



Trans and Nonbinary Colleague Inclusion Policy

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Note

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure compliance with changes in employment law, equality legislation, language and best practice regarding trans and nonbinary inclusion if this policy or procedure is not compliant, the relevant legislation shall prevail.

Introduction

Brunel's commitment to LGBTQ+ inclusion

Brunel University of London is committed to providing an equitable, safe and inclusive culture where all colleagues may work, study, and research without encountering prejudice or discrimination based on the protected characteristic of 'gender reassignment' as defined by the Equality Act 2010 and our Public Sector Duties. We are also committed to creating an LGBTQ+ affirmative culture and learning environment, so all are able to study, research, work and socialise free from prejudice, discrimination, bullying and harassment.

The University recognises that different members of the community at Brunel, may hold different opinions and beliefs towards gender identity. We want everyone to feel confident in holding their views provided that, they are lawful and highlight that 'gender critical beliefs' are also protected under the equality legislation and free speech and academic freedom (see more information below). We encourage students and staff to be mutually respectful, tolerant and open to people's different attitudes and identities.

Definitions¹

TRANS

A term to describe people whose gender is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with, the sex they were assigned at birth. In this policy, we use 'trans' as an umbrella term including (but not limited to) transgender, transsexual, genderqueer, genderfluid, intersex, agender, trans man, trans woman, trans masculine and trans feminine.

Nonbinary

A term for people whose gender doesn't sit comfortably with 'man' or 'woman'. Nonbinary identities are varied and can include people who identify with some aspects of binary identities, while others reject them entirely.

Transitioning

The steps a trans person takes to live in their gender. 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, using different pronouns, dressing differently and changing official documents.

¹ Adapted from <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/resources/list-lgbtq-terms>

Policy aims and objectives

The purpose of this policy is to assist in maintaining a positive working environment for all colleagues. In particular, it notes the following:

- The University's duty and commitment to providing a supportive and affirmative environment for Colleagues. It is the right of the individual to choose whether they wish to be open about their gender identity in the University.
- colleagues who are going through the process of transitioning (medical and/or social) will be supported by the University to ensure that their needs are met during this period.
- colleagues who have indicated a wish to live in a gender other than their sex at birth (whether or not medical supervision or surgery is either involved or contemplated).
- colleagues will not be excluded from employment or promotion because of their gender identity, trans history, or because they are transitioning.
- respect for the confidentiality of trans and nonbinary Colleagues and students and that no information will be revealed without the prior agreement of the individual.
- transphobic abuse, harassment or bullying (e.g. name calling, derogatory jokes, unacceptable or unwanted behaviour, intrusive questions, hate crime) is treated seriously and may be subject to disciplinary proceedings in accordance with the University's [Dignity at work Policy](#) and [Disciplinary Policy and Procedure](#).

Nothing within this policy should be construed in any way as a restriction on academic freedom as set out in the university's [Freedom of Speech Statement](#). Brunel's Royal Charter protects at all times the ability for academic staff to question and test received wisdom and to put forward new ideas and controversial or unpopular opinions without placing themselves at risk of losing their jobs or privileges.

Scope

The trans and nonbinary colleague inclusion policy applies to all colleagues, workers and contractors working with the University.

The legal framework²

The Equality Act 2010 ("EqA 2010") prohibits direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation of people with certain protected characteristics. We are required under the EqA 2010 to ensure that no student or Colleague should be treated unfairly because of a social or cultural characteristic such as age, disability, ethnicity, gender reassignment, religion or belief, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, sex and sexual orientation.

² Adapted from https://www.gardencourtchambers.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/old/1709124135-presentation_sl.pdf (Garden Court Chambers, 2024)

Under the EqA 2010 and this policy:

- Gender reassignment is a protected characteristic (s.7 EqA 2010).
- Gender reassignment refers to people who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning the person's sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex.
- This definition covers a wide range of gender identities, such as gender fluid and nonbinary.
- A person need not have had gender affirming surgery or other medical care to fall within the definition.

Roles and responsibilities

Transitioning Colleagues

Colleagues who have decided to transition are encouraged to contact their HR Business Partner in confidence as soon as possible to ensure that any support can be put in place. Colleagues will be encouraged to create a workplace transition plan that can then be reviewed by them and their manager to ensure all practical and support arrangements are in place. The individual transitioning plan is led by the Colleague throughout the transition process.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Team

The EDI team can offer support, for example assisting with facilitating meetings between the Colleague and their manager, advising on transition plans, facilitating meetings with colleagues and providing guidance on equality and diversity issues. Provision of Trans and Nonbinary inclusion training is highly recommended and can be delivered by the Equity Team. The University will seek to co-create any training materials with students and Colleagues from its trans and nonbinary communities in order to embed their first-hand experience and knowledge.

