

This policy is not intended to undermine or interfere with the Code of Practice for Freedom of Speech. Where there are inconsistencies, particular regard will be given to the Code of Practice for Freedom of Speech.

Newcastle University Students' Union (NUSU) believes that all students should be given equal opportunities, feel safe, respected, and welcome in the Students' Union and any of its activities. The trans community is no different and this policy has been written to inform students and staff alike about NUSU's commitment to tackle discrimination and to raise awareness of issues trans students may face. The trans community is diverse and includes – transgender men, transgender women, and those under the non-binary umbrella who also identify as trans.

Appropriate Language

Language is an extremely important part of how we communicate. For many trans students the language that you use can be instrumental to showing respect and civility; and so NUSU recognises the following as good practice:

- It is essential to use a trans person's chosen name, not their birth name (this can also be called a 'deadname') and it is never appropriate to put quotation marks around either the trans person's chosen name or the pronoun that reflects their gender identity.
- A person who identifies as a certain gender should always be referred to using the pronouns appropriate for that gender identity, or pronouns that they indicate match their gender identity.
- If you are unsure of somebody's gender identity, then it is good practice to use gender-inclusive pronouns (they/them/their) to refer to the person. If they indicate that they would like to be referred to with other pronouns then you should use those.
- It is not appropriate to use the terms 'sex-change' or 'pre/post-operative', or ask whether the individual has undergone any surgeries as these imply that the transition process must involve some form of surgery. Not only is this a very personal part of a person's transition, many trans people opt not to undergo any surgery or hormone therapy as part of their transition. Terms such as 'Gender Confirmation Surgery' or 'Gender Affirming Surgery' is the correct terminology.
- While mistakes, mis-gendering, or using an individual's deadname might occur accidentally. If you think that you have made a mistake, it would be appropriate to apologise to the person, correct yourself, and move on. Doing this will demonstrate that you recognised your mistake and you have shown respect without making the person feel more uncomfortable.

For more information and examples of gender-inclusive language, please check this [resource](#).

The Transition Process

Transitioning is a process where trans individuals start to express their gender identity. A person does not necessarily have to make any physical changes to their appearance in order to transition, however for some this may be an important step. A person's transition is a personal journey, which does not have a set length of time, and a trans person may continue their transition for the rest of their life. Transitioning can include many different social, legal, or medical steps depending on the person. Students can apply for a [Trans Fund](#) via NUSU towards new purchases of items such as binders, clothes, makeup, and other items that will make trans, non-binary students and gender questioning students' lives easier.

The University welcomes everyone in the transgender and non-binary community. They do all they can to ensure that students identifying as transgender and non-binary are not disadvantaged.

They recognise that students may wish to discuss specific support and advice without the need to approach lots of people. They provide an **Initial Point of Contact (IPC)** who can support and advise students about their options. These include how to get your name and gender changed on university records without the need for a deed poll.

The IPC may also liaise with or signpost students to other parts of the University or external services as appropriate. Contact the IPC via the University [form](#).

Find out how to change your legal name [here](#).

Find out how to change your legal gender [here](#).

If any changes you need to make aren't running smoothly, you can contact the Students' Union [Support and Advice Hub](#).

Notifying the Students Union:

Students may inform the University if they are intending to transition and Students' Union's records will be updated. See Records and Data Protection section below.

Alongside this or alternatively, the student can contact the Wellbeing and Safeguarding Specialist in the Students' Union.

With consent, NUSU can then notify staff who may come into contact with that student; or contact clubs and societies on their behalf to inform them so appropriate language and name can be used. No-one will be notified without the student's consent.

A student may also request their name changed on any record of NUSU achievements for example CSA Awards, and anywhere that refers to them on our webpages. This is also extended to alumni.

Confidentiality:

Confidentiality is crucial and respected. In specified circumstances, the Gender Recognition Act prohibits disclosure of the fact that someone has applied for a Gender Recognition Certificate, or disclosure of someone's gender before the acquisition of a GRC. Such disclosure constitutes a criminal offence liable to a fine.

