

Trans inclusion policy

New policy number:	323
Old instruction number:	
Issue date:	16 June 2003
Reviewed as current:	30 April 2025
Owner:	Assistant Director, People Services
Responsible work team:	Inclusion

Contents

1	Introduction	2
2	Employing and retaining trans people	2
3	Recruitment and interviews	2
4	Disclosure and barring service applications	3
5	Transitioning	3
6	Personal adjustments roadmap	4
7	Absence from work	4
8	Communications with colleagues	5
9	Name and pronouns	5
10	Use of facilities	5
11	Uniform and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)	6
12	Harassment	6
13	Confidentiality and record keeping	6
14	Gender recognition certificate	6
15	Help and support	7
	Appendix 1 - Definitions and terminology	8
	Document history	10

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This policy sets out the Brigade's arrangements for supporting and managing transgender or "trans", non-binary and/or gender-fluid employees. An employee who plans to change their gender identity is referred to as transitioning. This can be socially and/or medically transitioning.
- 1.2 This policy should be applied in line with the Brigade's values:
 - Service – We put the public first.
 - Courage – We step up to the challenge.
 - Learning – We listen so that we can improve.
 - Teamwork – We work together and include everyone.
 - Equity – We treat everyone fairly according to their needs.
 - Integrity – We act with honesty.

2 Employing and retaining trans people

- 2.1 The key to planning how to achieve and maintain trans inclusion requires an understanding of the settings in which barriers and problems can present themselves – whether intentionally or unwittingly. It can be helpful to think of these in terms of the particular settings where issues might arise.
- 2.2 The three settings are:
 - Recruitment of someone who is trans, non-binary, gender-fluid and/or is already transitioning or has transitioned.
 - The time when an existing member of staff discloses that they are trans, non-binary, gender-fluid and/or are planning to transition.
 - And the previously undisclosed gender history of a trans employee becomes known to colleagues or the public (or becomes the subject of speculation) – this may happen with or without the consent of the individual.

3 Recruitment and interviews

- 3.1 The Brigade's recruitment policies and procedures must treat trans workers fairly and make it clear that discrimination is not tolerated.
- 3.2 Trans people are not required to disclose their gender history as a condition of employment. This is a private matter for some trans, non-binary and/or gender-fluid people. Most trans people will have experienced prejudice and harassment as a result of disclosure in the past and have good reason to suspect that this will happen again. If a candidate who has the protected characteristic of gender reassignment ¹ does choose to talk about their gender history, it would be unlawful to use this as a reason to not offer them a job. It is also unlawful to dismiss someone for not disclosing their gender history, or for disclosing it at a later date.

¹ The protected characteristic of gender reassignment applies to a person proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning the person's sex by changing physiological or other characteristics of sex.

4 Disclosure and barring service applications

- 4.1 The Brigade requires all of its new and existing staff to apply for a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) disclosure. This means there can be some anxiety about the implications of this for trans applicants and existing staff. Please refer to Policy number 720 - Disclosure and barring service for further details on the process.
- 4.2 Staff should be aware that the DBS has a special process for trans people who are concerned about the confidentiality of their gender history but still ensures that any previous criminal history cannot be hidden.

Staff need to be aware that in some cases there is no way of avoiding the disclosure of their former identity to the Brigade. However, our policy for dealing with DBS applications and data instructs staff on how to deal with this eventuality in a responsible manner if it occurs. This includes reassurances that will need to be given to the applicant/member of staff in the event that the offence itself is not serious enough to preclude employment.

5 Transitioning

- 5.1 Transitioning can look different for different individuals. This can include medical transition, but not all trans people want or are able to have this. It can also include social transition, which involves things such as telling friends and family, dressing differently, changing names, and updating official documents.
- 5.2 For medical transition, access to trans healthcare on the NHS is currently through the Gender Identity Clinic system, which provides a diagnosis of 'gender dysphoria' followed by a treatment plan – trans healthcare can include hormone therapy, a number of different surgeries, hair removal or transplants, voice training, and other forms of treatment. It is important to note that waiting lists for this service are currently many years long – as such someone may have to wait a long time to access healthcare, use a private healthcare provider, or access treatment via other pathways. The person may start to live full time as a member of their 'new' gender before they begin any form of trans healthcare, or they may wait until after their treatment plan has begun – for example, hormone therapy usually starts to produce visible changes around 6 months after starting treatment. Some people may continue to present as their 'old' gender role at work for longer. People can continue to work throughout this period. When the person starts to live as a member of their 'new' gender, their name and other records will be formally changed. From this point they should be treated as belonging to their 'new' gender for employment purposes.
- 5.3 Transitioning is positive for trans people. It involves moving from a state that feels wrong or unnatural to a place where the individual is able to express their true self. Any anxiety therefore does not usually arise from that transition itself, but from the reaction of others and the obstacles they place in the trans person's path. If service managers find that providing services to trans people requires a rethink or special arrangements, that is not the 'fault' of the trans person for being different; this will be due to problems unconnected with the trans person, one of which may be that the service was not designed with them in mind.
- 5.4 An employee who plans to transition should first inform a manager or colleague from the Belonging, Inclusion and Wellbeing team. The employee should agree who they would wish to have as the main point of contact (ideally this would be their line manager) – this will be the person who will manage the transition from the Brigade's perspective, and they should discuss what help and support is needed. A positive and constructive approach should be adopted to supporting the employee throughout the process and should be approached as a joint project. The Brigade will ensure that the manager has the skills and support to act appropriately through advice and support from the Belonging, Inclusion and Wellbeing team.

