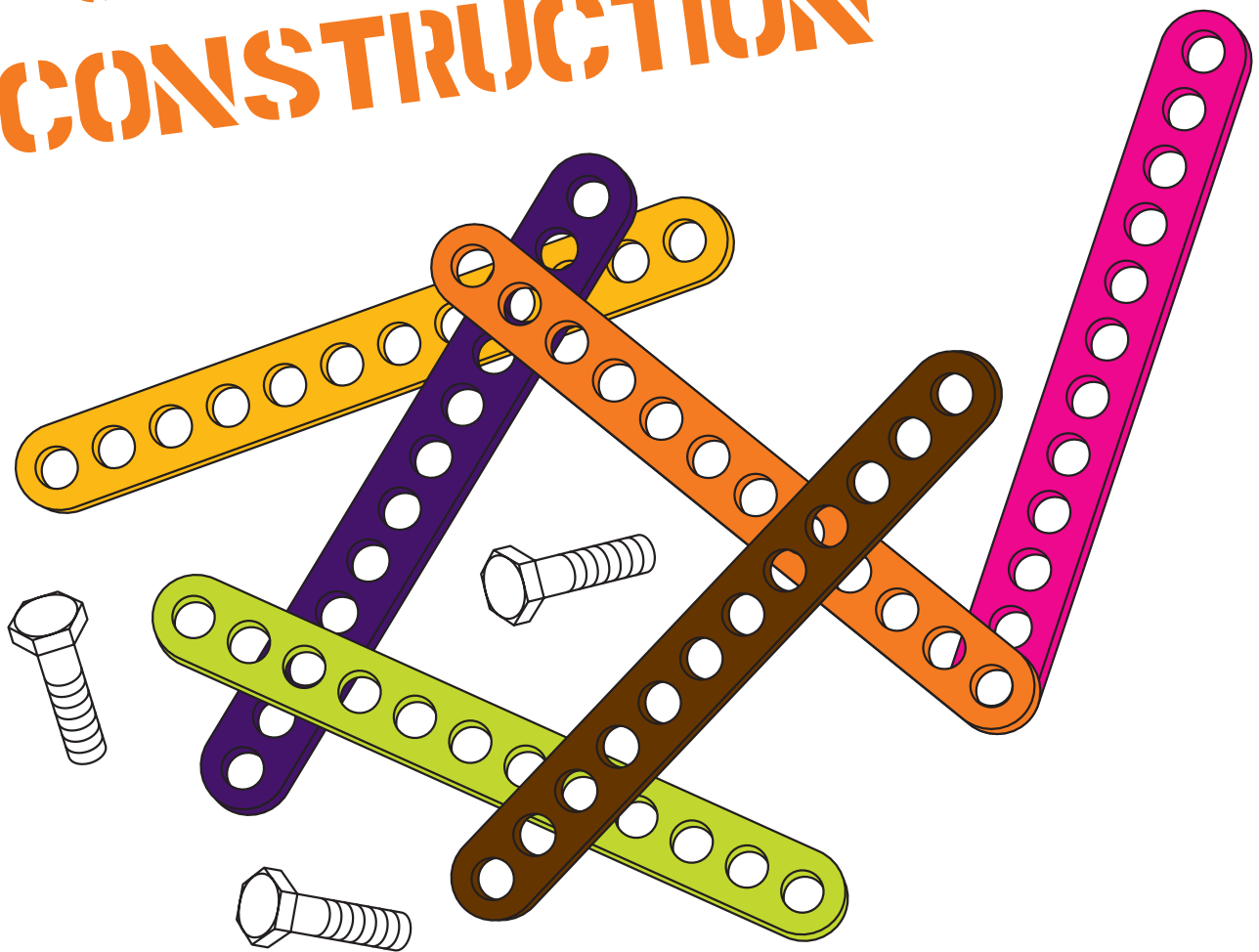


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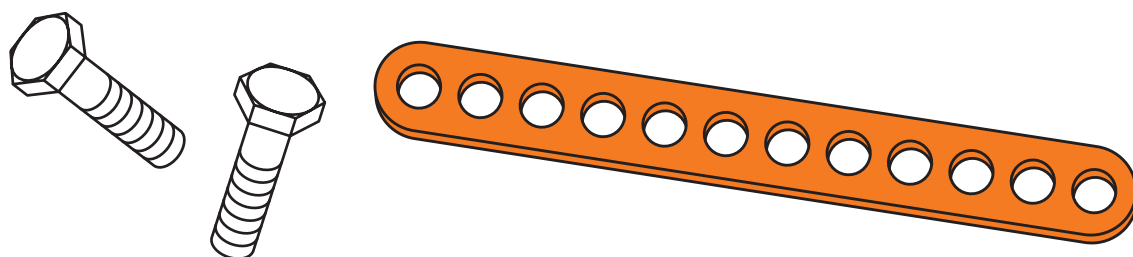
**BUILDING
OUR MOVEMENT**

TRANS STUDENTS

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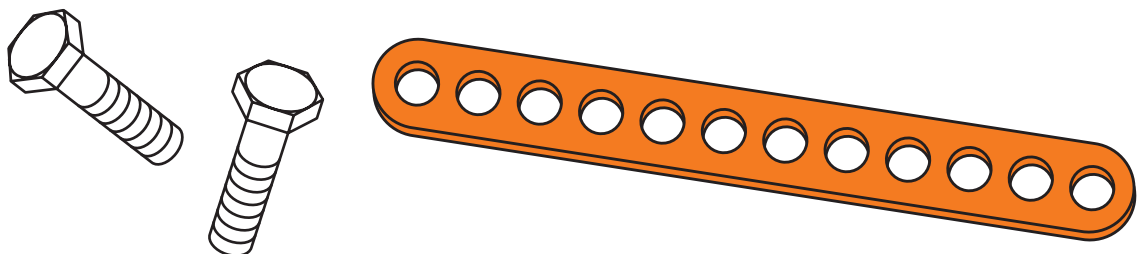


A GUIDE TO BECOMING TRANS-INCLUSIVE FOR STUDENT ACTIVISTS AND OFFICERS



Written by Ruth Pearce (NUS LGBT Committee 2007/8; NUS Women's Committee 2008/9)

Based upon Trans Students: A Briefing For Welfare Officers (Emma Persky, 2005)



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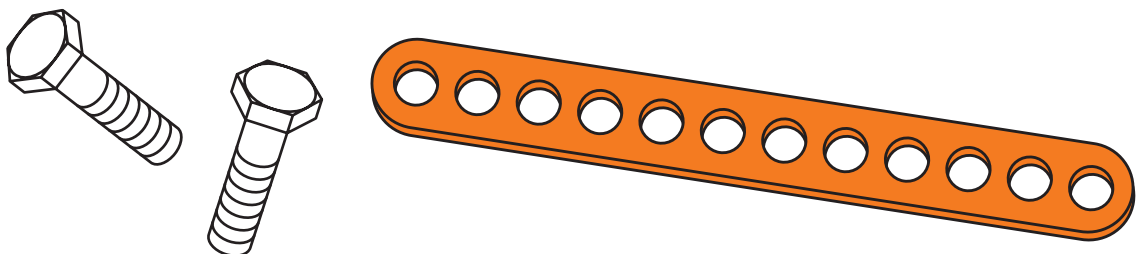
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UNDER CONSTRUCTION

TRANS STUDENTS



Introduction

Welcome to your guide to ensuring that your LGBT student group, students' union and your institution become trans-inclusive!

LGBT societies exist in students unions all over the UK, and many of these have explicitly become trans-inclusive in recent years. Although there are many commonalities between different members of the LGBT community, trans students have specific needs which are different from those of lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) students. At NUS LGBT we frequently receive emails from trans students telling us about the horrendous discrimination they face in further and higher education.

It's clear that trans inclusion needs to go further than nominal inclusion of trans students alongside LGB students in LGBT societies. NUS LGBT believes that trans identities should be acknowledged, respected and celebrated in all aspects of student life. Efforts to mainstream appreciation of LGB issues in education and in students' experience are beginning to find success and this process of education and inclusion must also take place for trans issues.

This document has been written as a broad overview of trans issues. The first half (parts one and two) provide a brief introduction to trans identities, who trans people are and some of the problems they might face, both social and legal. The second half (parts three and four) suggests some of the ways you can work to solve these problems and campaign for trans rights in your college or university, as well as in wider society. We've included a large glossary (appendix one) that explains some of the language used to discuss trans issues – both in this document and others that you might read to learn more. Finally, some useful web links can be found in appendix two.

Much of this document is written for the point of view of non-trans- people. If you're trans, we hope that you find parts of this document particularly helpful, such as the summary of legal issues in part two and some of the suggestions for trans advocacy on campus and campaigns in parts three and four.

If you have any questions about the content of this document, or about the work that NUS does on trans issues, you should contact lgbt@nus.org.uk.

Good luck, and happy campaigning!

Part 1: Trans Identities

What does it mean for someone to be trans?

Trans is a wide umbrella term for a wide range of personal identities, issues, conditions and states of being. You may have heard various terms before that relate to trans identities, such as “**transgender**”, “**transsexual**” and “**transvestite**”. Although these terms are all related, they refer to very different things and cannot be substituted for one another!



