

What do we mean by Trans-gender?

In this guidance we use the term trans- to refer to people with the protected characteristic of gender reassignment.

We've used this term because it's one of the broadest and most widely accepted words in current use. But, we know it's not a term that everyone uses, and we recognise and respect an individual's right to choose how they are described.

We want to make it clear that this guidance is about supporting and including everyone who has an experience of gender that is like what we describe below. Even if they use other terms to describe themselves as well as, or instead of, trans- In particular, many people who transition will describe themselves as men or women, and no longer described themselves as trans-.

Trans- and similar words are descriptive terms and should be used as such, for example: 'a trans- person', rather than 'a trans' or 'a transgender'.

To understand who trans- people are, it's first useful to understand the difference between sex and gender.

Sex refers primarily to a person's biological and physical characteristics, associated with the categories of female and male. It includes factors such as internal and external reproductive organs, chromosomes and hormonal make-up.

Gender refers to a person's sense of self as, for example, a woman, man, or non-binary person (their gender identity). It also includes associated behavioural expressions (gender expression) which relate to how masculinity or femininity are expressed in a society or culture.

As a culture, we typically expect someone's gender identity to align with their recorded sex, so gender gets recorded along with sex. This means we expect someone recorded as female at birth because of their biological sex to grow up to think of themselves as a girl and then a woman. And we expect someone recorded as male at birth because of their biological sex to grow up to think of themselves as a boy and then a man.

But, this isn't the case for everyone. Sex doesn't always determine gender identity. Around 1 in 100 people, maybe more, will find that the gender they have recorded at birth isn't a good match for who they know themselves to be.

People who feel that the sex (and gender) recorded at birth does not match or sit easily with their own sense of gender may describe themselves as trans, or use a similar term.

This includes people with a very wide range of different experiences, such as people recorded as female at birth who know themselves to be men; people recorded as male at birth who know themselves to be women; people who do not consider themselves as either men or women (non-binary); and people who may experience or express different genders at different times.

People may question their gender for a period before coming to an understanding of who they are.

Some people then transition. **Transitioning** is a personal process of taking steps to change your recorded sex and gender-expression to one that matches your gender identity. This can involve social, medical or legal changes. If, how, and at what pace a person transitions are individual to them.

Young people under the age of 18 can transition socially, but they can't get hormones or surgery, or change their legal sex. If they have parental consent, they can change the gender marker on their passport.

Some young trans- people can get 'hormone blockers' – medications which put puberty on hold and delay their body from developing in ways they aren't comfortable with.

There's plenty more to learn about trans- people and the diversity of their lives and experiences. The [Mermaids website](#) has some great information on and provides links from young people, parents and professionals. If you need further guidance please contact the [National Safeguarding Manager](#) or Force Diversity Unit or Staff Associations who will be able to help signpost you.

Glossary of Terms

The terms and descriptions used to talk about gender and gender identity are evolving all the time. We'll check on this and keep the list below up to date.

Sex refers primarily to a person's biological and physical characteristics, associated with the categories of male and female. It includes factors such as internal and external reproductive organs, chromosomes and hormonal make-up.

Sex is also a legal term and a protected characteristic, and it's recorded on birth certificates. If a person obtains a Gender Recognition Certificate (GRC) they have legally changed their sex.

Gender reassignment is defined in the Equality Act 2010 as ‘A person has the protected characteristic of gender reassignment if the person is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process (or part of a process) to reassigning the person's sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex’.

Gender reassignment is both a legal term and a protected characteristic.

Gender refers primarily to a person's sense of self as, for example, a man, woman or non-binary person (their gender identity), and to associated behavioural expressions (gender expression) set within the social and cultural contexts related to masculinity and femininity.

Gender identity is not automatically determined by sex, although it is usually assumed that it is, as they very commonly correlate.

Sex/gender recorded at birth refers to the sex/gender someone was assumed to have, based on the genitals they had when they were born.

Trans is a term that some people who feel that the sex/gender recorded at birth does not match or sit easily with their sense of self can use to describe themselves. For example, a person recorded as female at birth whose gender identity is male/man.

Cisgender or cis can be used to describe people who feel that the sex/gender recorded at birth aligns well with their sense of self. For example, a person recorded as female at birth whose gender identity is female/woman. Sometimes thought of as the opposite of trans-.

Gender identity is a person's inner sense of their own gender as, for example, a man, woman or non-binary person. This may or may not correspond to the sex recorded at birth.

Gender expression refers to the cultural gender-related cues and behaviours a person uses, traditionally associated with masculinity and femininity. This includes name, pronoun, title, clothing, hair, walk, speech, mannerisms and any other gendered aspects of presentation.

Understanding the difference between gender identity and gender expression allows us to recognise that transition is mostly about changing gender expression (cultural gender cues) rather than gender identity (sense of self).

Transitioning is a process of moving from your recorded sex/gender expression to one that accords with your gender identity. This can refer to social, medical or legal changes.

Gender stereotypes are when certain characteristics, such as preferring a colour or an activity, are applied to an entire gender. For example, 'all girls like pink' is a very common stereotype.

If a child enjoys activities or expressing themselves in a way that is stereotypically associated with a gender different to their recorded sex, this does not mean they are trans-.

Gender non-conforming is a broad term that describes those who do not conform to social expectations of gender identities or gender expressions. Being gender non-conforming does not mean someone is trans-, nor are all trans- people gender non-conforming.

Pronouns are words we use to stand in for people's names in conversation. These are often gendered - for example, "he", "she" or "they", "him", "her" or "them".

