

# Transgender experiences of Newcastle University 2018

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# Executive Summary

## Recommendations

- Make a commitment to being a trans-inclusive institution.
- Promote a social and critical approach to transgender issues rather than a medicalised approach.
- Continue membership of the Stonewall Diversity Champions Programme.
- Maintain connection with Stonewall's 'Come out for LGBT' campaign to show support for LGBT equality in all of its diverse forms.
- Consider supporting Stonewall in their recommendation to reform the Gender Recognition Act 2004 so that obtaining legal gender recognition does not require medical evidence.
- Introduce University-wide training about transgender issues. This should include a diversity of issues about transgender matters including the use of appropriate terminology, pronouns and issues about transitioning.
- Provide clear guidance and advice to all staff and students about appropriate terminology.
- Regularly review all transgender policies with transgender staff and students.
- Consider if it is always appropriate to ask about 'gender' on university forms; remove such requests when they are not necessary and offer a brief explanation in cases where this question is included.

## Teaching, learning and research

- All induction activities should include information about transgender issues.
- Train all staff on transgender issues, particularly those who supervise students, have line management responsibility for staff and/or have pastoral care duties. Such training should be integrated into already existing training such as that provided through CASAP etc.
- Consider the use of pronouns in e-mail signatures and conference name-badges as common practice by all staff and students.
- Integrate transgender issues into the curriculum in all disciplines. This includes social sciences, medical sciences and physical sciences as well as professional training courses (for example teacher training, town planning, medical training and so on).
- Provide tailored advice, support and funding to staff and students with regard to the changing names on publications.

## Health and Wellbeing

- Regularly train counselling and student wellbeing services staff on transgender issues. Care should be taken to ensure that services do not reinforce the medical model.
- Communicate the University's transgender policy regularly and clearly.
- Develop specific policy and guidance for transgender students including UG, PGT and PGR students. This guidance should include information for those who need to take leave for medical appointments or surgery and integrate this into existing policies on leave.
- Engage only with external organisations that are supportive of trans-inclusivity.

## Representation

- Develop a regular calendar of events to raise awareness about transgender issues.
- Develop an accessible webpage about a diversity of transgender issues with information about relevant policies, facilities and support available.
- Support the development of the Rainbow@NCL staff network and encourage it to champion transgender involvement and inclusion. This should work to include transgender postgraduate students.
- Consider establishing an 'ally' programme for staff and students interested in supporting sexual and gender diversity on campus.

## Internationalisation, placements and fieldwork

- Appoint a named contact (or set of contacts) with responsibility for providing advice and care for transgender staff and students.
- Provide tailored advice and support for transgender staff and students who are engaging in international work.
- Provide tailored advice and support for transgender staff and students who are undertaking placements, internships, fieldwork or related work outside the university setting.

## Built environment and university facilities

- Provide all-gender/gender-neutral facilities (toilets and changing rooms) with appropriate signs in all buildings. These facilities should be visible on main campus maps and included in all appropriate student-facing information.
- Consider including signs in toilets to indicate that it is inappropriate to challenge people about their presence in such places on the ground of their perceived gender.
- Train staff working in estates, cleaning and related services about transgender issues.

## Self-presentation

- Adopt a zero tolerance approach to transphobic bullying, discrimination and harassment.
- Engage in Hate Crime Champions training given the upward trend in LGBT hate crime.

# Transgender experiences of Newcastle University

## Background

There remains little research on transgender experiences of higher education (Mitchell and Howarth, 2009) with a few notable exceptions (see, McKendry and Lawrence, 2017). What is clear from existing studies is that transgender people experience multiple forms of exclusion, stigmatisation and marginalisation. For example, Bachmann and Gooch's (2018a) survey of 5375 LGBT people in England, Scotland and Wales highlights that 41% of transgender and 31% of non-binary people have experienced a hate crime or incident due to their gender identity whilst 12% of transgender employees have been physically attacked by colleagues or customers in the last year. 11% of transgender people who are 'out' to their family are also not supported by any of their family members and only 26% who are out say they are fully supported (see, also, Bachmann and Gooch, 2018b; 2018c).

