

Appendix 1: Terminology

Terminology in the 'transgender' field is varied and constantly shifting as understanding and perceptions of gender variant conditions and gender nonconforming expressions change. The terms described below may vary in their usage and may become outdated.

Acquired gender – when a person has changed gender, their new gender is referred to as their acquired gender.

Bisexual - a term which refers to women and men who are emotionally and/or sexually attracted to people of the same and opposite sex.

Despite misconceptions, bisexuality does not require that a person be attracted equally to both sexes. In fact, people who have a distinct, but not exclusive preference for one sex over the other may still identify themselves as bisexual.

Cisgender- if your sex characteristics match your gender identity, you are cisgender.

The majority of people living in the UK are cisgender. "Cis" is derived from the Latin meaning "on this side of".

Gay - The word gay is now standard in its use to refer to people whose orientation is to the same sex, in large part because it is the term that most gay people prefer in referring to themselves. Gay can be used to refer to both sexes; when the intended meaning is not clear in the context, the phrase gay and lesbian may be used.

Gender Dysphoria; Gender Identity Disorder – this is a medical condition, where a person's core gender identity does not match their outward appearance.

This is a recognised medical condition for which gender reassignment treatment is available on the National Health Service. Gender Dysphoria is distress, unhappiness and discomfort experienced by someone about their physical body not fully matching their gender identity (that is, their internal sense of where they exist in relation to being a woman or a man) and may cause severe mental distress, sometimes to the point of suicide.

Trans people usually experience intense gender dysphoria which is significantly reduced by transitioning to live as their self-identified gender and perhaps by taking hormones and perhaps getting surgery to help make their physical bodies match their gender identity and gender expression.

Male-to-female (MTF Trans woman) – a person who was born male, but who has transitioned or is transitioning to become female.

Female-to-male (FTM Trans man) – a person who was born female, but who has transitioned or is transitioning to become male.

Gender Expression - This is a person's external gender-related clothing and behaviour (including their interests and mannerisms).

Gender Identity - This is a person's internal sense of where they exist in relation to being a woman or a man.

Gender Reassignment – It is the process which is undertaken for the purpose of bringing the individual's physical appearance more in line with their gender identity. This will include counselling and psychiatric help, possible hormone replacement therapy (HRT) and surgery.

People who intend to undergo, are currently undergoing or who have previously undergone gender reassignment are legally protected from discrimination and harassment in employment, vocational training and the provision of goods, facilities and services. Not all individuals going through gender reassignment undergo surgery. Surgery is not a key criterion in the process of definition of gender change - people can receive full legal recognition of their acquired gender for all purposes without undergoing any surgery.

Gender Recognition Certificate – A certificate is issued by the Gender Recognition Panel that gives the transgender person legal recognition in their new gender. With the certificate it is possible for a transgender to change their birth certificate. It is not a requirement for the person to have had gender reassignment surgery to get a certificate. It may be applied for and granted after two years of the Real Life Experience.

Hormones – many transgender people have hormone replacement therapy (HRT) relevant to their intended gender role. These assist to change their outward appearance and internal core feelings. However, large doses of medication can have serious side effects; therefore some transgender people choose not to have HRT. This should not mean that their acquired gender is not respected.

Intersex – a genetic or hormonal condition which leads some individuals to an obvious mixture of male and female sex traits. Although derived from a different cause to that of the transgender person, gender role transition and similar treatment may be required for the intersex person to achieve their proper gender.

Non-binary - Gender is often referred to as a 'binary', meaning two – male and female.

The term 'non-binary' refers to people who don't believe that there are just two genders and who exist outside of the gender binary. Non-binary people class themselves as neither exclusively male nor female. They are under the trans umbrella but may not consider themselves trans.

A key thing to know is that if a service user identifies as non-binary, their gender identity is valid and deserves respect.

There are many terms that people find useful to describe their non-binary identity. 'Genderqueer' is a blanket term used for individuals who do not define their gender in binary terms. It covers a range of identities - from those who feel their gender is fluid, to others who feel they have no gender to speak of.

Real Life Experience (previously called the Real Life test) – before a person can apply for a Gender Recognition Certificate, they must live for at least two years in their acquired gender. To qualify for NHS treatment and corrective surgery, a trans person must usually have lived for one to two years in their acquired gender and hormones are normally prescribed just before or at the start of this period. This period is often referred to as the 'Real Life Experience'

Trans: an umbrella term to describe people whose gender is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with, the sex they were assigned at birth. Trans people may describe themselves using

one or more of a wide variety of terms, including (but not limited to) transgender, cross dresser, non-binary, genderqueer (GQ).

“Trans” comes from the Latin word meaning: “On the other side of”.

Transgender – is an umbrella general term applied to a spectrum of individuals, behaviours, and groups involving tendencies to vary from the usual gender roles and is the state of a person’s “gender identity” (self-identification as woman, man, neither or both) not matching their “assigned sex”. Transgender does not imply any specific form of sexual orientation. Transgendered people include transsexuals, transvestites and cross-dressers and intersexed people as well.

Transsexual – The terms ‘*transsexual*’ and ‘*transsexualism*’ are now considered old fashioned, and are only likely to be seen in legal and medical documents. Even there, these terms are gradually being replaced with more acceptable terminology, such as ‘transgender’. In law, a transsexual person is someone who ‘proposes to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone gender reassignment’ (Equality Act 2010). For some, this will involve medical intervention to adjust the appearance so that it aligns with the gender identity, and is often associated with changes to the gender role and expression, as well as names and pronouns. These changes may alleviate much or all of the discomfort. The term transsexual is specific, and does not include non-binary identities.

The word ‘transsexual’ should be used as an adjective, not a noun. It is, therefore, never appropriate to refer to an individual as ‘a transsexual’, or to transsexual people, as ‘transsexuals’. The abbreviation ‘tranny’ is also unacceptable.

Transvestites or Cross Dressers – People (mostly men) who sometimes dress in clothes usually worn by the opposite sex, but who have no desire or intention to change their gender. Transvestites are not covered by the Equality Act 2010.