

Quick guide to Gender

We build an inclusive culture through learning and being curious, broadening our understanding of different cultures, and exploring different topics with our colleagues and friends.

In this quick guide we look at gender in more detail, and the terminology often associated with it. Our aim is to help deepen understanding among colleagues and help create a more meaningful dialogue to allow all colleagues feel more comfortable whilst at work.

Important definitions to understand:

Gender identity: Gender identity refers to a person's deeply felt individual experience of gender, which may or may not correspond with the sex assigned at birth.

Gender expression: Refers to how a person externally presents their gender. This may be through choice of clothing, general physical appearance or social behaviour. Gender expression is most commonly measured on a scale of "masculinity" and "femininity", although not always.

First let's explore a little more about gender identity.

Gender is one of many facets that give us an identity as individuals, and those identities, much as our gender identity are fluid, change and flow as we live our lives, and as we learn more about ourselves and others.

Gender therefore isn't a fixed thing, it's often best represented as a spectrum. There are also lots of different and evolving ways to describe gender.



If you are questioning yourself, the best piece of advice I would say is to be *patient* and don't feel pressured into coming out or explaining yourself to anyone. Sexuality was easy to figure out for me personally, but realising I was non-binary took me a lot longer and even longer to come to terms with it.

– Xan Llewelin, Designer, Manton Wood

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What are the differences between sex, gender and gender identity?

It's common for people to confuse sex, gender and gender identity - they're actually all different things that interact closely with each other.

- Sex refers to a person's biological status and is assigned by a doctor at birth based on the organs and genitals you're born with and the chromosomes you have. Sex is typically categorised as male, female or intersex.
- Gender is much more complex: It's a social and legal status, and set of expectations from society, about behaviours, characteristics, and thoughts. Each culture has standards about the way that people should behave based on their gender, and usually is assumed from the sex assigned at birth. Gender is typically categorised as male, female or nonbinary.
- Gender identity is how you feel inside whether that is man, woman, neither or both. Unlike gender expression, gender identity is something that is not outwardly visible to others. For most people, gender identity aligns with the sex assigned to them at birth, however this isn't the case for everyone.

Some people feel that the sex they were assigned at birth doesn't match their gender identity, how they feel inside, this is known as gender dysphoria, which is a recognised medical condition. It is used to describe when a person experiences discomfort or distress because there is a mismatch between their sex assigned at birth and their gender identity.

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- design by: Sylvia Stewart, Manton Wood

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Commonly used gender identity terms:

Cisgender

Someone whose gender identity is the same as the sex they were assigned at birth.

Non-Binary

A gender identity which falls outside of the gender binary, meaning an individual does not identify as strictly female or male. A non-binary person can identify as both or neither male and female, or sometimes one or the other.



Gender fluid

A person who feels that their gender is not static and that it changes throughout their life, this could be on a daily/weekly/monthly basis.

Gender neutral

Someone who feels they are neither male or female may identify as gender neutral.

Transgender

An umbrella term to describe people whose gender is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with, the sex they were assigned at birth. Trans people may describe themselves using one or more of a wide variety of terms.

How can we all be more respectful of gender diversity?

- Use language thoughtfully - ask, listen, respect someone's choices
- Use gender neutral language
- Recognise and correct your mistakes, then move on
- Avoid unnecessary gender divisions (e.g. 'ladies on the left')
- Challenge gender stereotypes (e.g. men enjoy sports, women enjoy shopping, pink for girls, blue for boys etc.)
- Respect a chosen name, pronoun and other gendered language; this may mean changing a name/pronoun more than once or using different names/pronouns in different spaces or forums and may also mean updating records and ID's
- Challenge inappropriate comments or 'jokes'

Since I joined, I have felt very *accepted* and I enjoy answering questions from colleagues, if you're not sure on something – ask!

I have had colleagues bend over backwards to make sure all my details are correct and if there is anything they can do to make me more comfortable. At first, I was a bit nervous as I have never been part of a big company while I've been 'out' but I have really appreciated all the support I have received!

– Xan Llewellyn, Designer, Manton Wood