

Gender Pronouns

It is important that trans and non-binary colleagues know they can be comfortable in expressing their gender identity at work and will be treated with respect. Trans and non-binary contractors, colleagues from other organisations and our residents should also know their identity is recognised and respected in all their dealings with Anchor.

As part of our work to continue building this inclusive culture, it's important that we all understand what pronouns are and how to use them when addressing people.

What are pronouns?

Pronouns are the words used to identify who you are talking about in conversation or writing when we want to avoid repetitively referring to that person by name. The following is a non-exhaustive list of commonly used pronouns:

Subjective	Objective	Possessive
she	her	hers
he	him	his
they	them	theirs

Some examples in conversation:

- I went to see Lady Gaga last night. Her performance was amazing. She's my favourite artist!
- I haven't seen Steve in ages. Shall I ask him if he wants to come for lunch?
- I'm going to be meeting with Sam tomorrow. Should I ask them if you can join us? I am sure they'd like to meet you!

Why are pronouns important?

Pronouns, like names, are how we address people. It is a sign of respect that we take the time to remember and use someone's pronouns correctly when addressing them. When people don't use the correct pronouns it can make the individual feel disrespected, invalidated or dismissed.

Aren't 'they', 'them' and 'theirs' plural?

A common misconception some people have is that "they, them and theirs" are plurals and can only be used to refer to more than one person. However, this isn't the case. The singular form of they, them and theirs are often used in everyday conversation to refer to someone of unknown gender. For example:

- Someone's left their wallet on the train - I hope they manage to return it to them.
- I'm speaking to someone tomorrow. I'll ask them about it.

How do I know which pronouns to use?

It's important to remember that you can't always tell a person's pronouns from their name or appearance, so assumptions should not be made. However, directly asking someone for their pronouns puts that person under pressure to 'out' their gender identity straight away or closet themselves by having to lie.

One way to avoid this is to lead by example, stating your name and pronouns at the start of a meeting. For example: *"Hello my name is Ash, my pronouns are he/him, how should I address you?"* This allows the other person to define themselves in the way they are comfortable.

Adding your pronouns to email signatures or name badges is another way of doing this (see below).

Email signatures

One easy way to 'normalise' talking about pronouns is to add your pronouns to your email signature. This could also be helpful for colleagues who have names which are commonly both male and female, for example 'Ashley' or 'Lesley'.

In order to ensure a uniform approach to signatures we ask you do this in the format given below. Doing this is completely optional for colleagues:

Teagan Robinson (she/her)
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager
Tel: 07495749209

Zoom/Teams etc

You can update your name on Zoom/Teams or other virtual meeting platforms to include your pronouns by selecting 'rename' and using the same format outlined for email signatures above.

ID and Name badges

To support our trans and non/binary colleagues we are also giving the option to have pronouns printed on name badges. The user guide on the Bridge has been updated to outline how to add a colleague's pronouns to their name badge, simply by including these in the product free text box. ID badges are ordered through the AskHR portal and an additional field has been added to the order form asking for pronouns to be selected.

Workplace

You can update your pronouns on Workplace by clicking your photo on the bottom left of your screen, and then selecting 'settings'

What happens if I get it wrong?

People make mistakes. The important thing is to quickly correct and move on without making a fuss. For example, quickly saying "Sorry, I meant 'they'" if the conversation hasn't already moved on.

Whilst honest mistakes will happen, intentional misgendering is transphobia. Consistent, deliberate use of incorrect pronouns constitutes bullying and harassment and must be dealt with swiftly through the usual bullying and harassment processes.

If you think you would struggle with using this terminology, try having a conversation with someone using only gender-neutral language. As with everything – it gets easier with practice!

What happens if someone else gets it wrong?

If you notice one or more people consistently using the wrong pronouns to address someone, you might consider talking with the person affected by this, acknowledging how hurtful that might be for them, and asking if they'd like you to address it privately with the other people involved, or speak to a manager.

References and further reading:

- <https://www.mypronouns.org/>
- <http://genderedintelligence.co.uk/projects/kip/transidentities/language>
- <https://uwm.edu/lgbtrc/support/gender-pronouns/>

Support Available

There is a range of support available for colleagues, including:

- their individual line manager
- The Rainbow Network (Anchor's LGBTQ+ network) can be contacted at: rainbow.network@anchor.org.uk
- Colleague Assistance Programme
 - Phone: 0800 316 9337
 - Website: www.legalandgeneral.com/eap (use "worklife" for both the access code and password)
- There is also a specific list of help and support for LGBTQ+ colleagues on the [EDI Resources](#) page on The Bridge

Pronouns Guidance

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