Health Safety and Environment Team (HSET)

The HSET will provide expert advice and guidance on all health and safety related issues (psychosocial risk assessments, work related stress etc.), and will work with individuals, and their representatives (be those HR or Line Management etc.) to ensure a safe working environment for all.

HR Business Partner

The HR Business Partnering team will provide expertise and guidance to ensure that workplace transition plans consider University policies and procedures, legal requirements and best practice as well as assisting the Colleague and line manager with the implementation of the transition plan and providing coaching and development support and interventions as needed.

Line Manager

The line manager is responsible for ensuring that identified and agreed support is in place and that the workplace transitioning plan is implemented effectively. Line managers may take part in an initial meeting with HR if the colleague is happy for them to be present. Line managers should review the workplace transition plan for all business needs and should set expectations for colleagues' behaviour including arranging additional training or intervention if required.

LGBTQ+ Staff network

The [LGBTQ+ Staff Network](#) will promote respect, and work with internal and external partners to help engage, empower and develop LGBTQ+ people in the University community. The Network can be a great source of support.

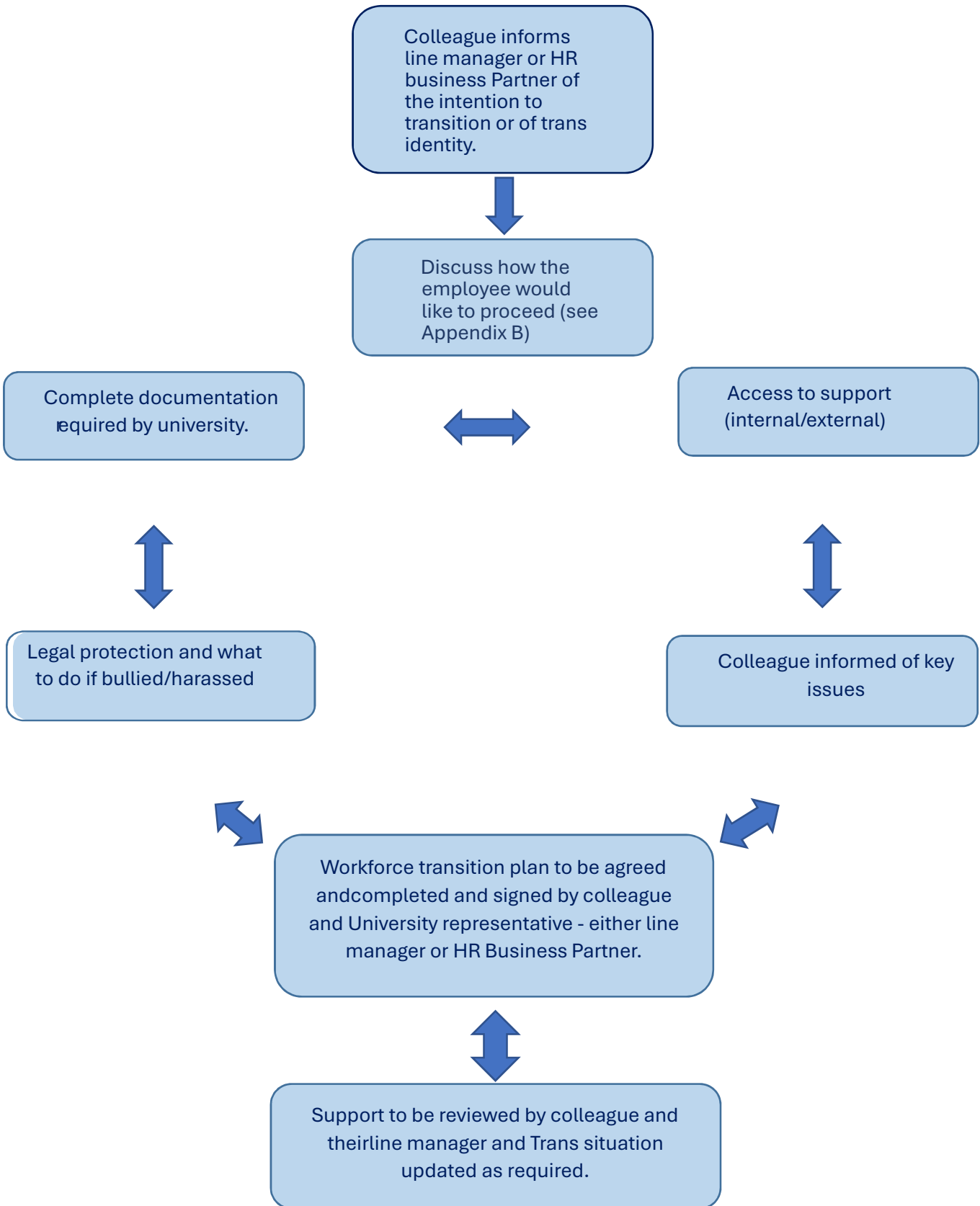
All Colleagues

Respect is expected to be mutual between all University colleagues, including the expectation to demonstrate respect for transitioning or trans individuals both in and out of the workplace.

Neurodivergent Staff Network

The [Neurodivergent Staff Network](#) can provide support for gender-questioning neurodivergent colleagues, advising on occupational health needs and any gender transition plan.

Flowchart for supporting colleague transition



Colleague leave of absence

We are compassionate and sympathetic at Brunel University of London and understand that everyone's transition experience is different. Brunel provides paid leave to assist Colleagues undergoing a gender transition, including:

- Gender Transition Leave – Colleagues who are transitioning or are questioning their gender identity can apply for up to 100 hours paid leave at their discretion (this is a one-off leave allocation).

In addition to the Gender Transition Leave other leave policy will be used to support a Colleague to safely transition at work and this is examined on a case-by-case basis. Colleagues who are supporting a partner to safely transition will be supported under our [Special Leave Policy and Procedure](#)

Creating a workplace transition plan

The Transitioning Colleague should create a workplace transition plan as part of the transitioning process. This can be used both to guide the initial conversations and to create a support team to help through the transition. A solid plan can help smooth the transition by reducing uncertainties and giving everyone involved a common roadmap from which to work.

A template plan is available in Appendix A.

How should we inform colleagues of a trans person's plan to transition?

The manager and transitioning Colleague should discuss and agree how best to inform work colleagues about the transitioning Colleague's plan to transition. If a person transitioned before joining the organisation, no information about this will be passed on to others unless absolutely necessary, and then only with the permission of the person concerned.

