

Trans & Gender Diversity Policy and Procedure



Royal Conservatoire
of Scotland

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PART ONE

TRANS 7 GENDER DIVERSITY POLICY FOR STAFF AND STUDENTS

The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland celebrates and values the diversity of our workforce and student body. We aim to create an environment in which all staff and students feel equally welcome and valued.

This policy aims to help ensure that the Conservatoire's staff, students and visitors are treated with dignity, respect and fairness and are able to work, study and visit the Conservatoire free from harassment, discrimination and victimisation regardless of their gender identity.

We recognise that there can be differences between a person's assigned gender and their gender identity/ expression. We believe that we will benefit from employing trans people at all levels of responsibility, thus hoping to provide role models for students who identify as trans.

We will at no time discriminate against people on the grounds of their gender identity or gender expression. Where this policy refers to 'trans people', it has in mind a broad range of people whose gender identity is not expressed in ways that are typically associated with their assigned sex at birth. This includes those who have non-binary, agender or gender fluid identities.

The accompanying procedures also provide guidance for both staff, students and managers about practical considerations to ensure the most supportive environment for individuals covered by this policy.

We will ensure that:

All students and prospective students will experience fair and equal treatment while on courses and applying for courses, regardless of their gender identity or expression.

All staff and job applicants will have equal and fair access to employment, promotion and training opportunities regardless of their gender identity or expression.

Requests to change name and gender on records will be handled promptly and, where relevant, the member of staff or student will be made aware of any implications of the changes.

We will respect the confidentiality of all trans and gender diverse staff and students and will not reveal information without the prior agreement of the individual.

Transphobic abuse, harassment or bullying (name-calling/ derogatory jokes, unacceptable or unwanted behaviour, intrusive questions) are serious disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under the appropriate procedure.

We will provide a supportive environment for staff and students who wish their trans status to be known. However, it is the right of the individual to choose whether they wish to be open about their gender identity, trans status or trans history. To 'out' someone, whether staff or student, without their permission is a form of harassment and in a number of contexts may amount to a criminal offence.

We will include gender identity issues in equality training.

We will include gender identity in internal attitudinal surveys, and when monitoring complaints of harassment.

Staff and students undergoing medical and surgical procedures related to gender reassignment will receive positive support from the Conservatoire wherever possible to meet their particular needs during this period.

We recognise that trans and gender diverse staff and students come from diverse backgrounds, and will strive to ensure they do not face discrimination on the grounds of their gender identity or in relation to other aspects of their identity, for example, their race, age, religion or belief, disability or sexual orientation. In addition, assumptions will not be made about the gender of partners of trans staff or students.

We will ensure that our environment, in terms of our pictures, images, publicity materials and literature, reflects the diversity of our staff and students.

2. Scope

This policy covers all staff, students and visitors to the Conservatoire. It also covers former staff and students where relevant.

3. Legal Context

The Equality Act 2010 includes gender reassignment as one of nine protected characteristics. The Act makes it unlawful to harass, victimise or discriminate against a person with the protected characteristic of gender reassignment. For example this could include threatening to 'out' a person's trans identity, or harassing a person because of their perceived gender.

More detail on the range of legislation which protects trans people can be seen at **Appendix 3**.

4. Language

Language is continually shifting and previously used terms may no longer be appropriate.

'Trans' is commonly used as an umbrella term including both transgender people and people with non-binary and gender diverse identities. However, while the term currently has no legal meaning it is used within this policy to reflect current discourse.

Appendix 4 provides a glossary of terms. All efforts are made to keep this glossary up to date but it is recognised that language is continually evolving and some of the contents may require revision. If you are aware of any changes that you believe should be made, please contact the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Team by [email](#).

5. Use of facilities

Trans and gender diverse staff and students are welcome to use the toilet and dressing room facilities of their authentic gender as soon as they start to live in that gender.

Gender neutral toilet facilities are available at both our Renfrew Street campus and Wallace Studios for any member of staff or student to use should they prefer.

6. Key Contact

We have key contacts for trans and gender diverse students, staff, applicants and candidates, who can be your first point of call if you have any specific questions about anything related to our policy or practices within the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

Our key contacts are the Conservatoire's Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Officers, [Roz Caplan](#) and [Amadu Khan](#), who can be contacted by email or Microsoft Teams.

7. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed by the Director of Human Resources on a biannual basis, or more frequently if required.

8. Document Control Information overview

Author of Policy:	EDI Officer
Accountability:	Director of HR
Department:	Human Resources
Review requirements:	Biannually/ as required

Committee Requirements: Major changes to be approved by Consultative Forum, operational changes to be approved by Director of HR and noted by Consultative Forum.

Current Version: 4

Approval Confirmed (date):

Approval Confirmed: Consultative Forum

Document Revision History

Version No.	Version Date	Prepared By	Approved By	Summary
1.	July 2018	Roz Caplan	Consultative Forum	New policy
2.	July 2019	Roz Caplan		Addition of dressing rooms to facilities section Addition of gender diverse to terminology section
3.	September 2019	Roz Caplan		Addition of "Gender Diversity" to title and text throughout policy
4.	January 2025	Roz Caplan		Addition of EDI Team details, Changes to Employee Assistance Provider, additional information about degree certificates

We would like to thank all those who have contributed to the development of this policy, including the Scottish Trans, TransEDU, Advance HE and other Higher Education Institutions.

PART TWO - PRACTICAL GUIDELINES

TRANSITIONING AT WORK

All staff should feel able to support trans colleagues and students in line with our approach to providing a supportive working and studying environment.

Should any member of staff need to communicate to others information on the gender identity of the person being supported, permission is required from the trans member of staff or the student. This is as the trans person's right to privacy is strongly protected by the legislation set out in **Appendix 4**.

Staff who wish to notify the Conservatoire that they wish to change the information we hold on their gender identity and / or name should normally contact their primary contact within the Human Resources Department. Should they prefer, the staff member transitioning can also notify the Conservatoire's key contact(s) or a trusted colleague and ask them to liaise with the HR Department on their behalf.

The primary contact within the HR Department will liaise with relevant staff to progress any formal Conservatoire identity and record changes. The number of other staff informed will be limited to those which are absolutely necessary to make changes to records and systems, and all information will be treated in the strictest confidence.

It is not necessary for the transitioning member of staff to have officially registered a change in gender or name in order for them to assume, and go about their daily life, in their authentic gender at the Conservatoire.

The records which the Conservatoire will update will be discussed with the staff member concerned. The records in scope for updating will vary according to the individual situation, and will be limited if an amendment to the birth certificate has not been registered. This limitation extends only to confidential HR records and will not impinge on the member of staff from going about their daily work in their authentic gender.

The HR Department will discuss options with the member of staff concerned and agree from the outset how their transition at work will be managed. Where original documentation cannot be updated, this will be accessible only by the primary contact within the HR Department.

We will take all reasonable care to support an individual transition within the systems we have control over. We are unable to act on behalf of an individual outside of the auspices of the Conservatoire, but will provide support and guidance to members of staff in relation to the steps that they may wish to consider taking themselves, for example in relation to contacting pension providers.

Time off

We recognise that time off associated with transitioning may be required. All requests for taking time off to attend appointments associated with transitioning will be considered reasonably and in line with the relevant policies, including (where applicable), annual leave policies, the Attendance Management Policy and Special Leave Policy. All requests for time off should in the first instance be made to line managers.

Employee Assistance Programme

As a source of additional support, the Employee Assistance Programme run by *Spectrum Life* is available for all staff. It provides 24-hour telephone counselling, and financial information services:

To access the Spectrum Life service please call the helpline number 0808 196 2016. Once through to the service you will be asked to give the name of the company you work for and will need to state that you work for 'The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland'.

Alternatively, you can access the service hub [here](#).

PVG Applications

Disclosure Scotland operates a special application process for trans people to assist in ensuring discretion is afforded to individuals who do not wish their previous gender and names to be disclosed. When completing a Basic Disclosure application form or PVG application form the individual should only declare current gender and names. There is no requirement to disclose on the form any names previously known by. Applicants will be required to provide details of previous name(s) under separate cover to Disclosure Scotland.

References

References for staff who have transitioned must make no reference to the person's former name(s) or gender, and must use the appropriate pronoun. Failure to do so without the individual's consent would be a breach of the Data Protection and the Gender Recognition Acts.