More transgender people experience school bullying (75%) than LGB people (25%) and 64% of FtM (Female to Male or a transgender man) transgender people have been bullied by staff or pupils compared to 44% of MtF (Male to Female or a transgender woman) transgender people (Mitchell and Howarth, 2009). Transgender students are likely to arrive at Newcastle having already experienced school bullying and discrimination from teachers and pupils (LGBT Youth Scotland, 2018). Moreover, 44% of transgender people avoid specific streets due to concerns about their safety and 26% of transgender people have experienced transphobic abuse or behaviour in the last month (Bachmann and Gooch, 2018c). 522 students participated in the Stonewall survey. Of this, 14% have considered dropping out of study due to their transgender status and 36% of university students have experienced negative comments or behaviour from staff. 60% were the target of negative comments from peers, 7% had been attacked by another student or staff member for being transgender and 39% did not feel comfortable reporting transphobic bullying. One fifth of students were encouraged by staff to conceal their transgender identity and 24% of non-binary students and only 16% of transgender students feel able to wear clothing that represents their gender identity. 17% of transgender students are unable to use the toilet they feel comfortable using at university.

The provision of a welcoming, supportive and inclusive environment for transgender people is an important goal for Newcastle University. It is concerning that of all the UK regions, the North East has the highest percentage of LGBT people who have experienced a hate crime or incident in the last 12 months (35%). This report is also mindful of the Equality Challenge Unit's (2016: 24-25) list of indicators of successful policies in relation to transgender issues:

- Transgender students and employees feel supported.
- Employees who transition are retained and valued as members of staff.
- Students who transition are able to complete their study programme.
- Barriers to the recruitment and retention of transgender staff and students have been removed.
- A clear and workable policy is in place for dealing with harassment of transgender staff and students.
- Support mechanisms exist to protect the health and welfare of transgender students and staff.
- Groups are established to provide a voice for transgender students and staff.
- The promotion and maintenance of a culture of respect for the dignity of individuals is evidenced.
- There are appropriate protocols for the management of sensitive information about transgender status.
- Practical matters relating to transition, such as access to changing and toilet facilities, are resolved quickly and respectfully.
- Curriculum provision is not based on gender stereotypical assumptions or imagery.

## Our research

Research about the experiences of transgender staff and students at Newcastle University was conducted from 2017-2018. The research involved individual interviews with 15 transgender staff and students about their experiences of working or studying at Newcastle University. The participants identified in diverse ways under the transgender umbrella; this included seven people who identified as transgender, five as non-binary, one as agender and one as gender non-conforming. All of those who participated were recruited either through an advert on the University intranet or through networks such as the student LGBT society. All participants signed a consent form to indicate that they freely agreed to participate in this study and we use pseudonyms in order to protect their confidentiality. All interviews were transcribed fully after which key themes were identified in order to then code and theme the data.

The interviews focused upon the experiences of transgender staff and students in relation to their interaction with staff and students, their negotiations of the different spaces and processes of the university and if appropriate, their experiences of transition. This short report highlights the main findings of this study and makes a number of recommendations to Newcastle University; these recommendations are based on both suggestions made by those who participated in the research alongside suggestions offered through a critical reading of relevant literature (see, for example, Mckendry and Lawrence, 2017; Singh et al. 2013). We use transgender as an umbrella term for those who identify as transgender, genderqueer, gender non-binary and gender non-conforming whilst recognising some of the challenges associated with this terminology (see glossary provided by ECU at the end of this report).

## Recommendations

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- Continue membership of the Stonewall Diversity Champions Programme.
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- Consider supporting Stonewall in their recommendation to reform the Gender Recognition Act 2004 so that obtaining legal gender recognition does not require medical evidence.
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# Teaching, learning and research

Transgender students and staff are often misgendered in encounters with others on campus. Some students are misgendered in seminars by their lecturers, in meetings with lecturers or supervisors and by professional services staff:

Interviewer: How did it feel when you were in your seminar when you were misgendered by your lecturer?

