



Guide to trans allyship



Contents

2	<u>What is Allyship?</u>
3	<u>Terminology</u>
5	<u>Other useful definitions</u>
9	<u>What does Allyship look like?</u>
11	<u>Top tips to be a great trans ally</u>
17	<u>Phrases to avoid</u>
18	<u>Recommended reading</u>
20	<u>Contact us</u>

Allyship

Allyship is critical to fostering an inclusive culture.

Policies alone cannot shift culture; we all need to play our part.

"An ally is any person that actively promotes and aspires to advance the culture of inclusion through intentional, positive and conscious effort that benefit people as a whole."

Forbes Magazine 2018

An LGBT+ ally advocates for and champions LGBT+ colleagues in the workplace.

Allyship is a continuous process of building relationships based on trust, consistency and accountability with the marginalised individuals and/or groups of people you are seeking to advocate for. It is not self-defined - work and efforts must be recognised by those you are seeking to ally with. It is an opportunity to grow and learn about ourselves, whilst building confidence in others.

Allyship is a continual investment of time in supporting others, holding ourselves accountable when mistakes are made, apologising and being prepared to rework the approach towards allyship as needs change. Through personal actions, a more inclusive work environment can be fostered.

People perform better when they can be themselves. We want you to help us make Police Scotland an inclusive organisation where everyone can bring their best selves to work and where all staff feel safe and included.

"It is not enough to be compassionate.
You must act."

Tenzin Gyatso, 14th Dalai Lama

Terminology

Language is important and is constantly evolving. It is good practice to keep yourself up-to-date and informed by regularly consulting a range of sources. We recommend:

The Equality Network	<u>equality-network.org</u>
LGBT Youth Scotland	<u>lgbtyouth.org.uk</u>
Stonewall	<u>stonewall.org.uk</u>
Time for Inclusive Education	<u>tie.scot</u>

Throughout this document the acronym LGBT+ is used as an umbrella term to refer to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer and questioning communities. We have endeavoured to be as inclusive as possible but if you have any advice or suggestions to help improve this document, please contact us (see last page).

We have consulted a wide variety of sources to prepare this document including but not limited to those listed above. We thank all of our community partners for their continued support.

Here is what we mean when we use the acronym LGBTQI:

L	Lesbian	A woman who is attracted to women. Some non-binary people may also identify with this term.
G	Gay	A man who is attracted to men. Gay is also a generic term for lesbian and gay sexuality - some women define themselves as gay rather than lesbian. Some non-binary people may also identify with this term.
B	Bisexual	An umbrella term used to describe an attraction 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.
T	Transgender	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. Transgender is often shortened to 'trans' and either is ok to use. 'Trans' is used throughout this document.
I	Intersex	A term used to describe a person who may not have the biological attributes of both sexes or whose biological attributes do not fit with societal assumptions about what constitutes male or female.
Q	Queer	Originally used as a hate slur, some people have reclaimed it whilst others still find it offensive. An identity label which is non-specific about a person's sexual orientation.
Q	Questioning	A person who is still exploring their sexuality and / or gender identity.

Other useful definitions



Cis / Cisgender

Someone whose gender identity is the same as the sex they were assigned at birth. Non-trans is also used by some people.



Coming Out

When a person first tells someone/others about their orientation and/or gender identity.



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

How a person chooses to outwardly express their gender, within the context of societal expectations of gender. A person who does not conform to societal expectations of gender may not, however, identify as trans.



Gender Identity

A person's innate sense of their own gender, whether male, female or something else (see non-binary below), which may or may not correspond to the sex assigned at birth.



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 their self-identified gender. Gender reassignment is a characteristic that is protected by the Equality Act 2010, and it is further interpreted in the Equality Act 2010 approved code of practice.



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 GRC to change your gender markers at work or to legally change your gender on other documents such as your passport.



Non-Binary

An umbrella term for people whose gender identity doesn't sit comfortably with 'man' or 'woman'. Non-binary identities are varied and can include people who identify with some aspects of binary identities, while others reject them entirely.



Outed

When a lesbian, gay, bi or trans person's sexual orientation or gender identity is disclosed to someone else without their consent.



Person with a trans history

Someone who identifies as male or female or a man or woman but was assigned the opposite sex at birth. This is increasingly used by people to acknowledge a trans past.