If a student discloses to NUSU that they are in the process of transitioning, this will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and no-one will be notified without their consent.

Forms and Questionnaires:

When designing forms or questionnaires, NUSU will bear in mind that some people prefer a further option in addition to 'male' or 'female'. Two further options, 'prefer not to disclose', and an open text preferring to self-describe will appear on all NUSU surveys or questionnaires. It should also be made clear on forms requesting this information what the intended use is, as this may affect how some trans people respond. Data regarding a student's gender should always be kept strictly confidential so they don't feel inclined to hide their gender identity.

Records and Data Protection

No University records will be changed without the permission of the student concerned. If an individual gives notification of their intent to transition during their education, the University will need to agree with them the date from which their gender is changed on all student records and public references, with the exception of degree certificates. The point at which these changes are made should be agreed with the individual.

The names and pronouns on student records (registered or alumni) will be changed on receipt of a written notification of intent to transition as this is sufficient for the gender and name on student personnel and academic records to be changed. This is necessary to enable the person to go about their daily life as a student without their birth gender being known.

It is very important to ensure a trans person's file reflects their current name and gender. When a trans person receives a Gender Recognition Certificate, they have the right to request that all references to their former name and gender are removed from old records to ensure their former identity is not revealed. All records held on paper file will promptly be found and replaced with new records, and relevant information transferred to a new cover. Nothing will remain on file which would disclose to a third person that a change has occurred.

At NUSU the SUMS central database will update in response to changes in the university data. Therefore, it is likely that our records will be updated without explicit consent but in line with our data sharing agreement. [Newcastle University Students' Union](#)

Facilities and Access to Spaces

Trans students may access facilities that align with their gender identity.

In accordance with the Equality Act, some exemptions may allow for access restrictions to single-sex spaces based on biological sex, but only where it is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim (e.g. safety).

These decisions will be made case by case, with transparency and student consultation.

Clubs, Societies, and Sport Participation:

While NUSU supports trans participation, policies are developed in line with sport specific National Governing Body guidelines and aims to balance fairness, safety and inclusion.

In gendered competitive sport, participation may be restricted under Section 195 of the Equality Act where necessary to ensure fairness or safety. These restrictions must be legally justified.

Non-competitive and social activities remain open to all regardless of gender identity.

Discrimination and Harassment:

Bullying, harassment, and discrimination will not be tolerated by NUSU. This policy protects the rights of trans people to dignity and respect whilst in the Students' Union building and when participating in any of NUSU clubs, societies or activities. Some indicative examples of unlawful incidents:

- refusing to support a student who is trans;
- verbally or physically threatening a trans person or spreading malicious gossip about that person;
- refusing to associate with or ignoring someone because they are a trans person;
- refusing to address the person in their acquired gender or to use their new name;
- sexual harassment of a trans person;
- revealing the trans status of a person to others, either by disclosing information to individuals or groups – in other words, 'outing' someone;
- passing judgment on how convincing a trans person is in their acquired gender;
- refusing to acknowledge the rights of a trans person and failing to acknowledge that a transition has occurred;

NUSU will take the following steps to ensure that discrimination does not happen:

- monitoring the policy and its impact regularly;
- having a clear procedure for investigating complaints;
- offering NUSU staff specific training on issues relating to trans matters;
- making all NUSU volunteers aware of our Transgender Policy, including when we train club and society officers;
- engaging in regular awareness-raising activities and campaigns;
- Transphobic propaganda, in the form of written materials, graffiti, music or speeches, will also not be tolerated. NUSU undertakes to remove any such propaganda whenever it appears on Students' Union premises;
- NUSU must adhere to regulations set by external organisations, however the Students' Union should challenge any practices that it believes are unfair and do not align with the transgender policy;
- Gender-critical views are legally protected under the Equality Act as philosophical beliefs, but harassment or targeted misgendering will not be tolerated.
- NUSU upholds freedom of expression under its Freedom of Speech Code of Practice.
- NUSU will seek to resolve conflicts between rights lawfully and respectfully.
- using gender neutral language in all documentation and on our webpages, and ensure our materials are diverse, non-stereotypical images of diverse gender identities;
- endeavour to use an individual's correct pronouns when interacting with said individual.

