# Brighton beach spa reverses cis-only sauna rule after backlash over transgender inclusion



A trendy Brighton beach sauna has become embroiled in controversy after altering its policy on gender inclusion. Beach Box Spa initially banned transgender women from a female-only steam room session, igniting accusations of capitulation to the "woke mob" and allegations of legal violations. The session, aimed exclusively at female customers, was advertised on social media with the stipulation that only cisgender women would be permitted to attend.

However, after receiving significant backlash from transgender activists and some members of the wider community, the spa retracted its stance, declaring that such exclusions were "wrong" and contrary to its principles. In an apology issued via Instagram, the business expressed regret for any hurt caused, stating, "We got it wrong… promoting or hosting a cis-only event goes against everything we believe in." This shift comes against the backdrop of a Supreme Court ruling made earlier in the year, which determined that trans women are considered legally male, complicating matters of inclusion in women’s spaces.

The fallout from the original exclusion has sparked a heated discourse surrounding women's rights and the legal status of transgender individuals. Critics, including prominent trans activists, argue that the decision to limit the event to cisgender women jeopardises the safety and dignity of those who identify as female but were assigned male at birth. India Willoughby, a trans woman and campaigner, labelled the initial decision as "blatant discrimination." Many detractors voiced their disapproval on social media, asserting that the spa's actions undermined the very inclusivity it professed to champion.

In response to the controversy, Beach Box Spa has announced it will provide LGBTQ+ inclusion training for staff and is launching a new "queer sauna session" designed to serve the broader community. Despite these efforts, criticism remains, with some customers expressing concern that the spa's modifications fail to acknowledge the feelings and safety of biological women wanting single-sex spaces.

This situation aligns with ongoing debates across the UK and internationally regarding the balance between inclusivity for transgender individuals and the rights of women to have spaces free from men, regardless of identity. Comparisons have been drawn to similar instances in the United States, such as a Washington State ruling mandating a women-only nude spa to admit transgender women, and a California spa’s policy overhaul to accommodate all women, highlighting a growing trend towards inclusivity in gendered spaces.

The increasing tension surrounding these policies also mirrors conversations sparked by other events, such as the Download Festival's recent decision to require attendees to use restrooms corresponding to their assigned sex at birth. Notably, trans artists and advocates have threatened boycotts, citing the potential for increased danger and discomfort for transgender individuals.

As these discussions unfold, it is clear that the complexities around gender identity and women's rights will continue to provoke passionate responses from all sides of the debate.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14771957/Brighton-beach-spa-woke-row-transgender-women-female-sauna-event.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14771957/Brighton-beach-spa-woke-row-transgender-women-female-sauna-event.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14771957/Brighton-beach-spa-woke-row-transgender-women-female-sauna-event.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[4]](https://www.bizpacreview.com/2023/06/07/womens-only-spa-must-serve-trans-patrons-with-male-genitals-federal-judge-rules-1366098/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[3]](https://www.serviceindustrynews.net/2023/06/29/judge-orders-wa-womens-nude-spa-admit-transgenders/), [[5]](https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2021/07/05/transgender-woman-los-angeles-spa/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[6]](https://www.sfstandard.com/2025/03/12/archimedes-banya-ladies-night-trans-women-updated-policy/), [[7]](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/us/transgender-activists-vow-to-attend-religious-women-only-night-at-san-francisco-spa/articleshow/118799499.cms)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14771957/Brighton-beach-spa-woke-row-transgender-women-female-sauna-event.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14771957/Brighton-beach-spa-woke-row-transgender-women-female-sauna-event.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Beach Box Spa in Brighton faced backlash after initially excluding transgender women from a female-only steam room session. The spa later apologised, stating that banning transgender women was 'wrong' and goes against their beliefs. This incident sparked discussions about women's rights and the legal status of transgender individuals following a Supreme Court ruling in April.
3. <https://www.serviceindustrynews.net/2023/06/29/judge-orders-wa-womens-nude-spa-admit-transgenders/> - A Washington State judge ordered Olympus Spa, a women-only nude spa, to admit transgender women with male genitalia. The ruling upheld a discrimination decision by the Washington State Human Rights Commission, stating that the spa violated gender identity protections by excluding transgender women.
4. <https://www.bizpacreview.com/2023/06/07/womens-only-spa-must-serve-trans-patrons-with-male-genitals-federal-judge-rules-1366098/> - A federal judge ruled that a women-only nude Korean spa must serve transgender patrons with male genitalia. The decision upheld a previous ruling by the Washington State Human Rights Commission, determining that the spa violated gender identity protections by excluding transgender women.
5. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2021/07/05/transgender-woman-los-angeles-spa/> - A transgender woman reportedly undressed at a popular Koreatown spa, sparking protests. The incident led to debates over gender-inclusive public facilities and safety concerns, with some arguing that such policies could open the door for predators to enter spaces like restrooms and changing rooms.
6. <https://www.sfstandard.com/2025/03/12/archimedes-banya-ladies-night-trans-women-updated-policy/> - San Francisco's Archimedes Banya reversed its policy to exclude transgender women from its monthly ladies-only and men-only nights. The spa now allows transgender individuals to attend these events, provided their gender identity conforms to the night in question.
7. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/us/transgender-activists-vow-to-attend-religious-women-only-night-at-san-francisco-spa/articleshow/118799499.cms> - Transgender activists vowed to attend a 'religious women-only night' at San Francisco's Archimedes Banya spa. The spa introduced two distinct women's nights: one inclusive of all women, including transgender women, and another based on sex assigned at birth to accommodate clients whose cultural or religious practices require a biologically female-only space.