What trans identities share is that they are to do with an individual’s **gender identity** and **gender expression**. Trans people usually reject the gender they were assigned at birth. A trans person assigned a female gender at birth might actually have a male gender identity, or could identify as neither female nor male, or both female and male.

When talking about trans people, it is sometimes necessary to compare the situation of those who are trans to those who are not trans. People who are not trans are referred to in this document as **Cis**.

An exploration of these terms and many others used in this guide can be found in Appendix 1: Trans Glossary.

What is Gender Identity?

The words “gender” and “sex” tend to be used interchangeably in our society, but the differences between the two are important. Gender is a term that is to do with how we are perceived by ourselves and others. A person’s understanding of their gender is their gender identity. The gender roles that people take or are placed in by others are a result of societal norms that interpret gender identity and categorise it. Sex, meanwhile, refers to the physical appearance and chemical makeup of our bodies.

Most people have a gender identity which is in line with their apparent physical sex and social **gender role**. When we refer to a “man” we tend to be referring exclusively to someone with a male gender identity, a male sex and a male gender role. When we refer to a “woman” we tend to be referring exclusively to someone with a female gender identity, a female sex, and a female gender role.

Trans people usually have a gender identity that does not have such a straightforward relationship with their apparent physical birth sex and/or social gender roles that are imposed on us all. There is no way you can ever safely assume someone’s gender identity from their physical appearance as ‘male’ or ‘female’.

Gender Expression and Passing

“Gender expression” and “gender presentation” are terms that refer to the manner in which people present their gender to the world. Many aspects of personal expression – from hairstyles and clothing to mannerisms and habits – are laden with societal gender connotations. For example, long hair and wearing dresses are associated with women in our society, even if many women have short hair and don’t tend to wear dresses.

In many ways our gender expression is shaped by social expectations. For example, men are not expected to wear dresses, because they are stereotypically seen as a female form of gender expression. In this way, gender expression tends to be bound up in social gender roles.

The gender expression expressed by an individual may or may not represent their gender identity. Trans people may dress in line with the expectations of others of their gender identity, or alternatively they might express only their assigned gender because they have not come out. This might be to avoid manifestations of prejudice from others. Similarly, a Cis person who is content in their gender role might choose to present temporarily as a different gender role: this does not make them trans!

The term “**passing**” is sometimes used by trans people to refer to being read by others as a female or male person. For example, if someone “passes” as male, they are considered by others to be a man. For transsexual people, “passing” most commonly refers to being recognised specifically as one’s true gender identity. How someone passes is usually dependant upon how their gender expression is interpreted by others.

It is possible for some to alter their appearance in order to change their gender expression and the way that others read their gender identity. For some people, adopting a particular ‘look’ is sufficient for them to pass as female or male. For others, medical intervention may be necessary to achieve this. For example, an individual who has particularly large breasts and hips may find it difficult to pass as male without the removal of their breasts and the administration of testosterone hormone therapy to cause the redistribution of body fat. Others still may never be able to pass as their gender for various physical reasons. They might nevertheless present their gender expression in line with their true gender identity, rather than their assigned gender identity, insofar as is possible.

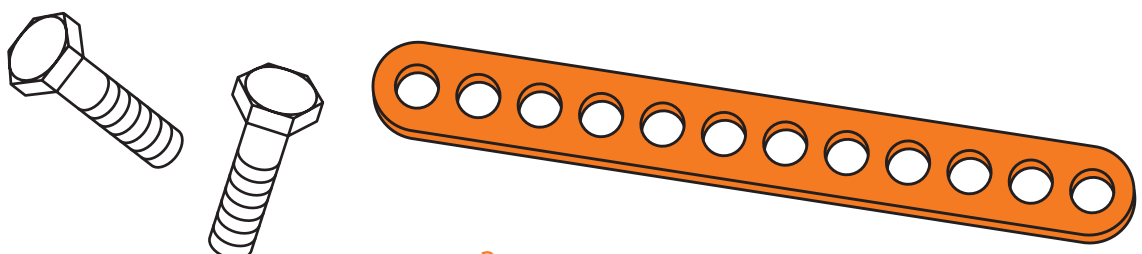
The Problem With Sex

Many incorrect assumptions are made about biological sex, even when it is distinguished from gender identity. It is widely believed that everyone has a straightforward physical sex: ie. we are all born female or male. In fact, it is quite common for bodies to have both female and male aspects.

Aspects of physical sex include an individual’s sex chromosomes, sex organs and genitalia, hormones, and physical characteristics such as their body shape and the distribution of fat and body hair. Typically a person regarded as female will have XX chromosomes, female sex organs and genitalia, a feminine body shape and so forth, as well as a female gender identity. This is regarded as a biological norm. However this norm is far from universal: any of these aspects of sex may vary.

It’s estimated by groups such as the Intersex Society of North America that around one in 100 people vary from female and male biological norms to the extent that their physical sex can be regarded as somewhat ambiguous. Such individuals are known as **intersex**. Often people will never know that they are intersex: for example, a woman with a feminine body shape, genitalia etc. is unlikely to discover if she has a Y chromosome unless she has a reason to undergo a genetic test. Other intersex people are born with a body or genitals that are sexually ambiguous.

Given these natural variations in physical sex, it is hardly surprising that some people’s gender identities are at odds with their physical appearance.



Self-identification

Trans people and cis people all have their own unique gender identities, and the only way to know for sure what these identities are is to ask. It's essential that all people are free to define their gender identity themselves but it's also important to remember that all trans people are different, and that one person's idea of being transsexual or **genderqueer** is likely to differ at least a little from another's.

The only way to know for certain that someone is trans and to know what that means to them, is for them to tell you!

Trans Definitions

There are many different types of trans identity. It's impossible to present any kind of comprehensive account of trans definitions as their variety is so broad. It's also difficult to describe or pinpoint an identity without encountering the difficulties that come with attempting to account for a wealth of very different individual experiences in a single definition.

It is however necessary to categorise trans identities in some respect, in order to discuss them. This section will give a broad overview of some ways in which people can be trans. A more in depth (though by no means exhaustive) glossary of trans terminology can be found in Appendix One: Trans Glossary. Neither that section nor this should be considered anything more than a very rough guide, since everyone who experiences being trans does so in their own way.



Transsexualism

One of the most common images of a trans person is of a person (usually a man) who wants to be the opposite sex.

There's a lot wrong with this image. For a start, such a person might be of either sex or any gender. Furthermore, whilst they may want their body to have a different physical sex, this does not mean that their gender identity changes with their body: it is in place before any changes are made, if any medical intervention takes place at all.

We are all **assigned a gender** at birth, usually in line with our apparent physical sex. A transsexual person is someone whose gender identity does not match up with that physical sex. A female transsexual person (known as a **trans woman**) is someone with a female gender identity who was assigned a male gender at birth. A male transsexual person (known as a **trans man**) is someone with a male gender identity who was assigned a female gender at birth.

Transsexual people will tend to want to make a **transition** from their assigned gender to the gender they identify in. This usually involves a social transition in which they adopt a gender expression in line with their gender identity rather than their physical sex, and may also involve a physical transition in which they undergo hormone therapy and maybe particular surgeries or other medical interventions in order to align their physical sex with their gender identity. Some transsexual people do not want to or are not able to transition: this does not invalidate their gender identity.

If you meet a transsexual person, they may present as their assigned gender, as the gender they identify with, or between genders. They may or may not be on hormones and may or may not have had other medical interventions. The physical appearance of a transsexual person is likely to change considerably if they transition, especially if this involves medical intervention. Whatever a trans person looks like though, it is polite to regard them as the gender they identify into and use their chosen name and appropriate pronouns to reflect this.

Beyond the Gender Binary

Whilst transsexual individuals tend to define as women or men, some people define outside of the female/male gender binary altogether. That is to say, they don't identify as female or male at all, but instead may consider themselves to be in some way without gender, between genders, or another gender altogether. They might consider themselves to be more female than male or more male than female, or may desire to avoid associating themselves with **binary gender** in this fashion.

The most common term used to describe this kind of identity is **genderqueer**, but other descriptions may be used, including (but not limited to) **bi-gender**, **androgynous**, **third gender**, and **genderfluid**. All such terms mean different things, and should not be used interchangeably: descriptions of each can be found in Appendix One: Trans Glossary.

Some of those who define outside of the gender binary live in an androgynous or gender ambiguous fashion. Others live in a female or male gender role, or switch between gender expressions. It's worth bearing in mind that some may be perfectly comfortable living as female or male and being perceived as such despite not identifying as female or male!

People who define outside of the gender binary may wish to transition. It is most common for such an individual to make a social transition to an androgynous gender expression. It is also possible for them to transition physically to female or male however, usually because this allows them a more socially acceptable gender expression which, whilst not perfect, may be better than their assigned gender role. Some of those who consider themselves to be transsexual also define outside of the gender binary.

Other Gender Variation

It is possible for those who are relatively comfortable with their assigned gender to want to express themselves as a different gender or outside of the gender binary. Some like to mess with gender expectations for political reasons or simply for fun, whilst others enjoy impersonating female or male modes of expression.

Cross-dressers are commonly considered to be men who enjoy dressing like women. It is of course perfectly possible for a woman to enjoy dressing like a man, but since it's more socially acceptable for a woman to dress in a masculine manner than it is for a man to dress in a feminine manner, it is difficult to know when to say that a woman is cross-dressing! People may cross-dress for many reasons: as entertainment for themselves or others, to express a different side of themselves, for sexual reasons, or simply because they prefer clothing associated with the opposite sex. They may cross-dress in public, but are more likely to do so in the privacy of their own home or in trans-friendly clubs.

