

DURHAM COUNTY LADIES GOLF ASSOCIATION

GENDER AND FAIRNESS IN COMPETITION POLICY 2025



1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Durham County Ladies Golf Association (DCLGA) shares the belief of England Golf that golf belongs to everyone. All who play and all who aspire to play must have an equal opportunity to do so. The DCLGA is committed to the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion throughout its membership, its paid and volunteer workforce and any others with whom DCLGA engages.
- 1.2 At the same time DCLGA must also ensure that fair and level competition is achieved as far as possible within the context of competitive events.
- 1.3 This Policy aims to balance the principles of fairness and gender inclusion in a way that is reasonable and proportionate for the sport of amateur golf when golfers play or compete in DCLGA events and activities.
- 1.4 In considering this Policy, DCLGA has followed the guidance provided by England Golf who have attempted, as far as possible, to reach an informed view, taking account of the medical evidence currently available and the emerging guidance. However, this Policy recognises that there are limitations to the information available to inform it. For example, it is acknowledged that scientific evidence regarding transgender and gender diverse participation in sport is incomplete and continually developing, in particular as this relates to performance advantage at elite level, and there is currently insufficient evidence to unequivocally inform policy development.
- 1.5 DCLGA will keep this Policy and its impact under review, in line with any reviews carried out by England Golf, so as to continue to take account of the developing evidence around the issue of transgender and gender diverse participation in sport and any impact upon the issue of fairness in competition.
- 1.6 Revisions to this Policy will be recorded in the modifications table at the bottom of this Policy.

2. APPLICATION OF THE POLICY

- 2.1 DCLGA respects the right of all individuals to adopt a gender identity different than their sex assigned at birth. Except as set out below, individuals may

participate in all county events and activities without restriction. Unlawful discrimination, abuse or harassment, contrary to the Equality Act 2010 will not be tolerated by the DCLGA.

- 2.2 This Policy applies to golf competitions and other activities organised by DCLGA (“eligible event”). It applies to transgender and non-binary golfers who wish to compete, or participate, in a gender that is different to their sex assigned at birth.
- 2.3 It is recognised that there is a group of rare chromosomal/genetic conditions, referred to as differences in sex development (DSD) conditions. It is not possible to set out a policy for golfers with those conditions, and any golfer with such a condition can contact the DCLGA Welfare Officer (welfare@durhamladiesgolf.org.uk) to confidentially discuss their circumstances. DCLGA may contact England Golf in such a case to obtain support on the recommended approach.
- 2.4 If the situation arises that any person has a concern regarding an individual’s eligibility to participate within an event, they should not attempt to raise those concerns directly with the individual. Any concerns should be directed to the DCLGA Welfare Officer (as above).
- 2.5 If any concerns under this Policy are identified during an eligible event, the competitor should be permitted to continue and DCLGA can be contacted afterwards. Any individual wishing to raise any concerns under this Policy should do so with the principles of respect, discretion and confidentiality in mind, remembering that such matters are likely to be sensitive in nature. Concerns under this Policy should therefore be discussed with DCLGA, but individuals are discouraged from sharing their concerns more widely.
- 2.6 This Policy operates without prejudice to the other eligibility requirements that are applicable to individuals, including without limitation the England Golf and/or UKAD (UK Anti-Doping) Anti-Doping Rules in force from time to time. Nothing in this Policy permits, excuses or justifies non-compliance with any of those requirements, including without limitation any requirement for an individual to obtain a therapeutic use exemption for the use of substances on the UKAD and/or WADA (World Anti-Doping Agency) Prohibited Substances on the Prohibited List, and individual players have sole personal responsibility at all times for ensuring their own compliance with any restrictions or stipulations as set down by UKAD from time to time.

3. GENERAL COMPETITION ELIGIBILITY

- 3.1 At all times, DCLGA rules and terms and conditions of entry for the relevant competition shall apply. All competitors must conform to DCLGA’s Policy regarding gender and fairness in competitions.

- 3.2 Where DCLGA enters England Golf competitions, DCLGA is obliged to adhere to all England Golf requirements, at all times. In that respect, the England Golf General Conditions, Hard Card and Terms of the Competition for the relevant competition shall apply. Therefore, all entrants into England Golf competitions are required to have a valid WHS™ Handicap Index. WHS™ requires a golfer to be identified as male or female and an individual can only hold one gender category of WHS™ handicap at a time.

4. HANDICAP COMPETITIONS

- 4.1 Handicap Competitions are either male competitions, female competitions or mixed competitions.
- For male competitions, competitors are required to hold a WHS™ handicap which identifies that they are a male golfer.
 - For female competitions, competitors are required to hold a WHS™ handicap which identifies that they are a female golfer.
 - For mixed competitions, competitors may only compete in the gender in which they hold their WHS™ handicap.

5. SCRATCH COMPETITIONS

- 5.1 Scratch competitions are either male competitions, female competitions or mixed competitions.
- For male competitions, players may compete in a competition if any one of the following circumstances apply:
 - Their sex assigned at birth is male.
 - They identify as a transgender man.
 - They identify as non-binary.
 - For female competitions players may compete in a competition if any one of the following circumstances apply:
 - Their sex assigned at birth was female **and** they have not undergone or commenced any process to transition to a transgender man.
 - They identify as non-binary, but their sex assigned at birth was female **and** they have not undergone or commenced any process to transition to a transgender man.
 - For mixed competitions:
 - A player may only compete as a female golfer if any one of the following circumstances apply:
 - their sex assigned at birth was female, **and** they have not undergone or commenced any process to transition to a transgender man.
 - they identify as non-binary, but their sex assigned at birth was female **and** they have not undergone or commenced any process to transition to a transgender man.

