

28 January 2026

[REDACTED]  
C/- [REDACTED]  
Sent via email to [REDACTED]

## **Request for Official Information LG25-0354 – Council Owned Swimming Pool Facilities**

Dear [REDACTED],

Thank you for your request for information held by the Queenstown Lakes District Council (QLDC). On 16 December 2025 you requested the following information under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA):

**Please provide the following information regarding provision for single-sex and gender-neutral changing and showering facilities in any swimming pool or fitness centre sites that are owned and/or operated by your Council.**

- 1. Do you provide communal single sex changing and showering facilities?**
- 2. Do you provide single occupancy changing and showering facilities? If so, how many at each site?**
- 3. Please provide any policies or procedures that apply to trans-identified people who wish to use the changing and showering facilities in your sites.**
- 4. How are your different changing and showering facilities labelled and described?**
- 5. At your sites, which changing room and showering facilities is a trans-identified male permitted to use?**
- 6. If applicable, do your facilities allow trans-identifying males to attend Women Only swim sessions.**

### **QLDC RESPONSE**

In response to your request, we consulted with the QLDC Sports and Recreation Team.

#### **Partial release of information**

- 1. Do you provide communal single sex changing and showering facilities?**

Yes. All Council aquatic centres (Alpine Aqualand, Wānaka Pool and Arrowtown Pool) and fitness centres (Queenstown Events Centre and Wānaka Recreation Centre) are equipped with communal single-sex changing rooms, toilets and showering facilities.

**2. Do you provide single occupancy changing and showering facilities? If so, how many at each site?**

Yes. All QLDC aquatic centres and fitness centres provide single-occupancy changing and showering facilities. These are provided either as individual cubicles within communal changing rooms, or as separate accessible/universal/family rooms. The number of single-occupancy facilities at each site is as follows:

	Alpine Aqualand	Arrowtown Swimming Pool (seasonal)	Queenstown Events Centre	Wānaka Pool	Wānaka Recreation Centre
Female Change Cubicle	6	4		4	
Female Shower Cubicle	3	1	8	4	3
Male Change Cubicle	6	1		4	
Male Shower Cubicle	4	1	8	4	3
Universal Shower and Changing Room			2		
Accessible/Universal/Family Changing Room	4			3	2
Accessible-only Changing Room				1	

Please note that all male and female individual cubicles for dry changing and single-occupancy showers—each with a lockable door for privacy—are situated within communal change rooms.

**4. How are your different changing and showering facilities labelled and described?**

Changing and showering facilities at QLDC fitness and aquatic centres are labelled as ‘Male’, ‘Female’, and ‘Universal/Family/Accessible’.

**5. At your sites, which changing room and showering facilities is a trans-identified male permitted to use?**

QLDC fitness and aquatic centres are guided by the Recreation Aotearoa [Trans and Gender Diverse Guidelines for Exercise and Recreation Providers](#), which advises that “single-stall gender neutral facilities are the best option for everyone, giving privacy and safety to all who use them. New build facilities should consider including single-stall gender neutral toilets, changing, and shower facilities as a best-practice option. This can be beneficial to those who are trans and gender diverse as well as people with mobility issues, caregivers with young children, people with physical and / or mental disabilities or people with cultural or religious beliefs that feel uncomfortable in shared facilities. In venues which have both gender-neutral and gendered facilities available, trans and gender diverse people might prefer the privacy of a gender-neutral stall but are not required to use them.”

Please note that the enclosed link will expire on 8 February 2026, 2:49 PM (UTC+12:00) Auckland, Wellington.

**6. If applicable, do your facilities allow trans-identifying males to attend Women Only swim sessions.**

The Recreation Aotearoa [Trans and Gender Diverse Guidelines for Exercise and Recreation Providers](#), which guides the operation of QLDC fitness and aquatic centres, states that transgender women should be treated the same as other women. Transgender women should therefore be able to attend women-only sessions and access other women's spaces. Additionally, the [Human Rights Act 1993](#) makes it unlawful for service providers to discriminate against individuals based on gender identity. On that basis, transgender women are permitted to attend women-only swim sessions at QLDC facilities.

For the purposes of this response, "transgender" is understood as an individual whose gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth. Therefore, transgender women are individuals who were assigned male at birth but identify and live as women.

Please note that the enclosed link will expire on 22 February 2026, 9:53 AM (UTC+12:00) Auckland, Wellington.

### **Decision to refuse information**

**3. Please provide any policies or procedures that apply to trans-identified people who wish to use the changing and showering facilities in your sites.**

Council has good reason under section 17(e) of the LGOIMA for refusing the information requested. We consider it is necessary to refuse the requested information on the basis of the following grounds:

- Section 17(e) – that the document alleged to contain the information requested does not exist or, despite reasonable efforts to locate it, cannot be found.

Section 17(e) of the LGOIMA provides that a local authority is not required to provide information that does not exist or cannot be found despite reasonable efforts. This ensures that the absence of information is not due to negligence but reflects its genuine non-existence.

QLDC does not have policies or procedures that specifically regulate the use of changing and showering facilities by trans-identified people. Practice in this area is guided by the Recreation Aotearoa [Trans and Gender Diverse Guidelines for Exercise and Recreation Providers](#).

As a local authority, we are committed to fulfilling our obligation to provide access to information that we hold. However, pursuant to Section 17(e) of the LGOIMA, we are unable to release information that either does not exist or cannot be found despite our reasonable efforts.

Please note that the enclosed link will expire on 22 February 2026, 9:53 AM (UTC+12:00) Auckland, Wellington.

### **Right to review the above decision**

Note that you have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about this process is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or freephone 0800 802 602.

If you wish to discuss this decision with us, please contact [Rebecca.Pitts@qldc.govt.nz](mailto:Rebecca.Pitts@qldc.govt.nz) (Engagement and Communications Manager).

We trust that the above information satisfactorily answers your request.