Jake: It's just, it's really, really stressful, I guess. It just does end up making you feel like quite rubbish to be honest because especially if you're in the middle of a seminar and you're in front of a lot of people you don't know, it's really, really hard to kind of speak up because it completely breaks the flow of the conversation and it makes people feel awkward because then they feel like they've offended you and it just causes a fair bit of confusion and awkwardness.

Transgender staff and students often feel uncomfortable about being misgendered, particularly given the power relations between them and those who have misgendered them. 23% of transgender students were not addressed using their correct name and pronouns according to a recent Stonewall Survey (Bachmann and Gooch, 2018c). When students are misgendered by staff, they do not feel like they can correct them as they do not want to create any additional sense of unease or discomfort. Additionally, PGR students felt they could not correct supervisors as they felt doing so could jeopardise future career opportunities:

Jane: If I was asked to report or pull him up on that, I wouldn't. I wouldn't point the finger and say who that was because that person is in a position of power over me where things I would say would have a knock-on effect and repercussions on my future career. So, it's easier for me to keep quiet. Also, I'm quite forgiving.

Because of the above, transgender staff and students often feel an additional sense of vulnerability as they go to work and study at Newcastle University. Some participants felt that transgender issues were rarely discussed in the curriculum despite there being opportunities to include such perspectives. When publishing, transgender staff sometimes recall problems with publishers using the wrong name:

Lucy: [my publisher] have just gone and put out my, have just gone and put out my new book... because there was a mix up and they didn't get they didn't get the message... but I think that is all getting fixed.

## Recommendations

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- Consider the use of pronouns in e-mail signatures and conference name-badges as common practice by all staff and students.
- Integrate transgender issues into the curriculum in all disciplines. This includes social sciences, medical sciences and physical sciences as well as professional training courses (for example teacher training, town planning, medical training and so on).
- Provide tailored advice, support and funding to staff and students with regard to the changing names on publications.

# Health and Wellbeing

Many staff and students felt that support services were unavailable or not well advertised. The LGBT+ society have developed a set of documents to help transgender students who want to transition and/or change their name at the university. While this is useful, participants felt that there is a lot of pressure put on them to do this work themselves, rather than being supported by the institution. Students were unclear about what support the university can or does offer:

Rebecca: I feel, I mean, I still have my dead name on my student card and I would like that to be changed but I feel that would be a bit of a daunting task and I haven't actually got my head round it yet or got round to it. So, I just think things like that that could be a lot more user-friendly. There's nothing sort of, spelled out, that feels discriminatory. But there are certain things like that which just make you feel a bit uneasy and it's probably just someone hasn't properly thought about it.

According to our participants, the university policy for transgender people does not feel well communicated. People who are non-binary often feel that there is no policy for them. This is evident when they are forced to continually tick male/female or man/woman boxes on university forms:

Sam: With something like non-binary gender identity, it's quite, it's often quite nebulous and it's small things like for example, using he or she on documents and things like that and forms with male, female, in this case, this is reasonably good but that sort of thing, they do still go around in university. The toilets thing is another one. I know that recently there was a fairly large amendment to the university's transgender policy at the behest of students which I think was a largely positive set of changes. I do not know whether the university has a specific non-binary gender policy or not. The fact that the university now has a marginalised genders officer is good. Though, if I'm right, that's just a name change from the women's officer. But that's good because it now means that the officer's remit encompasses non-binary genders as well. So, that is a good thing

Changing names is a challenge for many transgender people as e-mail addresses do not always reflect their new names. It can be very upsetting for transgender people to see these every time they access e-mail (which Newcastle University requires you to check regularly):

Kurt: Yeah. And then, so a lot of stuff was still wrong and then when I legally changed my name and I got a new card, some stuff is still wrong because they can't match up the system. So, my email address has still got the wrong initials. And it's really frustrating because everybody knows how university emails are generated so I say what my name is and then people look at my email address and go, "Well why is your email address different?"

Interviewer: I noticed that on your email too.

Kurt: Yeah. And I see that every day and I'm like, that is a microaggression

## Recommendations

- Regularly train counselling and student wellbeing services staff on transgender issues. Care should be taken to ensure that services do not reinforce the medical model.
- Communicate the University's transgender policy regularly and clearly.
- Develop specific policy and guidance for transgender students including UG, PGT and PGR students. This guidance should include information for those who need to take leave for medical appointments or surgery and integrate this into existing policies on leave.
- Engage only with external organisations that are supportive of trans-inclusivity.