- 5.5 An employee who intends to transition will be required to sign a disclaimer authorising the Brigade to amend all their internal records.

6 Personal adjustments roadmap

- 6.1 A personal adjustments roadmap will be agreed setting out how the transition will be handled at work. Central to this approach is the knowledge that the person with the greatest commitment to a successful outcome is the individual themselves and their personal expertise will be valued. Most trans people are experts on the details of what is going to happen, and what the implications are going to be. The timeline of the medical transition may vary depending on the person's decisions during the various stages of their transition. The personal adjustments road map will address the following issues:

- Agree the key Brigade contact.
- Whether the employee wants to stay in their current post or be redeployed.
- Agree any workplace adjustments, including uniform or workwear, and or flexible working arrangements. It is optional that these can be recorded in your Workplace Adjustment passport. Please visit the Workplace Adjustment passport details on Hotwire here to record this.
- The expected timescale of any medical and surgery procedures, if applicable.
- Plan when special leave of up to 16 days paid leave can be taken using the special leave application process as set out in Policy number 512 - Special leave policy.
- Agree toilet facility, changing room and sleeping arrangements.
- The expected point or phase of change of name, personal details and gender.
- What time off will be required for treatment and/or possible side effects.
- Whether the employee wishes to inform line managers, co-workers and service users themselves, or would prefer this to be done for them.
- What amendments will be required to records and systems.
- What training or briefing of co-workers or service users will be needed and when and by whom this will be carried out.
- How the Brigade should respond to any media enquiries.
- Sources of additional support e.g. LGBTQ+ Network Equality Support Group and its Trans Rep, Fire Brigades Union LGBT+ section, UNISON and GMB LGBT groups, other community groups.

7 Absence from work

- 7.1 A person who is undergoing any aspects of medical transition may need time off work for health treatment or recovery. This policy acknowledges that assessment by a qualified professional may take several months or even years. Appointments with less than 4 hours absence from work can be recorded as Gone To Visit (GTV) in accordance with Policy number 1005 – Supporting health and wellbeing policy. Appointments may involve travelling long distances, so are likely to take a whole day. Special leave for transitioning of up to 16 days paid leave can be taken within a 12 month period between 1 April and 31 March, using the special leave application process as set out in Policy number 512 – Special leave policy. This can be approved by a station commander/ FRS F/senior control commander or above who shall use the StARS special leave category 'gender reassignment/transition leave'. Following this, there may be a period of one or more years before the person is accepted for surgery and some people may require more than one operation. It is accepted that the time off following this will vary greatly, from one week to around 12 weeks, depending on the nature of the surgery and the physical demands of the person's job.

- 7.2 When the individual needs to be absent for treatment or surgery then normal sick pay arrangements will apply. Any reasonable absence because of the effects of treatment for transitioning will not normally be taken into account for the purposes of formal action for unsatisfactory attendance in line with Policy number 1005 - Supporting health and wellbeing policy and Policy number 873 - Sickness capability policy.
- 7.3 Subject to the exigencies of the service, flexibility will be given to individuals who may need to take holiday or rearrange working hours in order to attend additional appointments outside of work. The extent of transition related treatment will vary according to the needs of the individual.

8 Communications with colleagues

- 8.1 The Brigade will agree with the individual when and how widely they wish their transition to be made known and will arrange for an agreed communication process to be undertaken in a structured way. Colleagues will require, and often request, information. Education or training can be provided on trans identities and allyship. The right of all people to work in dignity and free from discrimination and the unacceptability of harassment must be made clear. The right to medical confidentiality should also be respected. It is good practice for the Brigade to take responsibility for informing those who need to know but the wishes of the individual should be given priority.

9 Name and pronouns

- 9.1 All members of staff must refer to the employee by their chosen name and use the pronouns that the employee asks for. Not only is the choice of the wrong terms a display of bad manners, such behaviour and errors (intended or accidental) can destroy the trust that is essential between colleagues in the workplace. Details of how to change name will be in the action plan.