Passing

If someone is regarded, at a glance, to be a cisgender man or cisgender woman. Cisgender refers to someone whose gender identity matches the sex they were 'assigned' at birth. This might include physical gender cues (including but not limited to hair and clothing) and/or behaviour which is historically or culturally associated with a particular gender. It is considered more appropriate to use "read" i.e. you read someone, at a glance, to be a cisgender man or cisgender woman. This removes the responsibility of the trans person to "pass" and places it on the beholder to "read".



Pronoun

Words we use to refer to people's gender in conversation - for example, 'he' or 'she'. Some people may prefer others to refer to them in gender neutral language and use pronouns such as they/their and ze/zir. Newly introduced pronouns may be referred to as 'neopronouns'.



Sex

Assigned to a person on the basis of primary sex characteristics (genitalia) and reproductive functions. Sometimes the terms 'sex' and 'gender' are interchanged to mean 'male' or 'female'.



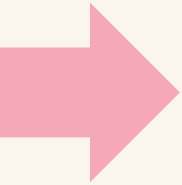
Spectrum

A term used to cover a variety of identities that have a root commonality or shared experience.



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 (but not limited to) transgender, transsexual, gender-queer (GQ), gender-fluid, non-binary, gender-variant, genderless, agender, nongender, third gender, bi-gender, trans man, trans woman, trans masculine, trans feminine and neutrois.



Transgender man

A term used to describe someone who is assigned female at birth but identifies and lives as a man. This may be shortened to trans man, or FTM, an abbreviation for female-to-male. However FTM / MTF can be considered offensive or inaccurate but this varies from person to person. This can also be the case for AMAB / AFAB which stands for 'Assigned male / female at birth'. 'Person with a trans history' is becoming a common way to refer to a trans person.



Transgender woman

A term used to describe someone who is assigned male at birth but identifies and lives as a woman. This may be shortened to trans woman, or MTF, an abbreviation for male-to-female. However FTM / MTF can be considered offensive or inaccurate but this varies from person to person. This can also be the case for AMAB / AFAB which stands for 'Assigned male / female at birth'. 'Person with a trans history' is becoming a common way to refer to a trans person.



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 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.



Transphobia

The fear or dislike of someone based on the fact they are trans, including denying their gender identity or refusing to accept it. Transphobia may be targeted at people who are, or who are perceived to be, trans.



Transexual

This was used in the past as a more medical term (similarly to homosexual) to refer to someone whose gender is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with, the sex they were assigned at birth. This term is still used by some although many people prefer the term trans or transgender.

What does Allyship look like?

Ask	<p>Ask others about their experiences and share yours. One of the seemingly smallest but also most powerful things we can do is ask others about their experience and how they are feeling. This can help you better understand the people you work with and their diverse experiences.</p>
Listen	<p>Listen with empathy and seek to understand different perspectives.</p> <p>Listen to what LGBT people are saying. If someone comes out to you, let them set the tone for the conversation. If they are bringing it up in a casual way, respond in kind. If they are being more serious, make it clear that you support them.</p> <p>Take note of what words a person uses to describe themselves and their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. You should not apply labels to a person if you have not heard them use those labels for themselves.</p>
Show Up	<p>Show up by being present, engaged, and committed. The next step in the ally journey is an active one. Once you have practiced asking questions and listening with empathy for a while, you can begin to understand what action is needed to help move a cause forward and feel more comfortable getting involved. Showing up is an extremely powerful way to show your support. This can mean showing up to an employee resource group meeting or participating workshop or local pride march.</p>
Speak Up	<p>Speak up as an advocate and evangelise your allyship among others.</p> <p>One of the bravest and most effective things an ally can do is speak up for someone. Speaking up can be uncomfortable and even scary. But not speaking up can mean you agree with the injustice or harmful actions around you. When we advocate for issues that don't directly impact us, we are giving a voice and platform to those who do not have one or need it to be amplified. The more voices that speak up for what's right, the louder we can be, and the more others have to take notice.</p>

Top tips to be a great trans ally

Here are some tips that can be used as you move towards becoming a great ally to trans people. This list is not exhaustive as there is usually never one "right" thing to do in every situation but we hope you find it useful as a starting point.

When you commit to becoming an ally of trans people your actions will help change culture, making society a better, safer place for trans people and for all people (trans or not) who do not conform to conventional gender expectations.