Any reference request for a member of staff who has previously transitioned and which refers to them by a previous name should be treated as confidential. Where possible it is good practice to check with the individual directly as to how any response should be framed.

A checklist to assist staff transitioning at work can be seen at **Appendix 1**.

TRANSITIONING AS A STUDENT

All staff should feel equipped to support trans students in line with our approach to providing a supportive working and studying environment.

Should any member of staff need to communicate to others information on the gender identity of the student being supported, permission is required in writing from the trans student. This is as the trans individual's right to privacy is strongly protected by the legislation set out **Appendix 3**.

If a student wishes to talk through an issue in confidence they can contact either a member of the [Student Counselling Team](#) or the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Team, who are the key contacts for students who are transitioning, [Roz Caplan](#) and [Amadu Khan](#) are the Conservatoire's EDI Officers, either of whom can make transitioning much easier for students in terms of the administrative burden, by offering a "one-stop shop" service to ensure that all relevant name changes are managed on a student's behalf.

The EDI Team will liaise with relevant staff to progress Conservatoire identity and record changes. Permission, in writing, is required to enable liaison with other staff. The staff members informed will be limited to those who are absolutely necessary to make changes to records and systems, and all information will be treated in the strictest confidence.

It is not necessary for the transitioning student to have officially registered a change in gender or name in order for them to assume, and go about their daily life in their authentic gender at the Conservatoire.

The records which we will update will be discussed with the student concerned. The records in scope for updating will vary according to the individual situation, and will be limited if an amendment to the birth certificate has not been registered. This limitation extends only to confidential student records and will not impinge on the student going about their daily business at the Conservatoire in their authentic gender. However, see paragraph below, in relation to Degree Certificates.

The Academic Registrar (or their nominee) will discuss options with the student concerned and agree from the outset how the transition will be managed. Where original documentation cannot be updated, this will be accessible only by the relevant member of staff within the Academic Admin. & Support department. Degree certificates will be issued in the name that the student matriculated in, unless a legal name change has been made in the interim period. However, the student's chosen name will be used at the ceremony if requested. If the name change takes place at a later date, a new degree certificate will be issued upon receipt of evidence of the change, at no cost to the graduate.

The Conservatoire will take all reasonable care to support an individual transition within the systems we have control over. We are unable to act on behalf of an individual outside of the auspices of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

Absence – Students

We recognise that time off associated with transitioning may be required and all requests for taking time off to attend appointments associated with transitioning will be considered

reasonably and in line with our Rules and Regulations.

Requests for authorised absence and/or extensions to deadlines must be completed within the required timescales and submitted to the appropriate Head of Department. All templates can be found on the Academic Support page of the student portal.

For long term absences or multiple short term absences, students may want to consider formally interrupting their studies, using the PMC (Personal Mitigating Circumstances) form which is available on the student portal.

Further information is available from the Academic Registrar or you can contact the EDI Team who can make enquiries on your behalf.

Dress Codes

Where dress codes exist for students, in the vast majority of cases these are gender neutral.

The dress code for Orchestras and Ensembles is smart black attire.

For Modern Ballet students, when working in contemporary classes and repertoire, the dress code is black tights and leotard of choice. For classical ballet classes and repertoire, it is standard practice for male students to wear unitards and female students to wear tights and leotards. However, accommodations will be made for trans students.

In Musical Theatre daily practice dance classes, students can wear whatever they feel comfortable and confident in, provided that they can move freely and clothing is not so baggy as to either be a health and safety risk or not allow assessment of movement.

Musical Theatre basic performance kit is black leotard/ unitard/ jazz pants/ dance trousers/ dance shorts/ black t-shirt/ vest and black jazz shoes or character shoes for all students.

It is highly recommended that students wear loose fitting clothes for all Acting classes. Comfortable trousers are the most sensible choice for general acting classes, and students should note that jeans are not appropriate for movement work. Outdoor shoes should not be worn in class.