Whilst it's possible for cross-dressers to define outside of the gender binary to some degree or later come out as transsexual, most cross-dressers define their gender in line with their apparent physical sex. It's also worth noting that most cross-dressers are heterosexual.

The term **transvestite** may be used instead of cross-dresser, but many prefer not to use it because of negative connotations. In particular, people often associate the word "transvestitism" with sexual behaviour that is most commonly irrelevant to one's identity as a cross-dresser.

Drag Queens typically define as men and present in a stereotypically feminine fashion, and **Drag Kings** typically define as women and present in a stereotypically masculine fashion. They usually do so temporarily as part of a performance or act, but it is possible for someone to define permanently as a Drag King or Queen and live most of their life "in drag".

Identifying as trans

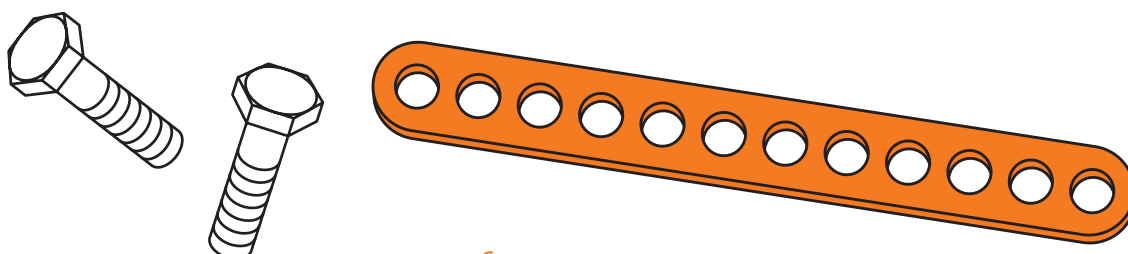
Since trans is a very wide umbrella term, some of those who might be considered trans by others prefer not to regard themselves as trans. Transsexual people might not wish to associate themselves with those who identify outside of the gender binary and visa-versa, and cross-dressers who do not question their own gender identity might find it odd to be lumped in with those people who do. Often intersex people with no gender issues are considered to be trans by others even when they do not define as such.

It's important to remember that trans is an identity to be defined into in the same way as lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer...or for that matter, straight! It's always worth telling people that they have a right to identify into the trans category if they are transsexual or in any way gender variant, but no one should ever be defined as trans against their will.

Trans Sexuality

Trans people who identify as female or male may be gay, lesbian, bisexual or straight in the same way as a cis person. A trans man who is attracted exclusively to women will tend to define as straight, as will a trans woman who is attracted exclusively to men. A trans woman who is attracted to both other women and to men will tend to define as bisexual. A trans man who is attracted exclusively to men will tend to define as gay.

Trans sexuality is not always so straightforward though. It can be difficult for genderqueer people and others who identify outside of the gender binary to consider themselves straight, gay or even bisexual though, since all of these definitions are rooted in the concept of binary gender. Furthermore, it can be difficult for someone attracted to an individual who defines outside of the gender binary to define their own sexuality. There is of course nothing wrong for example with a cis woman who is in a relationship with a genderqueer partner with an apparently female physical sex defining as lesbian as long as her genderqueer partner is comfortable with this. Some, however, find it easier to define as **pansexual** or queer in order to account for their attraction to people who do not fall easily into categories of "female" or "male".



Part 2: Trans People In Society

Transphobia

Trans people are widely misunderstood and regularly face discrimination.

Our society is rife with **transphobia**: that is, discriminatory attitudes and practices towards trans people and those assumed to be trans. Transphobia may come from the simple fear or hatred of trans people, but can also arise from common misunderstandings of trans issues.



Transphobia – like homophobia and biphobia – can of course manifest itself in extreme manners: it is possible for people to be assaulted, murdered or raped because they are trans. This is explicit transphobia, but transphobia can also be implicit.

Trans people are sometimes refused jobs and rejected from positions, refused service or even charitable aid because of who they are. It is still socially acceptable to make derogatory jokes or comments about trans people. Treatment for transsexual people on the NHS is slow, difficult and in some cases non-existent as this form of help for trans people is not prioritised.

Little is known about trans people amongst the broader population, and this leads to the kind of misunderstandings that fuel transphobia. Many believe that being trans is a choice. This leads to the idea that trans people should make more of an effort to fit in as their assigned gender.

Although many colleges and universities tend to be somewhat more liberal than wider society, this isn't always the case. Transphobia can be found almost everywhere in some form or another, even in supposedly accepting groups such as student LGBT societies.

Since trans issues are often incorrectly associated with issues of sexuality, trans people often also experience homophobia.

Transphobia and Homophobia

We live in a society with “heteronormative” norms. This means that human beings are expected to fall into two categories: female and male. The expectations that arise from these categories have resulted in a society that expects women and men to act and be treated differently. Inherent in this of course is also the idea that it is normal and right for men to be attracted to women, and women to men.

From birth we're divided into boys and girls and have to meet different social expectations for our different gender roles. As children and in schools we're made to dress differently, and there are often different expectations depending upon our apparent gender. There are certainly natural gender extremities (such as female and male identities) but on top of this we're actively taught to be different and behave differently, and expectations arising from peer groups, work environments and even the media that we're exposed to continues this into adulthood.

This is a state of affairs has important consequences for all campaigners for liberation. For trans people though – whose gender identities are particularly in conflict with their assigned roles – this situation can be particularly confusing and alienating.

Cis Privilege

One way of illustrating the extent of casual, often unintentional transphobia is through examining Cis privilege. Cis (non-trans) people gain privilege from not being trans in many ways. A few of many benefits follow:

- A cis person's right to inhabit their gender is universally considered valid.
- A cis person has unquestioned access to gendered public toilets and sports facilities.
- A cis person can expect the privacy of their body to be respected and any violation of this is usually considered outrageous.
- Perception and acceptance of a cis person's gender identity is usually automatic, and is independent of their choices regarding the clothes they wear, the hobbies they enjoy, their sexual choices and desires, their assertiveness or passiveness and so on.
- Popular terminology implies that cis people are normal and natural: by comparison, talking about trans issues can be very confusing because we don't have a straightforward language for it.

Trans people are of course denied such privileges unless they are perceived to be cis. Even if this occurs, their cis privilege can be suspended at any time if it is discovered that they are trans.

This is not to say that those benefiting from cis privilege are in any way necessarily transphobic. Whatever their attitude is towards trans people, cis people will gain cis privilege by virtue of being cis. Nor does this mean that any given cis person will necessarily be better off generally in their life than any given trans person.

Trans Rights In Law

The situation for trans rights is gradually improving in the United Kingdom. A number of new laws have been passed in recent years, which has had a positive impact on the lives of many trans people. Unfortunately these laws have not universally affected trans people as a group, since they have mainly been focused on helping those who are transsexual. Trans people who identify outside of the gender binary are almost entirely unprotected from discrimination.

“Gender Reassignment”

Protection for trans people in UK law is based upon the concept of “gender reassignment.” This is defined as:

“...a process which is undertaken under medical supervision for the purpose of reassigning a person's sex by changing physiological or other characteristics of sex, and includes any part of such a process”.

It's a definition that is wider than it first appears, since the “medical supervision” that is referred to can be as minimal as counselling. This legislation means that a transsexual person can legally gain protection if they undergo a recognised process with medical supervision that confirms they are transsexual. However, this legislation completely fails to protect any trans people who are not intending to transition (i.e. most those who identify outside of the gender binary) and those who transition in any way without recognised medical supervision.

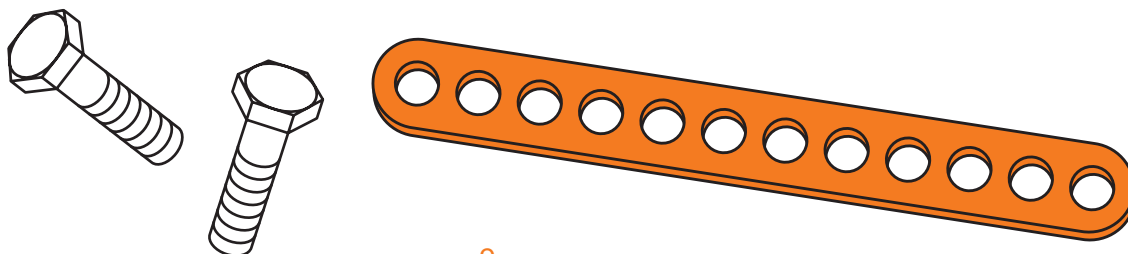
In practice, the only trans people widely protected by UK law are those transsexual people who are planning to undergo transition, are transitioning or have transitioned, and will have/are having/have had this transition overseen by medical professionals.

Trans Rights in the UK

- Trans people, just like all people can change their names freely by deed poll or statutory declaration with no need to register any change to their assigned gender.
- Trans people can change their national insurance details (with proof of change of name.)
- Trans people can have their gender altered on identification such as passports and driving licenses (as long as that gender is female or male, and only with approval from a medical professional.)
- Trans people can change the gender on their birth certificate with a **Gender Recognition Certificate**, (as long as that gender is female or male, and only with approval from a medical professional, with proof that they have been living in that gender role for at least two years.)
- Transsexual people cannot legally be discriminated against in the workplace or sacked unfairly.
- Transsexual people cannot legally be discriminated against by, or denied goods and services from providers such as shops, hotels and banks on the grounds of their being transsexual.
- Trans people may receive limited treatment on the NHS (but only if that person is transitioning to female or male rather than outside of the binary.)

