

IWFM signposts to current best practice for the provision of all-gender facilities

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Following the recent Supreme Court Ruling on the definition of ‘woman’ and [ahead of final guidance](#) from the Equalities and Human Rights Commission (ECHR) on its practical implications [IWFM](#) backs the Sport England approach to the provision of safe, inclusive and accessible all-gender facilities.

The UK Supreme Court ruled in April that a ‘woman’ is legally defined by biological sex for the purposes of the Equality Act 2010. It said that for single-sex spaces to ‘function coherently’ a biological interpretation of sex was required.

However that ruling plays out in the longer term, it has a profound impact on the lives and the dignity of countless people – trans, non-binary and non-gender conforming people in particular. And it has immediate practical implications for workplace and facilities managers involved in the safe and inclusive provision of spaces such as toilets and changing rooms.

Guidance published by Sport England in July 2024, [Accessible and Inclusive Sports Facilities](#) (AISF) sets out current best practice around the provision of inclusive all-gender toilet facilities that also meet the needs of people with unseen disabilities and medical circumstances. We believe it addresses the most practical concern for WFMs in the wake of the recent ruling.

IWFM member and inclusion specialist Jean Hewitt, Technical Lead in Inclusive Environments at Buro Happold was closely involved in its development:

‘The guidance has been carefully crafted in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders and gives consideration to the complex intersectionality and diversity of user needs as well as meeting the highest

standards of accessibility. It contains critical spatial and dimensional information and many example layouts and design considerations’.

The AISF guidance meets building regulation requirements for toilets and is influenced by emerging research and good practice. It provides a thoughtful and inclusive approach, recommending a mix of self-contained all-gender and male and female toilets and stakeholder consultation with users. The most relevant sections to look at are AISF Part D Changing and Toilet Provision.

EDI specialist Sharon Slinger, CIWFM, Founder of Constructing Rainbows supports the wider adoption of the Sport England approach:

‘This is an incredibly challenging time for our trans, non-binary, and intersex communities, many of whom now feel excluded from facilities they’ve used without issue for much of their lives. It’s more important than ever that we show our support to our friends, colleagues, and community members.

‘The guidance published by Sport England sets a strong example for how we can create spaces that are accessible and welcoming to all – and I hope to see more organisations adopting this approach.’

Sport England’s guidance is available [here](#).

The ECHR consultation on proposed changes to its Code of Practice for services, public functions and associations is expected later this year.

IWFM’s Good Practice Guide, Managing accessible and inclusive places is expected to be updated to incorporate the most up-to-date guidance in this area next year.