A GUIDE TO SUPPORTING TRANS STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS
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AN INTRODUCTION TO TRANS INCLUSION.

Action for Children is committed to the inclusion of staff, volunteers, children, young people and parents who identify as trans. This guide has been produced to support managers to identify and address the distinct challenges facing both staff and volunteers who identify as trans.

Challenges that face trans individuals can include:

- Physical spaces, such as gendered facilities.
- Direct discrimination and harassment based on gender identity.

Trans inclusion can ensure an environment that benefits all staff and volunteers and create diverse places of work for everyone. It is important, as a workplace and service deliverer, that Action for Children enables and supports everyone to be themselves. This is particularly important for those who identify as trans. This guide explores key areas of practice around how to support trans staff and volunteers.

EXPLORING SEX, GENDER AND SEXUAL ORIENTATION.

Everyone is unique, with their own thoughts and feelings, their own likes and dislikes. You will never find anyone who is exactly the same as you. However, the culture in which we are raised is overwhelmingly binary and we are classified medically as either male or female. Quite simply, when a baby is born, doctors look at the physical attributes of the baby, make a decision about the sex of the baby and a birth certificate is created.
It sounds simple and straightforward, but individuals are much more complex than the physical makeup of their bodies. Sexual orientation and gender identity can be independent of each other. How we wish to show the world who we are can also be different to our physical bodies.

- **Sexual orientation** – A person’s emotional, romantic and/or physical attraction to another person.

- **Gender identity** – A person’s internal, deeply held sense of their own gender.

- **Gender expression** – The ways in which people manifest their gender. For example, what they wear, how they speak and how they act.

- **Sex** – The two main categories (male or female) assigned to a person at birth on the basis of primary sex characteristics (genitalia) and reproductive functions.
WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE TRANS?

There is no universal experience of being trans and everyone has a distinctive experience. People often regard trans people as being individuals who wish to transition from one gender to another, but in reality the wide spectrum of gender identity is more complicated. Many people feel comfortable openly expressing and identifying themselves in ways other than simply male or female.

For the purpose of this guide, trans is used an umbrella term for people whose gender identity differs from what is typically associated with the sex they were assigned at birth. People under the trans umbrella may describe themselves using one or more of a wide variety of terms.
Some common terms you might hear are:

- Trans man – People who are assigned female at birth but identify and live as men may use this term to describe themselves. They may shorten the term to ‘trans man’. An abbreviation that can be used is FTM – female-to-male. As some individuals may prefer to be referred to as men, it is best to ask which term an individual prefers.

- Trans woman – People who were assigned male at birth but identify and live as women may use this term to describe themselves. They may shorten it to ‘trans woman’. Some may also use MTF – male-to-female - whilst some may prefer to simply be referred to as women. It is always best to ask which term the individual prefers.

- Transsexual – Some people still use this term if they have transitioned to live as a different gender than the one society assigned them at birth. It is best to ask which term an individual prefers, as they may also use transsexual woman or transsexual man.

- Non-binary – Non-binary is a term for people whose gender identities do not fit into the gender binary of male or female. A non-binary person may consider themselves to be neither male nor female, or to be in some sense both male and female, or to be sometimes male and sometimes female. People who identify as non-binary will sometimes prefer to be referred to using pronouns which are not gendered, for example ‘they’ or ‘ze’.
### Key Terms