# Representation

Many participants felt that the LGBT+ society was a welcoming space for them, and enabled them to speak about transgender, gender non-conformity and non-binary issues. Transgender postgraduate students did not feel that the LGBT+ society was as welcoming to them as it could be; they felt the society is targeted mainly at undergraduates and “younger” students:

Kurt: I think it's partly because they're all undergraduates and I just feel a bit weird about that because not likely you're going to encounter them, but they do seem, particularly ones who are 18, seem very young. And they kind of want to go out and do all of the gay bars much more. And I don't particularly like gay, I like going out to queer nights, but I wouldn't necessarily go out on the gay scene in quite the same way because I just find it a bit meat market.

Some transgender staff and students would like to see increased representation of transgender matters across campus. This can be in the form of postgraduate and staff groups or increased visibility of transgender issues on campus:

Kurt: I guess that's the other thing, boards that sort of have, say the university news that no one reads, that's all very sort of straight and sanitised. So, when it's LGBT history month, they don't even put that up on the board or if it's Black history month, they also don't put it up on the screens that flash the news. I'm like, that's a really simple thing that you could do. Have as one of your six revolving news stories that nobody cares about, one of them being that. I'm not saying that people would necessarily read it, but it would subtly be there all the time. Whereas instead, you get that banner outside the student union that says, “LGBT history month.” Or “Black history month.”

## Recommendations

- Develop a regular calendar of events to raise awareness about transgender issues.
- Develop an accessible webpage about a diversity of transgender issues with information about relevant policies, facilities and support available.
- Support the development of the Rainbow@NCL staff network and encourage it to champion transgender involvement and inclusion. This should work to include transgender postgraduate students.
- Consider establishing an ‘ally’ programme for staff and students interested in supporting sexual and gender diversity on campus.

# Internationalisation, placements and fieldwork

Many staff and students travel outside the UK as part of education and research; some felt that the university offered little support for them in preparing for such activities outside the country:

Lucy: And the thing is at the moment I am so, because I have got this trip to [the Global South], and I worried ... I think I have spent so much time worrying about that and so much time worrying about the fact that I am [a person who works in the Global South], and going back [there] will be very challenging for me now. I think all of my various anxieties about being trans in academia, tends to focus so much on that issue, I tend not to dwell so much on...on issues related to the toilets. I mean I think...I guess as somebody...who travels a lot and who works in areas of the world, or has, who works in areas of the world that aren't trans friendly, I guess...reflecting on what you can do to support members of staff going to areas that aren't trans friendly, LGBT friendly in a broader sense, might be something helpful. ....

Some students undertake placements as part of their course. This involves engaging with different industries, hospitals and universities. Some transgender students felt the university did not support them in these placements. They often spoke about placement supervisors and other professionals who would misgender them and they felt like they could not correct them due to the power dynamics:

Interviewer: Like a placement mentor?

Blake: Yes, kind of thing. So, she organised our timetable and she'd be the one we'd go to if we had any problems.

Interviewer: At the hospital?

Blake: Yes, and she did one of my assessments and she knew I was non-binary and we had a conversation about it and she then, not long after my assessment, introduced me to the patient as a lovely young lady and then went to me, "Oh, sorry." In a whisper and then afterwards she was like, "I didn't know how else to introduce you." And I was like, "I'm a student, just say "student." So, it's just that kind of thing and there's a lot of people that will address the room as "girls and boys" or "ladies and gentlemen" and it's like a punch in the guts.

Furthermore, many degree programmes require fieldwork whether this be as part of a module or to collect data for a dissertation project.

## Recommendations

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- Provide tailored advice and support for transgender staff and students who are engaging in international work.
- Provide tailored advice and support for transgender staff and students who are undertaking placements, internships, fieldwork or related work outside the university setting.