However, there are a huge number of deficiencies in the law. A number of these include:

- There is no legal protection from hate crime for trans people.
- There is no legal recognition of gender identities beyond female and male: in effect the gender binary is enforced by law.
- There is little protection in the workplace for those trans people who are not transsexual (so it is legal to sack someone because they are genderqueer and refuse to adopt a female or male gender role, for example.)
- There is no protection from discrimination in the provision of goods and services for those trans people who are not transsexual.
- Although all transsexual people theoretically have access to treatment on the NHS, in many areas (such as the entirety of Wales) this is not the case due to opposition from Primary Care Trusts.



The Problem of Marriage

A good example of the complexity of trans rights issues (particularly when they intersect with other areas such as LGBT rights) can be found in the issue of marriage and civil partnership.

Trans people in a relationship that is legally recognised as heterosexual may marry. Those who are in a relationship that is legally recognised as homosexual may enter into a civil partnership.

Unfortunately, the basis for legal recognition of a trans person's gender identity when it comes to marriage or civil partnership is the Gender Recognition Certificate. So whilst a lesbian trans woman with a Gender Recognition Certificate is regarded as a lesbian, and is permitted only to get a civil partnership with her girlfriend, a trans woman *without* a Gender Recognition Certificate is regarded as heterosexual and is permitted only to get married to her girlfriend as a man. Similarly, a straight trans woman can get married to her boyfriend if she has a Gender Recognition Certificate, but is permitted only to get a civil partnership with him if she doesn't, because her relationship with her boyfriend will be seen as a gay male relationship due to her assigned gender role on her birth certificate.

Trans people who do not identify into the gender binary must adopt a female or male role in order to marry or enter into a civil partnership, which is often in direct conflict with their gender identity.

The situation is worsened if someone wishing to acquire a Gender Recognition Certificate is already married or in a civil partnership. Since the UK does not recognise homosexual marriage or heterosexual civil partnerships, they must get divorced or have their civil partnership annulled in order to qualify for the Gender Recognition Certificate. This is to ensure that there is no possibility of gay marriage in the United Kingdom. The knock-on affects can be enormous: as well as the emotional trauma of this process, the couple will have to sort out a large amount of relevant paperwork. For example, much of their insurance will become invalid, and there is no compensation for this.

Legal Recognition of Sex and Gender

If someone talks about "legal sex" or "legal gender", they could be talking about a number of very different things. Many trans people will live in one gender role despite being recognised as another in law, and others will be recognised legally as both female and male in different ways.

Sex and gender may be legally recorded in the following ways:

1) Birth Certificate

All babies are assigned a gender on their birth certificate. Usually this is in line with the sex of their genitals. In the case of intersex children, doctors tend to decide what gender to assign to the baby (the newborn may be operated on to better resemble a boy or a girl.)

2) Identity Cards

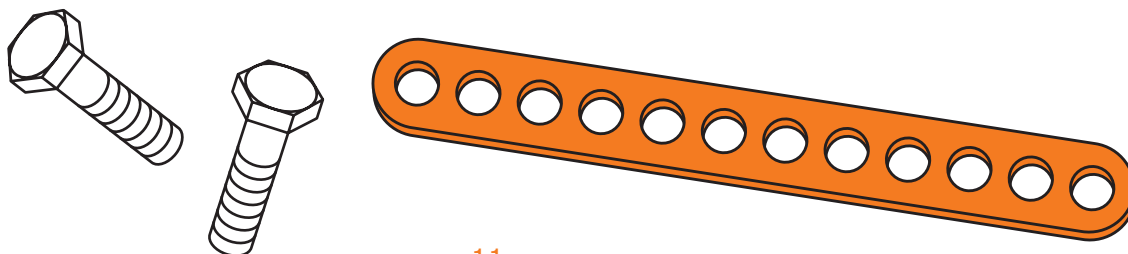
Gender is recorded on forms of identity card such as passports and driving licenses. These can be used as proof of gender in many fields, such as opening a bank account or accessing insurance. Sex/gender on a passport may be changed with a letter from a doctor saying that the passport's owner is living permanently in the gender role they wish to have recognised on the passport.

3) Gender Recognition Certificate

Trans people who can prove that they have been living in a female or male gender role (in contrast to the gender they were assigned at birth) for at least two years may apply for a Gender Recognition Certificate. This document effectively replaces the trans person's birth certificate, and may be substituted for a birth certificate whenever one is required for proof of sex/gender.

4) Other Forms of Identity

There are many forms of identification that have a limited use: for example, credit cards, bus passes, and student cards. These may register the sex, gender, or a gendered title (such as Mr or Ms) for a person. Some companies will ask for a gender recognition certificate to change the sex/gender on such identity cards, but legally they only need proof from a more universal identity card such as a passport, or doctor's letter. There is no legal requirement for any documentation to be necessary in order for an individual to change their title, including gendered titles.



Part 3: Trans inclusion at your institution

This section contains some ideas on how you can be inclusive of trans people in your LGBT group, and what positive changes can be brought about in your students' union and college or university. If you're not sure how best to bring about these changes, further advice can be found in Part 4: Campaigning on Trans Issues.

Including trans people in your LGBT group

If you're in a student LGBT group it is likely that you want to work on trans issues as well as LGB issues, but it can be difficult to know what or how. There are a number of steps you can take in order to become more inclusive of those who are trans. The first of these is to recognise that everyone is an individual. Some trans people will be extrovert and outgoing, whilst others may be quiet and withdrawn; some will be very open about their identity, whilst others will choose to hide it. Be open-minded, and don't make any assumptions about anyone because they're trans!



Trans Invisibility

Trans people are actually more common than you might first imagine. One of the biggest problems for any LGBT group aiming for greater trans inclusivity is the apparent rarity of trans people. You may seem to have only one or two trans people in your group, or more likely none at all. It might appear that there are no trans people at your institution altogether.

However, even the smallest college is likely to have trans students. The average university will probably have many. These students tend not to be immediately visible however, for various reasons.

- Many trans people will be afraid of coming out or revealing their trans status for fear of negative repercussions.
- Some trans people may have a negative view of the so-called "gay community", and hence find it difficult to understand what an LGBT group can do for them.
- Trans people do not necessarily "look trans".
- There is no necessity for a trans person to identify themselves to others as trans if they don't want to!

Encouraging Participation

1) Adding the "T"!

If your society is not already an LGBT group (for example, it might be an LGB group or use another name entirely) then an important first step is to be explicitly inclusive of trans people. Put forward a motion at any society meeting, or better still your society's Annual General Meeting if you have one. If there is opposition to your proposal then you might find some of the arguments in section below on winning the arguments for trans inclusivity helpful. You could also contact the NUS LGBT campaign for advice and support.

2) Trans Representation

Where possible, it is important for LGBT groups to have a trans representative. This individual can not only represent trans people within the society, raise specific concerns and address particular issues, but also

acts as a visible demonstration of the group's commitment to trans inclusivity. This can be a catalyst for greater trans participation in the group. Ideally, the trans rep should identify themselves as trans! If there does not appear to be any trans people in the group however, it may be helpful to nominate a cis person whose responsibility it is to ensure that the LGBT society includes trans issues in all its work.

3) Engaging With Trans Issues

Don't be afraid to engage with trans issues! In doing so you will not only be working towards a more inclusive world, but also demonstrating to trans students at your institution that they are welcome in your group. Some ideas of what you can do include:

- Invite in a trans activist to speak to your group or run a workshop on trans issues – if you're not sure who to ask, try contacting the NUS LGBT campaign for advice.
- Run a campaign on trans issues at your institution (see part four: Campaigning on Trans Issues.)
- If you have a message board on the internet, create a private forum for trans members to share their experiences or discuss ideas for campaigning.
- Include what information you can on trans issues in any welfare or campaigning material – it's best to research this thoroughly and remember that there is no simple definition of what counts as trans.

Why Trans Inclusion Is Important

The place of trans people in groups that are historically for lesbian, gay and bisexual students is still somewhat contentious. Trans people do face very different issues, which are typically to do with gender identity and gender expression rather than sexuality. It is of course quite common for many trans people to identify as heterosexual.

However, there are a number of good reasons for trans inclusion.

- Like lesbian, gay, bisexual and queer identified people, the existence of trans people challenges traditional ideas of how we should act and identify ourselves to others.
- Those with bigoted attitudes do not commonly distinguish between issues of sexuality and gender identity: trans people commonly face homophobia, and LGB people may face transphobia if they are seen to be undermining traditional gender roles.
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people fight similar battles for recognition, acceptance and respect, both on an interpersonal level and more widely in society.
- Trans people usually go through a process of self-identification, self-acceptance and "coming out" to others in a similar way to LGB people.
- Trans people have historically been greatly involved in the "gay rights" movement, from the Stonewall Riots to small-scale grassroots activism.
- LGBT societies can provide a valuable and much-needed safe space for trans students.

