

# Terminology Guide

## November 2019

## Introduction

A lack of understanding of terminology, or fear of using the wrong language, is a significant, but easy to overcome, barrier to providing good health and care to LGBTQ+ people, both in policy and practice.

When Brook originally approached The National LGB&T Partnership, it was to ask if we had a guide we could signpost them to, so that they could ensure that their services, policies and practices were inclusive of and welcoming to LGBTQ+ people and communities. As we didn't have a document to signpost them to, we offered to work with them to develop one. We hope that it is of use to you in your work.



Brook is really proud to support this truly flexible and comprehensive terminology guide and we would love to see it in every school, college, university and workplace. Through our work we're committed to providing young people with opportunities to affect change, and we're thrilled that our young volunteers were involved in the production of this fantastic resource. In a world where language is constantly evolving, this toolkit will support and encourage people to have open conversations about sexuality and gender – which is the first step in reducing harmful taboos, challenging stigma and creating a more inclusive society.



This guide has been compiled based on definitions offered by many different, specialist services and organisations. References are available at the end of the document.

Volunteers from Brook, overseen and supported by The National LGB&T Partnership, brought together the definitions outlined across these various glossaries and terminology guides to create a set of comprehensive yet flexible definitions for use by those working with the LGBTQ+ community.

# A

## AFAB

([Gender assigned at birth](#), [Sex assigned at birth](#))

- The acronym for 'Assigned female at birth'. Someone who was assigned female at birth, usually based on the appearance of external genitalia.

## Agender

([Gender](#))

- Someone who doesn't have a gender.

## Allosexual

([Asexual](#), [Sexual orientation](#))

- Someone who experiences sexual attraction, desire or sexual interest directed at other people. The opposite of asexual.

## Ally

- Someone who supports the LGBTQ+ community and challenges discrimination against LGBTQ+ people. This can be a person who is not any part of the LGBTQ+ communities, and it can also be a member of one part the LGBTQ+ communities supporting members of other parts of the communities. To be an ally should be considered a verb, an action or set of actions, rather than an identity that someone can chose to claim without ongoing activity.

## AMAB

([Gender assigned at birth](#), [Sex assigned at birth](#))

- The acronym for 'Assigned male at birth'. Someone who was assigned male at birth, usually based on the appearance of external genitalia.

## Androgynous

([Androgyne](#))

- Someone or something that is neither distinguishably masculine nor feminine, both masculine and feminine, gender neutral or non-gendered.

## Androgyne

([Androgynous](#), [Butch](#), [Femme](#), [Gender](#), [Gender roles](#))

- A non-binary gender identity that is based in androgyny. This identity comes under the trans umbrella.

## Aromantic

### [\(Romantic attraction\)](#)

- Someone who experiences limited or no romantic attraction to others or has little or no interest in forming or pursuing romantic relationships.

## Asexual/ace

### [\(Allosexual, Sexual attraction\)](#)

- Someone who experiences limited or no sexual attraction, interest or desire.

# B

## Bi erasure

### [\(Bisexual, Biphobia\)](#)

- The ignoring or questioning of the validity of bisexuality, as well as the use of terminology that excludes bisexuality (e.g. gay marriage, gay/straight relationship). This can come from both outside of and within LGBTQ+ communities.

## Bigender

### [\(Genderfluid\)](#)

- Someone whose gender is made up of two separate genders which may be experienced at the same time or at different times.

## Binding

### [\(AFAB, Transgender, Transition\)](#)

- The action of tightly wrapping one's chest with constrictive garments or materials in order to minimise the appearance of breasts. Binding can be done with cloth strips, bandages or specialised undergarments, and some methods of binding can be damaging. Binding is one of many actions which trans people, particularly those assigned female at birth, can choose to undertake to feel more comfortable.

## Biphobia

([Bi erasure](#), [Bisexual](#))

- Prejudice and discrimination towards, fear, and/or dislike of someone who is bisexual or who is perceived to be bisexual, based on their sexual orientation.

## Bisexual/bi

([Bi erasure](#), [Biphobia](#), [Pansexual](#), [Queer](#), [Sexual orientation](#))

- Someone who is romantically or sexually attracted to people of more than one gender. Sometimes this word is used more specifically to describe people who are attracted to people of their own gender and people of other genders. Bisexual people need not experience attraction to different genders in the same way, at the same time, or to the same degree. Bisexual people may also describe themselves using one or more of a wide variety of other terms, including, but not limited to, bi, pan, bi-curious, and queer, though not all those who use these terms will necessarily also identify with the term bisexual.

