LGBTI glossary

LGBTI
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex

Lesbian
A word describing a woman who is emotionally, romantically and/or sexually attracted to other women.

Gay
A word describing a person who is emotionally, romantically and/or sexually attracted to people of the same gender.

Bisexual
A word describing a person who is emotionally and/or sexually attracted to people of more than one gender or regardless of gender.

Transgender/trans
Equivalent inclusive umbrella terms for anyone whose gender identity or gender expression does not fully correspond with the sex they were assigned at birth.

Intersex
Umbrella term used for people who are born with variations of sex characteristics, which do not always fit society's perception of male or female bodies. Intersex is not the same as gender identity (our sense of self) or sexual orientation (who we are attracted to) but is about the physical body we are born with.

Equality Network

Creating change together
LGBTI equality in Scotland

It is important to remember that language around LGBTI issues is constantly changing and evolving. Particularly as many terms are related to people's personal identities, the terms may be used by different people to mean different things.

This is a non-exhaustive list of some LGBTI terms, you can find a more extensive list on our website at www.equality-network.org

Biphobia
A discriminatory or prejudiced action related to someone's actual or perceived bisexual orientation.

Cisgender/cis
A person who identifies with the sex they were assigned at birth. Cisgender is the word for anyone who is not transgender.

Come out
To tell others that you are LGBTI.

Cross-dressing person
A person who occasionally wears clothing and/or makeup and accessories that are not traditionally associated with the sex they were assigned at birth.

Gender binary
The dominant idea in Western society that there are only two genders, that all people are one of these two genders, and that the two are opposite.

Gender expression
External characteristics and behaviours that are socially defined as either masculine or feminine, such as clothing, hairstyle, make-up, mannerisms, speech patterns and social interactions.

Gender identity
Refers to our internal sense of who we are, and how we see ourselves in regards to being a man, a woman, or somewhere in between/beyond these identities.

Gender reassignment
The language used in the Equality Act to refer to any part of a process of transitioning to live in a different gender (regardless of whether any hormonal or surgical changes take place).

Heterosexual person / straight person
A person who is emotionally and/or sexually attracted to people of a different gender only.

Homophobia
A discriminatory or prejudiced action related to someone's actual or perceived sexual orientation.

Non-binary person
A person identifying as either having a gender which is in-between or beyond the two categories 'man' and 'woman', as fluctuating between 'man' and 'woman', or as having no gender, either permanently or some of the time.

Transsexual
Someone who intends to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process of gender reassignment from male to female (trans women) or from female to male (trans men).

Trans man
A person who was assigned female at birth but has a male gender identity and therefore transitions to live fully as a man.

Transphobia
Discriminatory or prejudiced actions or ideas related to someone's actual or perceived gender identity or gender expression.

Trans woman
A person who was assigned male at birth but has a female gender identity and therefore transitions to live fully as a woman.

Equality Network