Terminology in this field is complex, sensitive and constantly shifting. For example, the term ‘transsexual’ is rarely used now. Labels are necessary but also unsatisfactory when children and young people are just wanting to be themselves. It is always best to allow an individual to self-identify rather than using a wrong term that could cause offence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Term</strong></th>
<th><strong>Description</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agender</strong></td>
<td>Having no gender identity or a neutral gender identity.</td>
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<td><strong>Bi-gender</strong></td>
<td>Having two gender identities, either at the same time or in different situations. The two genders could be male and female but can also include non-binary identities.</td>
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<td><strong>Binary transgender</strong></td>
<td>Some children and young people fit into a binary stereotype which is at odds with their sex assigned at birth (i.e., someone who is not trans).</td>
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<td><strong>Cis / Cisgender</strong></td>
<td>A term used to describe a person whose gender identity matches the gender they were assigned at birth (i.e., someone who is not trans).</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Gender binary</strong></td>
<td>The concept that there are two genders (male and female).</td>
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<td><strong>Gender expression</strong></td>
<td>The external presentation of gender identity, for example, someone’s clothes, hair, voice and mannerisms.</td>
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<td><strong>Gender fluid</strong></td>
<td>Moving between gender identities or expressions.</td>
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<td><strong>FTM</strong></td>
<td>An abbreviation for female-to-male sometimes used by trans men.</td>
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<td><strong>Coming out</strong></td>
<td>Acknowledging to yourself and others that you are trans. It is also used in relation to sexual orientation.</td>
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<td><strong>Gender dysphoria</strong></td>
<td>A person who experiences discomfort or distress because there is a mismatch between their sex assigned at birth and their gender identity. This is also the clinical diagnosis for someone who doesn’t feel comfortable with the gender they were assigned at birth.</td>
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<td><strong>LGBT</strong></td>
<td>An acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender.</td>
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<td><strong>GENDER STEREOTYPING</strong></td>
<td><strong>MISGENDERING</strong></td>
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<td>Generalisations about the characteristics, behaviour and interests of an entire group based on gender.</td>
<td>Referring to someone using a word (often a pronoun, such as ‘he’ or ‘she’) which does not correctly reflect the gender with which they identify.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>NON-GENDER</strong></th>
<th><strong>SEX</strong></th>
<th><strong>NON-BINARY</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Any gender identity which does not fit within the binary of male and female.</td>
<td>The two main categories (male and female) assigned to a person at birth on the basis of primary sex characteristics (genitalia) and reproductive functions.</td>
<td>Some children and young people do not fit into the binary divide and identify as neither man nor woman, but somewhere in between. Some may also identify as a mix of man and woman.</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>GENDER IDENTITY</strong></th>
<th><strong>TRANSITION</strong></th>
<th><strong>INTERSEX</strong></th>
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<td>A person’s internal, deeply held sense of their own gender.</td>
<td>A term used to describe changing gender presentation so it aligns with a person’s gender identity. There are two main forms of transitioning – social transition and medical transition.</td>
<td>A term used to describe people born with variations of internal or external sex anatomy, resulting in bodies that cannot be classified as typically male or female.</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>GENDER PRESENTATION</strong></th>
<th><strong>GENDER ROLE</strong></th>
<th><strong>SEXUAL ORIENTATION</strong></th>
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<td>Is one’s outwards appearance, body language, and general behaviour as categorised under the gender binary by society.</td>
<td>A set of societal norms dictating what types of behaviours are generally considered acceptable, appropriate or desirable for a person, based on their actual or perceived sex.</td>
<td>Used to describe a person based on who they are physically and emotionally attracted to.</td>
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<th><strong>GENDER VARIANCE</strong></th>
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<td>Behaviour or gender expression by an individual that does not match masculine and feminine gender norms.</td>
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It is not uncommon for individuals to experience discrimination and transphobia as a direct result of their gender identity, which can occur in numerous different contexts in a person’s day-to-day life. According to the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (EU LGBT survey, 2012), 86 per cent of trans people agree that trans discrimination is widespread in the UK. Transphobia also occurs in the workplace, often due to ignorance or a prejudiced attitude or belief. Transphobic language and bullying contributes to a hostile environment for trans people, which is not only unproductive but also harmful and likely to be illegal. It is important that all Action for Children staff and volunteers are able to identify and address transphobia within their place of work.

Examples of transphobia:

**QUESTIONING SOMEONE’S ABILITY TO ‘PASS’**
- “SHE’D BE MORE CONVINCING IF SHE USED A BIT MORE MAKE-UP.”

**INAPPROPRIATE QUESTIONING ABOUT MEDICAL TREATMENT**
- “SO HAVE YOU HAD, YOU KNOW, THE SURGERY?”

**CONSISTENTLY REFERRING TO SOMEONE’S TRANS HISTORY**
- “SUCH A SHAME, SHE WAS SUCH A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN.”

**Transphobia and Transphobic Language Within the Workplace.**
SPECULATING ABOUT SOMEONE’S GENDER
– “IS THAT A MAN OR A WOMAN?”

PURPOSEFULLY IGNORING SOMEONE’S PREFERRED PRONOUN
– “HE/SHE NEEDS TO..”

DISCLOSURE OF SOMEONE’S TRANS HISTORY
– “YEAH, HE USED TO BE A WOMAN.”

THE USE OF FACILITIES
– “WHY IS HE USING THE WOMEN’S TOILET?”

A NOTE ON PRONOUNS.
If a staff member is unsure of a colleague’s preferred pronoun, first and foremost they should listen to the individual themselves and any others close to the individual who may use the correct pronoun. If in any doubt, a colleague should respectfully ask which pronoun the person uses. If a colleague accidentally uses an incorrect pronoun, they should apologise and carry on. Repeatedly and purposefully using the incorrect pronoun constitutes bullying and harassment.

They/them/their are pronouns that non-binary people may use. People will usually be familiar with using such pronouns to refer to groups, but they can be used to refer to a singular person instead of he/him/his and she/her/hers. For example:

- “They (meaning just Lee) emailed over all the information you need”.
- “Lee needs that report, can you print it off for them?”
- “Lee sent their notes around before the meeting”
There is still a long way to go until UK legislation fully protects the trans community in all aspects of life. There are, however, various laws which protect trans people in the workplace.