Respecting Identity and Privacy

It is always important in LGBT societies to respect everyone's right to determine their identity and to whom they reveal that identity. This can affect trans people in different ways to cis people who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual or queer.

Coming Out and Disclosing Status

There are also different ways in which trans people may come out. Initially, a trans person will tend to come out in a similar way to how someone might come out about their sexuality.

A male-assigned person may come out as a woman, a female-assigned person might come out as a man, or either might come out as genderqueer or otherwise between genders or without gender. In doing so they are choosing to reveal their true identity to others. Although all of these people technically fit under the trans umbrella, they may or may not decide to identify specifically as trans (for example a trans woman may identify as "a woman", with her trans status being a historical and physical fact about her rather than something she identifies as).

A trans person might also initially come out as trans, transgender or gender-questioning without specifying how they identify their gender. This can be because they are still trying to work out how they identify their gender, and they may come out as a particular gender at a later date.

A transsexual person who has already transitioned may choose to reveal that they are trans. This is very different to coming out prior to transition! Indeed, some trans people prefer not to see it as coming out, describing it rather in terms of disclosing their trans status.

Many transsexual people who are able to do so will choose to hide their trans status following transition, simply because they have no desire or reason to want to disclose to others that they are trans. Rather than revealing something about their self-identity, a transsexual person who comes out following transition is revealing something about their past. Coming out as transsexual pre-transition can reveal a transsexual person's true gender identity, but disclosing their trans status post-transition can give others an excuse not to accept their personal gender identity. As such, if someone has undergone transition and does not reveal their trans status, it is not equivalent to being closeted pre-transition: it's more comparable to not telling people about a hidden birth mark!

This of course raises the question: why would a post-transition transsexual person ever want to disclose their trans status if they don't have to? Many never do, and are described as "going stealth". Others however may disclose their status, whether to a few people they are close to, or more widely. This can be for various reasons, ranging from the very personal (for example, sharing information with friends) to the political: many trans activists are deliberately open about their trans status!

Names Changes and Pronouns

It is important to respect a trans person's choice of name and gender pronouns. A trans person who has just come out may begin using a new name that better reflects their gender identity amongst people they are out to. This can be hard to get used to and it's normal to slip up sometimes, but it's important to get used to using it!

Similarly, you should use female gender pronouns (such as “her”, “hers” and “she”) to refer to anyone who identifies as female, and male gender pronouns (such as “him”, “his” and “he”) to refer to anyone who identifies as male. Those who identify outside of the gender binary might be happy with gendered pronouns, or may choose to use gender-neutral pronouns. There are several systems of gender-neutral pronouns, some of which are more common than others.

There is no hard and fast way of knowing how someone identifies, or the pronouns that they would prefer you to use. Although it can be awkward, the best way of knowing if you are not sure can often be to simply to ask politely which pronouns someone uses to refer to themselves.

Outing

It is of course always wrong to “out” someone against their wishes. In the case of a trans person, this can be more complicated than is typically the case with LGB people.

If someone is openly a member of an LGBT group they are generally assumed to be gay, lesbian or bisexual. A trans student may choose to join an LGBT group whilst keeping their trans identity a secret. They might choose to be out as trans only to the LGBT group, or even only to particular individuals within the group.

If you know that a person who is openly a member of your LGBT group identifies as trans, don't assume that they are openly trans! You should find out where they are happy being out, and who they are happy being out to. Make sure that they are not referred to as trans when they do not wish to be.

It may be necessary to use a different name and different pronouns for a trans person under different circumstances. Again, the best way of knowing what name and pronouns should be used in different circumstances is to ask what the person in question prefers.

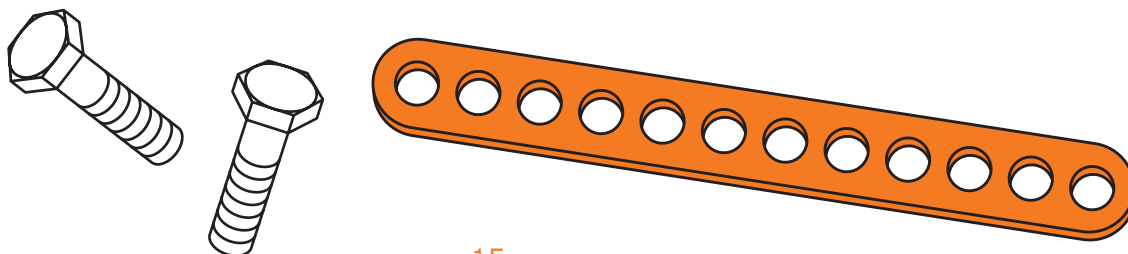
For example, a pre-transition or transitioning trans man who goes by the name of “Mike” and prefers male pronouns might be out to your LGBT group, but not be out to those on his course. In this instance he might choose for you to use his preferred name and male gender pronouns in LGBT safe spaces, and “Kate” – his old name – and female gender pronouns should you meet him in the street, in order to avoid outing him as trans to others.

Privacy

Always respect a trans person's right to privacy in the same way that you would anyone else's. Some trans people are happier to be open about their personal issues than others, but it's best not to assume that anyone will want to tell you intimately personal things unless (or even if) you know them well.

1) Do not expect trans people to want to talk about what medical treatment they may or may not have had.

It's not usual to ask someone about the state of their genitals!



- 2) Similarly, don't expect any trans person to want to talk about their old name or their life before they came out or transitioned: that is likely to be very private information.
- 3) If someone who identifies outside of the gender binary has a very ambiguous appearance and you're not sure whether they were assigned a male or a female sex, they're not necessarily going to want to tell you. The important thing is how they identify their gender now.

Including Trans People in your Students' Union

There are a lot of disadvantages that trans people may face in any environment. The section on Cis Privilege in part two can give you an idea of some of these. Since students' unions (whether organisations or physical buildings) are environments in which all students should feel comfortable, you should take action to make sure that this is the case for trans students as well.

The following suggestions are things you can change to make your union trans-inclusive.

Self-definition of Gender

Your union will often ask for students to state their gender. This can take place when registering them as members, collecting statistical information, for elections or various other reasons.

There is no reason, legal or otherwise, for students' registered gender to be based on their recorded sex. Students should be able to define their own gender, in the same way they might self-define as gay or bisexual. Many trans students will identify into or live in a new gender role without having yet received any legal recognition of this.

Some may claim that there is scope for abuse here. For example, any man could claim to self-identify as a woman in order to vote in women-only elections. In practice this doesn't happen! Moreover, the dangers of attempting to police gender are greater than of an isolated incident of the wrong person voting in an election.

There is also a problem in that students are usually forced to define their gender as either female or male using mechanisms such as 'tick boxes'. Having at least one other option on a form is better because it recognises those who do not identify in the gender binary. The best option would be to leave a space where people can specify their own gender identity. Where possible, the option "prefer not to select" should also be used. It should also not be essential for a student to answer a question regarding their gender. This is something to particularly note in the design of online forms: it is often necessary to choose one of the presented options in order to be able to move forward when completing one, or the form is not recognised as complete and cannot be submitted without a student ticking either 'male' or 'female'. This forces trans students to define into narrow categories which may not fit them, which can feel very uncomfortable.

Remember though that "trans" or "transgender" are not necessarily genders in themselves, so having "female", "male" and "trans" (or equivalent) as options on a form is not always good idea! After all, a trans woman is both female and trans.

It is important that unions support trans students in their identified gender. This includes in the case of gendered services, such as toilets.

Toilets

Gendered toilets can be very problematic for many trans people. There can be many reasons for this: someone might define between genders, be pre-transition, or have an ambiguous physical appearance for whatever reason. Anyone who appears to be female is likely to face discrimination and abuse in male toilets, and anyone who appears to be male is likely to face discrimination and abuse in female toilets.

Students' Unions should support trans students in using their preferred toilets. This is likely to be in line with their self-identity: trans men are likely to want to use men's toilets, and trans women tend to want to use women's toilets!

Some trans people will not want to use gendered (i.e. female or male) toilets. This may be because of the fear of discrimination, or simply because they do not define as female or male and having to 'choose' is uncomfortable for them. The best solution here is to have a third set of toilets alongside the female and male toilets: non-gendered toilets. If your students' union has a rebuild or re-fit planned, it's a good idea campaigning to have these included in the plans as creating new toilets involves physical changes to a building. A non-gendered toilet can be as limited as a single cubicle. If this is not possible though, you can simply 're-brand' existing toilets by replacing the sign on them. It is not acceptable to force trans students who do not wish to use disabled toilets, as being trans is not a disability and should not be regarded as such. However, if no other options are available, trans students who wish to do so should be supported to use disabled (or accessible) toilets.

It's important that trans students are not forced to use any particular set toilets but rather that they are empowered to make a choice that they feel comfortable with. Some genderqueer or otherwise non-binary identified trans people might prefer to use gendered toilets; some female or male identified transsexed people might prefer to use non-gendered toilets. The most problematic issues tend to revolve around trans students who for whatever reason don't look entirely female or male. However others react to them, they have the right to use toilets in the same way as anyone else. Throwing a trans woman out of the women's toilets because she looks somewhat male is as discriminatory as throwing out another woman for being lesbian or black.

Opposing Intolerance

All discrimination against trans people should be taken as seriously as disablist, homophobic, racist or sexist discrimination.