In addition to everyday clothing for classes, students should acquire the following to wear for acting or movement work relating to character, period, or genre:

For female character roles

Ankle length pleated or gathered skirt (Skirt must be long and loose fitting)

White shirt

Black character heels

Black character shoes

For male character roles

Hard-soled lace-up shoes in brown or black

White shirt

Suit, or dress jacket and trousers

Communicating transition to other staff and students

An individual should decide whether they want to announce their transition to their colleagues and peers. Should an individual wish to inform others, we can assist the individual with making the announcement or make it on their behalf, according to their wishes and preference.

The principal contact within the HR Department or the Academic Registrar (or their nominee) will discuss and agree with the staff member or student respectively the date from which their name and gender is changed on records, website records, payroll details, ID cards etc. Alternatively the EDI Team can be the key contact for both staff members and students.

The date, mode and scope of any announcement should be agreed with the individual in advance, and take account of the timeline required for updating of records and related processes, for example the creation of new ID cards.

Information for applicants

Proof of legal identity is required from all staff and students, either (or both) at application and at matriculation. This must match with evidence of qualifications and other eligibility to study or work requirements, for example previous educational qualifications and visa documentation.

Where an applicant has transitioned but not yet applied for, or received new supporting documentation required for their application, they should submit proof that corroborates the documentation. Suitable proof is considered to be:

- √ Registered statutory declaration of name change.
- √ Deed poll certificate.
- √ Gender Recognition Certificate.
- √ Birth certificate.
- √ Driving licence.
- √ Passport.

Where a legal name change has not been made, we are able to change the alias / known as name and gender of applicants, which will be reflected appropriately in future staff and student records.

We strongly recommend that applicants inform other relevant organisations involved in the recruitment process (such as CUCAS) of name changes.

Students that require a visa for studying at RCS

Legislation protecting the rights and freedoms for non-UK applicants may differ to that which exists in the UK. In order to meet UKVI requirements the given and family names recorded on our student database for students that require a visa must correspond with the given name and family name as written on the student's passport and/or visa documents. It is possible for visa national students to follow the processes set out above and request for a 'known as' name to be used in the application and subsequent processes.

A checklist to assist students transitioning whilst at the Conservatoire can be seen at **Appendix 2**.

PART THREE – APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

CHECKLIST FOR SUPPORTING STAFF WHO ARE TRANSITIONING

	WHAT	COMMENTS (who/ when etc.)
1.	<p>Responsible Person(s) Who is the person responsible for providing immediate support to the member of staff? Who will oversee the completion of the checklist?</p>	
2.	<p>Timetable What is the likely timetable for transition? e.g. dates for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Name change ▪ Change of records ▪ Communicating with others 	
3.	<p>Name Change What ID cards/ name badges will need to be changed? e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conservatoire ID card (is a new photograph required?) ▪ Business card (if relevant) ▪ Name on door (if relevant) ▪ Others? 	
4.	<p>Record/ document changes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ HR record on CiAnywhere ▪ HR paper file (held centrally. NB: copies of documents, e.g. academic certificates, in a former name that have not been updated, will be kept confidentially and separately from the new HR record) ▪ Payroll ▪ <i>Pension Scheme</i> ▪ Website – phone lists, profiles, course links etc. ▪ Portal – as above ▪ Career Development Review & Goal Setting data (held centrally and locally) ▪ Supervisor records (held locally) ▪ Other? 	
5.	<p>Informing relevant people If appropriate and with the agreement of the member of staff, the following people may need to be informed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Colleagues within own School ▪ Staff within other parts of RCS with whom they work ▪ Students supervised ▪ IT contact (to change log in ID etc.) ▪ Finance contact (for payroll purposes) ▪ Others? 	