A person does not need to have a Gender Recognition Certificate (GRC), or be at any particular stage of transition, in order to be treated with dignity and respect. The law currently protects those who propose to undergo, are undergoing, or have undergone gender reassignment. In order to obtain a GRC, an individual must have been diagnosed with gender dysphoria, lived in their acquired gender for at least 2 years, and intend to live in their acquired gender for the rest of their life. Trans experiences differ from person to person and many people do not wish to follow the GRC stages of transition. In order to be truly inclusive of all gender expressions and identities, organisations need to go above and beyond what legislation requires.

Some of the protections trans staff are guaranteed under law in the workplace are:

- Protection from direct discrimination (Equality Act 2010).
- Protection from indirect discrimination (Equality Act 2010).
- Protection from harassment (Equality Act 2010).
- Protection from victimisation (Equality Act 2010).
- Protection in taking time off work to transition (Equality Act 2010).
- Protection from misuse of trans history information (Data Protection Act, 1998).
- Advancing trans equality in the workplace (Equality Act 2010).
- Protection from non-consenting disclosure of trans history (Gender Recognition Act, 2004).
Current legislation:

1. The Data Protection Act, 1998: controls how personal information can be processed and used.

2. The Gender Recognition Act, 2004: a system which allows people to change their legal gender if they wish to.

3. The Equality Act, 2010: a single legal framework which protects individuals against discrimination and promotes equality of opportunity.
   
   a) This covers all aspects of employment, including recruitment and selection processes, employment-related benefits, training, career development and references.

   b) It also covers the delivery of goods, facilities and services.

Non-binary identities and the law:

There is a lack of clarity around non-binary identities within the current legal framework. The descriptive term used within legislation is gender reassignment, but this is a very narrow definition of what it means to be trans. At Action for Children, we will treat all individuals, including non-binary staff, as we would other people with protected characteristics.
As an employer, Action for Children has a legal obligation to ensure that all staff and volunteers, regardless as to whether they propose to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone gender reassignment, do not suffer discriminatory treatment at work. It is best practice to ensure that all trans staff are able to reach their full potential.
The words and terminology used to describe the trans community and gender identities can often be complex and develop quickly. People identify in different ways and all staff should be both confident and comfortable in understanding what these identities mean:

**Cisgender:** A person whose gender identity is the same as the sex they were assigned at birth. ‘Non-trans’ is also used by some people.

**Non-binary:** An umbrella term for a person who identifies outside of the ‘gender binary’ (in other words, outside of ‘male’ or ‘female’).

**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 transgender, non-binary and gender queer.

**Trans man:** A term used to describe someone who is assigned female at birth, but identifies as a man. This may be shortened to trans man, or FTM (female-to-male).

**Trans woman:** A term used to describe someone who is assigned male at birth, but identifies as a woman. This may be shortened to trans woman, or MTF (male-to-female).

**Transsexual:** Used in the past as a medical term to refer to someone who transitioned to live in the ‘opposite’ gender to the one assigned at birth. Although this term is still used by some, many people prefer the terms trans or transgender.
OTHER TERMS:

Gender dysphoria: A person who experiences discomfort or distress because there is a mismatch between their sex assigned at birth and their gender identity. This is also the clinical diagnosis for someone who doesn’t feel comfortable with the gender they were assigned at birth. Many trans people reject the idea that gender dysphoria is a pre-requisite for being trans.

Gender reassignment: Another way of describing a person’s transition. For some individuals, gender reassignment involves medical intervention, but this is not required for a person to identify as trans. It can also mean changing names, pronouns, dressing differently and living in your self-identified gender. Gender reassignment is a protected characteristic in the Equality Act 2010.

A Gender Recognition Certificate: Enables trans people to be legally recognised in their self-identified gender and to be issued with a new birth certificate. Not all trans people will want to apply for a GRC, and you have to be over 18 to do so. An employer or service provider does not need to see a GRC in order to recognise an employee’s or customer’s gender.

Gender variant: A term used for someone who does not conform to the gender role and behaviours assigned to them at birth. This is usually used in relation to children or young people.

Pronouns: Words we use to refer to people’s gender in conversation, for example, ‘he’ or ‘she’. Some people, such as those with non-binary identities, may prefer others to refer to them in gender-neutral language and use pronouns such as they / their and ze / zir.

Pronouns: A term used to describe the steps a trans person may take to live in the gender they identify as. Each person’s transition will involve different things. It can involve medical intervention, such as hormone therapy and surgeries, but not all trans people want or are able to have this. A medical intervention is not a pre-requisite step for transition. Transitioning might involve things like telling friends and family, dressing differently and changing official documents.
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Action for Children supports and protects the young and vulnerable as they grow up. We make their lives better: now, tomorrow and every day.

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