



BCGBA Statement – Transgender Participation Policy Review (March 2026)

The British Crown Green Bowling Association (BCGBA) is issuing this update following its statement in May 2025 regarding transgender participation in Crown Green Bowls.

In that statement, the BCGBA confirmed that it had not introduced specific eligibility criteria and has allowed participation to continue under existing competition structures. Since that time, there have been important developments across sport following the UK Supreme Court ruling on the interpretation of “sex” within the Equality Act, particularly in relation to sports considered to be “gender-affected”. Within bowls, Bowls England has now adopted a revised Trans and Gender Diverse Participation Policy, which came into effect on 1 January 2026. BCGBA has not adopted the Bowls England policy and is currently reviewing its position.

The Board recognises that this is an important and sensitive issue and that there is a need to provide clarity for counties, leagues and clubs, as the season approaches. The issue raises questions about fairness in competition, inclusion in participation, and the need to treat all members of the bowls community with dignity and respect. The Board also recognises that this issue has a direct impact on individuals currently participating in Crown Green Bowls, including those who have been part of the sport for many years.

Current Position and implications for the 2026 Season

For the 2026 season, participation will continue under the existing approach, including allowing transgender participants to compete in the category in which they are currently playing. Counties, leagues and competitions should therefore continue to apply existing rules and arrangements for the duration of the 2026 season. This approach provides clarity for the season ahead while enabling the Board to undertake a full and considered review before making any future decisions.

Next Steps

- 1. Policy Review Process** - BCGBA will undertake a formal review of its approach to transgender participation. This will consider; the legal position following the Supreme Court ruling, the concept of bowls as a gender-affected sport, the approaches taken by other governing bodies and the impact on Crown Green Bowls competitions and participation
- 2. Establishment of a Working Group** - A Transgender Participation Policy Review Working Group will be established during April 2026. The group will review the available evidence and guidance, consider the implications for Crown Green bowls and develop recommendations for the BCGBA Board. This will include consideration of competitive and non-competitive play, fairness, inclusion, duty of care, and how any future approach would be implemented and communicated. The group will include individuals with relevant expertise, alongside representatives from within the bowls community, and will begin its work immediately.

During the 2026 season, the working group will provide recommendations to the BCGBA Board, with the intention of informing a clear position for future seasons. Further updates will be shared as this work progresses, the next one will be in July 2026.

Our Commitment

BCGBA remains committed to ensuring that Crown Green Bowls is fair in competition, inclusive in participation, and respectful to everyone involved in the sport. We will continue to approach this issue with care, clarity and integrity.