

## Quick Guide

# To Supporting Staff Who Are Transitioning

### Why it matters?

Transitioning is the term used to describe the process and steps an individual takes in order to live in the gender they identify as.

For some this involves medical intervention, such as hormone therapy and surgeries, but not all trans people want, or are able to have this.

The decision to transition is not something an individual undertakes lightly. The support of managers and colleagues is vital. The process of transitioning is unique for each individual. Some people will transition to their preferred gender full time and others will choose to live in their preferred gender part- time.

Whatever the individual's circumstances, it is important that the University is supportive, and makes clear that discrimination and harassment against trans people will not be tolerated.

### What do I need to do?

As a manager you will play a vital role to supporting the employee through their transitioning. Creating an action plan will enable you to manage key periods and questions throughout the transition. The action plan should include the dates or expected timescales of:

- appointments with doctors
- when colleagues will be informed
- the start of any hormone therapy and/or medical procedures
- any change of name or personal details, such as title
- change of gender

The action plan should also consider:

- which amendments to records and systems will be required
- whether training or briefing of colleagues, students or service users will be necessary, when this will occur, and who will carry this out
- whether the individual wants to inform relevant people (line manager/colleagues/students) in person or for this to be done on their behalf
- whether they want to continue in their current role or consider redeployment or another arrangement
- ways to minimise disruption in the workplace
- You can find a template for the action plan [here](#).

### How it works



- **Arrange an initial meeting.** Once the employee has notified the University of their intent to transition or that they are transitioning; it is important to have a meeting in a private space to talk to them about what support is available .
- **Agree on an action plan:** an action plan should include timescales to consider any necessary arrangements for time off work and any changes to records that are likely to be required. It should be kept confidential.
- **Manage the reactions of others:** Agree with the trans person if and how they want to tell people about their upcoming transition. Be prepared to respond to questions by familiarising yourself with the university's code of practice and other available guidance.

## Transphobia, bullying and harassment

Transphobia is defined as hatred or fear of trans people – this can sometimes lead to hostility and acts of violence

In a work environment it can lead to instances of harassment and bullying by colleagues, managers and service users.

The university has a zero tolerance approach to instances of bullying and harassment

So as a manager it is important that you:

- Challenge transphobic language, jokes, behaviour, assumptions and culture within your department regardless of whether this is from employees, managers or service users.
- Take the time to read and learn more about gender reassignment and the needs of trans employees
- Plan how you will support your trans employee(s) and deal with concerns of your team and service
- Some instances of harassment because of an individual's gender identity, expression and history may constitute a hate crime. It is vital that you report any hate crime or malicious behaviour.

## Confidentiality

No records should be changed without the permission of the staff member concerned. It is not necessary to ask a trans person to provide any documentary evidence in order to change their name, gender and title on University records.

When a member of staff discloses to the University that they are trans this information will be treated confidentially. Disclosing that someone is trans without their permission to do so is illegal. Any member of staff who does so will be subject to disciplinary action. This information is held securely and treated as 'sensitive personal data' in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998.

## Managing Changes

As someone with managerial responsibility, you will need to ensure that changes within a team are managed sensitively and effectively.

- Colleagues should receive consistent messages about the changes to help them to understand the situation and continue to treat their transitioning colleague with respect and dignity.
- Managers should attempt to support all team members to adjust to the changes and help employees to understand the situation
- If the individual wishes you can hold a team meeting to give a briefing to all members of the team, explaining what will happen, explain what transitioning is and provide an opportunity for them to ask questions they may have. This may or may not include the trans employee .
- When decided by the individual, the trans employee will need to be addressed by their new name and pronoun for their preferred gender. If any colleagues repeatedly refuse to do this, they will be deemed to be harassing the trans person and appropriate action will need to be taken.
- **IMPORTANT:** the timescales should be actively led and communicated by the transitioning employee.

## Terms You Should Know

### Tips for the meeting

Having the initial meeting is a vital step to supporting your employee during and after their transition

- The trans member of staff should have the option to be accompanied by a colleague, friend or trade union representative during the meeting.
- During the meeting you should discuss how in their view, their transition may impact upon their work and inform them of the support available.
- This is also a chance to ask about timescales of any dates set (e.g. for medical appointments).
- Discuss what support the university can provide.
- At this stage, before developing the action plan you should consider who else needs to know.
- Agree on next steps which can be aided by setting the action plan

**Transitioning:** Adopting the outward or physical characteristics of the gender one identifies with as opposed to the one assigned at birth.

**Gender Identity:** An individual's personal sense of gender.

**Transgender:** The term for a broad range of people whose gender identity or expressions is different to the one assigned to them at birth. This includes transsexual people, cross-dressers and those who are gender nonconforming.

**Transsexual:** A medical term for people whose gender identity and sex do not line up. Typically the person will seek medical treatment to align their body and gender identity. Avoid using the term unless the individual self-identifies as such.

**Genderqueer:** How some people describe themselves when they present themselves in a gender-nonstandard way. Avoid using the term unless the individual self-identifies as such

**Gender Expression:** How a person communicates gender identity to other through behaviour, clothing, hairstyle, voice or body characteristics.

### Further Resources:

The Equality Challenge Unit have developed comprehensive [guidance for those who manage staff or support or teach students](#)

The University has [Code of Practice](#) for each characteristics including supporting an employee who is transitioning

The Government and Equalities Office has extensive [guidance](#) for employers which includes a template for an action plan

**LGBT+ Toolkit:** Supporting Inclusivity in our curriculum and practices

You can find further information and resources on our [webpage](#)