Kind regards,

██████

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# Trans and gender diverse guidelines for exercise and recreation providers

## Guidance

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## Section 1: Overview

The purpose of these guidelines is to support exercise and recreation providers to deliver safe, enjoyable, and quality active experiences for trans and gender diverse communities. This is intentionally a guide, rather than a comprehensive list of policies to adopt. It is designed to inform providers of considerations when developing their own policies and to guide best practice.

While this document is written for all exercise and recreation providers, the default language is aimed at larger organisations. However, it can be tailored to suit smaller organisations, such as sole traders.

Within these guidelines the term 'trans and gender diverse' is used as an umbrella term for anyone whose gender identity does not match the one assigned at birth. This may include people who are transgender, non-binary or intersex. Some intersex people – though not all – are gender diverse.

The rainbow community is also referenced in these guidelines, referring to a wider group of people with diverse sexualities, gender identities, and variations of sex characteristics.

For more definitions of terms please refer to Appendix C.

### 1.1. Introduction

Aotearoa has a diverse trans and gender diverse population. The [latest data from the 2023 Census](#) show that 0.7 % of New Zealanders identified as transgender and 0.4% identified as a gender other than male or female (non-binary). The numbers of people in the census identifying as non-binary was highest amongst those aged 15 – 19 years.

Trans and gender diverse people have always been a part of our communities and make significant contributions to our country. Despite trans and gender diverse people being represented across most communities in Aotearoa, high levels of discrimination have created barriers to their participation in everyday life.

Results from [Counting Ourselves](#), a 2022 study into Aotearoa trans and gender diverse communities indicate that this community is involved in exercise, sport, and recreation at a lower rate than the general population. Significantly lower proportions of trans (26 %) and young people unsure of their gender (22%) feel that physical activity, sport, or exercise is an important part of their life compared to their cisgender peers (53%).

[Counting Ourselves](#) results also suggest that fear of discrimination is a large barrier to accessing exercise, recreation and sport.

As awareness, acceptance, and the visibility of our trans and gender diverse people grow in Aotearoa, and as the benefits and protective factors of exercise and recreation continue to be better known, we see greater demand from these communities to access safe, inclusive, and welcoming recreational facilities and activities.

Recreation and exercise providers have a duty to create a safe environment for all in their community to visit and enjoy. The guiding principle at the core of this document is that everyone has the right to access exercise and recreation in a safe, inclusive, and welcoming environment.

## **1.2. Aim**

The aim of this document is to provide guidance to exercise and recreation providers to assist them in creating inclusive, safe, and welcoming facilities and environments to the trans and gender diverse community through policy, practice, and education.

## **1.3. Scope**

This document is for exercise and recreation facilities and providers such as aquatic facilities, gyms, sports halls, community facilities and outdoor centres. It examines how to create environments that are inclusive, safe, and welcoming to trans and gender diverse community members.

While sports clubs, teams, and other organisations may use these facilities, these guidelines do not address trans and gender diverse inclusion in sporting codes. Sporting clubs, teams, and other bodies are welcome to use these guidelines to guide their practice.

These principles support these guidelines for Exercise and Recreation Providers and Facilities.

## Overarching principle

**Inclusion**  
We include every New Zealander in recreation and exercise, and treat them with respect, empathy, and positive regard. We support transgender people to participate in the gender they identify with.



## Guiding principles



**Wellbeing and safety**  
We support the health, wellbeing, and safety of all participants.



**Privacy and dignity**  
We respect the privacy and dignity of all participants.



**Anti-discrimination, anti-bullying, and anti-harassment**  
We do not tolerate discrimination, bullying, or harassment.



**Listening and responding**  
We listen to all participants and provide appropriate channels and mechanisms for raising concerns.



**Education**  
We prioritise educating ourselves and our communities.

## 1.4. Legal context and guidelines

Trans and gender diverse people have the right to access recreation and exercise in safe, welcoming, and inclusive environments. The [Human Rights Act 1993](#) and the [New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990](#) are clear that it is unlawful to discriminate against a transgender or trans and gender diverse person on the basis of their sex or gender identity.

### Education

When working with school groups it might be useful to read the guidance from [Community Law for schools](#). Schools will likely have their own policies so work with them to ensure a successful experience for all.

### Employment

As employers, further information to help support understanding of requirements for [transgender or non-binary peoples](#) can be found on the Employment New Zealand website.

Both guidelines for schools and employment state that students and employees should be able to use bathrooms and changing rooms that corresponds with their gender identity and that they feel safest in. Gender neutral options should be available also for anyone to use if that's where they would feel most comfortable.

### Human Rights Commission

If someone feels they are being discriminated against, they can get information, support, or make a complaint through the Human Rights Commission. The Commission's website has lots of helpful information. A good place to start is the [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\)](#) section.

Here is one question that relate to recreation and exercise facilities.

I'm a transgender woman. Can I go to 'women-only' sessions at my local pool?

Yes, you should be treated the same as other women. Transgender women should be able to go to women-only sessions and access other women's spaces.

The Human Rights Act makes it unlawful for places providing a service to the public to discriminate against people because they are transgender.

If you have been excluded from a place that provides a service to the public because you are transgender, you can contact the Human Rights Commission for information, support, or to make a complaint.

Source: Human Rights Commission (2025)

## 1.5. Trans and gender diverse experiences

As exercise and recreation providers, we have a responsibility to ensure our spaces are safe, welcoming, and accessible to everyone. Therefore, it's important that we recognise, acknowledge, and address some of the barriers that can prevent trans gender diverse people from accessing exercise and recreation.

**“Being physically gender ambiguous made it super stressful to exercise in public places. When I transitioned, I stopped physically exercising in ways I had previously. Even now, when I can ‘pass’ when I need to, I only go to places where I can change in a cubicle. Most public pools and gyms don’t have this option.”**

- A non-binary adult, Counting Ourselves (2018) participant

One of the biggest barriers for trans and gender diverse people in accessing exercise and recreation, is the worry or concern about how they might be treated in those spaces. This can stem from their own previous experiences, the experiences of the wider community, or from how people talk about and treat trans and gender diverse people in general.

