Royal Papworth Hospital
NHS Foundation Trust

Our guide to pronouns

What pronouns are, how to use them and why they matter

As a core value and belief at Royal Papworth, equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) is woven throughout everything we do as a Trust. We want to continue building a culture of inclusivity that not only inspires, but celebrates diversity.

We believe that by doing so, staff, volunteers, and patients will not only have better experiences overall, but feel as if they are in a safe space. Ultimately, we want everyone to feel as if they belong and to fulfil their full potential.

What are pronouns?

Pronouns replace a person's name when referring to them. While she/her and he/him are the most common third person pronouns, some people use gender-neutral pronouns such as they/them, ze/hir/hirs and xe/xem/xyr.

Why does using the correct pronoun matter?

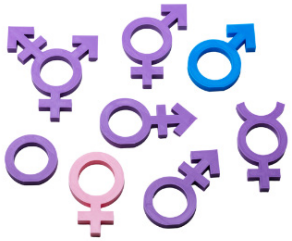
People who are referred to with a pronoun that does not align with their gender identity may feel unseen and unwelcome. They may experience distress and dysphoria as a result. Misgendering occurs when someone makes a wrong assumption about your gender identity or refuses to acknowledge it.

Examples of pronoun usage

- **He** wrote the presentation and presented it himself.
- **They** went to the shop and bought themself a bar of chocolate.
- **She** sent the appointment letter
- **Ze** organised the meeting.

What is gender identity?

A person's gender identity may or may not align with the sex they were assigned at birth, depending on their internal sense of gender.



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Large print copies and alternative language versions of this leaflet can be made available on request.

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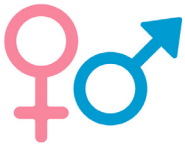
Cisgender

Cisgender, often shortened to 'cis', describes people whose gender identity aligns with the sex/gender they were assigned at birth (i.e. people who are not trans). Gender should not be assumed as this is not the case for all people.



Transgender

Transgender, often shortened to 'trans' describes someone whose gender identity differs from the gender they were assigned at birth on the basis of their sex (for example, a trans man is someone who was assigned female at birth but identifies as male).

Nonbinary people fall under the definition of trans (as their gender identity doesn't align into the binary of 'man' or 'woman').

If in doubt, just ask!

Whenever you are unsure of a member of staff, patient's or visitor's pronouns, ask them. When you make a genuine mistake and use the wrong pronoun, correct yourself, apologise briefly, and move on.

How can I support my gender diverse colleagues and patients?

- Make it a habit to use "they/them' until you know someone's pronouns.
- You can include your pronouns in your email signature (eg. my pronouns are: they/them').
- When holding meetings or when making introductions you can normalise the practice of using pronouns, for example: 'Hello, my name is Jack, my pronouns are they/them'.

If you would like more information or have any queries, please contact the EDI team:

papworth.edi@nhs.net

This leaflet has been created in collaboration with our LGBT+ Staff Network.

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