

## Derogatory or Offensive Language

The following terms (context specifics in parentheses) are generally considered to be offensive to trans people.

- **Sex change**
- **Sex swap**
- **Tranny**
- **Transgenderers**
- **Pre-op**
- **Post-op**
- **Shemale**
- **HeShe**
- **Transsexual** (when used as a noun, e.g., 'a transsexual')
- **Transgender** (when used as a noun, e.g., 'a transgender')
- **Gender-bender** (specifically when used in relation to a transitioning person as opposed to an individual who plays with their gender presentation)
- **Hermaphrodite** (this term is widely held to be offensive – the term now in use is 'intersex people')

## Inaccurate Usage

- ✗ Transgendered – not a synonym for transgender (similar to 'woman-ed' or 'Catholic-ed')
- ✗ Transsexuality – the correct medical term, where appropriate, is 'transsexualism'
- ✗ Gender identity confusion
- ✗ Born a man
- ✗ Born a woman
- ✗ Trapped in the wrong body (Some trans people find this phrase apt, many others feel it oversimplifies a more nuanced experience)

## Trainings

TENI is committed to improving conditions and advancing the rights of trans people in Ireland. We have a number of training courses available to help companies and employers. These include:

**Trans 101:** Introductory course in trans awareness

**Trans in the Workplace 1:** Supporting your employee

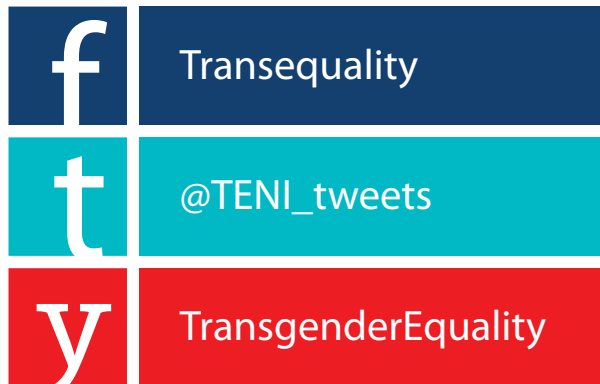
**Trans in the Workplace 2:** Staff training (training for staff members for engagement with trans colleagues and clients)

**Trans in the Workplace 3:** Policy and Procedure

## Please direct any questions to:

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Transgender  
Equality  
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## Transgender in the Workplace

Transgender people are active members of Irish society and play an important role in companies and organisations across the country. Unfortunately, the workplace can sometimes be a difficult place for trans people. Some individuals feel that they have to hide their gender identity or trans history to retain their employment and to ensure their personal safety.

Employers can help make positive change by creating work environments where trans people are free to live without fear.

This guide aims to help employers create an inclusive work environment where trans staff members can thrive and be productive members of the workplace. You will find useful information on how to support a staff member who is in the process of 'coming out' or transition.

## Here you'll find:

- A Note on Language
- 5 Simple Guidelines
- 5 Tips for Support During Transition
- Derogatory or Offensive Language
- Inaccurate Usage
- Information on TENI Trainings

[www.teni.ie](http://www.teni.ie)

## A Note On Language

- **Sex** generally refers to biological characteristics (e.g. genitals, chromosomes, reproductive organs).
- **Gender identity** refers to a person's deeply felt identification as male, female or another gender. An individual's gender identity may or may not correspond with the sex they were assigned at birth.
- **Transgender** or **Trans** describes an individual whose gender identity or gender expression is different from the sex they were assigned at birth.
- **Trans\*** (with the asterisk) is a new term that is gaining prominence and encompasses the diversity of experiences within trans communities.
- **Transition** refers to the process of changing gender presentation. Transition may involve social, legal, medical and/or surgical changes (not necessarily all of the above).
- **Gender variance** refers to all variation from expected gender norms. This term acknowledges that many experience their gender in a way that does not fall within society's expectations of being a man or woman.

## 5 Simple Guidelines

Below are some general tips about engaging positively with trans people in a way that is respectful of their gender identity.

1. Respect the person's wishes around which name and pronoun (he/she) they would like you to use. If you are unsure of which pronoun to use, ask the individual respectfully.
2. Some trans people are 'out' – open about their gender identity or expression – and others are not. Respect the employee's choice. Do not share this information without explicit permission.
3. Everyone has the right to privacy. The trans status of an employee is sensitive personal information. Their personnel information (employment records, insurance company records, medical information) should be protected by a maximum degree of privacy and confidentiality.

4. Allow employees to use facilities (restrooms, change rooms) which match their gender identity.

5. Ensure that organisational policies on equality, harassment or bullying explicitly include trans people. TENI is available to support in the development of trans-friendly policies and can provide training to staff and management.

## 5 Tips for Support During Transition

When a person transitions in the workplace it can be a time of change and growth for both the individual and the organisation. A supportive environment is key to ensuring that the individual feels supported and can continue to do their job effectively. The employer can take several proactive steps to ensure the safety, comfort and privacy of an employee as they transition.

1. Open communication and trust is key to supporting a trans person. A joint plan should be developed between employee and manager to assist in the employee's transition. Schedule regular meetings with the employee throughout their transition to see if other issues you may not have foreseen have arisen.
2. Discuss how the employee would like to be addressed. Make sure you consult with the employee before changing their details on personnel files. This can be a particularly vulnerable moment of their transition and should be treated sensitively.
3. Trans employees may need to schedule time off work for medical treatment. However, medical elements of transitioning are a private matter between doctor and patient. Transitioning employees should not be required to reveal – and employers should not be permitted to inquire about – the particular medical elements of transitioning.
4. Ensure the person has access to appropriate facilities e.g. toilets and changing rooms in the gender in which they identify. It is not appropriate to ask a staff member to use separate facilities, such as disabled toilets. However if transitioning employees ask for access to separate facilities for safety or privacy this should be taken seriously.

5. Highlight the need for all staff to work in a safe place with dignity and respect. Take a leadership role and create a workplace where people can feel free to be themselves.

## The Issues Trans People Face in Employment

*"I can't get a job in my chosen career, I have a fantastic work history up until the point when I came out as trans, now no one will employ me, this means I can't afford my transition in full which is really hard on me."*

*–Respondent 'Speaking from the Margins'*

In 2013, TENI published the 'Speaking from the Margins: Trans Mental Health and Wellbeing in Ireland' report. This report highlighted the struggles faced by trans people in the workforce, and found that 43% of respondents had experienced problems at work as a result of their trans identity or trans history.

The graph below illustrates the particular issues that trans people had experienced in relation to employment.

### Negative Experiences at Work Due to Trans Identity (N=103)

	%
Negative experience	43
Believe they have experienced workplace harassment or discrimination	14
Believe they have been unfairly turned down for a job	14
Believe they have been unfairly fired, dismissed or laid off	9
Have left a job due to harassment or discrimination, with no other job to go to	9
Have not applied for certain jobs due to fears of workplace harassment or discrimination	8
Have not provided references from a previous job because of gender history	7
Yes (other issue)	6
Have declined a job offer due to fears of workplace harassment or discrimination	3