## Built environment and university facilities

Bathrooms are troubling places for transgender people as they are nearly always explicitly gendered spaces that reinforce the binary between men and women. Using bathrooms can make transgender people feel vulnerable, so they often employ strategies to avoid this feeling. Many of our participants expressed frustration with the lack of gender-neutral or all-gender facilities on campus. Some participants would regulate when they use bathrooms. For example, some would only use them at certain times so they would avoid people coming in and out of lectures/seminars. Others would dehydrate their bodies so they did not have to use specific facilities.

Interviewer: Have you had any other incidents like that where you know your gender identity has been put into question or you've been outed or misrecognised?

Cheryl: Um I mean I have on numerous occasions in toilets, and mostly since certainly since we've moved to Daysh it's been students ... you know like I never would go to the toilet between like ten to and ten past the hour y'know so (Gender non-binary, support staff)

Whilst accessible toilets are supposed to be "gender neutral", some staff and students have been told that the accessible toilets "are not for them" by cleaning staff. This led some transgender people to feel anxious about using them because of the policing that they often encounter. Consider Cheryl's views here:

Cheryl: ... I've started using the disabled loo because it's the least problematic, erm although I've been since recently challenged on that, so now I've started using the women's.

Interviewer: Who challenged you on that?

Cheryl: A cleaner ... Because she was thinking well, y'know I'm, y'know she was, say I was a woman, she knows I could use y'know the toilet that's right next door to it, and I y'know, it's one of those things of "do I really want to get in the whole explanation of why I'm doing that?" ... I almost like brace myself when I go the loo, it's like y'know this kind of mental preparation, so going to the disabled was a way of kind of taking that out of the equation a little bit, but now I've got the same thing for both, because I'm either going to get caught by the cleaner.

Alex makes a similar point:

Alex: Yes, that's really recent and, like, I know in the student union there's like, the disabled toilet is like a gender-neutral toilet, I kind of feel guilty using it, I feel like, I don't want to walk outside and there's somebody actually disabled waiting to use the toilet. I don't know, but yes, there's definitely, like, in my department, there's no neutral or anything. And, like, normally I don't feel bothered about it, but some days looking at the sign going in, it's like the worst thing ever.

Some participants referred to bathrooms as a safe space where they can be upset or calm themselves after difficult encounters that have occurred during the day. However, some participants felt that the challenges they had with using bathrooms meant that this place of refuge was not available to them:

Kurt: If you can't go to the toilet in public, it means you don't have any kind of refuge in public. So, if you just feel a bit shit or you get a bit of bad news, there's nowhere that you can go to go and have five minutes by yourself.... And most people can just go and do that. Whereas I'm like, "If you're trans in public, you're always in public." I think that's the thing. And I definitely feel like ... I always feel like I'm being observed.

## Recommendations

- Provide all-gender/gender-neutral facilities (toilets and changing rooms) with appropriate signs in all buildings. These facilities should be visible on main campus maps and included in all appropriate student-facing information.
- Consider including signs in toilets to indicate that it is inappropriate to challenge people about their presence in such places on the ground of their perceived gender.
- Train staff working in estates, cleaning and related services about transgender issues.

## Self-presentation

Transgender staff and students often have to think carefully about how they present themselves to colleagues and peers to “fit in”. This often depends on where participants feel they are with their transition. For some, this means feeling they have to cover up their bodies when changing shape and size or being aware of how their voice is changing:

Rose: HRT does change the body shape and I feel very tired all the time, probably because you shouldn't mess up with the hormones.

Interviewer: Has that changed your experiences of being on campus?

Rose: Yes, like, change my body shape.

Interviewer: What about, has it made you feel any different being on campus?

Rose: Well, sometimes, like, some of my friends say, one of my friends is transphobic and he's in my classroom and I hang out with him sometimes, like wear some clothes that are big size and try to avoid too girlish dressing.

Interviewer: Why do you wear clothes that are a big size?

Rose: Like, to hide my butt.

Interviewer: How does that make you feel?

Rose: I can't truly be myself.