Complaints:

If you have experienced or witnessed Transphobic abuse, harassment or bullying, perpetrated by a student or staff member, you are encouraged to read the information provided on the NUSU pages [here](#).

Safeguarding:

NUSU is committed to safeguarding all students and balancing rights across protected characteristics.

Where concerns arise, NUSU will review the impact, consult affected parties, and take proportionate steps.

The Law:

NUSU recognises the rights of trans individuals under the *laws below and will ensure that protections are applied fairly and inclusively.

*The Gender Recognition Act 2004 provides a legal route for recognition of an acquired gender.

The 2025 Supreme Court ruling clarifies that “sex” in the Equality Act refers to biological sex, not gender identity. This impacts access to single-sex services or spaces under Schedule 3 of the Act.

Historical Context – The Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999

The Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999 were a key milestone in UK equality law. They amended the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 to make it unlawful to discriminate against a person on the grounds of gender reassignment in employment and vocational training. This included protections against direct discrimination, harassment, and victimisation for individuals who intended to undergo, were undergoing, or had undergone gender reassignment.

Protection applied from the point at which a person expressed their intention to transition, regardless of whether they went on to complete the process.

However, this legislation has now been repealed. Trans people's rights are currently protected under the Equality Act 2010, which replaced earlier equality legislation. Under this Act, individuals are protected from discrimination in a wide range of areas, including employment, education (including higher education), services, and public functions.

The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 protects individuals undergoing, intending to undergo, or having undergone gender reassignment.

Gender reassignment is one of nine protected characteristics within the act, and it is also included in the Public Sector Equality Duty. The definition of gender reassignment within the act gives protection from discrimination to a person who has proposed, started or completed a process to change their sex.

The Act offers more far-reaching protection from discrimination on the grounds of gender reassignment than existing equality law as it protects:

- trans people who are not under medical supervision;
- people who experience discrimination because they are perceived to be trans;
- people from discrimination by association because of gender reassignment. For example, it would protect the parents of a trans person from being discriminated against because their child is transitioning.

The Gender Recognition Act 2004

The Gender Recognition Act 2004 provides a legal mechanism for trans people to obtain legal recognition of their affirmed gender. Individuals who meet the requirements of the Act can apply to a Gender Recognition Panel for a Gender Recognition Certificate (GRC).

If a GRC is issued:

- The individual is recognised for all legal purposes as their affirmed gender.
- If their birth was registered in the UK, they are entitled to a new birth certificate reflecting their acquired gender, and it will not indicate that a change has occurred.

Under Section 22 of the Act, it is generally a criminal offence to disclose information about a person's gender recognition status without their explicit consent. This provision protects the confidentiality of those who have obtained a GRC.

Trans people, including those with or without a GRC, are protected under the Equality Act 2010, which prohibits discrimination, harassment, and victimisation on the basis of gender reassignment.

Data Protection Act 2018

While trans identity and gender reassignment are not explicitly named in the list of special category data under the Data Protection Act 2018, they are considered sensitive data and will be processed as such.

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995

A trans person could be protected under the Disability Discrimination Act if their gender dysphoria leads to anxiety and depression on a long-term basis, although there is no legal precedent at present.

The Human Rights Act 1998

The Human Rights Act provides protection to trans people, principally under the right to a private life in that this includes, amongst other things, the right to choose a sexual identity, lifestyle and the way a person looks and dresses.

Further information:

Some useful agency and organisations who offer support:

- [a:gender:](#) This is the support network for staff in government departments and agencies who have changed or need to change permanently their perceived gender, or who identify as intersex.
- [The Beaumont Society: This](#) is a national self-help body run by and for transgender people. Its website provides links to a range of information and advice resources.
- [Consortium of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered voluntary and community organisations:](#) This is a national specialist infrastructure and membership

organisation focusing on the development and support of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender groups, organisations and projects.

