

LGBTQ+ INCLUSION GUIDANCE

CONTENTS

Being a Supportive Manager and/or Colleague	01
Supporting LGBTQ+ Staff	02
Supporting Trans and Non-Binary Staff	03
Supporting Bi Staff	04
What Staff Want You to Know	05
Legal Obligations	06
Support and How to Report Discrimination	07
Helpful Resources	08
Terminology	09

This guidance contains a series of quotations collected from current University of Exeter staff who were consulted in the creation of this booklet.

Being inclusive in your actions and language at work can make a real impact on the lives of your colleagues. Therefore, please take the time to read this document. Nobody has all the correct answers, so if you are ever unsure about how to act or what to say, seek advice from your **HR Team** or the **Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity Team**.



“Coming out at Exeter was one of the most wonderful experiences in my professional life. Nobody in my immediate team had any prior experience with trans friends or co-workers but they made it clear they were supportive, they were professional, and they have helped when things have been bad. I am so grateful to all of them for that.”

01

BEING A SUPPORTIVE MANAGER AND/OR COLLEAGUE

The main way a person can be supportive of LGBTQ+ staff at work is to not make assumptions. Do not assume that everyone or anyone is heterosexual and cisgender.

If these assumptions are made, it can lead to an environment where a member of staff has to 'come out' in the workplace, which can be uncomfortable for many, especially if they are unsure of how this will be received. Not all LGBTQ+ staff want to be out at work, but they are more likely to be if the work environment is sufficiently supportive and relevant issues are taken seriously.

There are many ways to be an active ally and role model – heterosexual and cisgender managers play a crucial role in making their workplaces more inclusive by combatting the notion that sexual orientation and gender equality is of relevance only for LGBTQ+ employees. A practical way for managers to set an inclusive culture and tone within their team would be to sign-up to the LGBTQ+ Allies Network and/or attend Allies Training.



“I want managers and colleagues to know that the language they use can be very powerful. All anyone wants is a natural, relaxed and accepting work environment and this is easily achieved by ensuring staff are made to feel like they can be who and whatever they want to be from the very beginning.”

02

SUPPORTING LGBTQ+ STAFF

Challenge Discrimination and Inappropriate Behaviour

Always challenge inappropriate behaviour if it is safe to do so. If you need guidance on this, seek advice from **HR Advisors, HR Business Partners, Dignity and Respect Advisors**, or the **Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity Team**. Bullying and harassment of LGBTQ+ people including trans and non-binary people amounts to homophobia / transphobia (actual/perceived) and is a criminal offence.

LGBTQ+ Staff Network

This network exists to provide support to staff who identify as LGBTQ+. There is also an Allies network for those who do not identify as LGBTQ+ but want to show their support. An ally is an active friend or supporter to someone else. Both straight and LGBTQ+ people can be allies.

By educating yourself and others, listening, being visible, and challenging negative behaviour, you can help to change the hearts and minds of the community.

The networks provide resources which can be used to show your support and create a more inclusive workplace environment, including lanyards, coasters, and mouse mats. It is important to allow staff time to attend network meetings, even if they do not identify as LGBTQ+, or have not come out in the workplace.

Inclusive Language

Simple changes can be made such as making sure that social invitations use inclusive language, for example, use the word 'partner' rather than gendered terms (eg, boy/girlfriend, wife/husband). It is especially important to take prompt actions against homophobic, biphobic, transphobic or otherwise offensive banter, even if you are not aware that you have any LGBTQ+ staff.

“On the whole I’ve had the privilege of amazing staff to work around. The only exceptions are the odd times someone (usually an academic) makes a comment that may have been ok 50 years ago but really isn’t now. I think it’s a manager’s job to call out these comments to staff when the employee doesn’t feel comfortable.”

Pronouns

A simple way to be inclusive is to ask about peoples’ pronouns. Pronouns are words such as ‘he’, ‘she’, or ‘they’, which refer to a person. You can simply ask ‘what pronouns do you use?’, or ‘how should I refer to you?’. To be an active ally, it is a good idea to put your own pronouns in your email signature, for example, ‘my pronouns are he, him, his’. This encourages other staff to do the same, and prevents misunderstandings and embarrassment.