## Bottom surgery

([Gender affirmation surgery](#), [Top surgery](#), [Transgender/trans](#), [Transition](#))

- A colloquial term for gender affirming surgery in the genital area i.e. on the bottom half of the body. Common types of bottom surgery include vaginoplasty, hysterectomy, orchidectomy, metoidioplasty and phalloplasty.

## Butch

([Androgyne](#), [Femme](#), [Gender](#), [Gender roles](#))

- Someone whose outward appearance and mannerisms are traditionally associated with masculinity.

# C

## Cisgender/cis

([Transgender/trans](#))

- Someone who identifies with the gender they were assigned at birth; someone who is not transgender.

## Cissexism

([Cisnormativity](#), [Heterosexism](#), [Transgender/trans](#), [Transphobia](#))

- The belief that trans people are inferior to cisgender people based on the assumption that being cisgender is “normal” and preferable being transgender is “abnormal”. Cissexism is also a form of indirect discrimination based on not taking into account the existence of trans people as equal to cis people.

## Cisnormativity

([Cisgender](#), [Heteronormativity](#), [Transgender/trans](#))

- The assumption that all people identify with the gender they were assigned at birth to the exclusion of consideration that trans people exist and how statements or actions might exclude them.

## Chemsex

([HIV/AIDS](#), [MSM](#))

- Recreational drug use mainly by gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men. Drugs are used to enhance sexual pleasure in order to facilitate longer sessions of sexual activity, usually with multiple partners.

## Closeted/In the Closet

([Coming out](#), [Out/outing](#))

- A colloquial term used to describe someone who identifies as LGBTQ+ in some way but has not openly disclosed this facet of their identity.

## Coming out

([Closeted](#), [Out/outing](#))

- The disclosure of one’s LGBTQ+ identity to someone else. Coming out is rarely a once-in-a-lifetime event as many LGBTQ+ people may want or need to come out to each new person they meet or may realise different facets of their LGBTQ+ identity over time which they might then choose to disclose.

## Conversion therapy

- Activities and therapies that are performed on LGBTQ+ people in an attempt to change their sexual orientation or gender identity to that which conforms to a cis- and heteronormative view of society.

## Cross-dressing

([Drag](#), [Gender](#))

- Dressing in the clothes traditionally ascribed to someone of a different gender. Reasons for cross-dressing include self-expression, gratification or

entertainment. People who cross-dress can be of any gender or sexual orientation, and cross-dressing is not always indicative of a trans identity.

## D

Deadnaming/deadname

([Transgender](#), [Transition](#), [Transphobia](#))

- Using someone's previous name, usually the name that they were given at birth, rather than their current chosen name. This usually refers to intentionally or maliciously using a trans person's previous name.

Demisexual

([Asexual](#), [Sexual attraction](#))

- Someone who experiences limited or no feelings of sexual attraction to anyone they have not already formed a deep emotional or romantic connection with.

Drag

([Cross-dressing](#), [Drag king](#), [Drag queen](#))

- The, often theatrical or exaggerated, performance of one or multiple genders in an entertainment or performance context. Those who perform are often called Drag Kings and Drag Queens depending on the type of gender they perform. Drag Kings and Queens can be people of any gender or sexual orientation.

Drag king

([Cross-dressing](#), [Drag](#), [Drag queen](#))

- Someone who dresses up and acts to over-exaggerate stereotypically male characteristics for entertainment purposes. This is done as a performance and a caricature of masculinity and is not usually part of a trans identity.

Drag queen

([Cross-dressing](#), [Drag](#), [Drag king](#))

- Someone who dresses up and acts to over-exaggerate stereotypically female characteristics for entertainment purposes. This is done as a performance and a caricature of femininity and is not usually part of a trans identity.

Dyke

([Lesbian](#))

- A term used to describe lesbian women, often derogatory. People may choose to reclaim and use the term to describe themselves.

## E

Enby

([Gender](#), [Non-binary](#))

- A short form of 'non-binary' used instead of boy or girl by someone-binary people to refer to themselves and other non-binary people. Not all people with non-binary genders are comfortable with the term. It is used by some people to distinguish from 'NB', which is also used as a shortening of 'non-binary' and by people of colour in the acronym 'NBPOC' to refer to non-black people of colour.

