



Trans Awareness Guide

Line Manager Guide to Supporting Transgender Colleagues

Introduction

We want to be an inclusive employer, where every single one of our colleagues can fulfil their potential. As a line manager, you have a huge role to play in creating an environment where all of your colleagues can be themselves in work. Around 1% of the UK population identify as trans or non-binary, and so it's vital that you feel equipped to support any trans colleagues in your teams.

This guide contains advice and guidance on how to effectively support colleagues who are starting to transition and those that have already undergone transition. This isn't only in line with our company values and the right thing to do, but also a requirement under the Equality Act 2010.

If after reading this pack you need further advice on a particular situation you can contact our HR team.

This pack covers the following sections:

- Supporting your colleagues as they transition
- Saying it right
- FAQ

As well as this guide there are also a number of websites that can provide support and advice for both you and your colleagues and these can be found in the final section of this pack.

Supporting a colleague as they transition

You'll be the first point of contact for any queries as your colleague transitions. Our trans colleagues have told us that having an initial conversation with line managers about their gender identity, even when they have a great relationship, can be daunting. Therefore being open minded and sensitive during your first conversation is really important.

Planning a transition

You'll need to be on hand to support your colleague as they plan their transition and their Real Life Experience (RLE). RLE is a period of time where a person lives fully and continuously in the gender that they identify with. Doctors require their transgender patients to live fully in role for a period of time before referring someone for hormone treatment or surgery.

It is advisable that where possible a small period of leave is taken before your colleague comes into work in their new identity. This can be taken as holiday if your colleague has leave available or as authorised paid or unpaid leave.

Informing work colleagues

This period of leave may be an appropriate time for you, **with the agreement** of your transitioning colleague, to inform others in your team about what's happening. This has the benefit of providing your transgender colleague with the right levels of support and to maintain better connections within the team.

Any communication should be agreed with your transitioning colleague first, they may wish to share their story themselves, or decide not to communicate at all, or they ask you to share this with your team on their behalf.

You should always handle any colleague queries in a sensitive and respectful way. Not everyone is familiar with the term transgender, so ensure that your colleagues feel safe to ask questions. Refer to the 'Saying it Right' section at the end of this guide. You should be aware of any concerns other colleagues may have and resolve any issues quickly.

Once they have been made aware, everyone should refer to your transgender colleague by their new name and use pronouns appropriate to their gender identity.

Time off for medical treatment

Time off for medical or other treatment should be treated like time off for medical appointments, as per our policy or terms and conditions. Where possible your transgender colleague should confirm with you any anticipated time off for medical appointments. Flexibility, wherever possible, should be offered to colleagues who may need to take holiday, rearrange working hours or take authorised unpaid leave in order to attend additional appointments. Procedures which may be considered 'cosmetic' have particular significance for transgender colleagues in terms of their emotional well-being and the progress of their transition. These are something that should be considered medical and not cosmetic.

Uniform

A colleague starting their transition will most likely wish to wear the uniform/clothing (including PPE) appropriate to their role according to their gender identity. You should provide your colleague with new uniform that they feel is appropriate to their gender.

Toilet and changing room facilities

The law states that a colleague who has made or is making a permanent change of gender should be able to use the toilet facilities that are in line with their gender identity. Colleagues should not be asked to use separate facilities, e.g. accessible toilets. If you have obtained the permission of your transgender colleague to share their story, explain to your team that they will be using the right facilities for them. If your colleague is working in a location where lockers are positioned in gendered areas make sure they have access to a locker in the relevant area.

Name Change

If a colleague has a new name or preferred name a new name badge should be issued for that colleague. Your colleague can update their preferred name and gender identity on with HR.

Additionally a new photograph and security pass may need to be made.

A colleague's gender history

A colleague is not required to tell you if they have undergone gender reassignment and you do not have a right to ask. If you become aware of information relating to a colleague's gender history, you must keep this information confidential. You must not disclose information about a colleague's gender history to anyone else without your colleague's consent. Any records that you need to keep that relate to a colleague's previous gender, for example relevant qualifications in a previous name, must be kept confidentially. When these records are no longer needed they should be disposed of in the confidential waste.

Gender Recognition Certificate (GRC)

By law you remain your birth gender unless you apply for a Gender Recognition Certificate to change it legally. According to Gov.UK to legally change your gender status you must:

- have British medical evidence
- be 18 or over
- be diagnosed with gender dysphoria (unhappiness with your birth gender)
- have lived as your new gender for 2 years
- intend to live in your changed gender for the rest of your life
- apply to the Gender Recognition Panel

Please note that in order to transition and be protected under the Equality Act 2010 you do not need a GRC.

Saying it right

What are the correct words to use?

Below is a glossary of terms that are used to discuss gender identity and transgender identities. However, if you're unsure how your colleague would like to be addressed, please politely ask them.

Affirmed gender

Refers to the post-transition gender in which a person lives and presents themselves to the world. It is not the gender that they were registered in at birth, but it is the gender in which they should be treated. It is possible for an individual to transition fully to the affirmed gender without surgical intervention.

Cisgender

Is a term used to describe someone's gender identity when they identify with the sex they were born with. Non-trans is also used by some people. However, most commonly people will describe themselves as male/female or man/woman.