Some transgender staff and students are careful not to “overdo it” when it comes to self-presentation as they want to feel comfortable at university; this means working to ensure that they minimise any unwanted attention – such as avoiding people staring at them – so that they do not “stick out”:

Lucy: this goes for campus as well as the kind of general, part of the reason I do usually feel comfortable and quite un-hassled and in my safe space is because I deliberately choose not to wear...clothes that would draw attention to me. I don't wear makeup, I don't wear, I don't have a skirt. I mean I wear skirts sometimes when I am out and about in Newcastle, but I won't wear a skirt here, I won't wear makeup. I won't wear lipstick when I come into work. And I think that is partly because I want to preserve my comfort zone. So in a way that shows I don't feel entirely comfortable yet at work and in a certain number of other areas in my life ...professionally I know I wouldn't...but I, I think I have become very self-conscious and feel that I stood out.

Newcastle University was often discussed as a comfortable place in comparison with the city as whole:  
Jack: I'd feel more comfortable on campus, because I know more people in general, and I just feel like the chances of me running into someone I know if I was ever in a position where I'd feel uncomfortable is a lot higher than in town in general.

Going out to bars and pubs was challenging for some transgender staff and students. Some experienced transphobic abuse in bars and clubs; others avoided student nights in 'mainstream' clubs due to concerns about safety. Some would opt to go out on 'the scene' but may still encounter misgendering from door staff or other people there.

## Recommendations

- Adopt a zero tolerance approach to transphobic bullying, discrimination and harassment.
- Engage in Hate Crime Champions training given the upward trend in LGBT hate crime.

## References

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Singh, Anneleise A., Meng, Sarah and Hansen, Anthony, (2013) "It's already hard enough being a student": developing affirming college environments for trans youth. Journal of LGBT Youth 10(3) 208-223.

## Some useful links

Ally program for gender and sexual diversity at Murdoch University - <https://our.murdoch.edu.au/Student-life/Health-and-happiness/Support-for-LGBTIQ-students/>

Gender Identity Research and Education Society - <https://www.gires.org.uk/>

Gendered intelligence – understanding gender diversity in creative ways - <http://genderedintelligence.co.uk/>

Stonewall Supporting Trans staff in the workplace - <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/supporting-trans-staff-workplace>

LGBT Youth Scotland resources - <https://www.lgbtyouth.org.uk/resources/>

TransEdu – resources and information for supporting trans, non-binary and gender diverse applicants, students and staff in further and higher education - <https://www.trans.ac.uk/>

# Glossary of terms provided by the Equality Challenge Unit (2016)

The Equality Challenge Unit provides a useful glossary of terms (2016) and we reproduce this here:

Terminology changes and its use can be highly individualised. It is important to be mindful of trends in language as a staff member or student may associate with a term perceived by some, even members of the same community, to be inappropriate.

## Acquired gender

A legal term used in the Gender Recognition Act 2004. It refers to the gender that a person who is applying for a gender recognition certificate (GRC) has lived for two years and intends to continue living in. Affirmed gender may be used when a person has transitioned but has decided not to apply for a GRC.

## Cisgender

A term used to describe people who are not transgender. Cisgender is based on the Latin prefix cis which means 'on this side of'. The Latin prefix trans means 'across from' or 'on the other side of'. The use of cisgender is debated within the trans community and some people prefer the term non-trans as it familiarises the use of the term trans (see below).

## Dual role

A dual role person occasionally wears clothing and or makeup and accessories that are not traditionally associated with the sex they were assigned at birth. Generally, dual role people do not wish to transition and do not necessarily experience gender dysphoria. Some people prefer the term alter ego.

Historically the terms transvestite and cross dresser were used to describe dual role people, but they are now considered to be outdated. While some people may use the terms to describe themselves, other people may find the terms offensive.

## Gender

Gender refers to the cultural and social distinctions between men and women. It consists of three related aspects: a society's constructed gender roles, norms and behaviours which are essentially based on the sex assigned at birth; gender identity, which is a person's internal perception of their identity; gender expression, which is the way a person lives in society and interacts with others. Gender does not necessarily represent a simple binary choice: some people have a gender identity that cannot be defined simply by the use of the terms woman or man. It should be noted that currently, for the purposes of UK law, gender is binary – people can only be male or female. However, there is growing pressure from campaign groups for this to change in line with other countries including Australia, Bangladesh, Denmark, Germany, India, Nepal and New Zealand.