This information cannot be kept confidential if a person transitions in the workplace, so careful planning should be undertaken in the run-up to the transition. It may not be necessary to inform the entire workforce, however, who should be informed and what will be said should be agreed with the colleague who is transitioning. The extent of disclosure, and how it is to be done, is likely to vary depending on how much face-to-face contact the individual has with colleagues and students.

How should we respond to a request for name and title changes?

The transitioning Colleague is encouraged to discuss with their Line Manager, and to inform Human Resources, how and when their name change is to occur and what practical arrangements are necessary. The University does not insist on Colleagues providing more than a simple signed statement saying that they are changing from the old name and title, to the new one. All changes to the individual's records are managed under GDPR and University data protection policies.

Brunel colleagues have access to the CHIME self-service system that allows Colleagues to update their own personal information and reduces the need to continually 'out' themselves in order to have information updated.

How should we respond to requests for time off for medical treatment?

Transitioning colleagues may need time off work to undergo treatment as part of the transitioning process.

The University offers paid leave as detailed in section 7 of this policy so that colleagues are able to undergo their treatments associated with transitioning. This does not impact on annual leave entitlement. Colleagues should discuss as far as possible in advance the time away from work that they believe they will need. The normal policy for medical appointments should be followed – where possible the line manager should be flexible if an individual needs to rearrange working hours in order to attend additional appointments.

Guidance for individuals applying to work at the University

Guidance for individuals applying to work at the University and any disclosure made at any point will be treated in confidence, and any reasonable adjustments required should be requested at the earliest opportunity.

- As not all trans people will hold official documentation that is reflective of their affirmed gender identity, the University will need to work with the colleague to identify any additional documentation.
- Applicants who wish to confidentially disclose their trans status during the application process, may do so by contacting the Recruiting Manager or Human Resources Department.

Appendix A – Workplace transition plan

A Workforce Transitioning Plan will help the University to work with the transitioning Colleague to ensure a smooth transition at work. The plan does not represent a binding and unchangeable arrangement, but rather a commitment by the University to engage with, and support, the Colleague with their transition at all stages. A flexible plan can help smooth the transition by reducing uncertainties and giving everyone involved a common roadmap from which to work from.

Discussions about the workplace transition plan will be handled sensitively and in strict confidence and managers will listen to any suggestions and consider any possibilities – with the aim of agreeing an arrangement that will help the colleague to feel comfortable in the workplace. Human Resources are available to assist with these discussions and the development of the Plan as required. Please note that this should always be led by the transitioning colleague.