This does not merely apply to the relationships between different students. The students' union should take care not to support the transphobia either implicitly or explicitly. So, for example, it would be highly inappropriate for the students' union or a union society to host a speaker, band or comedian with a history of transphobia.

Your union should have an anti-bullying policy or equivalent which outlines its opposition to intolerance and discrimination, as well as outlining procedures for dealing with incidents of discrimination. It's important that transphobia is listed explicitly as a form of discrimination. More advice in this area can be found in the NUS LGBT campaign's "Bullying Sucks" literature.



Including Trans People at your Institution

Working on trans inclusion in your wider college or university rather than within student bodies can seem daunting, but is perfectly possible. Don't be afraid to contact officials for meetings about issues that concern you. You can also raise awareness of trans issues directly in a number of ways.

Recognising Gender

Basing gender on self-definition is somewhat more difficult in institutions such as colleges and universities than in students' unions! Nevertheless there are steps that can be taken.

Since there are several ways to legally define gender (see "Legal Recognition of Sex and Gender" in part two) a deed poll should suffice as proof of a trans person's change and name and gender for the sake of everyday interactions between students and staff, as well as for recording the correct gender on their student cards. Similarly a letter from a doctor or identification such as a passport should suffice for changing a student's gender on all their records: there is no legal requirement for a Gender Recognition Certificate to change a trans person's gender on formal paperwork.

Fighting Discrimination

Check that your institution has an equal opportunities and an anti-bullying policy. Firstly, it's important that these documents exist at all (if not, it's important for liberation campaigns in your institution to fight for them!) Secondly, it's important that trans people are explicitly included. More advice in this area can be found in the NUS LGBT campaign's "Bullying Sucks" literature.

Toilets

Non-gendered toilets are desirable in your institution's buildings as well as any student buildings. Look out for plans to re-fit existing buildings or build new ones: these can be perfect opportunities to lobby your institution for non-gendered toilets. Such toilets exist in a great number of colleges and universities in the United States, and they're starting to appear in the UK as well: for example at the University of Bath.

Raising Awareness

Making your college or university a better place for trans students isn't all about dealing with management staff: it's also about engaging with the staff and other students that trans students will encounter in their everyday life. As such, an awareness-raising exercises can be useful, especially since very little is known amongst the general populace about trans people and trans issues. One of the biggest issues that trans people face is that of invisibility, from which ignorance and prejudice can arise. Some examples of things you can do include:

Posters

Campaigns such as Stonewall's "Some People Are Gay. Get Over It!" poster campaign are very effective in raising awareness of homosexuality and challenging invisibility. There's no reason why a similar approach can't work for trans people: you could take a similarly minimalist approach, or alternatively raise awareness of famous trans people or how pretty much anyone might define as trans. Get creative! Of course, you should make sure you are respectful of trans people, so make sure your LGBT society's trans rep is on board, or try contacting the NUS LGBT campaign's trans rep for advice if you don't have a one.

Talks and Workshops

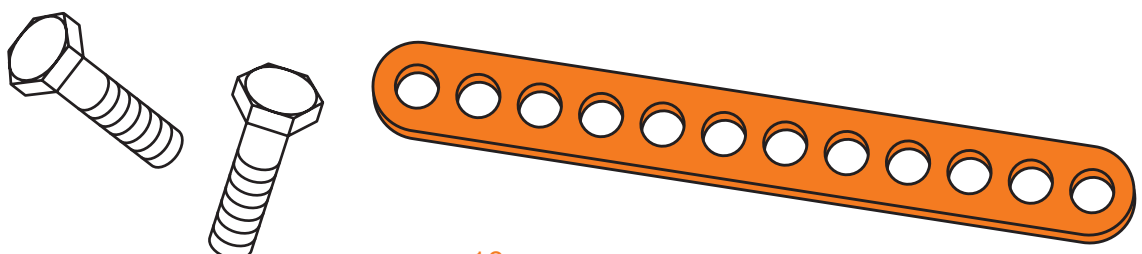
Getting in a trans activist to do a talk or run a workshop on trans issues offers a personal perspective and expertise in the subject. Such events can be really thought-provoking and of wide appeal, so make sure you advertise them to the wider body of students rather than just within your LGBT society!

Student Media

Why not do some research on trans issues and write an article in a student paper or try to appear on student radio? You can do anything from a polemic to interviewing trans students on your campus.

Campaigning on Trans Issues

The next section of this guide deals with some trans campaigns you can run. An effective campaign can raise awareness and draw attention to trans issues.



Part 4: Campaigning on Trans issues

One of the best things you can do for trans rights is to inform people around you and change their opinions. This can be done by measures as simple as talking to others about trans people and opposing transphobic behaviour, or on a more ambitious level through holding talks or distributing posters as outlined in Part 3: Trans Inclusion At Your Institution.

If you're an LGBT officer or a member of an LGBT society though, you might want to think bigger. This section outlines some ideas of how you can campaign for your college or university to be more trans positive, and ways you can influence local and national government.

It's important that all such campaigns are respectful of trans people. Consult as many trans people as you can on your ideas (even if you're trans yourself: remember, everyone has a different perspective!) in order to make sure of this.

Change In Your Institution

Part 3: Trans Inclusion at your Institution, outlined some of the differences you can make at your college or university. Hopefully you will be able to bring about much of these through talking to people and quietly lobbying for a more trans-inclusive approach. Sometimes however, there is resistance to new ideas and more direct campaigning is needed.

Lobbying

Speaking about your concerns to relevant officials in colleges, universities and students' unions might not be particularly exciting or sexy, but can yield considerable results. Try arranging meetings to speak to anyone who seems relevant in the field of equalities and human resources: if they can't help you, hopefully they should be able to put you in contact with someone who can. If one person is particularly unhelpful, don't be afraid to keep trying until you find someone else who is more sympathetic!

Try to research the issue you are raising (e.g. recognising gender, gender-neutral toilets) as much as possible in order to present good arguments in favour of the change you wish to see.

Student Politics

Within LGBT groups and Student Unions you may need to write a motion on an issue that concerns you, and argue for a body of students to pass it at a meeting. If you don't know how to do this, ask around for details of someone who can offer you advice on doing so or contact NUS LGBT.

Most people misunderstand trans issues, so there might be a lot of confusion about trans-positive moves you recommend for student groups. As such, it's worth talking to as many people as possible in advance to explain to them why the issue you're raising is important.

Drawing attention to the cause

If you find it difficult to win over those in power, it might be worth trying a more high profile campaign. You can try creating a petition, drawing attention to your campaign through student media, and maybe even hold a vigil or demonstration. Make sure you always have information on hand for the curious: since most people are ignorant of trans issues, it will be a good opportunity to raise awareness.

Bringing About Wider Changes

Part 2: Trans People in Society outlined a number of issues trans people face in terms of legal rights and the transphobic behaviour they face from others. There are a number of ways in which you can push for local authorities (such as district and city councils) and the national government to take trans-positive action. It's also worth targeting companies with a transphobic record.

The following suggestions are actions that can be taken both in response to a particular transphobic event (such as the sacking of a trans worker for expressing their gender identity), or in a push for more trans-positive laws and regulations.

Letter-Writing and Petitions

A strong letter-writing campaign or petition can demonstrate to a company or authority that a lot of people are in favour of trans rights. Make sure it's targeted: for example, if there's a bill coming up in Parliament that would effect trans rights, let your local MP know that you and others would like them to vote in favour of it. Similarly, if a local fast-food restaurant prevented a trans person from using a toilet, you can write or send a petition to both the management of that particular restaurant, and higher management if it's part of a chain.

Consultations

Consultations can take place when a new law is being planned, or when one has been passed and organisations need to adapt in order to adhere to it. For example, the summer of 2007 saw consultations on the forthcoming Single Equality Bill, and the recently passed Gender Duty. The consultations on the Single Equality Bill asked stakeholders what they thought of the proposals for the Bill, whilst the consultations on the gender duty were carried out by public services and companies to ask how they could best adapt to the new legal regulations in the duty.

It might not be immediately obvious how you or your LGBT society can respond to a consultation, but usually a brief read through proposals all too often reveals the level of ignorance that most authorities have of trans issues. By turning up to public meetings or responding by post or email to consultations, you can make a difference by praising trans-positive suggestions and criticising flawed ideas. In order to know when such events are happening, it's worth keeping a watch of government websites, and maybe joining mailing lists with news from trans campaigns such as Press For Change (www.pfc.org.uk). Issues raised in consultations can also be a good basis for petitions and letter-writing campaigns.

Demonstrations and Protests

There is of course always a place for public demonstrations and protests. As well as demonstrating on campus, you can take part in national demonstrations or organise a protest yourself against a transphobic organisation. These can be useful not only for demonstrating dissatisfaction with transphobia and the lack of legal protections for many people, but by having information on hand and contacting the media they can also act as useful awareness-raising exercises. Always investigate the legal restrictions on such demonstrations in your area!



APPENDIX 1: Trans Glossary

The English language isn't designed to describe trans concepts. As such, there's a lot of language that tends to be used by trans people that can be somewhat confusing. This section provides a rough guide to some trans terminology you may come across in this document, or in further reading on the subject.

Please bear in mind that the definitions contained here are for guidance only: none of them are absolutely agreed upon!