## Gender expression

While gender identity is subjective and internal to the individual, gender expression refers to all of the external characteristics and behaviours that are socially defined as either masculine or feminine, such as clothing, hairstyle, make-up, mannerisms, speech patterns and social interactions.

Typically, trans people seek to make their gender expression match their gender identity, but this is not always possible. It is best practice to not assume someone's gender identity on the basis of their gender expression. If you are not sure, it is best to ask a person how they would like to be addressed.

## Gender incongruence and gender dysphoria

Gender incongruence is a medical term used to describe a person whose gender identity does not align, to a greater or lesser extent, with the sex assigned at birth. Where this causes discomfort it is known as gender dysphoria. Gender dysphoria 'is a term describing the discomfort or distress caused by the discrepancy between a person's gender identity (their psychological sense of themselves as men or women) and the sex they were assigned at birth (with the accompanying primary or secondary sexual characteristics and or expected social gender role)' (NHS, 2013).

Gender dysphoria is not considered a mental health issue but unmanaged dysphoria or the social stigma that may accompany it and any changes a person makes to their gender expression can result in 'clinically significant levels of distress' (NHS, 2013).

In order to qualify for NHS medical assistance to transition, a trans person in the UK must have a diagnosis of gender dysphoria. As not all trans people have gender dysphoria this presents a significant barrier to accessing medical support and the provisions of the Gender Recognition Act. See page 17.

## Gender reassignment

The legal term used in the Equality Act to describe the protected characteristic of anyone who 'proposes to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning the person's sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex' (Equality Act, 2010).

This is the protected characteristic that protects trans people from discrimination, victimisation and harassment in employment, education and when using services. Importantly, the act requires no medical supervision or interventions for a trans person to be afforded protection.

## Gender recognition certificate

Gender recognition certificates (GRC) are issued by the gender recognition panel under the provisions of the Gender Recognition Act 2004. The holder of a full GRC is legally recognised in their acquired gender for all purposes. A full GRC is issued to an applicant if they can satisfy the panel that they fulfil all the criteria outlined in the Gender Recognition Act. Applicants can be UK residents or from recognised overseas territories who have already acquired a new legal gender. The act requires that the applicant is over 18, has, or has had, gender dysphoria, has lived in their affirmed gender for two years prior to the application, and intends to live permanently according to their acquired gender status. See page 15.

It is never appropriate to ask a trans person for a GRC and regarded as unlawful because it breaches their right to privacy. Once a person has obtained a GRC their gender history can only be disclosed where there are explicit exceptions in law:

- in accordance with an order of or proceedings before a court or tribunal, when it is strictly relevant to proceedings
- for the purposes of preventing or investigating crime, where it is relevant
- for the purposes of the social security system or a pension scheme

## Gender variance

Gender variance, also referred to as gender non-conformity, is behaviour or gender expression that does not match socially constructed gender norms for men and women.

## Intersex

An umbrella term used for people who are born with variations of sex characteristics, which do not always fit society's perception of male or female bodies. Intersex is not the same as gender identity or sexual orientation.

Until recently, parents of intersex babies were encouraged to elect for surgery so that their child would conform to stereotypical male or female appearances. As a result, many intersex people can encounter difficulties as the gender assigned at birth may differ from their gender identity and surgery may have

compromised sexual, urinary and reproductive function. Today, parents are advised to delay surgery until their child reaches puberty so that the child can inform decision-making. Some parents do not observe this advice and attitudes will vary country by country. Not all intersex people opt for surgery, and many will consider themselves to be intersex rather than male or female.

Some intersex people may decide to transition to their self-identified gender and start to identify as trans.

### **Legal sex**

A person's 'legal' sex is determined by their sex on their birth certificate and the assumption made at birth is that their gender status (boy, girl) matches. For higher education institutions (HEI's) and colleges a person's legal sex is only relevant for insurance, pension purposes and in rare cases occupational requirements. See section 2: policies.

For the purposes of everyday life (including banking, personal identification and travel), a person's legal sex may not be the same as their self-identified gender. For instance, a trans woman can have identity documents such as a passport, driving licence and employment records based upon her gender as female, but still have a birth certificate which states that she is male.

