

Guidance on Scottish FA Participation Policy

This Guidance accompanies the Scottish FA's Participation Policy, published on 1 July 2025 (the "Policy").

Scope of the Policy (*Participation Policy, Paragraphs 1.2 and 1.3*)

The Policy applies to Association Football matches in competitions which are:

- (a) organised or promoted by the Scottish FA, including the Men's and Women's Scottish Cup competitions, and friendly or testimonial matches which require the approval of the Scottish FA;
- (b) included in the Scottish FA's Register of Competitions; or
- (c) under the jurisdiction of an Affiliated National Association or an Affiliated Association, including friendly or testimonial matches which require the approval of an Affiliated National Association or an Affiliated Association.

Details of the Affiliated National Associations, the Affiliated Associations and the Scottish FA's Register of Competitions can be found on pages 50 to 55 of the Scottish FA Handbook: https://www.scottishfa.co.uk/media/12499/sfa_handbook-2024-25_digital.pdf

(Participation Policy, Section 1.1)

The Policy does not apply to football activity outside of that referred to above. This means that the Policy does not apply to:

- (a) matches which are not governed by, or do not require the approval of, the Scottish FA, an Affiliated National Association, an Affiliated Association or a recognised football body of the Scottish FA; or
- (b) training or other activity outside of matches in the competitions referred to above, including 5-a-side activity and similar small-sided formats, whether competitive or not.

(Participation Policy, Section 1.2)

Eligibility Requirements (*Participation Policy, Paragraph 2*)

From U13s competition onwards, a person whose biological sex is male (i.e. those born with testes), including those who identify as transgender female or non-binary, will only be eligible to play in matches within the scope of the Policy in the boys' pathway or the men's category. Conversely, a person whose biological sex is male shall not be permitted to play in the girls' pathway or the women's category from U13s competition onwards.

From U13s competition up to the age of 15, a person whose biological sex is female (i.e. those born with ovaries) will be eligible to play in matches within the scope of the Policy in the boys' or girls' pathway, or both, subject to (i) seeking permission from the relevant competition organisers where any such person wishes to play in both pathways and (ii) there being no material safety concerns in relation to them playing in the boys' pathway.

After the age of 15, a biological female will only be permitted to play in matches within the scope of the Policy in the women's category. This is subject to the proviso that a biological female who is using, or has used within the preceding four years, testosterone as part of gender-related treatment shall not be permitted to play in the women's category.

Any such person, or any other biological female whose gender identity is male or non-binary, shall be permitted to play in matches within the scope of the Policy in the women's category if they can provide a Declaration in the form annexed to the Policy. Such Declaration must include confirmation from a medical professional that the relevant person's level of circulating testosterone is in the normal adult male range (7.7 to 29.4 nmol/L) and that there is no medical reason why they should not play competitive football with and against adults whose biological sex is male.

Supporting Provisions (*Participation Policy, Section 3*)

The Scottish FA is aware that cases may arise which are not covered by the Policy. The Scottish FA will deal with such cases as it sees fit.

Similarly, there may be questions about a player's eligibility. In the first instance, those questions should be sent to edi@scottishfa.co.uk.

The Scottish FA reminds every participant in football to treat others with dignity, kindness and compassion.

July 2025

Scottish FA Participation Policy

Pursuant to the Scottish FA Articles of Association, the Board of the Scottish FA directs:

- (i) all members to comply with, and to procure that their respective players comply with; and
- (ii) all Affiliated National Associations, Affiliated Associations and recognised football bodies, to the extent they operate competitions to which this Policy applies, to comply with,

the following Policy relating to the eligibility of players to participate in the Association Football matches to which this Policy applies.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Terms defined in the Scottish FA Articles of Association (the “**Scottish FA Articles**”) shall have the same meanings in this Policy, unless expressly provided otherwise.
- 1.2 This Policy applies to Association Football matches in competitions which are:
 - (a) organised or promoted by the Scottish FA;
 - (b) included in the Scottish FA’s Register of Competitions; or
 - (c) under the jurisdiction of an Affiliated National Association or an Affiliated Association.
- 1.3 This Policy does not apply to:
 - (a) participation in any football or domestic competitions that are not governed by the Scottish FA;
 - (b) international competitions governed by FIFA, UEFA, the IOC or any other international football federation; or
 - (c) any activities other than matches, e.g. training sessions, or which do not fall within the competitions referred to in paragraph 1.2 above.
- 1.4 This Policy only deals with eligibility. The responsibility for protecting the safety and dignity of participants during matches, competitions and associated activities (e.g. training sessions) lies entirely with the organiser of the relevant match, competition or associated activity.
- 1.5 This Policy is effective from 1 July 2025 (the “**Effective Date**”), replacing any previous policy relating to its subject matter. It applies to the eligibility of players to compete in matches which are within the scope of this Policy after the Effective Date. For the avoidance of doubt, there will be no sanction for any member or player as a result of a player playing in a match prior to the Effective Date who would have been ineligible to play in that match under the terms of this Policy.
- 1.6 The Scottish FA reserves the right to amend this Policy in light of any legal, scientific or other relevant developments.

