

# The Diversity and Inclusion Glossary





## Introduction

We all have a responsibility to be understanding and respectful when talking to each other about diversity. That's why the words we use are so important.

Sometimes we can be unsure or worry about knowing which words to use when talking about diversity and inclusion. Sometimes it causes people to not talk about it at all, which means we end up not creating dialogue about race, gender, sexual orientation and other subjects at work.

Everyone is different, so if you're unsure, the best thing to do is ask your colleagues which words they prefer you use, rather than assuming.

This glossary will guide you through some common words and terms used when talking about diversity, so you can build up your understanding, enabling better conversations.

PLEASE NOTE: This document has been re-produced by the kind permission of The Queen Elizabeth Hospital King's Lynn NHS Foundation Trust although with some additional terms included.

Thank you to the Midlands and Lancashire Commissioning Support Unit Equality and Inclusion Team for their help and support with this.

# A

## **Ableism**

Ableism is discrimination and social prejudice against people with disabilities, or people who are perceived to be disabled. Ableism means prioritising the needs of non-disabled people over those who are disabled. It is ableist to believe that non-disabled people are more valuable to society than disabled people.

## **Abro (sexual and romantic)**

A word used to describe people who have a fluid sexual and/or romantic orientation which changes over time, or the course of their life. They may use different terms to describe themselves over time.

## **Accessibility**

The design, development or state of physical or digital environments, resources and services that are easy to reach, enter, use, see, etc. for all users.

## **Ace**

An umbrella term to include variations in an absence of sexual or romantic interest, including the experiences of asexual, aromantic, demisexual, demiromantics and grey-As.

## **ADHD**

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a type of condition known as a neurodevelopmental condition. Neurodevelopmental conditions like ADHD affect the way a brain develops and works, which can impact behaviour and the way a person experiences the world around them. People with ADHD can seem restless, may have trouble concentrating and may act on impulse.

## **Age (protected characteristic)**

A person belong to a particular age (for example 32 year olds) or range of ages (for example 18 to 30 year olds).

## **Agender**

A lived experience that does not relate to gender.

## **Ally**

A person who supports and advocates for LGBTQ+ people.

## **Allyship**

Is about building relationships of trust, consistency and accountability with marginalised individuals and/or groups of people.

## **Anti-racism**

Anti-racism is a proactive focus on transforming the unequal social and workplace relations that shape our interactions between black, Asian and other ethnic minorities and white people. Anti-racism is a change in our perspective. It is understanding all that has gone before us, and its impact on how we think, act and engage with different races.

## **Aromantic**

A person who does not experience romantic attraction. Some aromantic people experience sexual attraction, while others do not. Aromantic people who experience sexual attraction or occasional romantic attraction might also use terms such as gay, bi, lesbian, straight and queer in conjunction with asexual to describe the direction of their attraction.

## **Asexual**

Refers to a person who doesn't experience sexual attraction

## **Assigned Female at Birth (AFAB)**

Any person whose sex assignment at birth resulted in a declaration of "female".

## **Assigned Male at Birth (AMAB)**

Any person whose sex assignment at birth resulted in a declaration of "male".

## **Autism**

Also referred to as autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Autism is a lifelong developmental disability which affects how people communicate and interact with the world. Autism is a spectrum condition that affects people in different ways but refers to a broad range of conditions characterized by challenges with social skills, repetitive behaviours, speech and nonverbal communication.

# B

## **Belonging**

This refers to an individual's sense of acceptance. Belonging is usually the result of the level of inclusion an individual feels in their environment. It is also one of the four pillars of the NHS People Plan, as the NHS must welcome all, with a culture of belonging and trust, and understand encourage and celebrate diversity in all its forms.

## **Bias**

Bias is something we all have because of the way in which we process information and make decisions. Bias can cause us to have an unfair inclination or prejudice for or against someone or something, so it is important we recognise and challenge our own biases.

## **Biphobia**

Prejudice, discrimination, fear or dislike towards someone that is bisexual based on their identity.

## **Bisexual**

An individual who is attracted to more than one gender. One should not assume this is always an equally weighted attraction to different genders.

## **BME/BAME**

The acronyms BME (black and minority ethnic) and BAME (black, Asian and minority ethnic) have been used to refer to people of non-white ethnicities who are minoritized in the UK. The terms can be problematic as they emphasize certain ethnic minority groups and exclude others such as mixed and white minority ethnic groups. The terms can also mask disparities between different ethnic groups and create misleading interpretations of data. BME or BAME should not be used as a replacement for directly addressing a specific racial or ethnic group or individual when that is who we are speaking about, as they are not adjectives and do not describe an individual identity.