Equality Act (2010)

([Gender reassignment](#), [Protected characteristic](#), [Sex](#))

- In the UK, this refers to the 2010 Equality Act, which provides people with protection from discrimination and ill-treatment based on sexual orientation, gender, gender reassignment and 6 other protected characteristics.

## F

Femme

([Androgyne](#), [Butch](#), [Gender](#), [Gender roles](#))

Someone whose outward appearances and mannerisms are traditionally associated with femininity.

Feminine

([Gender roles](#), [Masculine](#))

- A set of behaviours and concepts that have been assigned as womanly or being associated with women due to a society's culture.

FTM

([MTF](#), [Transgender/trans](#))



- Short form of 'female to male', used to describe trans people who have transitioned from a female identity or assignment to male. Some people object to the use of this term because it implies that they previously identified as female, or, when misused, that all trans people who are assigned female at birth are trans men. Depending on the context, 'trans man' or 'AFAB' can be used to more accurately describe a person or group of people.

## G

### Gay

([Homosexual](#), [LGBTQ+](#), [Sexual orientation](#))

- Someone who is largely or exclusively romantically, emotionally or sexually attracted to people of the same gender. The term can be used to describe anyone regardless of gender identity but is more commonly used to describe men.

### Gender

([Agender](#), [Bigender](#), [Gender identity](#), [Gender non-conforming](#), [Genderqueer](#), [Non-binary](#), [Pangender](#), [Polygender](#), [Sex](#), [Transgender/trans](#))

- The socially constructed and reinforced divisions between certain groups (genders) in a culture including social norms that people in these different groups are expected to adhere to, and a person's sense of self relating to these divisions.

### Gender affirmation surgery

([Gender reassignment surgery](#))

- Also known as gender confirmation surgery, (outdated: gender reassignment surgery, sex reassignment surgery/SRS). An umbrella term used to describe a number of surgical procedures which trans people may undergo to bring their body more in line with their gender. Common forms of gender affirmation surgery include procedures on the chest area ('top' surgery) or genital area ('bottom' surgery) however the term also includes other forms of surgery such as surgery on the face or Adam's apple.

### Gender assigned at birth

([AFAB](#), [AMAB](#), [Sex](#), [Sex assigned at birth](#))

- The gender that a person is assumed to be at birth, usually based on the sex assigned at birth.

## (Gender) Binary

### [\(Gender\)](#)

- A mainly Western cultural idea that there are only two genders, and everyone must be either one or the other.

## Gender dysphoria

### [\(Transgender/trans\)](#)

- Medical term used to describe the distress or discomfort that a person may experience when their sex assigned at birth does not match with their gender. Trans people may experience varying degrees of gender dysphoria, and it is not something that is experienced by all trans people.

## Gender expression

### [\(Gender, Gender identity, Gender roles\)](#)

- The outwardly-visible behaviours and choices that a person makes in relation to the expression of gender.

## Gender fluid

### [\(Gender\)](#)

- Someone whose gender is not fixed; their gender may change slowly or quickly over time and can switch between any number of gender identities and expressions, as each gender fluid person's experience of their fluidity is unique to them.

## Gender identity

### [\(Cisgender, Gender, Gender expression, Gender assigned at birth, Sex assigned at birth, Transgender/trans\)](#)

- A person's internal feelings and convictions about their gender. This can be the same or different to the gender they were assigned at birth.

## Gender marker

### [\(Gender recognition act, Legal gender, Transgender/trans\)](#)

- A mark, usually or letter or number, on a legal document that shows the holder's gender.

Gender neutral

([Gender](#))

- Something that has no limitations to use that are based on the gender of the user.

Gender non-conforming

([Gender](#), [Non-binary](#), [Transgender/trans](#))

- A term used to describe someone whose gender expression does not conform to the social expectations of their gender (or sometimes the gender binary).

Genderqueer

([Gender fluid](#), [Gender non-conforming](#))

- Someone whose gender is outside or in opposition to the gender binary. Often viewed as a more intentionally political gender identity than some other non-binary genders, through the inclusion of the politicised 'queer'.

Gender roles

([Gender](#), [Gender expression](#))

- The activities, social status, and behaviours ascribed to certain genders by social norms.