- [Depend](#) is an organisation that offers free, confidential and non-judgemental advice, information and support to all family members, partners, spouses and friends of trans individuals.
- [Equality and Human Rights Commission](#): This provides guidance on the Equality Act 2010 and has a range of research reports relating to transgender issues.
- [The Forum](#): for sexual orientation and gender identity equality in post-school education promotes equality and good practice in employment and the provision of post-school education, with a specific focus on sexual orientation and gender identity, or transgender, equality issues.
- **National LGBT Hate Crime Partnership** brings together 35 LGBT organisations from across England, Wales and Scotland and is led by the LGBT consortium on behalf of the EHRC. It aims to increase the reporting of homophobic, biphobic and transphobic hate crimes and incidents and improve the support available to those targeted.
- [Press for Change](#): This is a political, lobbying and educational organisation, which campaigns to achieve equal rights for trans individuals. Its website is a useful source of information on the law and research into trans issues. Its TransEquality project provides professional legal support to trans individuals in key areas of the law, and advice to businesses and non-profit organisations.
- [Stonewall](#) is a campaigning organisation but also helps organisations including HEIs and colleges to recognise the benefits of the perspectives of lesbian, gay, bi and trans individuals for all employees, service users and members of the community. Recently Stonewall has published a series of publications on trans employees.
- [Transgender Zone](#) is an online resource that covers all aspects of transgender issues, including a section specifically for female-to-male trans individuals.

Useful Contacts

Transitioning can be a very hard time and there are many different means of support or people you can speak to.

On campus

- [Support and Advice Hub \(SU\)](#)
- [Student Health and Wellbeing](#)
- [Newcastle University LGBTQ+ society](#)

- [University Chaplaincy and Pastoral Care](#)
- [Nightline](#)
- [LGBTQ+ Officer](#)
- [Marginalised Genders Officer](#)

External support services

BE - Be: Trans Support & Development North is Trans Community Support, Development and Campaigning Organisation operating across the North of England. Offering a confidential 121 bespoke holistic support, advice and advocacy services to all gender diverse individuals and their families. They facilitate a variety of peer groups and social events, promote trans community cohesion, bring likeminded people together in a safe and positive environment where they can benefit from interacting with each other. Provide Trans guidance, advice and awareness training to public, private and 3rd sector organisations.

BE also run a monthly social event open to all Trans and Gender Diverse Individuals and their Family, Friends and Allies as well as other groups.

NORTHERN REGION GENDER DYSPHORIA SERVICE (NHS) works with people with gender identity issues whether its people with desire to gender transition or people with concerns about their own gender identity.

One-to-one work, couple work and group support is available. A referral from a GP or local Psychiatrist is required.

[Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning + \(LGBTQIA+\) support and groups in Newcastle - Information Now](#)

Terminology:

Acquired Gender:

The new gender of a person who has had their gender reassigned and/or legally recognised. It is possible for an individual to transition fully without surgical intervention.

Birthname/Deadname:

This the name previously assigned to a person who has since changed their name. A person should not ask or use a trans or non-binary person's deadname, as this is considered harmful and disrespectful.

Gender:

Gender consists of two related aspects - gender identity, which is the person's internal perception and experience of their gender, and gender role or expression which is the way the person lives in society and interacts with others based on their gender identity. Gender is less clearly defined than anatomical sex and does not necessarily represent a simple binary choice; some people have a gender identity that is neither clearly male nor female.

Gender Confirmation Surgery (GCS):

Gender Confirmation Surgery refers to a process that is undertaken under medical supervision for change to a person's body. These surgeries form part of someone's medical transition. However, this is not a requirement, some trans people will have some procedures and not others, while others might not feel they need GCS.