“Ensure that correct pronouns are used by all in attendance. Ensure that no assumptions are made if referring to the gender of people’s partners. Refrain from using gendered language when referring to inanimate objects (eg, referring to a piece of computer code or software as “he” rather than “it”). Call out any malicious or persistent mis-gendering while respecting the wishes of the victim.”

Parental Support Leave

LGBTQ+ Staff are entitled to take as much parental leave as heterosexual couples. Managers should not assume that LGBTQ+ staff will not be starting a family.

“My experience of being a pregnant lesbian was fantastic. I had (as expected) many questions from friends and colleagues about our decisions, but all were very positive and I was very happy to discuss this. I am happy to say that my sexual orientation was not an issue within work, which was at odds with the attitude of our local health care team.”

03

SUPPORTING TRANS AND NON-BINARY STAFF

Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation

Assumptions should not be made about the sexual orientation of trans members of staff or their partners. Sexual orientation and gender identity are not the same thing. Trans people include those who are heterosexual, lesbian, gay, bisexual or asexual. It should not be assumed that their sexual orientation will change after transitioning.

Record Keeping and Changing

It is good practice to consider revising any documentation that is available to the public, such as committee minutes, and discuss with the individual how to manage any name change that might alert the public to their transition. Where possible, documents should be edited to avoid unintended disclosure. Where a change of identity needs to be communicated to an outside body eg, in the case of migrant workers sponsored under the points based system, this should be discussed with the staff member at the time they plan to transition.

Recruitment

The University does not take account of an employee’s gender identity status or history in making employment decisions. If the University becomes aware of information relating to an employee’s gender identity status, this information needs to be kept confidential and not disclosed without the employee’s consent. Any records that the University needs to keep that relate to an employee’s previous gender status, for example relevant qualifications in a previous name, need to be kept confidential.

DBS Checking

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) has implemented a process specifically for trans people who do not wish to disclose their trans status to their employer or placement provider. The DBS provide a designated point of contact for trans applicants to deal with any queries raised, and to provide help and support throughout the process.

Plans to Transition

As a manager, it is useful to have a meeting with the person who is transitioning. It is important to discuss how and when other colleagues and/or, where appropriate, students will be informed. The person who is transitioning may want to do this themselves or may want this done for them. Whichever option is chosen, it is important that the person transitioning retains control over what and when people are told and the language used to explain this. It is important to follow confidentiality, GDPR, and disclosure protocols.

Facilities

Locations for gender neutral toilets are being looked at continuously. Staff and students should be allowed, and made feel comfortable to use, whatever facilities they prefer, regardless of gender identity.

It is important to listen to what trans and non-binary staff tell you about their own identity. For many people, the journey to discovering what their identity is, and making steps to medically and/or socially transition can be slow. Make sure to always use a person’s correct pronouns and name, and if you are not sure what these are and it is appropriate to do so, it is acceptable to ask. Asking is, in most cases, a preferred option over assuming.

Putting your pronouns in your email signature can be a simple way of supporting trans and non-binary staff. This can be a useful tool for many staff who want their colleagues to know their name and pronouns, without having to tell them face-to-face.



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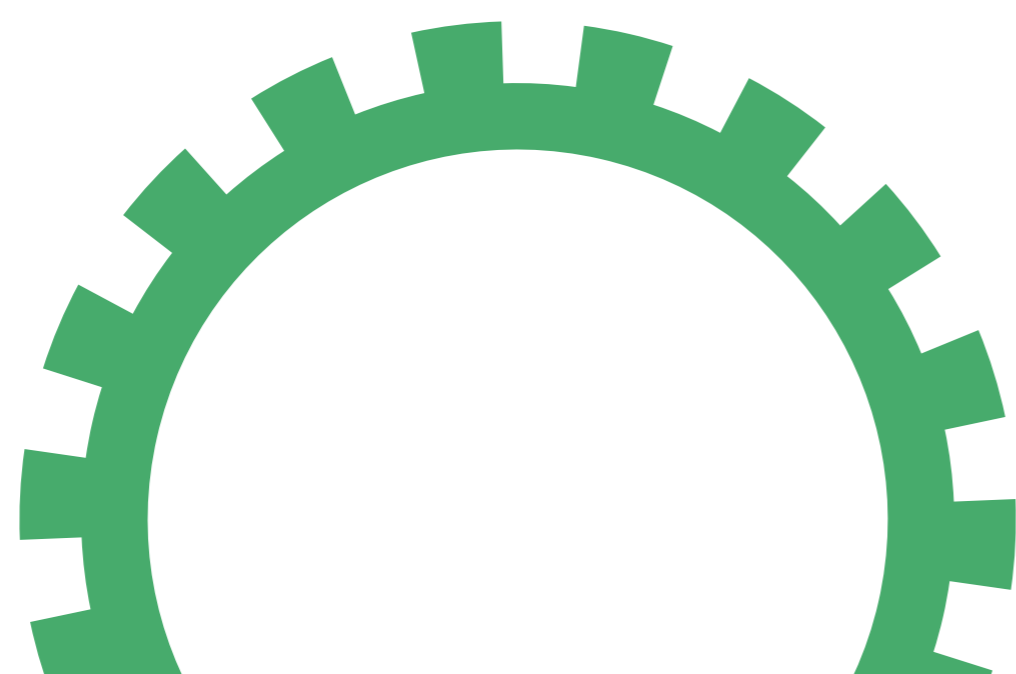
SUPPORTING BI STAFF

