

Gender Identity and Expression

Guide to Terminology

pushing
bullying pinching
withholding food & drink coercion intimidation
hitting isolating emotional abuse
restraint shaking
misusing medication
scalding teasing sexual abuse
leaving on own blaming
stealing money or benefits neglect
leaving on own ignoring needs

This guide is designed to be an introduction to the terms widely in use to describe gender identity and gender expression. It is not intended to be an exhaustive list and each individual will have terms they prefer to use. You should always check with the person you are speaking to as to the terms they prefer to use and which best fit their definition of who they are. Gender identity is also a dynamic area in which understanding and language evolves and develops as our awareness grows.

However, it is intended that the below explanation of some of the more common terms will help people begin to feel more confident in understanding and exploring gender identity issues with people where appropriate.

- **Cisgender** - Adjective that means “identifies as their sex assigned at birth”, derived from the Latin word meaning “on the same side”.
- **Cisgenderism** – Concept where social structures, infrastructure, institutions are set up based on the assumption everybody is cisgender.
- **Cross-dresser** – A person who, occasionally or regularly, wears clothing traditionally associated with another gender. They usually do not seek to socially or medically transition to another gender.
- **Deadnaming** – Calling someone by their birth name after they have changed their name. This term is often associated with trans people who have changed their name as part of their transition.
- **Gender** – Often expressed in terms of masculinity and femininity, gender is largely culturally determined and is assumed from the sex assigned at birth.
- **Gender Dysphoria** – Used to describe when a person 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 sex they were assigned at birth.
- **Gender Expression** – The social cues you adopt to tell people about your gender.
- **Gender Identity** – Your internal sense of being a man, woman, or neither.
- **GRC** – Gender Recognition Certificate. A full Gender Recognition Certificate shows that a person has satisfied the criteria for legal recognition in the acquired gender. It makes the recipient of the certificate, for all intents and purposes, the sex listed on the certificate from that moment onward. The legal basis for creating a GRC is found in the Gender Recognition Act 2004.

You do not need a GRC to change your gender markers at work or to legally change your gender on other documents such as your passport.

- **Intersex** – A term used to describe 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.
- **LGBTQ+** - Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer. The 'plus' is often used to denote the many other sexual and gender identities that people may have.
- **Non-Binary** – A term used by people who identify their gender as something other than male or female. Their gender identity can be stable or fluid over time.
- **Pronoun** – The gendered terms we use to refer to a person, e.g. she/her, he/him, they/them, etc.
- **Queer** – A reclaimed term used by some people of marginalised gender identities and sexual orientations, who are not cisgender and/or heterosexual. Historically, this was used as a derogatory slur to identify LGBT+ people.
- **Sex assigned at birth** – The biological sex category that was assigned to you at birth.
- **Transgender (Trans)** – An umbrella term that describes people whose gender identity or expression does not match the sex they were assigned-at-birth.
- **Trans Man** – An identity label sometimes adopted by individuals who are assigned female at birth and identify as men. Previously these individuals may have been described as 'female to male' or 'FTM'.
- **Trans Woman** - An identity label sometimes adopted by individuals who are assigned male at birth and identify as women. Previously these individuals may have been described as 'male to female' or 'MTF'.
- **Transsexual** - A person who consistently self-identifies psychologically as a gender/sex other than the gender/sex they were assigned at birth. This a largely outdated term, though it is still commonly used by Spanish and Portuguese speakers and some older trans people.

This guide was developed from materials produced by [Stonewall](#) and by Aedan Wolton Social Worker/Gender Identity Healthcare Practitioner