1.7 Any player who wishes to participate in an Association Football match in a competition to which this Policy applies:

- (a) shall comply in full with this Policy;
- (b) shall cooperate promptly and in good faith with the Scottish FA in the application of this Policy; and
- (c) consents to the lawful collection, processing, disclosure and use of information (including their sensitive personal data) by the Scottish FA as required to implement and apply this Policy effectively and efficiently.

2. Eligibility

2.1 The following table sets out the eligibility requirements for participation in Association Football matches which fall within the scope of this Policy (as per paragraph 1.2 above):

	Association Football matches in age-banded competitions which fall within paragraph 1.2 above, from U13 to U16 or aimed at young people aged between 12 and 15	Association Football matches in competitions which fall within paragraph 1.2 above for players aged 15 or older
Biological sex male (i.e. those born with testes), including those who identify as transgender female or non-binary	Shall only play in the boys' pathway	Shall only play in the men's category
Biological sex female (i.e. those born with ovaries), including those who identify as transgender male or non-binary	May play in either the boys' or girls' pathways, unless there are material safety concerns in relation to playing in the boys' pathway	Shall only play in the women's category, subject to paragraphs 2.2 and 2.3 below

2.2 A biological female who has begun the use of or has used testosterone as part of gender-related treatment may not play in matches which fall within the scope of this Policy for players aged 15 or older that are reserved for women until four years have passed since their last such use.

2.3 A biological female whose gender identity is male or non-binary may play in matches which fall within the scope of this Policy for players aged 15 or older that are reserved for men if they provide a Declaration in the form contained in the Annex to this Policy, signed by the player and their GP or another qualified medical practitioner (following appropriate consultation and examination).

2.4 Save where this Policy expressly provides otherwise, in accordance with Article 20.2 of the Scottish FA Articles, matches involving male and female players may be played, provided

that all of the participating players are not older than 15 years of age on 1 January of the calendar year in which the season commenced.

3. General

- 3.1 If a case arises that is not addressed by paragraph 2 above, the Scottish FA will deal with the case as it sees fit.
- 3.2 Where there is a question about a player's eligibility under this Policy or any material safety risk which is identified (in relation to biological females playing in age banded competitions from U13 to U16 or aimed at young people aged between 12 and 15; or otherwise), the player, the relevant competition organiser and the Scottish FA will seek to resolve it through dialogue between them in the first instance. Any such question which cannot be resolved in this manner will be determined by the Scottish FA, whose decision shall be final and binding, and may only be challenged by the affected player pursuant to arbitration under Article 99 of the Scottish FA Articles.

July 2025

Annex Declaration

Name of Medical Professional: _____

Surgery/Hospital/Other: _____

I am writing to the Scottish FA in respect of the individual named below.

I confirm that as at the date below:

1. this individual's level of circulating testosterone is in the normal adult male range (7.7 to 29.4 nmol/L); and
2. there is no medical reason why they should not play competitive football with and against adults whose biological sex is male.

Signed by Medical Professional: _____

Date: _____

My gender identity is male or non-binary and my biological sex is female, and I would like to compete in Association Football matches in competitions which fall within the Scottish FA's Participation Policy for players aged 15 or older that are reserved for men.

I declare that:

1. I have been advised by a Medical Professional as set out above.
2. I will maintain my testosterone level in the normal adult male range (7.7 to 29.4 nmol/L) for so long as I compete in the matches to which this Declaration relates.
3. I am aware of the Scottish FA's Anti-Doping Regulations and the requirements they contain in relation to my use of testosterone, including the requirement, at certain levels of competition, to obtain a therapeutic use exemption prior to starting treatment.
4. I understand that: (a) there are physiological and performance differences between adult biological females and adult biological males; (b) as a result, adult biological females have a greater risk of injury when playing against adult biological males than when playing against adult biological females; and (c) my treatment will not fully alleviate those differences and consequential increased safety risks.

Name: _____

Club: _____ League: _____

Signed by player: _____

Date: _____