A lack of understanding and knowledge of bisexuality has resulted in bisexual people remaining largely invisible. For example, some assume that if someone is not heterosexual they must be gay and that if someone is not gay they must be heterosexual.

This is one of many reasons why assumptions about the sexual orientation and gender identity of others can be harmful. Even if you know the gender of a person's partner, this does not necessarily mean that you know their sexual orientation.

Bisexual or pansexual people, like any other minority group, may be subject to discrimination, even from within the LGBTQ+ community. It is therefore important to be supportive and non-judgemental, and to not make assumptions.

“Bi erasure is rife, and it's very difficult for bi people to come out, especially after everyone assumes we are straight/gay based on the partner(s) they know of.”



05

WHAT STAFF WANT YOU TO KNOW

“It's about understanding and support. I'm super proud of who I am and my lanyards, coasters, mouse mat and rainbow and unicorn lunchbox will attest to that! Not everyone is as confident in themselves so it's about creating a good working relationship with your colleagues so they feel comfortable being themselves at work.”

“My supervisor started including her pronouns in her email signature when I included mine. I thought this was a great way to show solidarity. Other people I work with have started doing the same thing and I really appreciate it.”

“Ask about pronouns! I wish this was done generally so nobody feels singled out.”

“When I came out to my research group as non-binary and asked them to use they/them/their pronouns, it was super awkward. When I was done talking, nobody said a single word. Complete silence for what felt like minutes. I get that people might not know what to say, but even just something like “sure, no problem” or “thanks for letting us know” would have been nice.”

“One of my seniors once dismissed LGBTQ+ diversity issues as something that they did not care about as they did not wish to know someone's sexual preferences. This sits alongside the viewpoint that not being heterosexual is somehow a fetish. Certain people need to be reminded that knowing someone's sexual orientation tells them nothing about their bedroom antics and these should not be confused.”

“Treat you like everybody else. I'm not made of glass. I prefer an atmosphere where everyone is comfortable and we all takes jibes at each other in a friendly manner. In team meetings we all talk about our personal lives as well as professional so an awareness of the lifestyles of your colleagues makes sense.”

“Mention the LGBTQ+ staff network; demonstrate awareness of and respect for different gender and sexual identities and relationship models (eg, married/unmarried; with child/child-free).”





06

LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

As employees of the University, all staff must abide by the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty.

The Equality Act 2010 provides protection against discrimination (direct or indirect), harassment, and victimisation. The Act states that it is unlawful to discriminate due to a person being heterosexual, gay, lesbian, or bisexual. In addition, it is unlawful to discriminate because you think someone has a particular sexual orientation (discrimination by perception) or someone is connected to a person who has a particular sexual orientation (discrimination by association). The Equality Act also states that it is unlawful to discriminate based on gender reassignment (relating to transgender people). To be protected from gender reassignment discrimination, it is not necessary to have undergone any specific treatment or surgery. Anyone who has transitioned, or who has an intention to transition in any way is protected under the law against discrimination and harassment.