	The individual may wish to inform colleagues themselves, with another person for support, or for it to be done for them in their absence. Whichever option is chosen, it is important that the person transitioning retains control over what and when people are told and the language used.	
6.	<p>Training and awareness raising</p> <p>Is training needed for managers or colleagues? Does everyone understand the importance of pronouns? Is everyone aware of the Dignity at Work and Study Policy and the legal implications of harassing trans people in the workplace? Contact EDI Team for training, information and support as required.</p>	
7.	<p>Process</p> <p>Is time off needed for medical appointments?</p>	
	Is the individual taking any extended time off? <i>Is additional paid/ unpaid leave needed?</i>	
	How can ongoing non-medical procedures be accommodated? <i>e.g. a male transitioning to female may need regular specialist hair removal. Could this be addressed by working flexible hours and/ or by working from home?</i>	
	Is the individual having any planned surgery? <i>Recovery may take between one and 12 weeks, depending upon the surgery, and any complications, and several surgeries may be needed. Staff will receive standard sickness leave, but may wish to negotiate further unpaid (or paid?) leave.</i>	
	What arrangements have been made to ensure the individual is fit/able to return to work? <i>Would it be appropriate to arrange an appointment with our occupational health provider (though would be arranged through HR)?</i>	
	Are any temporary adjustments needed to duties following surgery? <i>e.g. avoiding heavy lifting. Individuals may experience fatigue or mood fluctuations</i>	
	Are any permanent changes to duties needed following medical treatment?	
	Are there any risks to the individual?	

	<i>e.g. in relation to third parties or media intrusion. If so, how will they be handled?</i>	
	Has workload during transition been discussed with the line manager? <i>There may need to be some flexibility on deadlines, especially if there are unexpected side effects or surgical complications</i>	
8.	<p>Support</p> <p>Is the individual aware of the support available to them, both internally and externally?</p> <p>Internally:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ EDI Team ▪ Human Resources <p>Externally:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Big White Wall</u> ▪ <u>Scottish Trans</u> ▪ <u>LGBT Youth</u> ▪ <u>TransEdu</u> ▪ <u>Stonewall Scotland</u> ▪ <u>Gendered Intelligence</u> 	

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APPENDIX 2

CHECKLIST FOR SUPPORTING STUDENTS WHO ARE TRANSITIONING

	WHAT	COMMENTS (who/ when etc.)
1.	<p>Responsible Person(s) Who is the person responsible for providing immediate support to the student? Who will oversee the completion of the checklist and coordinate arrangements between relevant departments of the Conservatoire?</p>	
2.	<p>Timetable What is the likely timetable for transition? e.g. dates for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Name change ▪ Change of records ▪ Communicating with others 	
3.	<p>Name Change What systems will need to be changed? e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Student ID card (is a new photograph required?) ▪ Email system ▪ ASIMUT ▪ Others? 	
4.	<p>Record/ document changes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Admissions records ▪ Department/ programme records (class lists etc.) ▪ Welfare/ disability records ▪ SU records ▪ Name on degree certificate ▪ Other? 	
5.	<p>Communication How will staff and students on their programme be informed? The student may wish to inform peers themselves, with another person for support, or for it to be done for them in their absence. Whichever option is chosen, it is important that the person transitioning retains control over what and when people are told, and the language used.</p>	
6.	<p>Training and awareness raising Is training needed for students or staff? Does everyone understand the importance of pronouns?</p>	

	<p>Is everyone aware of the Dignity at Work and Study Policy and the legal implications of harassing trans people? Contact EDI Team for training, information and support as required.</p>	
7.	<p>Process Is time off needed for medical appointments?</p>	
	<p>Is the student taking any extended time off? <i>Does the student want to continue their current programme of study, defer for a set time, or see if it is possible to come to some other arrangement?</i></p>	
	<p>How can ongoing non-medical procedures be accommodated? <i>e.g. a male transitioning to female may need regular specialist hair removal.</i></p>	
	<p>Is the individual having any planned surgery? <i>Recovery may take between one and 12 weeks, depending upon the surgery, and any complications, and several surgeries may be needed.</i></p>	
	<p>What adjustments can be made to minimise the impact on the student's learning? <i>e.g. extension to deadlines, use of PMC form</i></p>	
	<p>Are any temporary adjustments needed following surgery? <i>e.g. avoiding heavy lifting. Individuals may experience fatigue or mood fluctuations</i></p>	
	<p>Are any adjustments needed to work placements?</p>	
	<p>Are any adjustments needed following medical treatment?</p>	
	<p>Are there any risks to the individual? <i>e.g. in relation to third parties or media intrusion. If so, how will they be handled?</i></p>	
8.	<p>Support Is the individual aware of the support available to them, both internally and externally? Internally:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ EDI Team ▪ Counselling Team ▪ Student Union ▪ Academic Registrar <p>Externally:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Big White Wall</u> ▪ <u>Scottish Trans</u> 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ <u>LGBT Youth</u>▪ <u>TransEdu</u>▪ <u>Stonewall Scotland</u>▪ <u>Gendered Intelligence</u>	
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APPENDIX 3 LEGISLATION