### **Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans plus (LGBT+)**

While being trans or having a trans history is different from sexual orientation, the forms of prejudice and discrimination directed against trans people can be similar to those directed against lesbian, gay, bisexual plus (LGB+) people and historically the two communities have coexisted and supported each other. As a result, advocacy and support groups often cover LGBT+ issues. Trans people can also identify as LGB+.

### **Non-binary**

Non-binary is used to refer to a person who has a gender identity which is in between or beyond the two categories 'man' and 'woman', fluctuates between 'man' and 'woman', or who has no gender, either permanently or some of the time.

People who are non-binary may have gender identities that fluctuate (genderfluid), they may identify as having more than one gender depending on the context (eg bigender or pangender), feel that they have no gender (eg agender, non-gendered), or they may identify gender differently (eg third gender, genderqueer). Research by the Scottish Transgender Alliance (2016) found that 65 per cent of non-binary respondents identify as trans. Just as with trans men and trans women, non-binary people transition and live their lives in various ways – which may or may not include medically transitioning (ie taking hormones or having surgeries).

### **Pronoun**

A pronoun is the term used to refer to somebody. For example she or her or hers or herself or he or him or his or himself. Gender-neutral pronouns include

they or them or their or themselves

che or chim or chis or chimself

E or Em or Eir or Eirs or Emself

Per(person) or pers or perself

Xe or hir or hirs or hirself

### **Real-life experience or experience**

'Real-life experience' or 'experience' are the terms used by the medical profession and refers to the period in which an individual is required to live, work and study full-time in their affirmed gender before they can undergo genital surgery. Previously the requirement applied to hormone replacement as well as genital surgery. Some trans staff and students may be asked by a gender identity clinic to provide confirmation

## Sex

Sex refers to the biological status of a person as male or female in their physical development. Sex is judged entirely on the genital appearance at birth but internal reproductive organs, skeletal characteristics and musculature are also sex differentiated.

## Sexual orientation

Sexual orientation is different from gender identity. Trans people, like any other people, can have a wide range of sexual orientations beyond those recognised by the Equality Act including heterosexual, lesbian, gay, bisexual, asexual, pansexual, omniseual and demiseual.

## Trans and transgender

Trans and transgender are inclusive umbrella terms for people whose gender identity and or gender expression differs from the sex (male or female) they were assigned at birth. The term may include, but is not limited to, trans men and women, non-binary people and dual role people. Not all people that can be included in the term will associate with it.

The terms trans should only be used as an adjective, for example, trans people, trans man or trans woman. However, a trans person may say 'I am trans'.

## Trans history

A person with a trans history will have transitioned to their self-identified gender. Consequently, they may no longer identify as a trans person, and simply see their transition as one part of their history.

## Trans man

A person who was assigned female at birth but identifies as a man or towards the masculine end of the gender spectrum. He usually uses male pronouns and is likely to transition to live fully as a man. The terms 'female-to-male' or 'FtM' are shorthand for indicating the direction of a person's transition but these terms can be seen as offensive. Other people may use these terms to describe themselves.

## Trans woman

A person who was assigned male at birth but identifies as a woman or towards the feminine end of the gender spectrum. She usually uses female pronouns and is likely to transition to live fully as a woman. The term 'male-to-female' or 'MtF' are shorthand for indicating the direction of a person's transition but these terms can be seen as offensive. Other people may use these terms to describe themselves.

## Transition

Transition is the process of a person changing their social role in order to match their gender identity. Examples of transitioning include telling friends, family and colleagues, changing names, asking people to use different pronouns, and changing the way gender is expressed. For some people, this may involve medical assistance such as hormone therapy and surgery.

## Transphobia

Transphobia is a term used to describe the fear, anger, intolerance, resentment and discomfort that some people may have as a result of another person being trans. This can result in discrimination, harassment, victimisation and hate crime.

## Transsexual

Transsexual is a term that was traditionally used to describe a person diagnosed with gender dysphoria. Increasingly trans people are not comfortable with the use of this term preferring instead trans or transgender. While some people may find the term offensive, others may use it to describe themselves.