For managers, it is important to note that the following statements relate to the Public Sector Equality Duty and therefore are the responsibility of all staff at the University. The law not only protects LGBTQ+ people from discrimination, but requires all staff to help create a supportive and equal culture for LGBTQ+ people in the workplace:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.
- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

07



SUPPORT AND HOW TO REPORT DISCRIMINATION

If you need advice:

- **Dignity and Respect Advisors** – a team of trained University and Guild staff who provide a confidential service for those involved in cases of harassment or bullying.
- **Human Resources Business Partner/ Manager/Advisor** – The HR Business Partner for your service or College is your point of contact for all HR related enquires.
- **LGBTQ+ Staff Network** – The LGBTQ+ Staff Network has a co-ordinators group, with representatives for different identities and areas of the University. Email LGBTQPlusStaff@exeter.ac.uk for confidential advice.

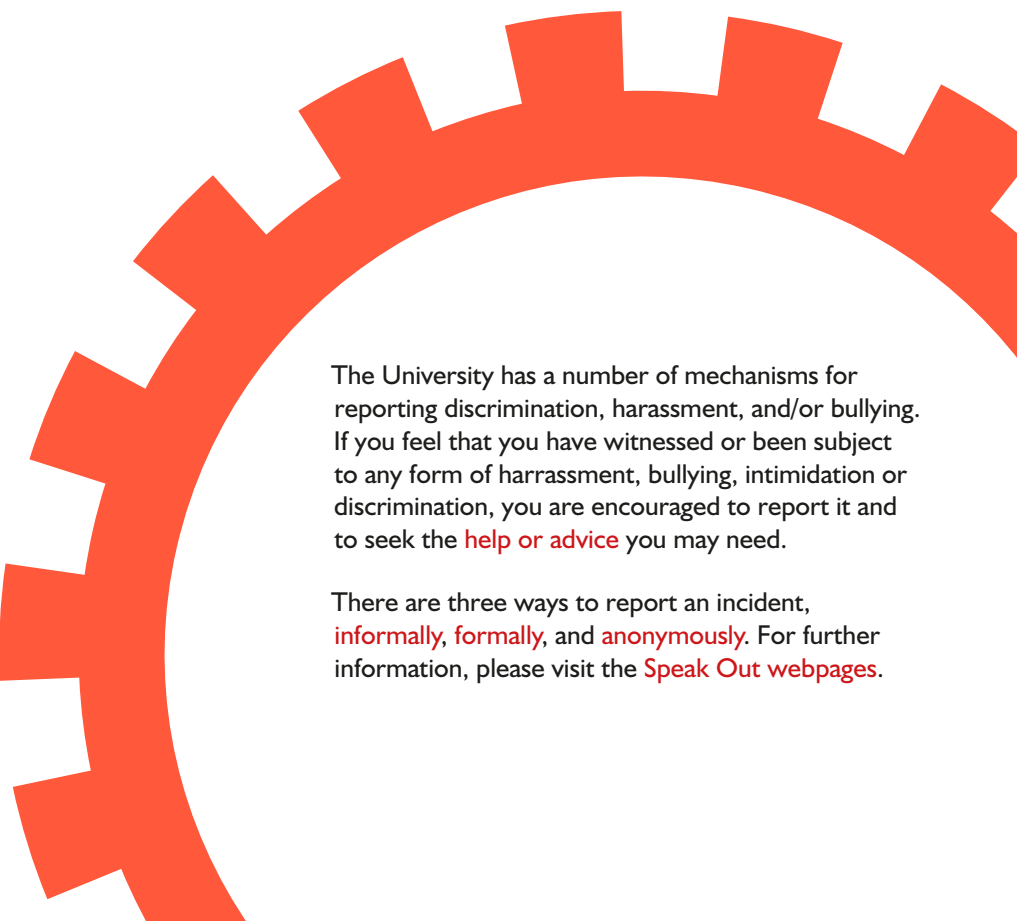
If you need wellbeing support:

- **Care First** – Care first provides confidential, impartial advice and support 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. They offer a counselling services and advice on a range of issues. The service is free for University of Exeter staff members and postgraduate research students to access. You don't need to ask permission from your line manager or supervisor before contacting Care first.
- **Occupational Health** – Occupational Health can assist with mental health and disability support and offer a staff counselling service.











The University has a number of mechanisms for reporting discrimination, harassment, and/or bullying. If you feel that you have witnessed or been subject to any form of harassment, bullying, intimidation or discrimination, you are encouraged to report it and to seek the **help or advice** you may need.

There are three ways to report an incident, **informally**, **formally**, and **anonymously**. For further information, please visit the **Speak Out webpages**.