Equality Act 2010

Gender reassignment or being transsexual is one of the nine protected characteristics covered by the Equality Act 2010. In 2016 a *Women and Equalities Committee* report recommended that the use of the terms 'gender reassignment' and 'transsexual' are outdated and misleading, noting that the preferred umbrella term is trans. While the Equality Act has not been updated, the Conservatoire adopts the use of trans as the preferred adjective.

The Equality Act makes it unlawful to harass, victimise or discriminate against a person with the protected characteristic of gender reassignment. For example this could include threatening to 'out' a person's trans identity, or harassing a person because of their perceived gender.

Gender reassignment is a personal, social, and sometimes medical process by which a person's gender appears to others to have changed. Anyone who is perceived to change the gender from which they were assigned at birth is protected from discrimination under the Equality Act. A person does not need to be undergoing medical supervision to be protected. For example, a person whose sex was assigned female at birth but identifies as male and lives accordingly without undergoing any medical procedures would be covered.

The Equality Act also affords protection to people who face discrimination through being perceived by others to be undergoing gender reassignment or who are associated with someone who has the protected characteristic of gender reassignment. This extends to people whose experience is non-binary or gender fluid.

The Act allows for voluntary positive action measures to be taken in order to help alleviate disadvantage and underrepresentation experienced by trans people, and to help meet their particular needs.

Gender Recognition Act 2004

The Gender Recognition Act 2004 allows people who meet certain criteria to apply for a Gender Recognition Certificate. This certificate allows them to amend their sex marker on their birth certificate.

The Act gives trans people privacy rights and makes it a criminal offence for someone who acquires information in an official capacity about a person's trans identity to pass that information to a third party without the consent of the trans person. For example this might be a personal tutor staff disclosing the information to those that manage records.

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) & Data Protection Act 2018

The Conservatoire is committed to protecting the rights and freedoms of individuals in accordance with the provisions of data protection legislation. In order to achieve this, we shall ensure that personal data is handled appropriately, consistently and securely.

Under the GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018, trans status and gender reassignment constitute 'special category' data. This means that information relating to a person's trans status will necessitate additional safeguards. Before processing special category

information, we will record decisions about why it is necessary and will assign a lawful basis for processing the data, including the written consent of the individual concerned.

The Human Rights Act 1998

The Human Rights Act 1998 affords protection to all people in respect of their right to a private life (which includes their right to express their gender identity, to live a particular lifestyle and to choose the way they look and dress). In addition the Act requires that personal information should be kept securely and not shared without the permission of the individual concerned.

The Act also gives a right to freedom from degrading treatment which could include, for example, the exclusion of a trans person from facilities that are appropriate to their gender.

USEFUL CONTACTS

INTERNAL

Equality, Diversity &
Inclusion Team

Roz Caplan r.caplan@rcs.ac.uk

Amadu Khan a.khan@rcs.ac.uk

Student Counselling Team

Jane Balmforth j.balmforth@rcs.ac.uk

Manisha Gosar m.gosar@rcs.ac.uk

Student Union President supresident@rcs.ac.uk

Trans Union nscott@rcs.ac.uk

EXTERNALScottish Trans

An organisation that works to improve gender identity and gender reassignment equality, rights and inclusion in Scotland.

LGBT Youth

Support lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender young people, who can get in touch in a number of ways if they have a question, need advice or support, or are just looking for someone to talk to.

TransEdu

Resources and information for supporting trans, non-binary & gender diverse applicants, students and staff in Further and Higher Education.

Stonewall Scotland

Campaigns for the equality of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people across Britain.

Gendered Intelligence

A Community Interest Company whose object is to deliver arts programmers and creative workshops to trans youth from across the UK in order to increase the quality of young trans peoples life experiences.

GIRES

A UK wide organisation whose purpose is to improve the lives of trans and gender non-conforming people of all ages, including those who are non-binary and non-gender.