Gender Recognition Act

([Equality Act](#), [Gender](#), [Gender Recognition Certificate](#), [Legal transition](#), [Transgender/trans](#))

- The Gender Recognition Act (GRA) is an Act of Parliament in the UK that allows people to legally change their gender through a process of application and assessment.

Gender Recognition Certificate

([Equality Act](#), [Gender](#), [Gender Recognition Act](#), [Legal transition](#), [Transgender/trans](#))

- A document that shows a person has satisfied the legal criteria under the GRA for being recognised as their gender.

Gender reassignment

([Equality Act](#), [Protected characteristic](#))

- The protected characteristic which trans people are described as having, or protected characteristic group they are described as being part of, with reference to the Equality Act 2010. 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) for the purpose of reassigning the person's sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex.

Gender reassignment surgery

([Gender affirmation surgery](#))

- An older and outdated term used for gender affirmation surgery, particularly in relation to genital surgery

(Gender) Transition

([Legal transition](#), [Social transition](#), [Transgender/trans](#))

- The process by which people change their social and/or legal identity, gender expression, and/or physical characteristics to bring them more in line with their internal sense of gender.

## H

Heterosexual (straight)

([Sexual orientation](#))

- Someone who is romantically or sexually attracted to someone of a different gender, typically a man who is attracted to women or a woman who is attracted to men.

Heterosexism

([Cissexism](#), [Heteronormativity](#))

- The belief that non-heterosexual people are inferior to heterosexual people based on the assumption that being heterosexual is “normal” and preferable and being lesbian, gay, bisexual or queer is “abnormal”. Heterosexism is also a form of indirect discrimination based on not taking into account the existence of non-heterosexual people as equal to heterosexual people.

Heteronormativity

([Cisnormativity](#), [Heterosexism](#), [Homonormativity](#))

- The assumption that all people are heterosexual, to the exclusion of consideration that people with other sexualities exist and how statements or actions might exclude them.

## HIV/AIDS

([PEP](#), [PrEP](#))

- HIV is often associated with MSM, but the proportion of people accessing HIV care in 2018 who acquired HIV through heterosexual sex (46.2%) was very similar to the proportion of people who acquired HIV through sex between men (46.4%). Unsafer sexual behaviours not sexuality or sexual identity are the cause of HIV transmission.

## Homonormativity

([Heteronormativity](#))

- The privileging of a particular idea of what it means to be LGBTQ+, based on conflating wider LGBTQ+ experiences with a dominant gay, male, cisgendered (and usually white) experience which either varies little from the heterosexual ideal and/or does little to disrupt heteronormativity.

## Homosexual

([Gay](#), [Lesbian](#), [Sexual orientation](#))

- A term used to describe someone who is almost exclusively attracted to people of the same gender. Some consider this word too medical and prefer the terms 'gay', 'lesbian' or 'queer'.

## Homophobia

([Biphobia](#), [Gay](#), [Homosexual](#), [Lesbian](#), [Transphobia](#))

- Prejudice and discrimination towards, fear, and/or dislike of someone who is, or who is perceived to be attracted to people of the same gender as themselves, based on their sexual orientation.

## Internalised homophobia

([Heterosexism](#), [Heteronormativity](#), [Homonormativity](#), [Homophobia](#))

- The experience of internalising and involuntarily believing the negative messages about lesbian, gay and bisexual people which are delivered and reinforced by a heteronormative and homophobic culture. This often has a negative effect on feelings of self-worth.

### Internalised transphobia

([Cissexism](#), [Cisnormativity](#), [Transphobia](#))

- The experience of internalising and involuntarily believing the negative messages about trans people which are delivered and reinforced by a cisnormative and transphobic culture. This often has a negative effect on feelings of self-worth.

### Intersectionality

- Coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw as a way to help explain the oppression of African-American women as being informed by both their ethnicity and their gender, the term is used to refer to the approach of considering intersecting and overlapping axes of power or discrimination.

### Intersex

([Sex](#), [Transgender/trans](#))

- A person whose biological sex characteristics don't fit into the binary medical model of male and female. This can be due to differences in primary and secondary sex characteristics including external and internal genitalia, hormones, and/or chromosomes.

## L

### Legal gender

([Gender](#), [Gender marker](#), [Gender Recognition Certificate](#))

- A person's gender as recognised under law i.e. the gender on a person's legal documents.

### Legal transition

([Social transition](#), [Transition](#))

- The process of officially changing one's gender/sex on legal documents.