Another significant barrier for some trans and gender diverse people is uncertainty about their safety in changing rooms and other gendered

spaces. This can range from toilets and changing rooms to sleeping arrangements in outdoor centres.

To understand more about the barriers to movement from the trans and gender diverse communities take a look at the [Joyful Movement Project Report](#). This report was prepared by The Joyful Movement that approaches movement from a position that's grounded in a worldview of lived experience from a rainbow youth perspective.

For a list of organisations around New Zealand that support the rainbow community including Trans and Gender Diverse peoples, please refer to Appendix A.

## Section 2: Action Steps

**This section looks at what an exercise and recreation provider can do to support trans and gender diverse peoples accessing existing services and facilities.**

### 2.1. Leadership

Whether you're a large or small organisation, it is important that the leadership team understands the barriers and is supportive of providing a welcoming and safe space for trans and gender diverse communities. Engaging leadership might include providing workshops or training to the leadership team.

There are rainbow organisations all around the country who offer support, education, and training. They can support your organisation with the development and rollout of your policy.

#### Develop an inclusive policy

Leadership should play a part in designing a policy that underpins your commitment to diversity and inclusion. A principles-focused high-level inclusive policy will help guide your practice, especially when you come across situations where you're unsure what to do, whether you're a sole trader or part of local government. Being able to refer to your values and policy will support you in finding the right way forward.

This policy should be applicable across your organisation, should be easy to read, and should be relevant for both staff and customers. Your policy could also guide you in how to respond to any media queries about your stance on inclusion. Reach out to your local rainbow community for their input for your policy.

It's important to include guidance for specific areas or activities that are relevant to your organisation or business. For example:

- Gendered toilets and/or changing rooms
- Women or men's classes, spaces, or programmes
- Sleeping arrangements with outdoor programmes.

You should be clear about what your process and policy is for accessing gendered spaces. One policy won't be right for every organisation, so you'll have to decide what's right for you. Some examples include:

- Allowing people to self-identify and access the changing rooms they feel safest in. This is often most practical for larger organisations.
- Providing the opportunity to disclose gender identity on registration forms or prefer not to say. If a client is open about being trans or gender diverse you can offer to discuss their needs and how you could best support them.
- Ensuring privacy of any disclosures is respected and maintained.
- Sharing information to everyone about what gendered spaces are available such as toilets and change spaces, whether that's online or as part of an orientation. This means no one person is singled out or has to ask.

<b>Leadership</b>	
Our leadership team have been part of the development of our policy and guidelines.	
Our leadership team have participated in training on trans and gender diverse inclusion.	

<b>Our operation continually looks to improve its culture to be a welcoming place to...</b>	
Engage with local rainbow community, listen to their needs and ensure individuals know how we keep in touch.	
Understand what trans and gender diverse peoples want from the facility and their experiences when attending our facility.	
Ensuring the rainbow community are actively involved in planning and decision making on rainbow issues.	

Your policy should also consider how to best support trans and gender diverse staff members in the workplace. Employment NZ have great guidance on the responsibilities employers have towards their trans and gender diverse employees which can help guide your policy. Trans and gender diverse employees can also be a great resource for guiding policy and practice and supporting trans and gender diverse clients - but don't assume everyone is interested or wants to be involved in this work.

An example guideline is provided in Appendix D.

## Develop a 'terms of use' policy

A 'terms of use' policy is the basis for creating a safe and respectful environment for all users. It is something that is useful to refer to if any issues or conflicts arise.

These policies establish the expected behaviours of all users of the services you provide. It should be available for all users and staff to view. It should include steps that may be taken if someone acts out of line with this policy.

A 'terms of use' policy may be called something like 'rules of use' or 'conditions of entry'. If you already have a policy in place this is a good time to review it.

Example 'Terms of Use' policy from Christchurch City Council

### General rules

You must not carry out any offensive, threatening, inappropriate, dangerous or illegal activities on Council Recreation and Sport Centres' premises, and you must comply with the Council's health and safety requirements, including those directed to your own health and safety. Our decision as to what constitutes an offensive, threatening, inappropriate or dangerous activity will be final and binding. We may immediately suspend your membership and/or exclude you from all Council Recreation and Sport Centres for a period of time, which we in our discretion consider reasonable.

...

Management reserves the right to refuse entry and/or suspend membership to any person who doesn't follow these rules of use.

### 3. Levels of unacceptable behaviour:

- Minor – breaches of rules.
- Major – fighting, anti-social behaviour, vandalism, harassment, or abuse.
- Immediate Trespass – firearm or weapon, drugs, sexual indecency, or repeat of prior misconduct.

## 2.2 Provide staff training

Once you have an inclusion policy in place, it's important to back it up with full-staff training, so everyone is on board and understands why your organisation is taking this approach. Everyone in your organisation or business has a role to play, from admin and reception staff to trainers, lifeguards, and leadership. Inclusion is most effective when the whole team is on board!

It can be useful to include a FAQs document to sit alongside your policy, to support staff with any questions customers may have. This provides your team with a script, so they're not having to respond off-the-cuff. A useful format is:

### When we're asked... We say...

For example:

When we're asked...	We say...
Why we're taking this approach to trans and gender inclusion?	This is a community that has some extra barriers to accessing exercise and recreation. We're trying to reduce those barriers.

More FAQ examples can be found in Appendix E.

Establishing an inclusion champion can be a helpful role to provide ongoing support for staff in a large organisation. The champion needs to be provided with the time, training, and recognition so that all staff members know that they are available for advice, support and resources.