Mermaids UK

Family and individual support for gender diverse and transgender children and young people

GLOSSARY OF TERMINOLOGY

- **Sex**
Sex is a collection of physical attributes that are used by society to categorise someone as male, female and/or intersex. Biological features that are included are usually a combination of some or all of the following: genitalia, internal reproductive anatomy, hormones, chromosomes and secondary sex characteristics (e.g. body and facial hair.)
- **Gender**
Gender is an internal sense of where one stands in relation to being a woman, a man, both, neither, some combination of these or something else altogether.
- **Sexual Orientation**
Your sexual orientation refers to which genders/sexes you are sexually attracted to (if any), and/or which sexes/genders you want to have sex with (if any.) When we use the phrase “sexual orientation,” we often use it to encompass both sexual and romantic attraction. Some people understand sexual orientation as referring to which sex/es they are attracted to while others use it to convey which gender/s they are attracted to.
- **Romantic Orientation**
Your romantic orientation refers to which genders/sexes you are romantically attracted to (if any), and/or which sexes/genders you want to have romantic relationships with (if any.) While there are a wide range of different understandings of what it means to be romantically attracted to someone, this can generally be understood as what sort of people you would like to date or be “in relationships” with.

Gender Terms

- **Cisgender**
Describes everyone whose gender is consistently the same as the gender they were assigned at birth. When babies are born, they are assigned a gender based on the appearance of their external genitals. If the gender that you are throughout your life is the same as the gender you are assigned at birth, you are cisgender.
- **Transgender**
Describes people whose gender is not consistently the same as the gender they were assigned at birth. Transgender (or trans/trans*) are umbrella terms that include many diverse identities within them. While some understand transgender to include everyone whose gender is not consistently the same as the gender they were assigned at birth, it is important to note that some people who are not cisgender also do not identify as transgender. Some people realise that they are transgender very early on in life, while others realise later on.
- **Intersex**
Denotes anyone whose biological sex is not easily categorised as either male or female. There are a wide range of biological variations that may mean somebody describes themselves as intersex, including (but not limited to) variations in chromosomes, hormonal levels or genitals. Some people who fit this description

choose not to describe themselves as intersex, while others do. Nobody is ever categorised as intersex legally in the UK – every human is either “male” or “female” on their birth certificate.

- **Non-Binary**

Non-binary refers to anyone whose gender is neither 100% male all the time nor 100% female all the time. Some non-binary people also identify as trans or transgender while others do not. There are a number of different non-binary identities. Here are some of the most common:

- **Agender**

- This is someone who does not identify with any gender: an agender person is not a man or a woman.

- **Genderfluid**

- This is someone who experiences their gender as changeable. A genderfluid person may identify with one gender sometimes and a different gender at other times, or they may move between having a gender and not having a gender. They may experience these changes on a daily basis (or even more frequently), or over the course of many years.

- **Bi-gender**

- This is someone who identifies with two (or sometimes more) genders. A bi-gender person may be genderfluid (e.g. they may be a man sometimes and a woman at other times), or they may feel like they are simultaneously a man and a woman all of the time.

- **Gender-queer**

- Gender queer is an umbrella term that many people who are not cisgender identify with. It can be used by anyone who isn't cisgender, but is more popular among non-binary people. As with the word queer, gender-queer can be considered offensive if the person does not self-identify with this term.

- **MTF transgender person/transgender woman**

This is a woman who is assigned male at birth and later transitions to living socially as a woman. Being perceived as male, or having a body that is considered male, can cause considerable amounts of distress to women. Trans women may use hormonal therapies, surgeries or other medical interventions to alter their bodies and to ensure that other people will recognise them as women.

- **FTM transgender person/transgender man**

This is a man who was assigned female at birth and later transitions to living socially as a man. Being perceived as female, or having a body that is considered female, can cause considerable amounts of distress to men. Trans men may use hormonal therapies, surgeries or other medical interventions to alter their bodies and to ensure that other people will recognise them as men.

