

Men-only sessions in Luton pool a 'cultural thing'

From [Daily Mail](#)



Luton's olympic swimming pool has begun hosting gender-segregated swimming sessions because of "cultural" reasons, it has been alleged. Users of the competitive pool at Inspire Sports Village in Stopsley – built with taxpayer-funded Olympic money – were given sudden notice that there would be men-only sessions on Friday evenings from July 29. Women-only sessions will also take place on a Friday evening, but in the smaller community pool.

One outraged female swimmer told Luton News: "The Friday night session for everyone is now closed because of the listed men-only sessions. "I have asked a team leader about it – as there are no managers at the weekend – and he said it was a

'cultural thing'." Women who do not want to use the community pool are reportedly told to use Lea Manor or Lewsey Pools. The woman added: "Why has one section of the community in Luton been allowed to dominate and take over the best pool in the borough?

An Active Luton spokesman defended the move and explained that on Friday evenings, Inspire offered gender-specific swimming sessions – albeit men had access to the larger competitive pool. He went on: "We regularly provide opportunities for different groups in our programme, including many different activities and swimming sessions.

What the Luton Today report doesn't specify but the Daily Mail, having done a little more research does, is that the segregated groups work to Islamic rules re dress.

The gender-segregated sessions are being advertised as 'Alhamdulliah swimming' on Facebook, a Muslim phrase which thanks God for his blessings.

Posters promoting the event, which were implemented last Friday, strictly ask that 'navel to knee must be covered'. The poster states 'The Strong Believers presents Men's Swimming' from 8.30pm until 9.30pm where 'kids, adults beginners and pro's all welcome'. The women's sessions take place later in the evening and are more expensive,

MailOnline asked Active Luton what the 'cultural reasons' were for the decision and whether the town's large Muslim population had anything to do with it. Mailonline also asked whether the gender-segregated sessions had been requested, and by whom. Active Luton said it would get back with a response.

This is very similar to the situation in Waltham Forest with