



# A GUIDE TO HELP YOU GET IT RIGHT

LGBTQ+ INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE GUIDE

By Pride Outside

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# INTRODUCTION

Language is changing all the time, with 650 new words being added to the Oxford dictionary in 2022. In the LGBTQ+ community, language is also changing as our understanding of sexual orientation and gender identity continues to evolve.

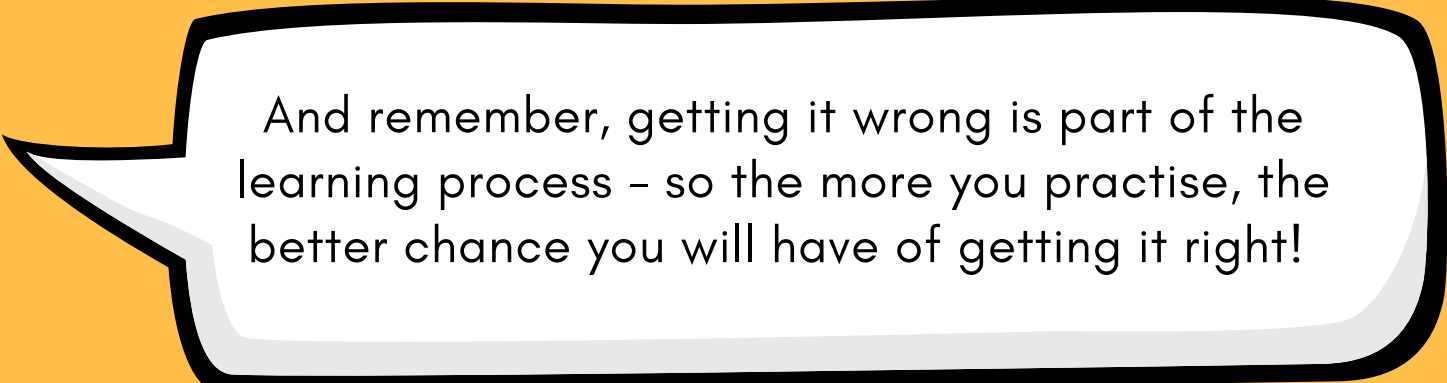
Using LGBTQ+ inclusive language not only benefits the LGBTQ+ community, it also benefits many other minority groups by helping them to feel included and accepted. Using LGBTQ+ inclusive language will also help you build better connections and relationships with the LGBTQ+ community as it shows respect and kindness and signals that you are an LGBTQ+ Ally.

## **This guide includes:**

1. Examples of using LGBTQ+ Inclusive language in practice
2. Key definitions of LGBTQ+ inclusive language
3. Top 5 more commonly asked questions on LGBTQ+ inclusive language

## **The aim of this guide is to help you:**

- Update your organisational materials (website, marketing materials, forms) to ensure they are LGBTQ+ inclusive
- Understand and use more LGBTQ+ inclusive language when speaking with people
- Feel more confident using LGBTQ+ inclusive language on a day to day basis



And remember, getting it wrong is part of the learning process - so the more you practise, the better chance you will have of getting it right!

# EXAMPLES OF USING LGBTQ+ INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE IN PRACTICE

Examples	More Inclusive language	In practice....
ladies and gentleman	everyone, people, folk, colleagues, team, friends, buddies	Good morning everyone. Welcome friends or Good evening folk (* try avoiding gendered language like "guys")
women	women, person, individual (Women includes trans women and any non binary people who feel comfortable in a women's space)	Our women's group is for all women which includes trans women and non binary people
men	men, person, individual (Men includes trans men and any non binary people who feel comfortable in a men's space)	Our men's group is for all men, which includes trans men and non binary people
husband/wife	partner, spouse, romantic partner, other half, significant other	What's your partner's name? or Can I ask the name of your spouse?
boyfriend/ girlfriend	partner, spouse, romantic partner, other half, significant other	Is your other half in at the moment? or Do you have a significant other?
Same sex relationship	LGBTQ+ relationship, same-gender relationship, couple (this recognises that one of the partners might identify as trans or non binary)	Are you two in a couple? Or Are you in a relationship together?
Mum/mother	parent, carer, guardian	Is your parent or carer in?
Dad/father	parent, carer, guardian	Can I speak to you guardian?

Examples	More Inclusive language	In practice....
daughter/son	child, family member	Is there someone else in your family I can speak to?or Is your child in the house just now?
brother/sister	sibling, family member	Do you have any siblings?orCan a family member come with you?
preferred pronouns	pronouns	What are your pronouns?orMy name is Alex and I use she/her pronouns, can I ask what your name and pronouns are?
transexual or tranny	transgender or trans for short	Do you identify as transgender?or This person experiences discrimination because they are transgender.
crossdresser or transvestite	gender non conforming	I identify as gender non conformingOrThis person is gender non conforming
sex change operation	gender affirming surgery or gender confirmation surgery	Have you had any gender affirming surgery?OrHave you had any gender confirmation surgery?
hermaphrodite	intersex	Do you identify as intersex?
sexual preference	sexual orientation or sexual identity	What's your sexual orientation? or What is your sexual identity?
homosexual	gay, lesbian	Do you identify as gay or lesbian?
preference or lifestyle	orientation or identity	What is your sexual orientation or gender identity?
biologically male or female	man or woman	What is your gender identity?
Ms, Miss, Mrs, Mr	You could add in Mx(* it is pronounced mix)	This is the gender neutral prefix most commonly used by trans and non-binary people
Both genders	All genders	This facility is for all gendersorThese toilets are gender neutral
Women's or men's	Gender neutral facilities	These facilities are gender neutral so can be used by all genders

# KEY SEXUAL ORIENTATION DEFINITIONS

## **Lesbian**

Refers to a woman who has a romantic and/or sexual orientation towards women, however the word gay or queer is now also regularly used to also mean lesbian.