1

You can't tell if someone is transgender just by looking

Transgender people don't look any certain way. Many trans people do not appear "visibly trans," meaning they are not perceived to be transgender by others. It is not possible to look around a room and "see" if there are any transgender people. (It would be like a person looking around the room to "see" if there are any gay people.)

You should assume that there may be transgender people in any space.

2

Don't make assumptions about a transgender person's sexual orientation

Gender identity is different than sexual orientation. Sexual orientation is about who we're attracted to. Gender identity is about our own personal sense of being a man or a woman, or neither of those binary genders. Transgender people can be gay, lesbian, bisexual, straight, or any other sexual orientation.

3

If you don't know what pronouns to use, listen first

If you're unsure which pronoun a person uses, listen first to the pronouns other people use when referring to them. Someone who knows the person well will probably use the correct pronoun. If you must ask which pronoun the person uses, start with your own. For example, "Hi, I'm Alex and I use the pronouns he and him. What about you?" Then use that person's pronoun and encourage others to do so.

If you accidentally use the wrong pronoun, apologize quickly and sincerely, correct your mistake, then move on. The bigger deal you make out of the situation, the more uncomfortable it is for everyone.

4

Don't ask a trans person what their "real name" is

For some trans people, being associated with their birth name is a tremendous source of anxiety, or it is simply a part of their life they wish to leave behind. Respect the name a trans person is currently using. If you happen to know the name someone was given at birth but no longer uses, don't share it without the person's explicit permission. Similarly, don't share photos of someone from before their transition, unless you have their permission.

5

Be careful about confidentiality, disclosure, and "outing"

Some trans people feel comfortable disclosing their gender history, while others do not. A trans person's gender history is personal information and it is up to them to share it with others. Their trans history must be treated with the same high level of confidentiality as sensitive medical information. Do not casually share this information, speculate, or gossip about a person you know or think is transgender. Not only is this an invasion of privacy, it could be a data breach with legal repercussions and can also have negative consequences in a world that is very intolerant of gender diversity.

Transgender people can lose jobs, housing, friends, or even their lives when other people find out about their gender history. Even if a trans person is open about their trans status, never assume you can tell others.

6

Respect the terminology a transgender person uses to describe their identity

Trans people use many different terms to describe their experiences. Respect the term (transgender, transsexual, nonbinary, genderqueer etc.) a person uses to describe themselves. If a person is not sure which terms best describes their gender, give them the time to figure it out for themselves and don't tell them which term you think they should use. You wouldn't like your identity to be defined by others, so please allow others to define themselves.

7

Be patient with a person who is questioning or exploring their gender identity

A person who is questioning or exploring their gender identity may take some time to figure out what's true for them. They might, for example, use a name or pronoun, and then decide at a later time to change the name or pronoun again. Do your best to be respectful and use the name and pronoun requested.

8

Understand there is no "right" or "wrong" way to transition, and that it is different for every person

Some transgender people access medical care like hormone replacement therapy and surgeries as part of their transition in order to align their bodies with their gender identity. Some transgender people want their authentic gender identity to be recognized without hormones or surgery. Some transgender people cannot access gender affirming healthcare due to a lack of financial resources or access to trained providers. A transgender person's gender is not dependent on medical procedures or how they look. Accept that if someone tells you they are transgender, they are.

9

Don't ask about a transgender person's genitals, surgical status, or sex life

It would be inappropriate to ask a cisgender (non-transgender) person about the appearance or status of their genitals. It is equally inappropriate to ask a transgender person those questions. Don't ask if a transgender person has had "the surgery" or if they are "pre-op" or "post-op." If a transgender person wants to talk to you about such matters, they will bring it up. Similarly, it wouldn't be appropriate to ask a cisgender person about how they have sex, so the same courtesy should be extended to transgender people.

10

Challenge anti-transgender remarks or jokes in public spaces, including LGB spaces

You may hear anti-transgender comments from anti-LGBTQ activists, but you may also hear them from LGB people. Someone may think that because they're gay, it's ok for them to use certain words or tell jokes about transgender people. It's important to challenge anti-transgender remarks or jokes whenever they are said and no matter who says them.

11

Support gender neutral / all-gender public toilets

Some transgender, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming people may not feel like they match the signs on the toilet door. Encourage schools, businesses, and agencies to have single user, unisex and/or all-gender options. Make it clear that trans, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming people are welcome to use whichever facility they feel comfortable using.