<b>Staff training includes:</b>	
Overview of trans and gender diversity and language used.	
What the barriers are to exercise and recreation for those who are trans and gender diverse.	
Initiatives the operation is implementing to reduce barriers.	
Expectation that staff welcome all people to the service on offer.	
What gendered spaces and non-gendered spaces are available for use of staff and customers.	
Systems in place that permits culturally sensitive/ responsive dress and privacy (e.g. clothing in pools and gender-specific training times).	
A range of team uniform options are available so that staff do not feel body-conscious when wearing certain items (e.g. shorts or a skirt, singlet or a long-sleeved shirt).	
Overview of FAQs and where to find them.	
Overview of complaint handling procedures.	

<b>Our organisation supports our staff to provide enjoyable and safe experiences for all participants.</b>	
Regular staff and customer communication highlighting that our facility takes everyone's safety seriously.	
A champion that supports inclusion and safety and all staff members are advised so that they can go to them for advice, support and resources.	
To enable people to come forward to report incidents, our facility uses a range of reporting methods (e.g. in person, email, telephone or feedback form).	
A clear written 'terms of use' policy and processes in place on how our organisation will respond to reports of harassment or assault, inappropriate, aggressive, threatening or unsafe behaviour. Provide options for how and who to report incidents to, and what people can expect from any processes.	

## 2.3. Physical spaces

### Toilets, changing rooms, and other gendered spaces

All people, including trans and gender diverse people, have the right to use toilets, changing rooms, showers, and other facilities appropriate to their gender. This is recognised international best practice and aligns with human rights laws in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Single-stall gender neutral facilities are the best option for everyone, giving privacy and safety to all who use them. New build facilities should consider including single-stall gender neutral toilets, changing, and shower facilities as a best-practice option. This can be beneficial to those who are trans and gender diverse as well as people with mobility issues, caregivers with young children, people with physical and / or mental disabilities or people with cultural or religious beliefs that feel uncomfortable in shared facilities.

In venues which have both gender-neutral and gendered facilities available, trans and gender diverse people might prefer the privacy of a gender-neutral stall but are not required to use them.

To provide more privacy options in gendered facilities consider adding curtain/s in spaces such as changerooms as a more cost-effective option in the short term.

Consider too, the line of sight between change room and activity area, create a barrier if one doesn't fully exist.

### Signage and wayfinding

When designing or reviewing wayfinding and signage for a facility consider putting information about toilets, changerooms and any gendered spaces online, so people can look this up before they arrive.

It is ideal that there is at least one gender neutral option and that it is clearly marked.

Here is an example of icons used from Christchurch City Council:



Gender neutral changing areas previously 'family change'



The approach has been to move away from gendering things if unnecessary but use icons which communicate what is behind the door. Moving away from identifying those spaces as 'family change' will help make it socially acceptable for anyone to use these gender neutral spaces.



There are still male and female change spaces.

**Figure 1:** A series of icons.

Other options are to use words instead of icons.

'Gender inclusive' or 'all genders' are acceptable options.



**Figure 2.** A restroom sign showing icons.

It is recommended to avoid icons such as the one below, as it reinforces a binary gender stereotype, remembering that trans and gender diverse peoples may be non-binary, intersex, gender fluid etc.



**Figure 3.** A sign combining traditional male and female symbols.

### Can I use public toilets and changing rooms that align with my gender?

If you are transgender, intersex, or non-binary, you should be able to use the toilets and changing rooms you feel most comfortable in.

Many public facilities provide unisex or accessible toilets and private cubicles within changing rooms to ensure everyone can feel safe and comfortable. If gender neutral bathrooms are available, trans people are not required to use them and have the right to use a bathroom that matches their gender.

If you think you have experienced discrimination because of your gender, you can contact the Human Rights Commission to discuss your options or make a complaint.

Source: Human Rights Commission (2025)

Through the voice and experience shared of trans and gender diverse communities, we know that feeling unsafe is a barrier to accessing exercise and recreation. Below are some ways to help provide an environment that promotes safety for all users.

<b>Changing rooms, bathrooms and other gendered physical spaces:</b>	
Gender-neutral options are available and are clearly marked.	
Changing rooms include partitioning that eliminates direct line of sight between changing room and corridors/foyers/spaces external to changing rooms and amenities.	
Changing rooms include partitioning to create more privacy options within.	
Sanitary bins are available in every toilet cubicle, including designated male toilets.	
Staff facilities include gender neutral change/toilet/shower facilities.	

<b>We provide a safe environment with:</b>	
Clear wayfinding signage to all accessible facilities.	
Adequate lighting in and around any buildings, including the carpark and surrounding areas that is regularly checked.	
Appropriately located secure lockers and/or locks are available to participants.	
External spaces are regularly monitored and maintained.	

## 2.4. Visibility and communications

Visibility is one of the most useful tools in addressing barriers to exercise and recreation. It can be useful to think about how someone who is trans or gender diverse could look at your venue, programmes or events from the outside and know that it's a space they would be safe, welcomed, and accepted in. This can include what information is available on your websites and social media, a sign or sticker at the front door, rainbow pins or badges for staff, and posters in your spaces.

An example statement for a website could be as simple as:

**Recreation Aotearoa welcomes members from our whole community, including our Māori, Pasifika, rainbow, Trans and Gender Diverse, and members with disabilities.**

<b>Communication:</b>	
Our communication channels demonstrate how our organisation is inclusive of everyone, so all people of all genders feel like it is a place they will be welcomed.	
We use imagery that showcases a range of different body types, ethnicities, gender expressions and ages that reflects our community.	
We offer clear and simple advice showing the appropriate clothing that can be worn in our facility or to a specific activity.	
<p>All important information is displayed on our website and in our facilities in a way that is easily accessible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access, transport and parking options</li> <li>• Changing and toilet facilities available, including gender neutral options and their location</li> <li>• Locker requirements (e.g. cost, own padlock required, key code etc)</li> <li>• Accessibility information</li> <li>• Membership and options for visiting as a guest</li> <li>• How to use the booking system (if booking is required)</li> <li>• How to find the different areas within your facility.</li> </ul> <p>An inclusive welcoming statement that clearly includes the rainbow community.</p>	
Our organisation uses inclusive language and images that reflects our membership in all communications and promotional material.	