## **Gay**

Refers to a man who has a romantic and/or sexual orientation towards men. 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.

## **Bisexual (Bi for short)**

Bi is an umbrella term used to describe a romantic and/or sexual orientation towards more than one gender.

## **Pansexual (Pan for short)**

Refers to a person whose romantic and/or sexual attraction towards others is not limited by sex or gender.

## **Queer**

Queer is a term used by those wanting to reject specific labels of romantic orientation, sexual orientation and/or gender identity. It can also be a way of rejecting the perceived norms of the LGBT community (racism, sizeism, ableism etc). Although some LGBT people view the word as a slur, it was reclaimed in the late 80s by the queer community who have now embraced it.

## **Questioning**

The process of exploring your own sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

## **Aromantic**

A person who does not experience romantic attraction. Some aromantic people experience sexual attraction, while others do not.

## **Asexual**

A person who does not experience sexual attraction. Some asexual people experience romantic attraction, while others do not.

# KEY GENDER IDENTITY DEFINITIONS

## **Gender**

We are all assigned a gender at birth, for example boy or girl, based on our assumed sex. It is then assumed you will grow up to be a man or a woman. Gender is largely culturally determined and is assumed from the sex you are assigned at birth.

## **Cisgender (Cis for short)**

Someone whose gender identity is the same as the sex they were assigned at birth. If you were born a girl and grow up to be a woman, you would be cis gender. The word cis is a Latin word meaning “on the same side as”.

## **Transgender (Trans for short)**

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. The word “trans” is a Latin word that means “on the other side of”. Some of the other terms that might be used by trans people include gender-queer (GQ), gender-fluid, trans masculine, trans feminine and agender.

## **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.

## **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.

## **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. People who identify as non-binary, quite often also use the pronouns they/them.

## **Intersex**

A term used to describe a person who may have the biological attributes of both sexes or whose biological attributes do not fit with societal assumptions about what constitutes male or female. For example, someone might have both ovarian and testicular tissues or might have a mix of chromosomes. Intersex people may identify as male, female or non-binary.

# TOP 5 MOST COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

## **Q1. Which acronym should we use when speaking about the community?**

In Scotland, the most commonly used acronym is LGBTQ+ however, some organisations have started using the full acronym of LGBTQIA+ . This stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and non-binary, queer and questioning, intersex, asexual and aromantic + represents all of the other identities in the umbrella term.

## **Q2. How do we ensure trans people are included in women's groups?**

It can be helpful to include a statement with any women's groups to explain who is included when you use the term women e.g. our women's groups includes trans women and non binary people who feel comfortable in a women's space.

## **Q3. Can we use the word queer even though we aren't part of the LGBTQ+ community?**

The word queer was reclaimed by the community, as it was previously used as a slur in the 80's and 90's. The word queer is now often used by members of the community as shorthand for being part of the LGBTQ+ community. It is also worth noting, that it is mostly a word used by the community to describe themselves rather than a term used by people outside of the LGBTQ+ community.

## **Q4. How can we include non-binary people in our services?**

All non-binary people are different and some might have been assigned male at birth and some might have been assigned female at birth. Therefore, it is important to explicitly say if a space or service is for non-binary people. It is also worth noting that a lot of non-binary people identify as part of the trans community and some do not, therefore the term "trans and non-binary people" is now commonly used.

## **Q5. What should we include in our LGBTQ+ Inclusion statement to let people know we are an LGBTQ+ inclusive space?**

Every LGBTQ+ Inclusion statement looks different depending on what type of organisation you are and the different identities of people you might be engaging with. The fact that you have an LGBTQ+ Inclusion statement on your website or in public places is a sign of safety already for most LGBTQ+ people. An example of one might be "We are proud to be an LGBTQ+ Inclusive space and welcome people from all gender identities and sexual orientations into our spaces"



This document was created by Pride Outside.

Pride Outside are an award-winning Scottish social enterprise founded by LGBTQ+ couple Ellis (they/them) and Lou (she/her) Beardsmore. They are on a mission to build a world where all LGBTQ+ people are safe and well. They are specialist LGBTQ+ Inclusion consultants who deliver training, workshops and LGBTQ+ Leadership and Wellbeing Days and use their profits to fund a free wellbeing programme for young LGBTQ+ people in Scotland, including an annual Pride Outside Wellbeing Festival.

You can follow them on Instagram or Facebook  
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