Lesbian

([Dyke](#), [Gay](#), [Homosexual](#))

- A woman who is largely or exclusively emotionally, sexually, and/or physically attracted to other women.

Lesbophobia

([Lesbian](#))

- Prejudice and discrimination towards, fear, and/or dislike of someone who is, or who is perceived to be a lesbian, based on their sexual orientation.

LGBTQ+

([Bisexual](#), [Gay](#), [Lesbian](#), [Queer](#), [Transgender/trans](#))

- The acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (sometimes also used to refer to questioning, usually when working with younger age groups). There are variations on this that include more (or fewer) identities, such as LGBT or LGB. LGBTQ+ can also be used to be more inclusive of other identities beyond those described by the acronym but related to them in identity or experience.

## M

Masculine

([Feminine](#), [Gender roles](#))

- A set of behaviours and concepts that have been assigned as manly or being associated with men due to a society's culture.

Misgender

([Deadname](#), [Transgender/trans](#))

The act of referring to someone as the wrong gender or using the wrong pronouns (he, she, boy, sister, etc.). This usually refers to intentionally or maliciously referring to a trans person incorrectly, but of course can also be done accidentally.

Misogyny

([Transmisogyny](#))

- Prejudice and discrimination towards, and/or dislike of someone who is female or who is perceived to be female, or items and behaviours associated with women or the feminine that is based solely on gender.

## Monogamy

([Non-monogamy](#), [Polyamorous](#))

- A relationship dynamic where both partners are expected to be emotionally and sexually exclusive to each other.

## Monosexuality

([Bisexual](#), [Homosexual](#), [Gay](#), [Lesbian](#))

- An overarching term to describe sexual orientations where attraction is directed towards only one gender, such as lesbian, gay or straight.

## MSM/MLM

- Stands for men who have sex with men/men loving men. Men who have sex with men is used as a term within sexual health and other services to make these services more inclusive to men who have sex with other men but may not identify as LGBTQ+.

## MTF

([FTM](#), [Transgender/trans](#))

- Short form of 'male to female', used to describe trans people who have transitioned from a male identity or assignment to female. Some people object to the use of this term because it implies that they previously identified as male, or, when misused, that all trans people who are assigned male at birth are trans women. Depending on the context, 'trans women' or 'AMAB' can be used to more accurately describe a person or group of people.

# N

## Non-binary

([Enby](#), [Gender](#), [Gender non-conforming](#), [Genderqueer](#), [Transgender/trans](#))

- Used to describe those whose gender does not fit into the gender binary. The term can be used by some as an identity in itself and is also used as an overarching term for genders that don't fit into the gender binary, such as genderqueer, bigender and gender-fluid.



## Non-Monogamy

([Monogamy](#), [Polyamorous](#))

- A relationship dynamic where one or both partners are consensually not emotionally and/or physically exclusive. Agreement is reached between partners about limits and boundaries regarding non-monogamy and is different for each couple.

## O

### Outing/Out

([Closeted/In the closet](#), [Coming out](#))

- Disclosing someone else's sexual orientation or gender identity without their consent.

## P

### Pansexual/pan

([Bisexual](#), [Sexual orientation](#))

- Someone who is emotionally, sexually, and/or physically attracted to others regardless of gender identity.

### Pangender

([Gender](#), [Polygender](#))

- Someone whose gender is made up of a number of different genders. A pangender person may consider themselves a member of all genders.

### Passing

([Gender](#), [Read as](#), [Transgender](#))

- Sometimes used to refer to the state of an LGBTQ+ person not being visibly recognisable as LGBTQ+. Most commonly used in relation to trans people - one might say a trans person 'passes' if they are assumed to be, at a glance, to be cisgender. The term 'passing' is considered by many to be outdated and

unhelpful as it can be seen put the impetus on the LGBTQ+ person to conform, rather than on society not to make assumptions. Some people refer to being 'read as' (a particular gender of sexual orientation) as an alternative.

PEP

([HIV/AIDS](#), [PrEP](#))

- Stands for Post Exposure Prophylaxis. This is medication taken up to 72 hours after exposure to HIV to minimise the risk of infection. A 28-day course is taken after exposure.

Polyamorous/poly

([Monogamous](#), [Non-monogamy](#))

- Someone who has or is open to having more than one sexual and/or romantic relationship at a time with the full awareness and consent of all parties.