Trans Language

Assigned Gender

The gender someone is given at birth and brought up in. For the vast majority of people in the world, this will be a female or male gender. An individual's assigned gender will almost always be based upon their physical sex, but there is a chance it may not be (particularly in the case of intersex people).

Biological Female / Biological Male

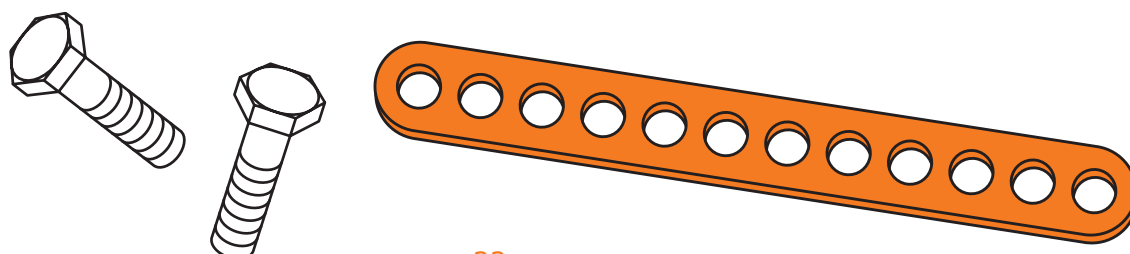
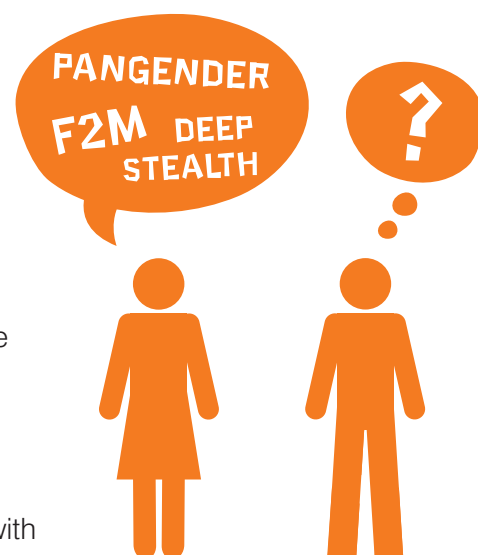
Also known as "bio female" or "bio male", these terms may refer to individuals who are not trans, and have a gender identity that is in line with their assigned gender and apparent physical sex. They also may refer to an individual's apparent physical sex (for example, someone who has a male body may be referred to as a "bio male"). Some trans people prefer terms such as "cis" or "cisgender" to describe those who are not trans, on the grounds that the term "biological" becomes problematic when referring to individuals who have undergone hormone therapy and gender may be considered to have a biological basis. This document uses "cis" because it is arguably a less problematic term.

Binary Gender

"Binary gender" refers to the idea that gender exists in two forms: female and male. Those who identify outside of the gender binary have a gender that does not conform to either of these forms. Others say that they identify within a binary gender (i.e. they identify as either female or male) but they may still contest the idea that gender is a binary. So a trans women who identifies as a woman (a binary gender) may not believe that gender is limited to female and male, but can still identify firmly as female herself.

Binding

Binding is a process by which individuals use material to "bind" down their breasts. This may be through use of tight clothing, purpose-made binders, or more dangerous items such as bandages. The technique is often used by trans men and genderqueer individuals to hide their breasts if they have not had them surgically removed, but may also be used by those on oestrogen hormone therapy who need to hide their growing chest.



Cis / Cisgender / Cissexual

In its most basic sense, “cis” is an easy way to refer to someone who is not trans. Similarly, “cisgender” refers to someone who is not transgender, and “cissexual” refers to someone who is not transsexual. This document uses the more straightforward term “cis” because it has less confusing connotations!

Coming out

Trans people can come out in a similar fashion to gay, lesbian or bisexual people, by coming out of the closet and revealing their true gender identity. Someone who has transitioned may also come out as trans however, which is somewhat different. For example, for a trans man there is a difference between coming out initially as a man, and later coming out as trans to those who only know him as a man.

Gender dysphoria

A term used to refer to the conflict between a trans person's gender identity and their assigned gender. It is often used in a medical context, but may also be used by trans people when referring to trans-related stress.

Gender Identity Disorder

Another term used to refer to the conflict between a trans person's gender identity and their assigned gender. It's most commonly used in a medical context, particularly in reference to transsexual individuals. A transsexual person seeking medical intervention may be diagnosed with gender identity disorder.

Gender Recognition Certificate

A UK document that recognises a trans person's gender identity rather than their assigned gender, if that trans person defines as female or male. No genders other than female and male are recognised in law.

Gender role

Society imposes various ideals of how females and males should act: these are gender roles. They operate on many levels and can vary from straightforward stereotypes (for example: a male gender role is manual labour, whilst a female gender role is looking after children) to more subtle things such as clothing, mannerisms and other behaviour. Although the imposition of stereotypical gender roles is usually thought of as sexist these days, those who adopt the wrong clothes and mannerisms can still suffer severe social stigmatization.

Hair removal

Male to female trans people cannot lose thick facial or bodily hair through undergoing oestrogen hormone therapy. Instead they must continue to shave, or undergo electrolysis or laser treatment to permanently remove the hair.

Hormone replacement therapy

Trans people – particularly transsexual individuals – may undergo hormone therapy in order to change their body so it is more feminine or masculine. Oestrogen causes a redistribution of body fat that includes breast growth and slows the growth of bodily hair, whilst testosterone causes a redistribution of body fat, a lowering of the voice and an increase in the growth of bodily hair. Both will also cause emotional changes. There are certain things that hormones cannot change: for example oestrogen does not cause a higher-pitched voice, and testosterone may cause a reduction in breast size but will not get rid of them altogether.

Passing

If someone appears to be female or male, they can be said to “pass” as female or male. Passing usually has positive connotations, so a trans man for example might talk about “passing as a man”, which for him is good. He is less likely to talk about “passing as a woman” because – given the fact he identifies as a man – this is a negative thing for him. An individual who identifies outside of the gender binary is more likely to talk about passing as female or male in a neutral fashion, since they will tend not to identify as either. Most trans people desire to pass as their identified gender, but not all are able to.

Sex Change

Trans individuals are widely referred to in the media as desiring a “sex change”. This is a problematic term because it tends to be used as a catch-all way of referring to every element of transition, with an emphasis upon surgery. It tends to invisibilise those trans people who are not transsexual and those transsexual individuals who do not have surgery. It also implies that the changes a transsexual person will experience in a physical transition are wrought mainly through surgery, when in actual fact the most apparent changes usually come about because of hormone therapy.

Sex Reassignment Surgery

Sex Reassignment Surgery is the surgical process by which an aspect of someone's physical sex is altered, usually from male to female or from female to male. Most commonly this involves surgery on the genitals, although the term can also refer to surgeries such as mastectomy (for female to male spectrum people) and facial feminisation (for male to female spectrum people).

Stealth

Post-transition, many transsexual people will choose to hide any evidence of their assigned gender. This is known as going stealth. This can be beneficial for many as they do not have to justify their gender or being transsexual to others, but can also be stressful for others due to the difficulty of hiding their past. Transsexual people may be stealth to various degrees post-transition depending on who they choose to disclose their trans status to. Those who sever almost all ties with their past life are known as being “deep stealth”.

Transition

A trans person may “transition” from one gender role to another, or from one apparent physical sex to another. The former transition may be referred to as a “social transition” and the latter may be referred to as a “physical transition” or “medical transition”. A transition is most often undertaken by a transsexual person, typically from female to male or male to female, but it's also possible for someone who identifies outside of the gender binary to transition in a way that means they don't end up presenting themselves as particularly male or female. As an example, a trans woman who transitions will generally attempt to acquire more “feminine” clothing and mannerisms, and may also undergo hormone therapy and have sexual reassignment surgery in order to gain a more female body. Transitions can last various lengths of time, but typically take a number of years and can be very stressful.

Transphobia

Discrimination or prejudice towards trans people based upon the expression of their gender identity, or their simply being trans.

Trans Identities

People who identify as any of the following may identify as trans. It is not by any means an exhaustive list, but it deals with a number of the most common identities. Nor are all of these identities exclusive: for example, it is possible for someone to define as a genderqueer drag king.

Please bear in mind however that some people who may be considered to fall under the trans umbrella might equally choose not define as trans! For example, most intersex individuals do not identify as trans because it is their physical sex that varies from typical expectations, rather than the nature of their gender identity.

Agender

A person whose identity is genderless, without gender, or neither female nor male. They may feel they have a non-binary gender.

Androgyne

A person whose identity or appearance is not entirely female nor male. It may be some combination of the two, or they may feel that their gender identity is non-binary.

Bi-gender

A person whose gender identity is some combination of female and male. They may feel that they have a non-binary gender.

Cross-dresser

A man who dresses as a woman, or a woman who dresses as a man. This may be due to gender issues, or for a whole variety of other reasons: it may be for fun, as a stress release, or for sexual reasons. Commonly abbreviated to “CD”.