- **Transsexual**

This is a term that is used to refer specifically to trans people who have used (or are intending to use) medical interventions to alter their physical bodies. However, this definition is contested and transsexual can mean different things in different medical and legal contexts. In general, the trans community is moving away from using this term because it creates an arbitrary distinction between transgender people who are

medically transitioning and those who are not. This reinforces a common belief that you are more legitimately transgender if you take steps to change your body. This is untrue: many trans people do not wish to change their bodies, or are not able to do so for financial, personal or medical reasons. It also increasingly difficult to pinpoint exactly which steps in a transition constitute a medical or physical transition. Instead of transsexual, transgender should be used instead as often as possible.

- **Transvestite**

Transvestite usually means someone who cross-dresses, especially people who are assigned male at birth who dress in clothes generally considered to be feminine. While some people do identify as transvestites, applying the term to transgender people can be offensive as transgender people usually do not identify as transvestites. It also sometimes has connotations of crossdressing for sexual reasons. Unless you know for sure that someone identifies as a transvestite, avoid using it to describe people. Remember that transgender people are (usually) dressing as the gender that they are, and are thus not the same thing as transvestites. Transvestite is also somewhat outdated as a term, and in modern usage cross-dresser tends to be used to describe the above.

Some words are not necessarily offensive as such, but are often misdirected. None of the following terms mean the same thing as transgender, but are sometimes used to mean such. When you conflate being trans with any of these things, that is offensive as it is fundamentally misunderstanding what it means to be trans. Remember that a trans person **is** the gender that they describe themselves as.

- **Drag queens/kings**

A drag queen is a person who was assigned male at birth and who wears clothes generally considered to be “feminine” for the purpose of performance or art. A drag king is someone who was assigned female at birth and who wears clothes generally considered to be “masculine” for the purpose of performance or art. Most (but not all) drag queens and kings are cisgender people.

- **Cross-dresser**

Cross-dressing is when someone wears clothes designed for another sex/gender. It is a very wide ranging term that is understood differently by different communities. While some trans people do cross dress, remember that a trans woman who is wearing a dress is not cross dressing because she is wearing the clothing designed for women and she is a woman.

- **Tomboy**

A tomboy is a girl that looks masculine, or that enjoys participating in activities that are usually considered masculine. Tomboy is usually a word used to describe children and young people – for example, girls that play football, climb trees and have short hair. While tomboys and transgender boys may have many things in common, calling a transgender boy a tomboy is calling him a girl when he is a boy.

- **Transgendered**

The correct term is transgender, not transgendered. Transgendered is inappropriate

because it suggests something that has been done to the person. Like painted – i.e. “That person has been transgendered.” It should be “That person is transgender.”

- **A trans, a transgender, transgenders**

All of these are wrong. Transgender is an adjective. It should be used as follows: “They are a transgender person” or “they are transgender.” It should not be “they are a transgender.”

- **Gender Vs. Gender Identity**

There is a lot of disagreement over the correct use of these two terms. Often, transgender people are described as having a “gender identity” while cisgender people are described as having a “gender.” This is very problematic as it suggests that trans people are in some way less authentic or genuine in how they experience gender.

However, it is also important to note that the ways in which we talk about gender are often confused. While man and woman are both genders, transgender and cisgender are not genders. These are words that describe your gender: they are gender identities. Let’s use the example of a transgender man: his gender is male, but his gender identity may be transgender male. Similarly, a cisgender woman has a gender identity of cisgender woman while their gender is simply woman. An agender person has a gender identity (they are agender, and may also identify as non-binary), but an agender person does not have a gender. In this sense, it is true to say that everybody has a gender identity because everyone has a way in which they experience gender or the lack of gender; it is not true to say that everyone has a gender. Gender identity is not an inherently oppressive or offensive term, but it becomes so when it is used to devalidate the ways in which trans people experience gender.

However, this latter understanding of the meaning of gender identity is by no means universally accepted, even amongst the transgender community.

- **Trans Vs. Trans***

This is a highly contested point within the trans community. Some people feel that trans* is more inclusive, as the asterisk explicitly makes a statement that non-binary people (and sometimes transvestites) are being included. However, others feel that non-binary people (and sometimes transvestites) are included in trans, and that to add on an asterisk is to say that non-binary people are less trans than binary people. There are strong feelings on both sides of this debate.

- **Tranny**

This is a potent slur used against trans people, particularly trans women. While some trans women choose to describe themselves as such, it is never an acceptable term to label anyone else.

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