A statement like this might seem obvious, but it will mean that someone looking at your website, who is feeling unsure if they would be safe or welcomed in your venue, can be reassured that their safety is something you have considered and are committed to.

## 2.5. Resolving issues & complaints handling

Staff and customers may have their own opinions and strongly held views on trans and gender diversity inclusion. Being clear on the reasons for inclusion for both staff and customers can help communicate your position and build understanding.

These could include:

1. Our sector is based on supporting all people's wellbeing through movement.
2. Those who are trans and gender diverse have additional barriers to accessing recreation, sport and exercise.
3. It is unlawful to discriminate against a transgender or gender diverse person based on their sex or gender identity.

## Staff

Providing training for staff is crucial to ensure the team understands any actions or changes made to be more inclusive. We would recommend reaching out to your local community rainbow group to see if they are able to deliver training.

Remember to include all levels of staff in this initiative. It is important that leadership teams not only understand the issue but also provide leadership in supporting any changes.

You may have staff members who are trans and gender diverse and it's important to also consider not only what may make your facility or services more welcoming for customers but also for existing or potential future staff. If you do have openly trans and gender diverse staff on board, check in with them and see if they want to contribute to developing this initiative. Remember not to assume everyone is interested or wants to be involved in this work.

## Customers

Existing and potential customers may query any changes and policies you have. Being prepared for questions and supporting your staff to deal with these in the first instance is important for both staff and customers.

### **1. Dealing with feedback face to face**

Support your frontline team with training, a clear policy or guideline, updates on any changes so they know what is happening and why. Include some templated answers for Frequently Asked Questions. Ideally this will provide consistent responses that are in line with your initiative.

See our FAQ section for some examples.

### **2. Dealing with feedback after the fact – e.g. written in**

If a customer or potential customer is not satisfied with a response on the frontline, or wants to enquire before attending, they may reach out in other ways e.g. email. Depending on your organisation size you may either

want to designate the handling of queries, if they fall outside of your standard FAQ's, to one person to manage. Again, this will help provide consistency in response and enable that person to keep track of conversations.

When replying:

- Reiterate the reasoning behind any changes.
- It is good practice to respond in a respectful and professional manner.
- If your answers are not accepted by the recipient, you do not need to continue to engage.

### **3. Dealing with social media complaints**

Another avenue of communication is via social media. Many places will already have a social media policy in place that provides guidance for admins in how to manage communications and responses. If you're a smaller operator and don't have a policy, take some time to consider some guidelines for yourself.

In either case you should be able to remove or turn off comments for anything that isn't appropriate.

You can remind followers of social media guidelines and / or the expectation that comments need to be respectful. As admin of a page, you reserve the right to remove any that don't meet your criteria.

### **4. Responding to constructive feedback**

If the feedback is a suggestion for ways to encourage more inclusive practices make sure you acknowledge the communication if possible. Consider if it is feasible to implement the suggestion and respond with the outcomes and reasons behind those.

This can be an opportunity to build your own awareness and understanding of your local communities needs. It can also be an opportunity to start building relationships with community members.

### **5. Dealing with Local Government Official Information and Meeting Act requests**

This is a legal requirement for those who work for Local Government. However, any organisation may find it helpful to keep good records of discussions and decisions made.

The Local Government Official Information and Meeting Act 1987 allows people to request official information held by local government agencies. If you work for Local Government and you think this may become part of a LGOIMA request, keep a file of relevant information pertaining to decisions made.

If a request comes through, you may be asked to submit any of the following on the subject:

- written documents, reports, memoranda, letters, notes, emails and draft documents
- non-written documentary information, such as material stored on or generated by computers, including databases, video or tape recordings
- information, which is known to an agency, but which has not yet been recorded in writing or otherwise (including knowledge of a particular matter held by an officer, employee or member of an agency in their official capacity)
- documents and manuals which set out the policies, principles, rules or guidelines for decision making by an agency
- the reasons for any decisions that have been made about a person.

The LGOIMA for local Government Agencies Guide (The Office of the Ombudsman, August 2019).

## 2.6. Build engagement

Building engagement with any community helps align and grow the understanding of their needs and perspectives. This checklist provides suggestions for continuing to build engagement and support of the rainbow community.

<b>Our organisation offers a variety of activities that the rainbow community want to participate in.</b>	
We do this through:	
Actively seeking to hear the voices of the rainbow community to develop programmes that meet their needs, interests and experiences (e.g. type of activity, scheduling and delivery).	
Providing entry-level activities or classes and this information is available and visible throughout our centre and promoted online via our website.	
Promoting sessions that are explicit in their ability level so everyone can find what suits them.	
Briefing our staff on all the different sessions we offer so that they can inform and advise members what might be appropriate for them.	
Seeking feedback from people who no longer attend or leave the facility to understand the reasons why.	

<b>It's easy for new participants to attend our services through...</b>	
"Come and try events" focussed on the rainbow community.	
"Buddy systems" to help new participants to feel welcomed.	
Addressing identified barriers to access for members (e.g. information on website around toilets and changerooms, flexible membership fees, inclusive language, programme overview).	

<b>Our organisation considers different factors which affect how the rainbow community can participate.</b>	
We run different promotions or offers around multiple attendance such as 'join with a friend' or a reward if they introduce someone else to the facility.	
We ensure clubs or organisations that we partner with, or provide spaces for, are aware of and adhere to our gender inclusive policies.	

## Section 3: Case studies

### 3.1. Christchurch City Council

The Christchurch City Council (CCC) has several sport and recreation venues, including community swimming pools, and has taken an active stance on trans and gender diverse inclusion in its venues.

CCC has developed guidance, training for front-line staff, and a FAQ document in partnership with local rainbow social support organisation, Qtopia. CCC engaged in this community partnership process prior to the opening of a new facility, Te Pou Toetoe Linwood Pools, and the launch of a women's swimming session that is open to transgender women.