10 Use of facilities

- 10.1 The Brigade's 'Privacy For All' strategy and its implementation is to create single dedicated gender-neutral dormitory and shower/toilet facilities across its entire estate. Where these are available then they are accessible for use by a trans employee. Details of this will be in the personal adjustments road map.
- 10.2 The use of toilets, locker rooms, changing rooms, showers and sleeping arrangements can occasionally be an issue in the workplace, particularly during the early stages of transition if colleagues were familiar with the employee prior to transition. However, if anxieties are acknowledged and responded to in a thoughtful manner, concerns can usually be overcome. The usual point for starting to use opposite gender facilities will be the day the employee starts coming to work in that role. Insistence that a trans person use the facilities of their birth sex or an accessible toilet may count as unlawful discrimination.
- 10.3 For reasons of health and safety, operational personnel must have access to washing facilities at work. Trans people will be able to use the appropriate communal facilities that align with their gender identity if they wish. They may be able to negotiate the use of private washing and changing facilities if they exist. Consideration will be given to workplace adjustments, such as redeployment, if private facilities are required for a limited time. Trans people must be supported to use all facilities designated for other members of their acquired gender.

11 Uniform and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- 11.1 Where uniform and PPE is provided, the Brigade is required to provide a new uniform that is consistent with any change in gender role. The individual should be given the choice as to the uniform and PPE that they use. It is essential that the individual receives any new uniform and PPE as early as possible in order for them to try it on at home and become comfortable wearing it.

12 Harassment

- 12.1 The Brigade operates a zero-tolerance approach to any instances of bullying, harassment and discrimination against trans employees and will not tolerate or permit such behaviour. It is everyone's responsibility to call-out such behaviour when it is observed. These shall be dealt with in accordance with Policy number 394 – Complaints (grievance) policy and the external complaints process on Hotwire. All staff are required to treat colleagues and members of the public in an inclusive and respectful manner regardless of their gender presentation.

13 Confidentiality and record keeping

- 13.1 Confidentiality is crucial. Some trans staff members may be out or may not be out at work about their gender history. This is their decision alone. Being out to one person or a small group of people does not necessarily mean a person wants to be out to everybody. The Brigade's personnel records (both hard copy and electronic) for an employee that has transitioned must not refer to a previous name and that records made before a change of name are updated.
- 13.2 There may still be some records which identify a person's gender history, such as records of absence for medical treatment. For people without a Gender Recognition Certificate, some records, for example those relating to pensions and insurance, may include a reference to their legal sex. Access to any records showing the change of name and any other details associated with the person's transgender status will be stored appropriately and restricted to staff who 'need to know' for specific reasons. 'Need to know' refers to those directly involved in the administration of a process, for example the appropriate People Services or Finance section who authorises payments into a pension scheme.
- 13.3 Breaches of confidentiality will be treated in a serious manner and may amount to unlawful harassment. Please refer to Policy number 351 - Data protection and privacy.
- 13.4 The law recognises the seriousness of confidentiality issues. The Gender Recognition Act 2004 gives anyone applying for or holding a Gender Recognition Certificate particular privacy rights. It is a criminal offence to pass on information acquired 'in the course of official duties' (e.g. a manager, trade union rep) about someone's gender recognition, without the consent of the individual affected.

14 Gender recognition certificate

- 14.1 The Brigade recognises that a Gender Recognition Certificate only includes binary identities, however the Brigade supports employees of all gender identities regardless whether a Gender Recognition Certificate is issued. The key purposes of the Gender Recognition Certificate are to enable trans people to:
- Have their UK birth certificates corrected to reflect their acquired gender.
 - Have a marriage or civil partnership in their acquired gender.
 - Have gender-specific benefit and pension entitlements calculated using their acquired gender.

- 14.2 Individuals will need to demonstrate that the Brigade has changed its records before a Gender Recognition Certificate is issued. A Gender Recognition Certificate is **not** required for the purposes of changing a person's gender identity in all other aspects of their day-to-day life (including using toilets and changing all documentation such as their passport, driver's licence, bank accounts, medical records, and employment records).

15 Help and support

- 15.1 Please contact the HR Helpdesk on extension 89100 option 3 and by email to IT.HR@london-fire.gov.uk or the Inclusion team direct by email to Inclusion@london-fire.gov.uk.
- 15.2 Please visit the Counselling and Trauma Service (CTS) Hotwire page to find out more about the support they can provide you. They can be contacted by email to counselling@london-fire.gov.uk or on extension 35555.
- 15.3 The Brigade has a LGBTQ+ Network Equality Support Group and details can be found in the Equality Support Groups section on Hotwire. Their Hotwire page also contains additional information and support available.
- 15.4 The Brigade has a Fitness Advisory Team that can provide you with support to maintain your fitness and their details can be found on their Hotwire page.
- 15.5 This policy may also be available on request in other alternative accessible formats as set out in Policy number 290 – Guidance note on translation and interpretation. Please contact Communications on extension 30753 and by email to communications.team@london-fire.gov.uk to discuss your needs and options.
- 15.6 The Brigade invites your engagement so that it can learn so if you have a suggestion that can improve this policy then please submit your idea via the Staff Suggestion Scheme on Hotwire as set out in [Policy number 887](#) – Staff suggestion scheme. Any changes do need to go through the agreed engagement, consultation, negotiation or governance requirements.