HELPFUL RESOURCES


-  **Dignity and Respect Advisors** – The University provides a network of Dignity and Respect Advisors, which are members of staff from across the University who have volunteered and are trained to undertake the role. They provide a confidential and informal service for anyone involved in cases of harassment or bullying (including those facing allegations about their behaviour). Advisors can listen, talk through the options available and, if appropriate, signpost to other sources of support and advice: www.exeter.ac.uk/staff/equality/dignity
-  **Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity Team (EDI)** – The EDI Team provide professional advice, guidance and tools to enable everyone working or studying at Exeter to take individual responsibility and help create an inclusive community. Contact the team at equalityanddiversity@exeter.ac.uk
-  **HR Support Team** – Every team within the University has dedicated Human Resources support. HR advisors can offer advice and guidance on University policies and procedures.
-  **Name/Gender Change on Records: Procedures for Staff** – These webpages detail how staff can update their personal details on Trent, including gender identity, and who to contact to amend gender/name details on their staff record.
-  **Inclusivity Toolkit** – This toolkit has been designed to provide tools and information so that staff can reflect on how their behaviour affects others and challenge inappropriate behaviour. Real life stories are a powerful way of understanding the experiences of others and so the toolkit includes a number of real life experiences.
-  **Intercom Trust** – Intercom Trust is a lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans community resource in Cornwall, Devon, Dorset and the wider South West. They provide help against homophobic and transphobic prejudice, crime and discrimination (including bullying, harassment, abuse, attacks, and threatening behaviour), helping to develop the LGBT communities, providing professional training and consultancy, and working in partnership with local government, the police, health, and other organisations.


-  **LGBTQ+ Staff Network** – The LGBTQ+ staff network runs and promotes a number of events, including a monthly Coffee Morning, and Pride on Campus. Most events are open to all but some may be specifically for those that identify as LGBTQ+, and some may be just for allies.
-  **Stonewall** – Stonewall is a lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans rights charity in the UK. It is the largest LGBT rights organisation in Europe. Stonewall provides guidance and support to both employers and employees. The University of Exeter is a **Stonewall Diversity Champion**.

TERMINOLOGY


This is a useful, but not exclusive, guide to the terminology used by the LGBTQ+ community.




 **LGBTQ+** – This is a useful acronym for referring to a community of people who typically do not identify as heterosexual or cisgender. There are many different forms the acronym can take, the most common of which is LGBT or LGBTQ+. This stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer/questioning. The plus sign incorporates all other sexual orientations and gender identities such as intersex, non-binary, pansexual, asexual, etc.

 **Sexual Orientation** – A person's emotional, romantic and/or sexual attraction to another person. Typically, sexual orientation is defined by the gender of that person. Sexual orientation is different from sexuality, which refers to the interests and behaviours associated with the act of sex.




 **Asexual/Aromantic** – Asexual refers to a person who does not experience, or experiences very little sexual attraction. Asexual people may experience romantic attraction and therefore identify as heterosexual, lesbian, gay, bisexual, etc. Some people also identify as Aromantic, therefore not experiencing romantic attraction.




 **Bisexual/Bi** – Bi is an umbrella term used to describe a person who has an emotional, romantic, and/or sexual orientation towards more than one gender. Bi people may describe themselves using one or more of a wide variety of terms, including, but not limited to, bisexual, pansexual, and queer.




 **Gay/Homosexual** – Gay is a term which refers to a person who is emotionally, romantically and/or sexually attracted towards people of the same gender as themselves. Some women define themselves as gay rather than lesbian. Homosexual is often considered a more medical term and is not generally used by gay people themselves.




 **Lesbian** – Refers to a woman who has an emotional, romantic and/or sexual orientation towards women.




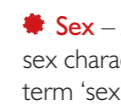
 **Pansexual** – Refers to a person whose emotional, romantic and/or sexual attraction towards others is not limited by biological sex, gender or gender identity. Bisexual people may identify as pansexual and vice-versa.




 **Queer** – In the past a derogatory term for LGBT individuals. The term has now been reclaimed by LGBTQ+ young people in particular who don't identify with traditional categories around gender identity and sexual orientation but it is still viewed as derogatory by some.





 **Straight/Heterosexual** – Refers to a person who has an emotional, romantic and/or sexual orientation towards people of the opposite gender. The flag seen here is used for heterosexual allies of the LGBTQ+ community.