Polygender

([Gender](#))

- Someone who experiences many gender identities. These can be experienced at the same time or at different times by the person.

Post-op

([Bottom surgery](#), [Gender affirmation surgery](#), [Pre-op](#), [Top surgery](#))

- Sometimes used to describe trans people who have had gender affirmation surgery. Considered a flawed term by most as not all trans people want to or are able to have surgery. The term also implies that there is only one type of gender affirmation surgery, when in fact trans people may have one or more different types of surgery to help them medically transition.

Pre-op

([Bottom surgery](#), [Gender affirmation surgery](#), [Pre-op](#), [Top surgery](#))

- Sometimes used to describe trans people who have not had gender affirmation surgery. Considered a flawed term by most as not all trans people want to or are able to have surgery. The term also implies that there is only one type of gender affirmation surgery, when in fact trans people may have one or more different types of surgery to help them medically transition.

## PrEP

([HIV/AIDS](#), [PEP](#))

- Stands for Pre-exposure Prophylaxis. This is medication taken in an ongoing fashion as a measure to prevent HIV, usually taken by MSM or other at-risk group members.

## Pride

- Having a positive view of membership of the LGBTQ+ community. Also, a celebration of LGBTQ+ cultures, protest at discrimination currently faced, and a reminder of past crimes and discrimination against the community.

## Protected characteristic

([Equality Act](#), [Gender reassignment](#), [Sex](#), [Sexual orientation](#))

- Under the Equality Act 2010 It is against the law to discriminate against someone because they have a protected characteristic. These are outlined under the act, and comprise: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

## Q

### Queer

([Gender](#), [Genderqueer](#), [LGBTQ+](#), [Sexuality](#))

- An overarching or umbrella term used by some to describe members of the LGBTQ+ community. The term has been reclaimed by members of the community from previous derogatory use, and some members of the community may not wish to use it due to this history. Queer is also linked to 1990s Academic Queer Theory and for this reason as well as its reclamation, is seen by many and inherently political. When Q is seen at the end of LGBTQ+, it typically refers to queer and, less often, questioning.

### QPOC/QTPOC

- Stands for Queer People Of Colour or Queer, Transgender, and Intersex People of Colour. Queer people of colour experience intersecting oppressions on the basis of race, gender, sexual orientation and other factors.

## Questioning

- A term used to describe people who are in the process of exploring their sexual orientation or gender identity.

## R

### Read as

([Gender expression](#), [Passing](#), [Transgender](#))

- How someone is perceived in terms of their gender identity or sexual orientation. Depending on how someone presents themselves, they may or may not be 'read as' LGBTQ+. Seen by many as preferable to the word and concept of 'passing'.

### Romantic attraction

([Aromantic](#), [Romantic orientation](#), [Sexual attraction](#))

- An emotional attachment or connection to someone that is separate from physical/sexual attraction.

### Romantic orientation

([Romantic attraction](#), [Sexual orientation](#))

- How a person feels romantically about different genders. The term describes who a person is or are most likely to pursue an emotional and romantic relationship with.

## S

### Same Sex Attraction/SSA

- A term used to describe the feeling of attraction people may have to people of same gender, usually in a medicalised context. Most is commonly used by religious groups and advocates of conversion therapy.

### Sex

([Equality act](#), [Gender](#), [Protected characteristic](#))

The scientific and/or legal classification of a person as male, female or intersex. A person's sex is usually determined by a combination of primary and secondary

sex characteristics including chromosomes, hormones, and internal and external reproductive organs.

## Sexual orientation

([Bisexual](#), [Equality Act](#), [Gay](#), [Homosexual](#), [Lesbian](#), [Pansexual](#), [Protected characteristic](#), [Queer](#), [Romantic orientation](#), [Sexuality](#))

- How a person feels sexually about different genders. The term describes who they are most likely to pursue a sexual relationship with. Sexual activity does not indicate sexual orientation, so people who have sexual relations with someone of the same gender may not necessarily identify as LGBTQ+. This is why terms such as MSM are used in some contexts. Sexual orientation is a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010.

## Sexual attraction

([Allosexual](#), [Asexual](#), [Romantic attraction](#))

- Desiring sexual contact with a specific other person or group of people.