Gender Dysphoria:

The medical term for the condition in which a person has been assigned one gender (usually at birth based on sex), but identifies as belonging to another gender, or does not conform to the gender role society ascribes to them. Gender Dysphoria is not a form of sexual deviancy or a sexual orientation. Gender Dysphoria is a highly personal and complex condition. Commonly, it is the feeling of discomfort and/or distress associated with a person whose gender identity does not match the gender they were assigned at birth.

Gender Identity:

A person's inner and deep-held sense of their gender. Man or woman is usually seen as the default; however, gender identity is a spectrum which encompasses a wide range of valid identities. For example, people can identify somewhere within the spectrum (i.e. non-binary) or outside it completely (i.e. agender).

Gender Non-Conforming:

Exhibiting behavioural, cultural, or psychological traits that do not fit with societal gender 'norms'. Therefore, gender expression and/or identity can be outside societal expectations. Not all gender non-conforming people identify as trans, in the same way some non-binary people do not identify as trans.

Gender Presentation / Gender Expressions:

While gender identity is subjective and internal to the individual, the presentation of one's self, either through personality or clothing is what is perceived by others. Typically, trans people seek to make their gender expression or presentation to match their gender identity, rather than their assigned gender at birth.

Gender Recognition Certificate (GRC):

A certificate issued by a Gender Recognition Panel under the Gender Recognition Act 2004 means that a holder of a full Gender Recognition Certificate (GRC) is legally recognised in his or her acquired gender for all purposes.

Non-binary:

An umbrella term for people's gender identity and/or gender expression that falls outside man or woman. There are a variety of non-binary identities, with differences and nuances to these gender identities. Many non-binary people use they/them pronouns or alternative pronouns (i.e. zie/zir). Non-binary is a typically 'western' term, however, there are cultural alternatives to gender identities, for example Hijra (third gender community in India) and two-spirit (used by some Indigenous North Americans). Finally, not all non-binary people identify as trans.

Real Life Experience:

This refers to the phase during gender reassignment in which the individual must live and work in their acquired gender before certain medical procedures will be carried out.

Trans:

An inclusive term for those who identify themselves as transgender or transsexual. The word 'trans' can be used without offence to cover people undergoing gender transition; people who identify as someone with a different gender from that in which they were born, but who may have decided not to undergo medical treatment; and people who choose to dress in the clothing typically worn by the other sex. This term should be used as an adjective.

Transgender:

An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from their assigned gender at birth.

Transitioning:

This is a personal process that an individual that identifies as trans or under the non-binary umbrella. Transitioning can include many different social, legal, or medical steps, depending on the person. For example: coming out, using a different name and pronouns, altering legal documents, hormone therapy, and surgery. Transitioning should not be focused on one or more of these processes as it is based on what an individual feels appropriate for them.

Transphobia:

Transphobia is the intolerance of gender diversity and manifests as prejudice and abuse towards transgender and non-binary people. It stems from the notion that 'sex' and 'gender' are comparable, however this is not the case.

Outdated terminology:

Cross-dresser:

While anyone may dress in the clothing typically worn by the opposite sex, cross-dressers often identify as heterosexual men. It might be done for entertainment purposes; although this may not always be the case. A person who cross-dresses generally not wish to alter their body and do not necessarily experience gender dysphoria. This term replaces “transvestite”, however is still out of date.

Transsexual Person

A person who feels a consistent and overwhelming desire to transition and to fulfil their life as a member of the opposite sex. However, this term is not an umbrella term. Some people still might use this to express themselves, which should be respected.

Transvestite

A person who dresses in the clothing typically worn by the opposite sex. Generally, transvestites do not wish to alter their body and do not necessarily experience gender dysphoria. This is seen by many as an offensive term, and you should never refer to somebody as a transvestite unless somebody specifically self-identifies that way.

Re v.	Date	OWN ER	APPROV AL	DESCRIPTION OF CHANGE
KH	4.7.25	KH	GW/AC/ SW	Updated legal information. Job role changes. Added FOS information.