

The Ladies Gaelic Football Association

Croke Park, Dublin 3

To: Chief Executive Officer: Helen O'Rourke

## **CC your local TDs**

**CC Minister for Sport Catherine Martin [catherine.martin@oireachtas.ie](mailto:catherine.martin@oireachtas.ie)**

Re: Transgender Policy ratified on 15th February 2023

We are writing to call on you to immediately revoke the "Transgender Policy" ratified by the Ladies Gaelic Football Association (LGFA) on 15th February 2023 in respect of the participation of transgender males who "...transitioned, or are transitioning.." aged 12 years plus.

We can only surmise that the LGFA's grave misjudgement in ratifying the Transgender Policy is because they are so utterly disconnected from parents, players and grassroots supporters. We are therefore giving the LGFA an opportunity to reverse this decision before we launch a nationwide boycotting campaign on the grounds that your policy is not necessary, justifiable nor lawful and represents a direct attack on the integrity of female sports in Ireland. It also sets a dangerous precedent going forward in Ireland if this policy is not rigorously challenged as it represents an assault on the civil and human rights of females to single sex spaces.

You will no doubt be aware that even if the equality legislation is extended in Ireland, following the present Government consultation, to include the protected characteristic of "gender identity" under the Equal Status Acts 2000 to 2018, this would not purport a requirement for the participation of transgender males aged 12 years plus in Ladies Gaelic Football. This is because a service provider can prohibit transgender males from female only sports if they can demonstrate there is a proportionate and legitimate aim under equality legislation. The fact that the LGFA failed to follow the IRFU in implementing a blanket policy prohibiting biological males from entering female rugby is shocking to say the least and would raise significant questions about who was involved or influenced the decision making process that led to the ratification of this Transgender Policy.

## **Protecting The Integrity of Female Sports**

Ladies Gaelic Football is a 'gender-affected' sport as it is of a competitive nature in circumstances in which the physical strength, stamina or physique of the average biological female would put them at a disadvantage compared to the average biological male as competitors. This means that prohibiting transgender males aged 12 plus years from participating in Ladies Gaelic Football is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim, that of fair competition and safety.

As Gaelic Football is a contact sport, your Transgender Policy is placing girls and adult woman at risk of injury and also contravenes health and safety legislation.

## **Privacy And Decency**

The LGFA is under an obligation to treat its female players with respect and dignity and to provide a safe and secure environment for teams during training and competitions including access to facilities and changing rooms. The entry of transgender males to Ladies Gaelic Football is a form of sex discrimination under Section 3(2)(a) of the Equal Status Acts 2000 to 2018 and Article 21 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights and should be prohibited. The policy undermines a female's right to privacy and decency by allowing for the encroachment of transitioning or transitioned transgender males in a female only team sport that involves physical contact.

### **The Welfare of Children**

We would seek to remind you that you are under a statutory duty in accordance with Schedule 1, Section 5 (a) of the Children First Act 2015 to ensure, as far as reasonably practical, that children are not exposed to harm as members and players of Gaelic Football. The definition of "welfare" includes a child's moral, intellectual, physical, emotional and welfare of the child. We trust that you are fully cognisant of the harm that may be caused to a child by exposure to gender identity ideology, particularly at a susceptible and vulnerable age. In accordance with Article 3(1) of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989, all actions undertaken by a public or private body must be in the best interests of the child. Under Article 24(1) of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights a child must be provided with care and protection necessary for his or her well-being.

The Transgender Policy ratified by the LGFA is not in the best interests of girls who are participating in Gaelic Football and we would request a copy of the Child Protection Statement and Risk Assessment undertaken prior to this decision being made.

### **Trauma**

The Transgender Policy also places female participants in Ladies Gaelic Football at risk if they have suffered domestic abuse. In such circumstances the presence participation of a transgender male as part of a Ladies Gaelic Football team with such close physical and hygiene contact could traumatise a female victim of domestic violence and/or coercive control. You will no doubt be aware that the LGFA are under a duty to take reasonable precautions to ensure that its policies do not detrimentally impact on the emotional welfare of female participants.

We look forward to hearing from you as a matter of utmost urgency and trust that you will uphold the law and reverse this policy with immediate effect. If the policy is not reversed further action will include proceedings for injunctive relief to protect the biological sex rights of females participating in Ladies Gaelic Football.

Regards,

Signed