Appendix 1 - Definitions and terminology

Definitions

- 1 **Gender identity:** A person's innate sense of their own gender, whether male, female or something else (see non-binary below), which may or may not correspond to the sex assigned at birth.
- 2 **Transgender person:** An umbrella term to describe people whose gender is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with, the sex they were assigned at birth. Trans people may describe themselves using one or more of a wide variety of terms, including (but not limited to) transgender, transsexual, gender-queer (GQ), gender-fluid, non-binary, gender-variant, crossdresser, genderless, agender, nongender, third gender, bi-gender, trans man, trans woman, trans masculine, trans feminine and neutrois.
- 3 **Non-binary:** An umbrella term for people whose gender identity doesn't sit comfortably with 'man' or 'woman'. Non-binary identities are varied and can include people who identify with some aspects of binary identities, while others reject them entirely.
- 4 **Gender dysphoria:** Used to describe when a person experiences discomfort or distress because there is a mismatch between their sex assigned at birth and their gender identity. This is also the clinical diagnosis for someone who doesn't feel comfortable with the sex they were assigned at birth.
- 5 **Gender reassignment:** Another way of describing a person's transition. To undergo gender reassignment usually means to undergo some sort of medical intervention, but it can also mean changing names, pronouns, dressing differently and living in their self-identified gender. Gender reassignment is a characteristic that is protected by the Equality Act 2010, and it is further interpreted in the Equality Act 2010 approved code of practice. It is a term of much contention and should only be used when referring specifically to the protected characteristic in the Equality Act 2010.
- 6 **Transitioning:** The steps a trans person may take to live in the gender with which they identify. Each person's transition will involve different things. For some this involves medical intervention, such as hormone therapy and surgeries, but not all trans people want or are able to have this. Transitioning also might involve things such as telling friends and family, dressing differently and changing official documents.
- 7 **Pronoun:** Words we use to refer to people's gender in conversation - for example, 'he' or 'she'. Some people may prefer for others to refer to them in gender neutral language and use pronouns such as they/them and ze/zir.
- 8 Please refer to the Stonewall website for a full list of terms and definitions.

Why are different terms important?

- 9 The simplest distinction is that 'trans' or 'transgender' are terms of choice often adopted by people to describe themselves. The trans community is wide and varied, and as such people who identify as trans may or may not seek certain aspects of medical and/or social transition. Many trans people transitioning reject the term 'transsexual' because of its links to historical approaches that were grounded in theories about mental disorder and sexual deviancy.
- 10 As far as possible, this guide endeavours to use the more encompassing term 'trans', which is replacing 'transgender' in common usage. 'Gender reassignment' should only be used when referring to the protected characteristic that appears in the Equality Act 2010.

Sexual orientation

- 11 It is important not to make any assumptions about a trans person's sexual orientation which can include heterosexual, lesbian, gay, bisexual and all other sexual orientations like everyone else.

Document history

Assessments

An equality, sustainability or health, safety and welfare impact assessment and/or a risk assessment was last completed on:

EIA	28/05/24	SDIA	H -10/08/23	HSWIA	11/08/23	RA	N/A
-----	----------	------	-------------	-------	----------	----	-----

Audit trail

Listed below is a brief audit trail, detailing amendments made to this policy/procedure.

Page/para nos.	Brief description of change	Date
Throughout	Major changes made throughout policy.	04/04/2024
Page 2, para 1.2 Page 4, para 7.1 Page 7, para 15.5	PN973 - Togetherness policy reference removed. Gender reassignment/transition special leave details added. Access to alternative policy format details added.	15/04/2024
Page 7, para 15.6	Staff suggestion scheme details added.	10/06/2024
Throughout Page 4, Para 6.1 Page 4, Para 7.1	Policy reviewed as current with the following changes made. 10 days paid transition leave increased to 16 days paid leave.	30/04/2025
Page 4, para 7.1	Reference to cancelled PN0888 – Partial attendance policy updated.	04/11/2025

Subject list

You can find this policy under the following subjects.

Employment	Equalities
Gender	Transgender

Freedom of Information Act exemptions

This policy/procedure has been securely marked due to:

Considered by: (responsible work team)	FOIA exemption	Security marking classification