Trans girl/woman is someone recorded as male at birth whose gender identity is female (woman/girl). They may describe themselves as a woman with a trans-history or simply a woman.

Trans boy/man is someone recorded as female at birth whose gender identity is male (man/boy). They may describe themselves as a man with a trans- history or simply a man.

Non-binary refers to someone whose gender identity is not only male/man or female/woman. They may experience their gender as both male and female, or neither male nor female or take another approach to gender that doesn't align with traditional binary ideas.

Transphobia is the fear or dislike of, or prejudice towards, someone based on the fact they're trans-. This includes the denial or refusal to accept their gender identity.

Transgender Cadets

When supporting a young person who identifies as trans, further advice can be gained from your Force LGBT Network and/or the National VPC Team.

It is very difficult to write guidance around this as each individual has specific needs. Good practice has been to sit down with the young person and their parents/carers and discuss what their wishes are, how they want to be treated and how we can best support them on their journey.

There may need to be some communication and education around the subject with other cadets and parents/carers but the LGBT Network, National VPC Team and the cadet involved can advise you.

The main questions that arise around this subject are: Names and Pronoun change.

Respecting a young person's request to change name and pronoun is a pivotal part of supporting and validating that young person's identity. It is also important to consistently use preferred pronouns and names in order to protect a child or young person's confidentiality and to not 'out' them in ways that may be unsafe and exposing. Some trans- young people may wish to change their name to make it in line with their chosen gender identity. Although they may not have changed their name legally, individuals have the right to choose the name by which they are known to cadet leaders, friends and family. Any problems are likely to be the practical ones of proving that different names refer to the same person.

Working with parents and carers

Many parents/carers of a child or young person who identifies as trans or gender questioning will be supportive of their child's gender identity; however, this is not always the case. When working with parents/carers, leaders should bear in mind that they are representing the interests of the young person. As far as possible, care should be taken to ensure the wishes of the individual cadet are taken into account with a view to supporting them during potential transition. Confidential information must not be shared even with the parents/carers without the child or young person's permission unless there are safeguarding reasons for doing so. The fact that a young person identifies as Trans is not in itself a safeguarding issue.

Toilets

Cadets have the right to access the toilet that corresponds to their gender identity. Any cadet who has a need or desire for increased privacy, regardless of the underlying reason, should be provided access to a single stall toilet, but no cadet will be required to use such a toilet.

Changing Rooms

The use of changing rooms by trans cadets should be assessed on a case -by- case basis in discussion with the trans cadet and their parents/carer. In most cases, trans cadets should have access to the changing room that corresponds to their gender identity unless they choose not to. This approach is underpinned by the Equality Act 2010 where refusing a child or young person access to the changing room of their true gender identity would constitute an act of discrimination. Any cadet who has a need or desire for increased privacy, regardless of the underlying reason, should be provided with a reasonable alternative changing area such as the use of a private area (e.g.: a nearby toilet stall with a door, an area separated by a curtain or a nearby office), or with a separate time to change (e.g.: using the changing room that corresponds to their gender identity before or after other cadets). Any alternative arrangement should be provided in a way that protects the cadets' ability to keep their trans- status confidential if required.

Residential trips

A degree of discussion, care and preparation is required to enable trans cadets to participate in residential trips. To exclude trans cadets from residential trips would be contravening the Equality Act. As far as possible, trans cadets should be able to sleep in dorms appropriate to their gender identity where they wish to. Some trans young people may not feel comfortable doing this and in such cases alternative sleeping and living arrangements should be made. Discuss this with the trans young person and their family. If the trans young person wishes to sleep in a dorm/tent of the gender they identify with then arrangements should be outlined in your risk assessment. Similarly, the degree of participation in physical activities that a trans child or young person feels comfortable with should be discussed prior to any residential trip with them and if appropriate their parents/cares. For example, young trans men who are binding their breasts can often experience a great degree of discomfort when participating in activities such as climbing or canoeing. Where a trans cadet feels that they do not want to or cannot participate, alternative arrangements should be made to allow for them to participate in a more appropriate activity.

Risk assessments should be carried out prior to residential trips in order to make reasonable adjustments which would enable the participation of trans cadets. If travelling abroad leaders should consider and investigate the laws regarding trans communities in countries considered for visits. The International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA) have information on their website about countries that pose a risk to trans individuals.

Dealing with other Cadets and Parents

Where a young person's trans identity is known to the wider cadet community, leaders will need to ensure that they have a robust language using the Equality Act and a Human Rights approach to counteract any prejudice expressed or concerns raised. Additionally, when a parent/carer of a cadet raises a concern about the safety of their child when spending time in the company of a trans cadet or cadet leader it is vital that cadet leaders focus on the 'problem' being with the person who raises the concern and not with the trans individual. Therefore, support work should be aimed at answering the question 'how can we make your child feel more safe?' rather than compromising the rights of the trans person.

Scenario

A parent of a female cadet complains that leaders are allowing a "boy" to get changed next to their daughter. The "Boy" in question is a male to female trans cadet.

In this scenario it would not be appropriate to remove the trans young person from the changing room, it would be far more appropriate to look at offering an alternative changing environment for the cadet who feels uncomfortable around the trans person. A Human Rights response would be to state that although the individual in question may have the body of a boy, they are in every other respect a girl and as such have the right under the Equality Act to change with the girls and to be treated fairly as such. It is the responsibility of cadet leaders to support both trans cadets and cis-gendered cadets to feel comfortable around one another.