# C

## **Cisgender**

A person whose gender identity aligns with the sex they were assigned at birth.

## **Civil partnership**

In the UK a civil partnership is a legal relationship entered into by a couple which is registered and provides them with similar legal rights to married couples. Civil partnerships were introduced in 2005 to provide legal recognition and protection for same sex couples. Since then, the law has further developed to enable marriages between same sex couples too.

## **Coming Out**

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

## **Cultural intelligence (CQ)**

Cultural intelligence refers to the skill to relate and work effectively in culturally diverse situations. It goes beyond existing knowledge of cultural sensitivity and awareness, to look at intercultural capabilities as a form of intelligence that can be measured and developed.

# D

## **Deadname**

A trans person's previous or birth name. It is considered offensive to use this name. 'Deadname' can be used as a noun and a verb.

## **Deaf and hard of hearing**

Deafness or hearing loss affects people differently and to different extents, but deaf people mostly have profound hearing loss, which implies very little or no hearing. They often use British Sign Language (BSL) for communication. 'Hard of hearing' refers to people with mild, moderate or severe hearing loss. People who



are hard of hearing often benefit from the use of hearing aids, and other assistive devices such as captioning. 'Hearing impaired' is also another term that is often used to describe this group. It is important to avoid phrases such as: "the deaf", "suffering from deafness" or "afflicted by deafness" and to use "deaf people" instead.

### **Demisexual**

A person who only experiences sexual attraction once they have an emotional bond with a person.

### **Disability (protected characteristic)**

A person has a disability if she or he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

### **Diversity**

Diversity is about recognising difference. It's acknowledging the benefit of having a range of perspectives in decision-making and the workforce being representative of the organisation's customers.

### **Discrimination**

The unequal treatment of members of various groups based on race, gender, social class, sexual orientation, physical ability, religion, national origin, age, physical/mental abilities and other categories that may result in differences in provision of goods, services or opportunities.

### **Dyslexia**

Dyslexia is a learning difficulty that primarily affects the skills involved in accurate and fluent word reading and spelling. Characteristic features of dyslexia include difficulties in phonological awareness, verbal memory and verbal processing speed. Some individuals with dyslexia can experience visual and auditory processing difficulties, and dyslexic readers can show a combination of abilities and difficulties that affect the learning process.

### **Dyspraxia**

also known as developmental coordination disorder (DCD), dyspraxia is a surprisingly common condition affecting movement and coordination in children and adults. It is a hidden condition which is still poorly understood and affects all areas of life, making it difficult for people to carry out activities that others take for granted.



**EDI**

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) can be defined as ensuring fair treatment and equal opportunities for all. It aims to eradicate prejudice and discrimination on the basis of an individual or group of individual's protected characteristics.

**Enby**

Colloquialism for non-binary.

**Ethnic minority**

An ethnic minority refers to a particular ethnic group of people with a shared culture, tradition, language and history, who are living in a country where most people are from a different ethnic group. The term 'ethnic minorities' refers to all ethnic groups except the white British group. Ethnic minorities include white minorities, such as Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller groups.

**Equality Act 2010**

The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society. It replaced previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act, making the law easier to understand and strengthening protection in some situations. It sets out the different ways in which it's unlawful to treat someone. The Equality Act is made up of nine protected characteristics which are age, disability, gender reassignment, being married or in a civil partnership, being pregnant or on maternity leave, race (including colour, nationality, ethnic and national origin), religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

**Equality and Health Inequality Impact and Risk Assessment (EHIIRA)**

This is a vital evidence-based tool designed to ensure that a policy, project, or service assesses the potential impact on people from both protected characteristic groups and from otherwise vulnerable or health inclusion groups as well, making sure that decisions made, are as inclusive as possible.

**Equity**

This refers to offering varying levels of support to individual's or communities, depending on the individual needs to achieve fairness and impartiality.

# F

## **FTM/MTF**

Referring to Female-to-Male/Male-to-Female transition.

# G

## **Gaslighting**

This is a form of psychological manipulation and abuse in which the perpetrator makes somebody question and doubt their own perceptions, memory, judgement and sanity, by making them believe untrue things in order to control them. Whilst it usually occurs within a couple relationship, it can occur in any relationship such as friendships, between work colleagues or within families.

## **Gay/Homosexual**

A general label for same sex attraction. Most used with men who are exclusively or preferentially attracted to other men in an emotional, sexual and/or physical manner.

## **Gender**

A social construct informed by the norms, roles and behaviours that we attribute to being masculine, feminine or third gender.

