

Inclusion

Swim Ireland is committed to promoting inclusion throughout the organisation for all members. Swim Ireland undertakes its responsibility to comply with equality legislation by fostering a culture of inclusion and equality, striving to celebrate diversity and to demonstrate a commitment to equality.

As such, it is committed to ensure that no person is treated less favourably than another on grounds of:

- Gender
- Marital Status
- Family Status
- Sexual Orientation
- Religion
- Age
- Disability
- Race (ethnic background)
- Membership of the Traveller Community

Vulnerable groups

Individuals who may be particularly vulnerable to exclusion and/or discrimination include the following

- Minority ethnic cultures
- LGB individuals
- Transgender or non-binary individuals
- Young people at risk of exploitation or harm
- Athletes with a disability
- Traveller Community members
- Religious minority individuals
- Looked-after children
- Separated or unaccompanied children and young people

Responsibilities within sport

Members have individual and group responsibilities to uphold the ethos of inclusion in sport. All members should be aware of the possibility of the exclusion of individuals due to racism, discrimination, homophobia and transphobia. The aquatic disciplines do not discriminate on the basis of gender, marital or family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, ethnic or social background or as a member of the Traveller Community.

Where necessary the CCO and the appropriate coaching staff should be informed of any increased vulnerability or difficulty an athlete may have. Sensitive or personal information concerning an athlete should be given on a need to know basis only. Advice should be sought from the Youth Development department if there is any doubt.

Individual Responsibilities:

- To provide freedom of access to sporting activities, regardless of a person's ability, sexual orientation, social, religion or ethnic background
- To ensure that inclusion is reflected in all practices and procedures
- Be aware of and deal with issues related to racism, discrimination and homophobia
- To ensure that any report where any member feels that they have been unfairly treated because of their gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, ethnic or social background or membership of the Traveller Community is dealt with confidentially and through the appropriate process; this may include the Complaints and Disciplinary process and/or reporting to An Garda Síochána/PSNI, if applicable.

Club Responsibilities:

- Ensure that members are aware of the policy and their role in its implementation.
- Ensure that activities and events are inclusive, and that no person is refused participation based on any of the grounds named in the Employment Equality and Equal Status Acts (ROI) and the Equality Acts (NI) (see below).

- Advice should be sought from the Youth Development Department where transsexual members wish to participate in competition.
- Allegations of discrimination made against or by any member of Swim Ireland are dealt with in line with the Code of Conduct and the Complaints and Disciplinary Policy. An Garda Síochána/PSNI, should be informed if applicable.

Employment Equality and Equal Status Acts (ROI)

The Employment Equality and Equal Status Acts prohibit discrimination on the following nine grounds:

1. **Gender** – a man, woman, or transsexual person.
2. **Marital Status** – single, married separated, divorced or widowed.
3. **Family Status** – pregnant, a parent of a person under 18 years or the resident of primary care or parent of a person with a disability.
4. **Sexual Orientation** – homosexual, bisexual or heterosexual.
5. **Religion** – different religious belief, background or outlook.
6. **Age** – this only applies in relation to persons above the maximum age at which a person is statutorily obliged to attend school.
7. **Disability** – this is broadly defined including people with physical, intellectual, learning, cognitive or emotional disabilities and a range of medical conditions.
8. **Race** – skin colour, national origin or ethnicity.
9. **Membership of the Traveller Community** – people are commonly called Travellers, who are acknowledged both by Travellers and others, as people with a shared history, culture and traditions, identified historically as a nomadic way of life on the island of Ireland.

Equality Acts (NI)

The law in Northern Ireland protects people from discrimination, across a range of Acts, on a number of specified grounds, namely:

1. **Age** – relates to actual age and perceived age.
2. **Disability** – a person is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantially adverse and long-term effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
3. **Gender reassignment** – covers someone who proposes to go through, is going through or has gone through a process, or part of a process, to change his or her gender from man to woman or woman to man. A person making this change is described in the Act as a 'transsexual' person.
4. **Marital or civil partnership status** – broadly covers people who are married in a legally-recognised union or in a legally-recognised and registered civil partnership.
5. **Pregnancy and maternity** – refers to someone who is pregnant, or has given birth recently, is breastfeeding or is on maternity leave.
6. **Racial group** – this includes the different elements of colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin.
7. **Religion or belief** – religion, belief or lack of religion or belief.
8. **Sex** – a man, a woman, a transsexual person.
9. **Sexual orientation** – homosexual, bisexual or heterosexual.
10. **Political opinion** – political opinion or lack of.

Training and Competition

Participation and training in clubs is broadly non-gender and non-age specific. However, entry to competition in swimming, diving and water polo is based on gender and conducted in age specific categories. For aquatic competition purposes individuals will be categorised by age according to their date birth recorded on their birth certificate. The gender category for competition will be based on their gender according to their birth certificate or their gender reassignment certificate. For regional, national and international competition, which are based on FINA rules, selection is in accordance with the recommendations of the International Olympic Committee Medical Commission Guidance 2015. Where competition rules allow, e.g. club or non-FINA standard competitions, non-specific genders are encouraged to participate in fair and meaningful competition.

Inclusion Guidance for Young People

1. All new athletes should be welcomed, a welcoming positive experience especially for vulnerable athletes will encourage future participation
2. Ensure the athlete's first session is suitable for their needs

3. Promote inclusion in the group to ensure the training group come together as a team; if necessary, work with the group in a sensitive way to encourage understanding
4. Ensure your own understanding of any specific requirements to balance ignoring differences versus highlighting differences
5. Consider the practical needs of any vulnerable athlete e.g.:
 - Equipment – this may need adapting or specialist equipment brought in
 - Individual preferences – athlete’s may have preferences regarding their training routines, however consideration must be given to the welfare of the athlete and what is appropriate
 - Safety – safety is paramount for all athletes regardless of vulnerability
 - Venue/facility – the risk assessment should be reviewed for the venue/facility prior to the athlete attending; these may have changed and need to be reflected in the RA document
6. Consider the content of the session
 - Style of engagement, coaching or interaction
 - Be flexible regarding delivery
 - Have different methods to assess the needs of athletes – take advice from parents/guardians or other expertise especially people who regularly interact with the athlete
 - Ensure challenge is appropriate to encourage and extend skills – it is not always necessary to ‘go easy’ just because an athlete has added vulnerabilities; any challenge should be appropriate for the level of skill and psychological maturity of the athlete

Incidents of discrimination

Where an incident of discrimination is suspected or reported the following guidance should be considered:

- Incidents should be dealt with promptly and with the safety and welfare of those involved as a priority
- Where possible, an informal approach to discovering the facts of the case should be taken; listen and assess before any response is given.
- Anyone involved should be dealt with in confidence and treated fairly and with respect.
- The details of the issue should be noted and where appropriate handed to the Club Secretary. If a young person is involved their parent/guardian must be informed as well as the CCO

The matter may require reporting further to An Garda Síochána or PSNI; or to the Complaints and Disciplinary Committee of the club depending on the nature of the incident. Advice can be sought from the Club Support Officer/Club Development Officer or the Youth Development Department.