Training for staff included an in-depth understanding of why CCC took this position and approach; training meant frontline staff saw the commitment from leadership information about the wider rainbow community; barriers to accessing recreation; and specific guidance, FAQs, and scenarios frontline staff might encounter in their roles, including how to respond to someone asking why a trans person is in a gendered changing room. Involvement of CCC Recreation leadership in this and management to this approach.

Since opening Te Pou Toetoe Linwood Pools, the women's swimming session has been incredibly popular, with around 200 attendees per week, and has seen regular attendance from transgender people with no issue. CCC has responded to queries and criticisms from some members of the public disagreeing with their guidance and has remained firm and clear in its stance.

Guidelines document provided in Appendix D.

## 3.2. Outward Bound

### Outward Bound's integration of gender diversity

Outward Bound is renowned for its outdoor education programmes aimed at personal development and leadership skills through challenging outdoor experiences. In recent years, the organisation has made significant strides in fostering gender diversity within its programmes, recognising the importance of inclusivity in outdoor education.

Outward Bound identified the need to be proactive and committed to strategic actions to uplift the capability of our staff, review policies and processes to successfully integrate gender diversity into their courses. To keep on track Outward Bound developed quarterly action plans to make incremental changes that enhance inclusion for members of Rainbow communities.

A big part of increasing staff capability was training. In October 2023 all Outward Bound staff attended training delivered by Pride Pledge to learn what diversity, equity and inclusion looks like for our rainbow communities. The training concluded with a workshopping session identifying actions that could be taken in the areas of Policy, Practice and Infrastructure for each team within the organisation. The knowledge gained in this training inspired confidence in the staff, which led to actions to progress the organisation towards being more inclusive. Rainbow training has been added to all new staff inductions, to ensure the knowledge continues to grow and flow through the organisation. As an organisation staff took the Pride Pledge to signify their commitment to Rainbow inclusivity.

For customers, the course participants, increasing the visibility of being a welcoming, rainbow-friendly organisation was another strength of Outward Bound's approach. On the front lawn area of the Outward Bound school in Anakiwa there are several flag poles. The Rainbow Pride flag now flies alongside the Outward Bound flag with other nations' flags. Staff are encouraged to use pronouns in their email signatures, and instructors use pronouns in their introductions to participants at the beginning of each course, providing a safe space for participants to do the same. Many of the instructors and school staff choose to wear pride pins and the Pride Pledge is displayed in the offices at Tāmaki Makaurau and Anakiwa.

During the enrolment process, participants could specify their gender identity. For individuals identifying as trans, gender neutral, fluid, or non-binary, Outward Bound takes care to discuss any gender-specific practices they may encounter during their course, such as sleeping and bathroom arrangements on certain programmes. Together with the student, staff work to find solutions that align with their comfort level, so participants can fully engage with their Outward Bound course.

In policy and process Outward Bound is now gathering data on participants' gender identity and affiliation with Rainbow communities. Understanding the demographics of the participants, as well as those who are missing from our courses, is crucial for their commitment to inclusivity. Outward Bound has also revised their policies, eliminating heteronormative language.

Regarding physical spaces Outward Bound changed the signage on bathrooms to be non-gendered and provided greater privacy and autonomy for students who prefer this. This is also discussed with students in their enrolment process. For the future Outward Bound is integrating gender-inclusive design into their new infrastructure.

Outward Bound is excited to continue to explore ways to grow their effectiveness and better accommodate Rainbow communities.

## Appendices

### Appendix A: **Access further help and support**

Remember, you're not in this alone! Connecting with your local rainbow community organisations is a good place to start for further support and if you have any questions. They'll also be best placed to understand the need and barriers local to you.

Region	Local rainbow community organisation	Link
<b>Auckland</b>	F'INE – Pasifika Village Collective – Pasifika youth The Joyful Movement Project Radiqal Movement	finepasifika.org.nz villagecollective.org.nz joyfulmovement.thinkport.nz radiqalmovement.com
<b>Central</b>	Rainbow Hub Waikato	rainbowhubwaikato.org.nz
<b>Wellington</b>	Tiwhanawhana – takatapui community Ngā Uri o Whiti te Rā Mai Le Moana Trust – Pasifika and Māori youth	tiwhanawhana.com nuowtrmoanatrust.com
<b>Canterbury</b>	QTOPIA – Canterbury and West Coast Mana Tipua –Māori takatapui Moana Vā - Pasifika	qtopia.org.nz manatipua.nz moanava.org
<b>Nelson</b>	Q-Youth – youth	qyouthnz.com
<b>National</b>	RainbowYOUTH – youth led OutLine – rainbow mental health support InsideOUT –rainbow support Intersex Aotearoa – Intersex support Gender Minorities Aotearoa – transgender support Rainbow Path – rainbow refugee and asylum support Adhikaar Aotearoa – rainbow South Asian support Nevertheless – Māori, Pasifika rainbow Rainbow Support Collective – connects peer-led rainbow support organisations I'm Local – support for more rural areas	<a href="http://ry.org.nz">ry.org.nz</a> outline.org.nz insideout.org.nz intersexaotearoa.org genderminorities.com rainbowpathnz.com adhikaaraotearoa.co.nz neverthelessnz.com rainbowsupportcollective.nz imlocal.co.nz

## Appendix B: **Relevant links**

### [Employment NZ - Transgender Employees](#)

The Human Rights Commission Inquiry into Discrimination Experienced by Transgender People in 2008, confirmed that trans people face significant discrimination in day to day life. The majority of submissions about discrimination focused on employment.

### [Australian Human Rights Commission, Sport Australia \(2019\):](#)

Guidelines for the inclusion of transgender and Trans and Gender Diverse people in sport.

### [Community Law – schools and rainbow rights](#)

Community Law provides an overview for schools of rights for rainbow students.