## **Gender confirmation/affirmation**

Replacing the term 'Gender Reassignment'.

## **Gender dysphoria**

The discomfort felt between one's gender and their sex assigned at birth. This may be mental, physical or social.

### **Gender expression**

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

### **Gender identity**

An individual's personal sense of having a particular gender.

### **Gender reassignment (protected characteristic)**

The process of transitioning from one sex to another, this definition also covers people who identify as non- binary or gender fluid.

### **Gender fluid**

A form of gender and expression that is not fixed.

### **Gillick competence**

A term used in medical law to decide whether a child (under 16 years of age) is able to consent to their own medical treatment, without the need for parental permission or knowledge.



### **Harassment**

By law, harassment is when bullying or unwanted behaviour is related to any of the following (known as 'protected characteristics' under the Equality Act 2010). For it to count as harassment, the unwanted behaviour must have either, violated the person's dignity, whether it was intended or not or created an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the person, whether it was intended or not.

### **Health equity**

The state in which everyone has a fair and just opportunity to attain their highest level of health. Achieving this requires ongoing societal efforts to address historical and contemporary injustices, overcome economic, social, and other obstacles to health and health care, and eliminate preventable health disparities.

## **Health inequalities**

Health inequalities are unfair and avoidable differences in health across the population, and between different groups within society. These include how long people are likely to live, the health conditions they may experience and the care that is available to them. The conditions in which we are born, grow, live, work and age can impact our health and wellbeing. These are sometimes referred to as wider determinants of health and are often interlinked. For example, someone who is unemployed may be more likely to live in poorer quality housing with less access to green space and less access to fresh, healthy food. This means some groups and communities are more likely to experience poorer health than the general population. These groups are also more likely to experience challenges in accessing care.

## **Hearing impaired**

Someone who is partially or completely deaf.

## **Heterosexism/heteronormative assumptions**

A system of attitudes or beliefs that assumes or favours opposite sex relationships and attraction.

## **Heterosexual**

A person who is romantically or sexually attracted to someone of a different gender.

## **Hidden disability**

Not all disabilities are visible, you may not be able to see when a patient or staff member may have a condition that means they may need some assistance or adjustments.

## **Homophobia**

Prejudice, discrimination, fear or dislike towards someone that is homosexual based on their identity.

**Inclusion**

Inclusion refers to the behaviours and cultural norms that make people feel welcome and is the practice of providing everyone with equal access to opportunities and resources. Creating the distinction between diversity and inclusion is important to note, because diversity can, and often does, exist without the act of inclusion.

**Inclusion Health Groups**

Inclusion health is an umbrella term used to describe people who are socially excluded, who typically experience multiple overlapping risk factors for poor health, such as poverty, violence and complex trauma. Examples of inclusion health groups could include people experiencing homelessness, asylum seekers and refugees, carers, care-leavers, veterans or people experiencing drug and alcohol dependence.

**Indeterminate**

A person of indeterminate sex or gender is someone whose biological sex is unable to be classified as either male or female, or someone who identifies as neither male or female.

**Institutional racism**

The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture, or ethnic origin.

**Institutional sexism**

This refers to gender discrimination reflected in the policies and practices of organisations such as governments, corporations (workplaces), public institutions (schools, health care), and financial institutions

**Intellectual/learning disability**

Affects the way a person learns new things throughout their life. A learning disability is different for everyone.

## **Intersectionality**

Theory introduced by Prof. Kimberlé Crenshaw to describe how multiple facets of a person's identity can combine to make unique forms of oppression and discrimination.

## **Intersex**

A general term used for a variety of instances in which a person is born with reproductive or sexual characteristics that do not fit the typical definitions of female or male. They may express their gender as male, female or non-binary. Clinically known as Variations in Sex Characteristics (VSC).

## **Invisible Disability**

An invisible (or hidden) disability is a disability that may not be immediately obvious. Invisible disabilities include physical conditions, learning disabilities, sensory impairments, neurological conditions and mental health issues. They can also include long-term conditions such as respiratory and chronic illnesses such as renal failure. Invisible disabilities can be difficult for others to understand due to lack of awareness.

# L

## **Lesbian**

A woman who is exclusively or preferentially attracted to other women in an emotional, sexual and/or physical manner.

## **LGBTQ**

Initialisation of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer. Used to refer to the broader sexual and gender minority community.

## **LGBTQIA+**

A variant of LGBT that includes Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual and others.

## **LGBT-phobia**

Prejudice, discrimination, fear or dislike towards someone that is LGBT based on their identity.

