

# A Guide to Pronouns and Gender Inclusive Language

— FACTSHEET —

This factsheet is intended to accompany the UKONS short video “A Guide to Pronouns and Gender Inclusive Language” but can also be read in isolation. It aims to break down definitions of gender identity and explain pronouns use, which might be unfamiliar to some.

These terms are important because both gender identity and sex-assigned at birth are relevant in cancer risk and screening, as well as for a patient’s holistic cancer care needs. More information on this can be found elsewhere on the UKONS website.

## Definitions:

### Gender

The social norms, behaviours and roles that we all take which inform our socially constructed ideas of what is masculine and feminine.

### Sex assigned at birth

How someone’s sex was identified and registered when they were born, usually based on their genitalia. This may be female, male or intersex.

### Intersex

Umbrella term referring people with variation in their gendered physiology or anatomy due to conditions affecting sex-differentiation. Also known as Differences in Sex Development.

### Cisgender/cis

Term used to refer to someone whose gender identity is the same as their sex assigned at birth.



### Transgender/trans

Umbrella term for someone whose gender identity is not the same as their sex assigned at birth. Between 1 and 9 per 200 people identify as transgender in some way.

### Gender dysphoria

The distress experienced when a person is aware of the incongruence between their gender identity and either their body or others’ perceptions of their gender.

### Transition

The process by which someone aligns their gender expression and/or body with their identified gender. This may or may not include medical treatment such as hormones or surgeries. Someone’s identity, names and pronouns might change during this time.

### Stealth

When a trans person finds themselves indistinguishable from a cis person in all social interactions and does not disclose that they are trans unless absolutely necessary.

## Some trans identities you might come across:

### Trans man

Someone assigned female at birth that identifies as male. You might describe this person as transmasculine.

### Trans woman

Someone assigned male at birth that identifies as female. You might describe this person as transfeminine.

### Non-binary

A term used to describe someone whose gender identity is outside exclusively male or female.

### Agender

A term used to describe someone who does not experience or relate to gender.

### Gender-fluid

A term used to describe someone whose gender is constantly changing.

There are some non-cisgender identities that are more common in other cultures. These are sometimes referred to as a third-gender and include: māhū, hijra, two-spirit, fa’fafine, muxe.

# Pronouns:

A pronoun is the word we use to replace a person's name in a sentence. Pronouns can be a way for a trans person to share their gender identity with others. For this reason, understanding and respecting pronouns is important when interacting with trans people and patients.

Some common pronouns you might come encounter are:

Subject	He	She	They	Ze	Ze
Object	Him	Her	Them	Hir	Zir
Possessive	His	Her(s)	Their(s)	Hir(s)	Zir(s)
Reflexive	Himself	Herself	Themself	Hirself	Zirself

When in use, they look like:



Stewart left **their** hat behind.



**She** coaches **her** local football team.



**He** lost **his** new bag.



**Ze** bought new glasses for **zirsself**.

Please be mindful that it can cause a person significant dysphoria if you misgender them or use the incorrect pronouns.

It is always best to ask rather than assume someone's name and pronouns. You cannot assume someone's gender identity from their name or pronouns. You may worry about offending someone by asking these questions but the key is positive intention. If you are respectful and there is a reason for asking, most people welcome the opportunity to share.

Other ways to bring pronouns into a discussion can be by putting your own:



In an email signature



On your social media



On your name badge



In video calls



If you're ever not sure if the pronoun you're using is the right one, make a friendly check-in with the person. Tell them that you know pronouns can change for some people and you want to be sure you're using the right one.