### [Gender Minorities Aotearoa – free online course](#)

Gender Minorities Aotearoa is offering a free online course, Supporting Transgender People. This course is designed to increase your knowledge of issues affecting transgender people in Aotearoa, and to build your confidence in speaking about these issues and supporting transgender people. It is a 101 course and suitable for people with any level of knowledge on transgender issues.

### [Education Outdoors NZ EONZ – Menstruation and rainbow Inclusive Practices](#)

EONZ has created a resource: Going with the Flow, which covers menstruation and rainbow inclusive practices in the outdoors. They also provide letter templates for schools and providers around inclusion in outdoor programmes.

## Appendix C: **Definitions and abbreviations**

Within this resource we recognise that language is ever evolving, and that everyone has different understandings of language meanings, and personal language preferences. We also appreciate that language is deeply connected to identity, and it's important that professionals continually develop their knowledge on the use of relevant language relating to gender diversity. The 'key information' section of this document talks about how to ask about someone's identity and the language they use.

This resource seeks to give guidance that is specific to the inclusion of transgender, gender diverse, and intersex people. Some trans, gender diverse and intersex people may also identify as rainbow or as a member of the LGBTQIA+ community.

**The following is a guide of the language used throughout this resource, developed with definitions from InsideOUT<sup>1</sup>.**

**Cisgender** – someone whose gender is aligned with the sex or gender they were assigned at birth (i.e. not trans or non-binary).

**Gender** – we are designated a gender at birth based on our sex characteristics, but not everyone's gender aligns with the one they were designated. Gender is understood differently across cultures and throughout history.

**Gender Diverse** – is also an umbrella term adopted in recent years in addition or as an alternative to the word 'transgender'. It has been developed in response to young people whose gender does not align with the sex they were assigned at birth but do not use the term 'transgender' to describe themselves. Gender diverse can also be used to refer to a group of people, rather than an individual - to describe the diversity of genders that can exist in a group, beyond binary genders.

**Intersex, variations of sex characteristics (VSC)** – an umbrella term describing people born with variations of sex characteristics, such as chromosomes, gonads, reproductive organs, and hormones that don't fit medical norms around female or male bodies. There are many different

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<sup>1</sup> InsideOUT Making Schools Safer, Language Glossary, Appendix 1  
<https://www.insideout.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Making-Schools-Safer.pdf>

variations that fall under the intersex/VSC umbrella and make up around 1.7% of the population. Some people who are intersex may also identify as gender diverse and some may not.

**LGBTQIA+** – An acronym that stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, and more sexuality and gender diverse identities. It is used in a similar way to ‘rainbow’ but is often critiqued for centring Eurocentric understandings of gender and sexuality.

**Misgendering** – referring to a person by a gender they are not (for example, by using a person’s previous name, pronouns, or gendered language, such as ‘ma’am’ or ‘sir’). Misgendering is sometimes accidental but prolonged misgendering is a form of abuse, especially if it is done by multiple people. It can be highly distressing, endanger trans people’s mental health and wellbeing, and cause trauma.

**Non-binary** – an umbrella term and gender describing people who do not strictly identify with one of the two binary genders (boy/man/tāne or girl/woman/wahine).

**Pronouns** – the words used when referring to someone in the third person. Common pronouns include she/her/hers, he/him/his, they/them/theirs. In some languages, pronouns are gender-neutral (for example, in te reo Māori the pronoun ‘ia’ refers to any individual person). Some people prefer that people use their name instead of pronouns or use pronouns that are less commonly known, known as neo-pronouns such as ze/hir/hirs.

**Rainbow** – rainbow is an umbrella term that describes people of diverse sexualities sex characteristics, and genders.

**Sex** – a medical way of categorising people’s bodies based on sex characteristics, such as genitals, chromosomes, hormones, and reproductive organs. People often conflate sex and gender, but sex does not always determine a person’s gender.

**Takatāpui** – a Māori word that traditionally means ‘intimate friend of the same sex’. It has since been embraced to encompass tāngata Māori who identify with diverse genders, sexualities or variations of sex characteristics and choose to use this kupu. Takatāpui denotes a spiritual and cultural

connection to the past. It is best understood within its cultural context and may mean something different to each person.

**Tangata ira tāne** – a Māori term describing someone who was assigned female at birth but is a tāne/boy/man.

**Trans boy or trans man** – a person who was assigned female at birth but is a boy/man/tāne. Trans masculine is an adjective some people who were assigned female at birth use to describe their gender.

**Transgender (Trans)** – is an umbrella term used to describe someone whose gender does not fully align with the gender they were designated at birth.

**Trans girl or trans woman** – a person who was assigned male at birth but is a girl/woman/wahine. Trans feminine is an adjective some people who were assigned male at birth may use to describe their gender.

**Transphobia** – transphobia is the fear, hatred, disbelief, or mistrust of people who are [transgender](#), thought to be transgender, or whose gender expression doesn't conform to traditional [gender roles](#). Transphobia can prevent transgender and gender nonconforming people from living full lives free from harm.<sup>2</sup>

**Whakawahine, Hinehi, Hinehua** – Māori terms describing someone assigned male at birth but who is a wahine/woman/girl.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/gender-identity/transgender/whats-transphobia>

## Appendix D: **Guidelines Example**

Staff guidelines to support the Community use of Changing Facilities.

### **Christchurch City Council recreation & sport centres**

#### **Background**

New Zealand has a diverse population including trans and gender diverse communities. These communities are involved in exercise, recreation and sport at a lower rate than the general population. A fear of discrimination is a large barrier to accessing sport and recreation.

Council aims to provide access to safe, inclusive and welcoming recreation facilities for all our community including our trans and gender diverse community. We want to ensure all people are feeling safe and respected in our facilities.

#### **Aim of these Guidelines**

Council aims to provide a safe, fair and inclusive environment for everyone using our Recreation and Sport Centres. This includes supporting all our customers including trans and gender diverse people to use the change area, toilets, showers and all other parts of our Centres appropriate to their gender and where they feel most comfortable. This is considered international best practice and aligns with human rights laws in Aotearoa New Zealand. It is against the law to discriminate against someone based on their sex or gender identity.