**Marriage and civil partnership (protected characteristic)**

Marriage is a union between a man and a woman or between a same-sex couple. Same-sex couples can also have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'. Civil partners must not be treated less favourably than married couples (except where permitted by the Equality Act)

**Men who have sex with men (MSM)**

A term for any man who has sex with men to include homosexual, bisexual, pansexual and those who do not identify as a sexual minority.

**Mental disability/illness/disorder**

A mental illness or mental health disorder is an illness that affects that way people think, feel, behave, or interact with others. There are many types of mental illnesses/health disorders with different signs and symptoms.

**Mental health**

Mental health refers to our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. We all have mental health. Our mental health affects how we think, feel, and act. It also impacts on how we cope, interact and form relationships with others, as well as our daily functioning.

**Micro-aggressions**

statement, action, or incident regarded as an instance of indirect, subtle, or unintentional discrimination against members of a marginalised group such as a racial or ethnic minority. Micro-aggressions can take several different forms. They can be: Verbal

A verbal micro-aggression is a comment or question that is hurtful or stigmatizing to a certain marginalized group of people. For example, saying, "You're so smart for a woman" would be a verbal micro-aggression. Behavioural

A behavioural micro-aggression occurs when someone behaves in a way that is hurtful or discriminatory to a certain group of people. An example of a behavioural micro-aggression would be a bartender ignoring a transgender person and instead serving a cisgender person (someone whose biological sex matches their gender identity) first. Environmental



An environmental micro-aggression is when a subtle discrimination occurs within society. One example of an environmental micro-aggression would be a college campus that only has buildings named after white people.

### **Minority ethnic**

This refers to racial and ethnic groups that are in a minority in the population.

### **Misogyny**

This is the hatred of, contempt for, or prejudice against women or girls. It can also refer to social systems or environments where women face hostility and hatred because they're women in a world created by and for men by a historical patriarchy.

## **N**

### **Neurodiversity**

Neurodiversity describes the idea that people experience and interact with the world around them in many different ways, that there is no one "right" way of thinking, learning, and behaving, and that differences are not viewed as deficits. The word neurodiversity refers to the diversity of all people, but it is often used in the context of autism spectrum disorder (ASD), as well as other neurological or developmental conditions such as ADHD or learning disabilities.

## **P**

### **People of colour (POC)**

Is a term primarily used to describe any person who is not considered "white". It has relatively limited usage in the United Kingdom.

## **Pregnancy and Maternity (Protected Characteristic)**

Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.

## **Protected characteristic**

It is against the law to discriminate against someone because of: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. These are called protected characteristics. Discrimination can take many forms including direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, bullying, harassment and victimisation.

## **Positive action**

Positive action is about taking specific steps to improve equality. For example, to increase the number of disabled people in senior roles in an organisation, in which they are currently under-represented. It can be used to meet a group's particular needs, lessen a disadvantage they might experience, or increase their participation in a particular activity.

## **Positive discrimination**

This is a form of discrimination that favours someone by treating them differently in a positive way. An example might be an organisation appointing someone from an underrepresented group into a role without considering whether they have the right skills for the post and passing over other candidates who are better qualified. Positive discrimination is broadly unlawful, unless a strict occupational requirement applies, for example, where a women's refuge requires all members of staff to be female.

## **Psychological safety**

This is a belief that it's OK to take risks, express ideas and concerns, speak up with questions, and to admit mistakes, all without fear of negative consequences. In a work environment, it can be shared expectation held by members of a team, which can lead to team members feeling more engaged and motivated, better decision-making, and a fostered culture of continuous learning and improvement.

# Q

## **Queer**

An umbrella term for LGBTQ+ people. Also refers to a mode of critical theory and political discourse. It is a reclamation of a slur.

## **Questioning**

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

# R

## **Race (protected characteristic)**

Refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.

## **Racism**

Racism is grounded in a presumed superiority based on racial heritage or ethnic background. Racism is often defined as Prejudice + Power as it is the combination of prejudice and power which enables the mechanisms by which racism leads to different consequences for different groups.

## **Reasonable adjustment**

Reasonable adjustments are changes, that organisations and people providing services or public functions, have to make for individuals who have a disability that puts them at a disadvantage compared with others who are not disabled. They have an anticipatory duty to make these adjustments and must plan to meet the access needs of disabled people. There are three requirements that apply in situations where a disabled person would otherwise be placed at a substantial disadvantage compared with people who are not disabled. The first involves changing the way things are done, the second involves making changes to overcome barriers created by the physical features of a building or service, and the third, involves providing extra equipment or getting someone to do something to assist them.