At meetings and events, set an inclusive tone

In a group setting, identify people by articles of clothing instead of using gendered language. For example, the "person in the blue shirt," instead of the "woman in the front." Similarly, "Sir" and "Ma'am" are best avoided.

In some circumstances, where not everyone is known, consider asking people to introduce themselves with their names and pronouns. For example, "Hi, I'm Nick and I use he/him pronouns." Start with yourself and use a serious tone that will discourage others from dismissing the activity with a joke. However, if you feel this practice will have the effect of singling out the trans people in the room or putting them on the spot, avoid it.

Remember, it costs cisgender people nothing to share their pronouns, but for trans people it can mean they are sharing something very personal about their gender.

Listen to trans people

The best way to be an ally is to listen with an open mind to trans people speaking for themselves.

Follow thought leaders in the transgender community. Check out books, films, YouTube channels, and trans blogs to find out more about transgender people and the issues people within the community face.

We recommend watching the documentary "Disclosure" on Netflix. Directed by Sam Feder and executive produced by Laverne Cox, "Disclosure" surveys the history of trans representation in TV and film using archival footage and interviews with 30 trans advocates and artists working in the entertainment industry. The film reveals how media has created and perpetuated stereotypes about transgender people.

Also, check out our Association LGBT Lending Library. We have loads of books on trans identities, biographies and children's texts.

14

Learn that transgender people are not new

Transgender people have existed across cultures and throughout history. What is new is the heightened awareness of gender diversity and the transgender community because of increased media attention in recent years. Seek out resources written by transgender people about how trans people existed in the past, and how trans community exists in different countries around the world.

15

Know your own limits as an ally

Don't be afraid to admit when you don't know something. It is better to admit you don't know something than to make assumptions or say something that may be incorrect or hurtful. Seek out the appropriate resources that will help you learn more. Remember being an ally is a sustained and persistent pattern of action; not an idle or stable noun.

The trans flag was designed by American trans woman Monica Helms in 1999.

She says:

"The stripes at the top and bottom are light blue, the traditional colour for baby boys. The stripes next to them are pink, the traditional colour for baby girls. The stripe in the middle is white, for those who are transitioning or consider themselves having a neutral or undefined gender."



Phrases to avoid

Avoid making backhanded compliments or offering "helpful" tips.

While you may intend to be supportive, comments like the following can be hurtful or even insulting:

- "I would have never known you were transgender. You look so pretty."
- "You look just like a real woman."
- "She's so gorgeous, I would have never guessed she was transgender."
- "He's so hot. I'd date him even though he's transgender."
- "You're so brave."
- "You'd pass so much better if you wore less/more make-up, had a better wig, etc."
- "Have you considered a voice coach?"

Recommended reading

The following texts are available to borrow from our Association lending library.

To borrow a book email
gen.sec@lgbtipolice.scot

This is a completely free service for our members!

Visit our website for the full catalogue.

'Not Just a Tomboy: A Trans Masculine Memoir'
Casper J. Baldwin

'Life Isn't Binary'
Meg-John Barker & Alex Iantaffi

The Transgender Child: A Handbook for Parents and Professionals'
Stephanie Brill & Rachel Pepper

'Trans Britain: Our Journey from the Shadows'
Christine Burns

'Not Today: How I chose Life'
Sophie Cook

'Gender Euphoria'
Laura Kate Dale

Gender Games'
Juno Dawson

'What's the T?'
Juno Dawson

'Trans Bodies, Trans Selves'
Laura Erickson-Schroth

'The Transgender Issue: An Argument for Justice'
Shon Faye

'Gender Diversity and Non-Binary Inclusion in the Workplace'
Sarah Gibson and J. Fernandez

'My Awesome Brother'
Lise Frances

'But, I'm not a Boy!'
Katie Leone & Alison Pfiefer

'Transitioning in the Workplace: A guidebook'
Dana Pizzuti

'The Hidden Case of Ewan Forbes'
Zoe Playdon

'The Autistic Trans Guide to Life'
Yenn Purkis & Wenn Lawson

'Transgender History: The Roots of Today's Revolution'
Susan Stryker

'Beyond the Gender Binary'
Alok Vaid-Menon

Contact us



Page 20

For further information, guidance or support please contact us:

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