Drag King

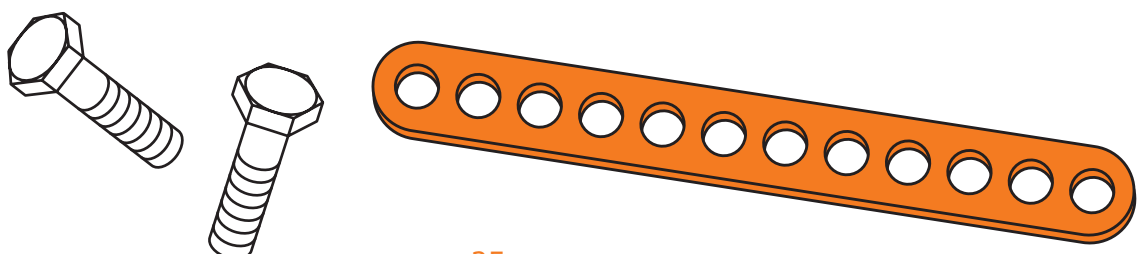
An individual – usually female-identified – who cross-dresses as male either in an exaggerated manner, or as part of a performance.

Drag Queen

An individual – usually male-identified – who cross-dresses as female either in an exaggerated manner, or as part of a performance.

Female to Male

A term that may refer to someone transitioning from female to a more masculine gender. Usually if someone is female to male they will be a trans man, but it's possible to talk about a female to male spectrum. This includes not only trans men, but also individuals with a non-binary identity that is closer to male than female. Female cross-dressers may also describe themselves as female to male. Commonly abbreviated to “FtM” or “F2M”.



Genderfluid

A person whose gender identity is neither female nor male, but fluctuates between the two. They may feel sometimes that they are female and other times that they are male, or they may identify outside of the gender binary and feel more feminine at some times and more masculine at others. This does not mean that they are confused about their gender identity: being genderfluid is an identity in itself.

Genderfuck

Someone who “genderfucks” plays and aims to transgress ideas of gender, identity, and gender roles. Some people consider genderfucking to be something they do (for example, a genderqueer person might genderfuck in order draw attention to the falsity of the concept of binary gender) whilst others embrace genderfuck as a gender identity in itself.

Genderqueer

A person who is genderqueer may consider themselves to be somewhere between female and male, beyond this binary, or without gender altogether. Many people identity directly as genderqueer, but it can also be used as an umbrella term: for example, a genderfluid person might consider their genderfluidity to be a form of genderqueer.

Gender-questioning

A term that refers to someone who is questioning their gender identity, whether or not they're trans, or in what way they're trans. Coming to terms with being trans can be very difficult for a lot of people, and as such they may go through a long period of gender-questioning, or identify as a gender-questioning trans person whilst finding a way to define themselves.

Intersex

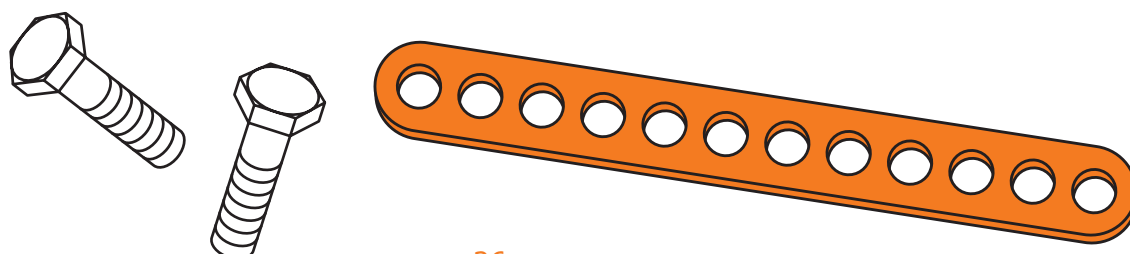
A person who is intersex was born with a body that has an ambiguous sex to some extent: i.e. it has a mix of female and male characteristics. The vast majority of intersex people will be assigned a female or male gender depending on which sex norm their body most resembles. Some intersex people will not identify with their assigned gender, and hence they might identify as trans or seek to transition. Intersex people define as female, male, or outside of the gender binary in the same way as anyone else. Commonly abbreviated to “I” or “IS”.

Pangender

A person whose identity is somewhere between female and male, beyond this binary, or without gender altogether.

Pansexual

Pansexuality is not in fact a trans identity in itself, but is a sexuality tied to trans identifies. A person who is pansexual may be attracted to anyone regardless of their sex and gender, including those who do not identify into the gender binary. Another term which can have a similar meaning is “omnisexuality”.



Male to Female

A term that may refer to someone transitioning from male to a more “feminine” gender. Usually a person who is male to female will be a trans woman, but it's possible to talk about a male to female spectrum. This includes not only trans women, but also individuals with a non-binary identity that is closer to female than male. Male cross-dressers may also describe themselves as male to female. Commonly abbreviated to “MtF” or “M2F”.

Third Gender

A person whose identity is outside of the male/female binary.

Trans

A wide umbrella term, covering those who transcend traditional boundaries of gender and sex, those who are gender variant, and those whose gender identity does not match their assigned gender. Trans people may identify explicitly as trans, or consider themselves trans by dint of another identity (such as any of those included in this glossary!) Commonly abbreviated to “T”.

Trans Man

A trans person who identifies as male: he will usually be a female to male transsexual.

Transgender

The term “transgender” can be used in a number of different ways. It is sometimes used as an umbrella term in a similar manner to “trans”, but is somewhat more problematic. For example, some transsexual individuals claim they are not transgender because they are in no way transcending gender if they identify as female or male (rather than outside the gender binary). Alternatively, transgender can be used as an identity in itself. Sometimes individuals who wish to live in a gender role other than the one they were assigned at birth without engaging in any kind of medical transition will identify as transgender.

Commonly abbreviated to “TG”.

Transsexual

A transsexual person wishes to change their gender presentation and often also their physical sex in order to bring it more in line with their gender identity rather than their assigned gender. They will generally intend to transition in order to do so, but the nature of the desired transition differs greatly from individual to individual. Some transsexual people find the term “transsexual” to be misleading because it incorrectly implies that it is a sexuality, and hence prefer to describe themselves as “transsexed”. Commonly abbreviated to “TS”.

Transvestite

See “cross-dresser” for a definition. Increasingly, the term “cross-dresser” is preferred to “transvestite”, since the latter has negative connotations for many. Commonly abbreviated to “TV”.

Trans Woman

A trans person who identifies as female: she will usually be a male to female transsexual.

APPENDIX 2: Useful weblinks

NUS LGBT Campaign

The national representative voice for LGBT students. We offer support to LGBT societies in student's unions and organise campaigns and training at local and national level.

www.officeronline.co.uk/lgbt

GIRES

A registered UK charity that sponsors research and education, and provides information on issues surrounding gender identity.

www.gires.org.uk

Press For Change

A political lobbying and educational organisation that campaigns for equal civil rights and liberties for trans people in the UK.

www.pfc.org.uk

Scottish Transgender Alliance

A Scotland-based group formed to address issues of prejudice and the lack of information and support for transgender people. They have a very thorough and informative website.

www.scottishtrans.org

Trans Youth Network

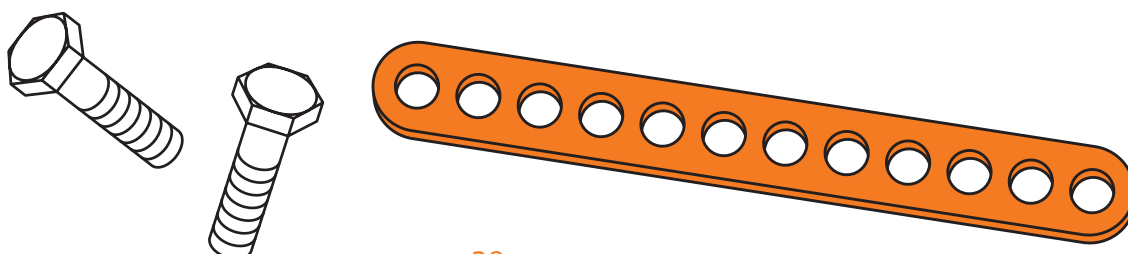
A national project associated with Queer Youth Network, established to support and unite transgender young people all over the UK, as well as those who may also identify as gender-queer, intersex or transsexual.

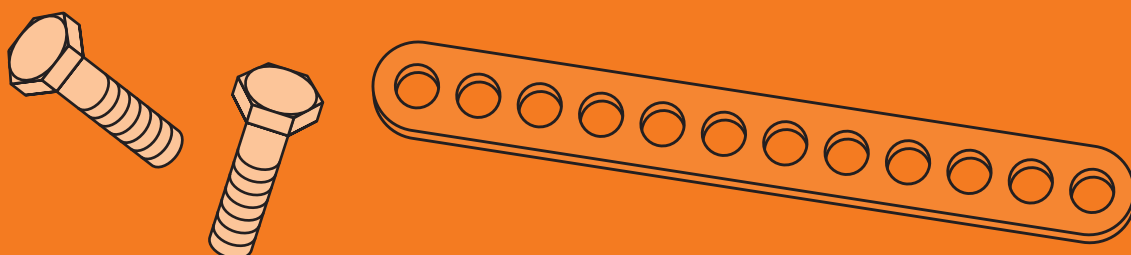
www.transyouth.org

T-Vox

A wiki project aiming to provide comprehensive information on genderqueer, intersex, transgender and transsexual issues.

www.t-vox.org





National Union of Students

2nd floor, Centro 3
19 Mandela Street
London NW1 0DU

t. 0871 221 8221

f. 0871 221 8222

w. www.officeronline.co.uk/lgbt

n u s lgbt