The plan should be reviewed at least every three months and can be reassessed at each significant stage of the process. If necessary, the colleague can ask at any time that the plan be reviewed at an earlier point in time.

Key questions and steps to take:

- What is the likely timetable for the transition and any key dates? In particular, when will the Colleague begin their gender presentation in a different manner, (their workplace transition date)?
 - Create a timeline
 - Define your transition milestone
- Who are all the people at the University colleagues may need to engage during the transition?
- When do they need to be engaged?
- Does the colleague give their permission for information to be shared with these people?
- Are there any specific issues that need to be addressed sooner rather than later?
- Consider what information needs to be updated by the workplace transition date to reflect the colleague's identity? Who will be responsible for arranging these changes? For example:
 - a) Employment records (held by HR)
 - b) All Core University Systems and Databases e.g., CHIME
 - c) Email and telephone systems
 - d) University I.D. cards
 - e) Gym membership cards
 - f) Staff contact lists
 - g) Office door names
 - h) Intranet and internet references to the staff member
 - i) Course handbooks
 - j) Any information provided to students
 - k) Prospectuses

- l) Membership lists of groups and committees where this includes photos of the member of staff, these may need to be updated at a later stage and/or on more than one occasion as the person's appearance changes.

Considerations for colleagues undergoing transition

- What changes need to be made to capture information (e.g., getting a security badge photo, tax forms, benefits paperwork, name changes, company directory, etc.).
- How long will this normally take and when can the change process begin?
- Do a search for your name on our internal sites. Create a list of which sites need to be altered or removed?
- Decide and agree with the relevant teams how existing hard copy documents that cannot be changed are to be stored, and only accessible to named people, under specific circumstances.
- Determine if you will need to re-apply for or change any professional certifications?
- Discuss with your manager and HR business partner how and when colleagues should be informed.
- Think about which discussions you prefer to lead (if any) and what are your expectations of your manager.
- Discuss with HR about insurance, pensions and any other benefits that are of relevance.

Appendix B – Contacts for additional support

The **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Team** can be [contacted](#) for further information and guidance.

The **LGBTQ+ Staff Network** can be contacted via lgbtqia-plus@brunel.ac.uk or on the [IntraBrunel staff intranet](#).

Wellbeing and mental health support is available for individuals through the [Care First Colleague Assistance Programme](#)

The University recognises the following **Trade Unions**, who can be contacted for member advice:

- GMB
- UCU
- UNISON
- UNITE

External information, advice, and support

The list of useful contacts given below is correct at the time of writing (June 2025). Please check the web for up-to-date contact information. Please note that Brunel University of London does not endorse or take responsibility for the information provided by external organisations.

Advance HE provides advice and support for students and staff on equality and diversity in higher education - <https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/>

Depend offers advice, information and support to all family members, partners, spouses and friends of trans people — www.depend.org.uk

Equality Advisory Support Service (EASS) advises and assists individuals on issues relating to equality and human rights, across England, Scotland and Wales
<https://www.equalityadvisoryservice.com/> – Tel: 0808 800 0082

Equality and Human Rights Commission is the statutory body responsible for protecting, enforcing and promoting equality across nine protected characteristics — age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, and sexual orientation - www.equalityhumanrights.com.

Galop, the national helpline for LGBT+ victims and survivors of abuse and violence
<https://www.galop.org.uk/> – Tel: 0800 999 5428

Gendered Intelligence provides support, training and resources for all those who work with and support trans people as students, pupils, Colleagues, colleagues, or clients; and works extensively in schools, colleges and universities with students and staff offering mentoring, workshops and training — <https://www.genderedintelligence.co.uk>

Spectra provides peer-lead trans support to all trans and gender diverse people including counselling, peer mentoring, social group and health advocacy - <https://spectra-london.org.uk/trans-services/>.

Stonewall is Europe's largest LGBTQ+ campaigning charity and provides information, support and guidance on LGBTQ+ inclusion, working towards a world where all are free to be. Through their Diversity Champion and Workplace Equality Index programmes, they help organisations including HEIs and colleges to recognise the benefits of the perspectives of lesbian, gay, bi and trans people for all Colleagues, service users and members of the community —

<https://www.stonewall.org>

Switchboard, LGBT+ Helpline, provides a one-stop listening service for LGBTQ+ people on the phone, by email and through Instant Messaging <https://switchboard.lgbt/> – Tel: 0800 011 9100