## Sexuality

([Sexual orientation](#))

- Sexuality is a holistic term for someone's sexual behaviours, attractions, likes, dislikes, kinks, and preferences. Sexual orientation makes up a part of someone's sexuality, and sexuality is sometimes used interchangeably with sexual orientation, but it covers more than just who a person is attracted to. Sexuality is what you enjoy and how you enjoy it, whether that be partners or activities.

## Sex assigned at birth

([AFAB](#), [AMAB](#), [Gender](#), [Intersex](#), [Sex](#))

- The sex that a person is designated to be at birth, usually based on the appearance of external genitalia.

## Sex change

([Gender affirmation surgery](#))

- An outdated, usually offensive, term for gender transition and/or gender affirmation surgery.

## Social transition

([Legal transition](#), [Transgender/trans](#))

- The process of a person changing how they interact with society in order to bring this more in line with their gender. This can include changing one's name or pronouns, using different facilities or spaces, and changing one's gender expression, for example, by wearing different clothes.

## T

### Top surgery

([Bottom surgery](#), [Gender affirmation surgery](#), [Transgender/trans](#))

- A colloquial term for gender affirming surgery in the chest area i.e. on the top half of the body. Common types of top surgery include bi-lateral mastectomy and breast augmentation surgery.

### Third gender

([Gender](#), [Non-binary](#))

- The terms third gender and third sex describe individuals who are considered to be neither women nor men, as well being used to describe the social category present in those societies who recognise three or more genders. The state of being neither male nor female may be understood in relation to the individual's biological sex, gender role, or gender identity. To different cultures or individuals, a third sex or gender may represent an intermediate state between men and women, a state of being both (such as "the spirit of a man in the body of a woman"), the state of being neither (neuter), the ability to cross or swap genders, or another category altogether independent of male and female. This last definition is favored by those who argue for a strict interpretation of the "third gender" concept. The term has been used to describe Hijras of India and Pakistan, Fa'afafine of Polynesia, and Sworn virgins of the Balkans, among others, and is also used by many of such groups and individuals to describe themselves. It is not commonly used in western contexts, as this social category is largely not considered to be present.

### Transfeminine/transfemme

([Transgender/trans](#), [Transmasculine/transmasc](#))

- A broad term to describe trans people whose gender, or gender expression, is mostly or predominantly feminine.

### Transgender/trans

([Gender](#), [Transvestite](#))

- An overarching term used to describe anyone whose gender is not the same as the gender they were assigned at birth.

### Transmasculine/transmasc

([Transfeminine/transfemme](#), [Transgender/trans](#))

- A broad term to describe trans people whose gender, or gender expression, is mostly or predominantly masculine.

### Transmisogyny

([Misogyny](#))

- Prejudice and discrimination towards, and/or dislike of someone who is transfeminine or who is perceived to be transfeminine, that is based solely on their gender expression. Transmisogyny refers to the specific intersection of transphobia and misogyny experienced by transfeminine people.

### Transphobia

([Cissexism](#), [Transgender/trans](#), [Transmisogyny](#))

- Prejudice and discrimination towards, fear, and/or dislike of someone who is trans or who is perceived to be trans, that is based on their trans identity.

### Transsexual

([Transgender/trans](#))

- An older and medicalised term used to describe someone living as a different gender than the one assigned at birth. This is sometimes used exclusively to describe trans people who have medically transitioned i.e. undergone hormone replacement therapy and/or gender affirmation surgery. The term is still used by some transgender people but has widely been replaced by trans or transgender, as it is nowadays often considered offensive or exclusionary due to its medical and pathologising context.

### Transvestite

([Cross-dressing](#))

- A medicalised term used to describe people who cross-dress, particularly when this was considered a pathology. Nowadays the term is considered by most to be offensive, and cross-dressing is a more widely used and respectful term.

## Two-spirit

- An umbrella term used to describe a group of identities within Native American communities that do not fit in with the binary concept of male or female. The term should not be used outside of this context.

## W

### WSW/WLW

#### ([MSM/MLM](#))

- Stands for women who have sex with women/women loving women. Women who have sex with women is used as a term within sexual health and other services to make these services more inclusive to women who have sex with other women but may not identify as LGBTQ+.

## Z

### Ze/hir/hirs

#### ([Gender neutral](#), [Non-binary](#), [Transgender/trans](#))

- Gender-neutral pronouns which can be used in place of, or as well as, other pronouns such as he/him, she/her or they/them.

## Sources

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