The aim of this document is to provide guidance to our staff so if there is a situation they need to discuss with a customer, they have the knowledge, tools and confidence to do so. This operating practice will be reviewed over time as necessary due to more information and experience becoming available.

#### **Language and Definitions**

It is useful to understand that language is ever evolving, and that everyone has a different understanding of language meanings and personal language preferences. It is important that our staff continue to develop their knowledge on the use of relevant language relating to gender diversity. It does not imply any specific form of sexual orientation.

## Principles and context

- Everyone should have access to exercise and recreation in a safe, inclusive and welcoming environment.
- Recreation providers should ensure our spaces are safe for trans and gender diverse people.
- Everyone has a right to privacy and dignity including trans and gender diverse people.
- Everyone's journey is different, and everyone has different needs. We must treat everyone as their own person and listen and respond to their individual needs.

## Risks / concerns

On occasion there may be situations where staff could suggest a different changing place for people to use – ie the whanau change cubicles.

When discussing facility options with a customer, please be respectful and sensitive and only request information that is necessary & appropriate.

We recognise there is potential for abuse of the situation by people claiming to be transgender to gain access to specific changing spaces.

Staff may be concerned about an individual using a specific gender changing facility and have reason to believe they are using the changing facility for inappropriate purposes.

## Conversation starters

Where staff are concerned, or have been advised that a person is potentially in an incorrect changing facility, the following process should be followed:

- Have a conversation with the customer to determine how best to support them.
- People can self-identify and access the changes rooms, showers & toilets they feel safest in.
- Single stall gender neutral facilities may be a good option to provide privacy and safety to all. Trans and gender diverse people may prefer to use gender neutral facilities, but they are not required to use them.
- Do not ask questions about the status of someone's transition or medical interventions they may be engaged in as this is an invasion of their privacy.

## Scenario

### **Staff receive a complaint about a member of the opposite gender using the changing rooms.**

If the person identified is not causing any issues - advise the complainant that they are welcome to use the private facilities and explain our gender inclusion statement ie “we know that trans and gender diverse people face additional barriers to accessing recreation. We are working to reduce those barriers and ensure our space is open to our whole community”.

Additionally, staff can advise “it is against the law to discriminate against someone on the basis of their sex or gender identity”.

If the person identified is acting inappropriately – respond the same way we would to any other person acting inappropriately.

If appropriate to do so, once the person identified has exited the changing room staff can chat to the person, provide options of other changing areas that may prefer to use at that specific facility.

## Appendix E: **Frequently Asked Questions**

In change management, communication is a key component to help things go smoothly. In consideration of both customers and staff draft a list of questions you think may be asked and an appropriate response to those.

This helps prepare you, and any staff to respond to questions that might be difficult. It ensures there is consistency in that response and that it is in line with the policies and principles you have committed to. Here are some examples:

### **Can I ask someone if they are transgender or gender diverse?**

It's important to consider why you're asking. Sometimes, we're just fulfilling our own personal curiosity - but other times, by knowing whether someone is trans or gender diverse, we can provide better support and care to them. In these cases, it's important to mention why you're asking. Say something like, "I want to make sure I'm providing the best support I can to you, so I hope you don't mind me asking. Are you transgender or gender diverse?"

You shouldn't ask someone if they are trans or gender diverse to determine which changing facilities they should use - trans and gender diverse people have the right to use the facilities that align to their gender.

### **Can I ask whether someone has had 'the surgery'?**

No. We do not have the right to ask for someone's private medical information - and we wouldn't ask about anyone else's genitals.

### **What do I do if someone complains about a trans person in a changing room?**

If someone is complaining about the presence of a trans person in a changing room, and that person is not causing trouble, advise the complainant that they're welcome to use private facilities if they'd feel more comfortable, and explain your organisation's reasons for your gender inclusion policies.

It can be useful to refer back to your organisation's values, kaupapa, mission, or vision statement. For example, we could say:

**“Recreation Aotearoa works to increase participation in exercise and recreation across the country. We know that Trans and Gender Diverse people face additional barriers to accessing recreation and exercise. Our inclusion policy is working to reduce those barriers and ensure our space is open to our whole community.”**

If someone is complaining about a trans person acting inappropriately in a changing room, respond how you would to any other complaint about someone acting inappropriately or in an unsafe manner. You can refer to you ‘terms of use’ policy to address concerns.

### **Does every transgender person transition the same?**

We’ve often thought of transition as a very linear process from A to B that looks similar for everyone, but in fact everyone’s transition is unique. Not everyone wants every intervention or option available to them: not everyone engages with medical transition (hormones or surgery); some people change their name and ID quickly, and others take more time; and others might take some time for their gender expression (how they look and appear) to match their identity. It’s important to remember everyone is their own person, with their own journey.

### **What is the importance of pronouns and what happens if I accidentally misgender someone?**

Pronouns are what we use to refer to someone instead of their name. They are important as they can indicate what gender the individual is and it can be upsetting for anyone to be referenced incorrectly. It is respectful to use a person’s self-determined pronouns. If unknown it is easy to ask, ‘what are your preferred pronouns?’

If someone lets you know their pronouns and you accidentally call them by different ones you can rectify the situation respectfully. Once you’ve realised, or been told, your mistake simply apologise and correct yourself.

### **What is the law?**

It is against the law to discriminate against someone on the basis of their sex or gender identity.

### **Who can help me develop our policies and practice?**

You don’t have to be the expert in this mahi - there will be lots of people in your community with a broad depth of knowledge and expertise in rainbow communities you can seek support from. Knowing your

community will help you lean on this expertise. Connect in with local rainbow communities and organisations, and ask them for help and support early on in the process - you'll get a much better understanding and outcome by working alongside them from the get-go!