- A player may compete as a male golfer if any one of the following circumstances apply:
 - Their sex assigned at birth was male.
 - They identify as a transgender man.
 - They identify as non-binary.

Combined Competitions – Scratch and Handicap Combined

5.2 Where there is a competition that allows individuals to play for both prizes (scratch **and** handicap), the eligibility requirements for players to win in either section of that competition will continue to apply. For example, a transgender woman would be permitted to play in a combined competition but would only be eligible to compete for the handicap competition prize, and not for the scratch prize.

6. INVESTIGATIONS

6.1 DCLGA has the right to investigate whether an individual who is competing, is intending to compete or has competed within an eligible event, if there are any circumstances which indicate non-compliance of this Policy by that individual, including a suspicion of non-compliance which is reasonably held in good faith

6.2 Any individual who is subject to an investigation under this section is required to co-operate fully in good faith. Failure to do so may result in disqualification from any competition or event entered and the inability to enter future DCLGA competitions or events.

6.3 In addition, DCLGA may consider a temporary suspension of an individual from competing in an eligible event where further investigation is required before a conclusion can be reached.

6.4 DCLGA will use reasonable endeavours to complete any investigation as quickly as possible,

6.5 DCLGA reserves the right to seek support and/or guidance from England Golf relating to investigations for alleged breach of this Policy.

7. DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS

7.1 Where an individual is found to have contravened this Policy, either intentionally or negligently, DCLGA may disqualify the individual from the event and forfeit any prize they have won.

7.2 Furthermore, any such breach of the Policy may be subject to investigation and/or disciplinary action pursuant to the applicable rules or policies of DCLGA.

7.3 DCLGA reserves the right to seek support and/or guidance from England Golf relating to disciplinary proceedings for alleged breach of this Policy.

7.4 DCLGA's disciplinary regulations set out the process that will be followed in cases where a disciplinary process is deemed appropriate.

8. MALICIOUS OR BAD FAITH ALLEGATIONS

8.1 Where an allegation is raised in respect of an alleged breach of this Policy and there is reasonable suspicion or evidence to suggest that the allegation has been made either in bad faith and/or with malicious intent, DCLGA reserves the right to investigate and/or take appropriate action against the individual who made the allegation, as deemed necessary, including but not limited to, disciplinary sanction.

9. UNFORESEEN ISSUES

9.1 Should an issue arise which is not foreseen within this Policy, DCLGA reserves the right to address the issue in a manner which it considers is reasonable, appropriate and in keeping with the general principles of this Policy.

10. APPEALS

10.1 There is a right of appeal against any action taken under section 7 of this Policy, as detailed in the DCLGA's disciplinary regulations.

11. SINGLE SEX FACILITIES

11.1 Clubs hosting DCLGA County events should do their best to ensure that they create an inclusive, safe and welcoming environment for all. DCLGA expects Clubs to have their own Gender and Fairness in Competition Policy in place and these policies should set out the availability of single sex and gender-neutral changing and toilet facilities, as appropriate.

11.2 Any concerns relating to the issue of same sex facilities at events being run by DCLGA should be directed to the DCLGA Welfare Officer, email welfare@durhamladiesgolf.org.uk.

12. FURTHER GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

You can find further information from the following sources:

- [*Equality and Human Rights Commission Guidance*](#)
- [*LPGA Gender Policy for Competition Eligibility*](#)
- [*R&A Fairness in Competition Policy*](#)

DEFINITIONS

The following terms have the following meanings in this Policy:

Handicap Competition	A competition played in accordance with Rule 3.1.c(2) of the Rules of Golf: <i>“In a handicap competition: The player’s ‘net score’ for a hole or the round is the gross score adjusted for the player’s handicap strokes</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>This is done so that players of differing abilities can compete in a fair way.”</i>
Scratch Competitions	A competition played in accordance with Rules 3.1c(1) of the Rules of Golf: <i>“How players score: Gross Scores or Net Scores</i> (1) <i>Scratch competitions. In a scratch competition: The player’s ‘gross score’ for a hole or the round is their total number of strokes (including strokes made and penalty strokes).</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The player’s handicap is not applied.”</i>
Sex assigned at birth	The designated sex, whether male or female, that is ascribed to an individual at birth, based on genitalia and recorded on an individual’s birth certificate at the time of birth, regardless of any subsequent changes to the birth certificate.
Gender	Expressing or considering oneself to be a man or a woman
Transgender	An individual who adopts a different sex identification than their sex assigned at birth.
Transgender Man	An individual assigned female at birth, who identifies as male.
Transgender Woman	An individual assigned male at birth, who identifies as female.
Non-binary	An umbrella term used to describe someone who does not identify exclusively as a man or a woman
DSD Conditions	A term used to describe a broad group of rare conditions involving genes, hormones and reproductive organs, including the genitals. It means a person’s sex development is different than expected.

Policy Revisions

Version	Approval Date	Effective Date	Description of changes	Approved by
0	21.02.2025	01.03.2025	Original version	DCLGA Exec. Committee