 **Sex** – Assigned to a person at birth on the basis of primary sex characteristics and reproductive functions. Sometimes the term 'sex' is used with 'male' or 'female'.



 **Intersex** – A person who may have the biological attributes of both sexes or whose biological attributes do not fit with societal assumptions about what constitutes male or female. Intersex people may identify as male, female, non-binary, agender, or use another term.

 **Gender Identity** – A person's innate sense of their own gender which may or may not correspond to the sex assigned at birth. Often expressed in terms of masculinity and femininity, gender is largely assumed from the sex assigned at birth but may not match this.



✿ **Agender** – A person who identifies as without gender. People who identify as agender may describe themselves as genderless, gender neutral, not aligning with any gender, or having no other words that fit their gender identity.

✿ **Cisgender/Cis** – A person whose gender identity is the same as the sex that they were assigned at birth. Non-trans is also used by some people.



✿ **Non-binary** – An umbrella term for a person who does not identify as male or female, or who may identify as both. Non-binary people may use other terms such as genderqueer or gender-fluid. Some non-binary people use gender neutral pronouns such as They instead of He/She, and/or a gender neutral title such as Mx instead of Mr/Miss. Some non-binary people also identify as trans.



✿ **Transgender/Trans** – An umbrella term to describe people whose gender is not the same as, or does not sit with, the sex they were assigned at birth. Trans people may describe themselves using one or more of a wide range of terms, including (but not limited to) transgender, transsexual, genderqueer, gender-fluid, non-binary, agender, etc. The term transsexual was used in the past as a more medical term and whilst still used by some, most people prefer the term trans or transgender.

Other terms:

✿ **Coming out** – When a person first tells someone/others about their identity as LGBTQ+.

✿ **Outed** – When a person's LGBTQ+ identity is disclosed to someone else without their consent.

✿ **Heteronormativity** – An assumption of heterosexuality or a viewpoint that expresses heterosexuality as a given instead of being one of many possibilities. Often expressed subtly, heteronormativity refers to heterosexuality being assumed to be the default sexual orientation.

✿ **Cisnormativity** – The assumption that all, or almost all, individuals are cisgender. Although transgender-identified people comprise a fairly small percentage of the population, many trans people and allies consider it to be offensive to presume that everyone is cisgender unless otherwise specified.

✿ **Homophobia** – The fear or dislike of someone, based on prejudice or negative attitudes, beliefs, or views about people who are not heterosexual. Homophobic bullying may be targeted at people who are, or who are perceived to be not heterosexual.

✿ **Biphobia** – The fear or dislike of someone based on the fact they are bisexual, including the denial/refusal to accept their sexual orientation or identity. Biphobia often comes from within the LGBTQ+ community as well as from heterosexual and cisgender people.

✿ **Transphobia** – The fear or dislike of someone based on the fact they are trans, including the denial/refusal to accept their gender identity.

✿ **Gender expression** – How a person chooses to outwardly express their gender, within the context of societal expectations of gender. For example, a person may express their gender identity through clothing choices. A person who does not conform to societal expectations of gender may not necessarily identify as trans.

✿ **Gender reassignment** – Another way of describing a person's transition. To undergo gender reassignment usually means to undergo some sort of medical intervention, but it can also mean changing names, pronouns, dressing differently and living in the self-identified gender. Some people prefer the terms 'gender realignment' or 'transition' rather than gender reassignment as the term can suggest that a person has not always been the gender that they identify as.

✿ **Gender Recognition Certificate (GRC)** – This enables trans people to be legally recognised in their affirmed gender and to be issued with a new birth certificate. Not all trans people will apply for a GRC and you currently have to be over 18 to apply. You do not need a Gender Recognition Certificate to change your gender on records at work or to legally change your gender on documents such as your passport.

✿ **Pronouns** – Words we use to refer to people's gender in conversation for example, 'he/him/his' or 'she/her/hers'. Some people may prefer others to refer to them in gender neutral language and use pronouns such as 'they/them/theirs' or 'ze/zir/zirs'.

✿ **Transitioning** – The steps a trans person may take to live in the gender with which they identify. Each person's transition will involve different things. For some this involves medical intervention, such as hormone replacement therapy and surgeries, but not all trans people want or are able to have this. Transitioning also might involve things such as telling friends and family, dressing differently and changing official documents.