### **Religion and belief (protected characteristic)**

Religion refers to any religion, including a lack of religion. Belief refers to any religious or philosophical belief and includes a lack of belief. Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.



### **Seldom heard**

This term refers to under-represented people who use (or might potentially use) health or social services, and who are less likely to be heard by those service professionals and decision-makers. These groups used to be described as hard to reach

suggesting that there was something that prevented their engagement with services. Seldom heard emphasises the responsibility of agencies to reach out to excluded people, ensuring that they have access to health and social care services and that their voices can be heard. Examples of seldom heard groups could include ethnic minority groups, carers, LGBTQ+ people, or people with disabilities.

### **Sensory impairment**

Sensory impairment is the common term used to describe deafness, blindness, visual impairment, hearing impairment and deaf blindness.

### **Sex (protected characteristic)**

A man or a woman.

### **Sexual minority**

Individuals who do not identify as heterosexual. Gender minority may also be used for individuals who do not identify as cisgender.

### **Sexual orientation (protected characteristic)**

Whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.

## **Sexuality**

A term referring to someone's sexual attractions, behaviours, kinks and desires. Sexuality is a term broader than sexual orientation to encompass a sense of what a person enjoys and with whom.

## **SOGI**

Shorthand for sexual orientation and gender identity.

## **Social model of disability**

The social model of disability is a way of viewing the world, developed by disabled people. The model says that people are disabled by barriers in society, not by their impairment or difference. Barriers can be physical, like buildings not having accessible toilets. Or they can be caused by people's attitudes to difference, like assuming disabled people can't do certain things. The social model of disability looks at ways of removing barriers that restrict life choices for disabled people, offering disabled people more independence, choice and control.

## **Staff networks**

These are staff-led communities of interest that help create a more equal place to work. They offer a place for staff to come together, share experiences and facilitate learning and development. They can also assist in the shaping and delivery of organisational strategy and policy, working to improve staff experience on specific issues relating to each network. Staff networks aim to support a fairer and more diverse NHS for everyone, by tackling issues for, and amplifying the voices of, underrepresented and disadvantaged groups and individuals within an organisation.

## **Stealth**

Community term describing the ability to live as your gender without disclosing your transition.

**Third gender**

A distinct form of gender from that of male or female. Often culturally informed with a rich history such as the Hijra, Māhū, Fa'afafine, Two- Spirit and Muxe.

**Top surgery**

Common term for bilateral mastectomy and male chest reconstruction.

**Transfeminine**

A person who was assigned male at birth but whose gender identity is more female than male.

**Transgender**

An umbrella term for a person whose gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth.

**Trans(gender) man**

A man who was assigned female at birth.

**Trans(gender) woman**

A woman who was assigned male at birth.

**Transitioning**

The steps a trans person may take to live in the gender with which they identify. Each person's transition will involve different things. For some this involves medical intervention, such as hormone therapy and surgeries, but not all trans people want or are able to have this. Transitioning also might involve things such as telling friends and family, dressing differently and changing official documents.

**Transmasculine**

A person who was assigned female at birth but whose gender identity is more male than female.

**Transphobia**

Prejudice, discrimination, fear or dislike towards someone that is transgender based on their identity.

# U

## **Unconscious bias**

Refers to a bias that we are 'unaware of', and which happens outside of our control. It is a bias that happens automatically and is triggered by our brain making quick judgements and assessments of people and situations, influenced by our background, cultural environment, and personal experiences.

## **Undetectable**

HIV medication (antiretroviral treatment, or ART) works by reducing the amount of the virus in the blood to undetectable levels. This means the levels of HIV are so low that the virus cannot be passed on. This is called having an undetectable viral load or being undetectable.

# V

## **Visually impaired**

The term used to describe a loss of sight that cannot be corrected using glasses or contact lenses.



**Wellbeing**

The Oxford English dictionary defines wellbeing as the state of being comfortable, healthy and happy. Yet what one person feels is their perfect state of wellbeing may be completely different from another person, as we all have different goals, ambitions and personalities. Even though happiness is an integral part of a person's personal wellbeing, it includes other things such as the fulfilment of long-term goals, a sense of purpose and how in control someone feels in life.

**White privilege**

This term relates to the advantages that a white person has in a society where other people may not have the same opportunities because of their race. Anti-racism campaigners stress the importance of acknowledging the reality of white privilege.

**Workplace adjustment**

This term can be used interchangeably with 'reasonable adjustment' but may encompass people who are not disabled, but face additional barriers or challenges, such as carers.

**Women who have sex with women (WSW)**

A term for any woman who has sex with women to include homosexual, bisexual, pansexual and those who do not identify as a sexual minority.