Gender dysphoria

Is a medical term used to describe people who have a gender identity/expression that is different from their birth gender.

Gender identity

Describes the gender that someone feels they are.

Gender reassignment

This is a term used by the Equality Act 2010 and is defined as covering those people who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone, a process (or part of a process) of reassigning their sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex. It is not necessary to have medical treatment in order to benefit from the protection against discrimination that the Equality Act affords people who have reassigned their gender.

Gender Recognition Certificate (GRC)

By law, a person will be classed as their birth gender unless he or she applies for a GRC to change it legally. In order to change gender a GRC is not mandatory and many people transition without having one. It's also a legal offence to ask someone if they have a GRC.

Gender fluid, gender neutral, gender queer, non-binary

Describes any gender identity which does not fit within the binary of male and female.

Non-binary individuals might ask you to use the pronoun "they" and might indicate their title as 'Mx', 'Sie', 'Per' or another term of their choice.

Intersex

Intersex is a separate identity which is sometimes attributed to trans. Intersex is a general term used for a variety of conditions in which a person is born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn't seem to fit the typical definitions of female and male.

Pronouns

These are important when referring to whether or not a person is called 'he' 'she' or 'they' (if non binary), if unsure of what pronoun to use when referring to a colleague, ask them how they would like to be addressed. If a pronoun mistake occurs such as calling someone he instead of she – do apologise and make an effort to address someone correctly the next time.

Transsexual

This term was used more commonly in the past to refer to someone who transitioned to live in the 'opposite' gender to the one they were assigned at birth. This term is still used by some although many people prefer the term trans or transgender as the term transsexual can suggest a link to someone's sexual orientation which transgender does not.

Trans

This is an umbrella term used to describe someone who presents themselves in a gender that differs from the one that they were assigned at birth. It can encompass individuals who are transsexual, cross-dressers (or transvestite), intersex or non-binary.

Transgender man

People who were assigned female at birth but identify and live as men may use this term to describe themselves. They may shorten it to trans man, or trans guy. Some may use FTM which is an abbreviation for female-to-male. He/him pronouns would be the correct ones to use. Most just prefer to be called men. Always ask what the individual prefers.

Transgender 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 use MTF which is an abbreviation for male-to-female. She/her pronouns would be the correct ones to use. Most just prefer to be called women. Always ask what the individual prefers.

Transition

This describes the journey that someone takes from living in their assigned gender to living and presenting as the gender which they identify. This may include some or all of the following personal, medical, and legal steps: telling family, friends, and co-workers; using a different name and new pronouns; dressing differently; changing one's name and/or sex on legal documents; hormone therapy; and possibly (though not always) one or more types of surgery. The exact steps involved in transition will vary from person to person.

Cross dresser

Someone who wears the clothes usually expected to be worn by someone of the 'opposite' gender. Other terms include 'transvestite' (now becoming a dated term and disliked by some) and 'dual role'. A cross-dresser is unlikely to have a full-time identity as a member of their cross-dressed gender and typically does not seek medical intervention.

FAQ's

What should I do if a transgender colleague tells me they are being harassed or bullied by another colleague?

We have a Grievance policy concerning issues of bullying and harassment and how complaints of this type will be dealt with. You should make sure your transgender colleague is aware that if they are suffering from harassment and bullying, they should tell you in the first instance or another manager.

What should I do if a customer refuses to be served by a transgender colleague?

You should politely remind the customer that all colleagues have received the same level of training and are able to serve their needs. If a customer still refuses to be served by the colleague, you should politely remind them that we have a number of other checkouts and self-scan that are available for them to use and in the unlikely event that the customer becomes abusive, escalate to the manager running the store who may decide to ask the customer to leave the store as transphobic abuse will not be tolerated.

What should I do if colleagues are acting inappropriately towards my trans colleague?

Try to keep communication channels open, but it's important to remind colleagues about working together respectfully and embracing each other's differences. However, in instances where another colleague has acted in a discriminatory way (e.g. deliberately mis-using pronouns), this is considered a disciplinary matter and appropriate action must be taken.

What happens if colleagues are uncomfortable with a colleague transitioning?

If other colleagues feel uncomfortable with this decision, you should in the first instance sit down and talk through their concerns. Your transgender colleague is protected by law and not allowing colleagues to use the appropriate facilities is classed as discrimination and will have serious implications on you and our business.

Is a colleague allowed to wear clothing of the opposite sex if they are not considering transitioning or are not transgender?

Colleagues must wear the required PPE when necessary. But colleagues can wear what they like as long as it's within our approved uniform guidelines.

Transgender is not in line with my beliefs, what should I do?

We have a responsibility under the Equality Act 2010 to treat everybody equally and without discrimination whatever our individual religious and personal beliefs.

A colleague of mine needs to change their name, title and gender on their work files, can they do this?

Yes. They can update via HR and they can change their name, title and gender details.

Additional support

Trans*formation UK

Trans*formation is a network of trans business professionals who seek to raise trans visibility and equality at work

Website: www.transformationuk.com

Stonewall

Stonewall (Stonewall is a lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans rights charity in the UK)

Website: www.stonewall.org.uk

Mermaids

Mermaids provides support for families and children with gender identity questions

Website: www.mermaidsuk.org.uk