

## Introduction

Nottingham Women's Centre has been inclusive of trans women since 1<sup>st</sup> June 1998, a decision that was taken in line with our commitment to anti-oppressive and discriminatory practice.

This policy outlines our approach to the inclusion of trans women as service users, volunteers and employees.

## Definitions

For this policy, we use the following definitions:

- Trans / Transgender someone whose gender does not, either partially or fully, align with the gender they were assigned at birth. Non-binary and non-transitioning transgender people are fully included and equal under this definition.
- Cis / Cisgender means not transgender or transsexual.
- Non-binary means someone with a gender/ identity that is not exclusively male or female, masculine or feminine—identities which are thus outside of the gender binary. May also be referred to as genderqueer. May also be agender/genderless.
- Assigned at birth means the gender category a person was given when they were born.
- Transition – the process of developing congruence with your gender identity. This may or may not involve surgery, hormone replacement therapy, and changes to assist being correctly identified through clothes, speech, etc.

## Trans service users

Nottingham Women's Centre is a women-only space. Maintaining a women-only service is important because women face significant inequality in society, face violence and abuse (the vast majority of which is perpetrated by men<sup>1</sup>) and have needs that are distinct from the needs of men. We know that some women will not access a service provided in a mixed-gender setting. As part of our feminist values, Nottingham Women's centre is committed to challenging all forms of oppression.

The Equality Act 2010 protects any trans person who 'intends to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone gender reassignment', which means that trans women who have taken any steps to move towards living as women are covered by the legislation. Nottingham Women's Centre's services are open to all self-identifying women who have, or are taking steps towards living as women, in line with the provisions of the Equality Act.

We will take a person-centred and case-by-case approach to the inclusion of non-binary people within our service. We recognise that some people who have a non-binary gender may be presumed to be women, or live as women, and these individuals share many of the experiences that women do and face similar forms of discrimination. In these cases, it may therefore be entirely appropriate for those non-binary people to access our service, if they feel comfortable to do so (understanding that they are likely to be 'read' as women) and feel that this will benefit them.

In most cases, Nottingham Women's Centre's services will not be open to people who for the most part live as or identify as men.

We recognise that in some cases a service user may begin to transition whilst using our service. Transition is a process and so we recognise that in some cases trans men may wish to continue using our services in the early

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<sup>1</sup> This is recognised by various sources. The Ministry of Justice reports that men are more likely to be perpetrators of crime, particularly violent crime, and make up 95% of the current prison population and 85% of offenders managed in the community.

stages of transition, and again we would seek to work in a person-centred way with the service user concerned to ascertain the point at which they are no longer comfortable in a women-only space.

We recognise that some trans women also identify as non-binary, and if they are living as women they should also be included.

We aim to ensure that all women receive a quality service from us, regardless of whether they are trans or cis, or any other irrelevant factors. We acknowledge that trans women may face additional barriers in accessing our services and that we must take additional steps to address these, including:

- Ensuring that staff and volunteers receive sufficient training and guidance to understand and support the needs of trans service users
- Ensuring that publicity material is inclusive e.g.; using the phrase “open to any self-identifying women” for women-only events
- Ensuring that there is a visible statement in our reception area that affirms our commitment to inclusion and that Nottingham Women’s Centre is a centre for ALL women.

Our staff:

- Will challenge transphobia by other staff members, volunteers and service users.
- Will use correct and respectful language about trans service users’ identity (e.g. they will ask which pronouns and/or names the service user prefers to be called).
- Will not disclose trans service users’ gender history without their permission

## **Trans staff and volunteers**

In line with the Equality Act 2010, Schedule 9, Part 1, Paragraph 1, most roles at Nottingham Women’s Centre require the staff member or volunteer to be a woman (the only exception would be roles that take place entirely off-site). This definition includes all self-identifying women as described above - including some non-binary people, if they were assigned female at birth and are continuing to live mostly in this gender, or identify and live as non-binary trans women.

We do not ask about an employee or volunteer’s trans status during the recruitment process and if a disclosure is made, it is not taken as a relevant criterion for the selection process.

We recognise that disclosing a person’s trans history to colleagues or service users without their consent is highly distressing to that individual and can also be unlawful. We will always seek permission of the trans person before disclosing any information to others.

If a staff member or volunteer notifies their manager that they are considering transitioning, a meeting should be held between that member of staff and their line manager to discuss in confidence how they wish to deal with transition and to agree and follow a process with which they are comfortable. A member of the Trustee Board or other staff representative can be present if required. A crucial element of this meeting is to decide who should be told what, and when and how this should occur.

We will consider the following issues during the initial consultation meeting:

- the expected timescale of the transition process and what is entailed
- what time off will be required e.g. for medical appointments
- what amendments will be required to records and systems
- whether the employee wishes to inform colleagues themselves, or would prefer this to be done by someone else
- whether the employee wishes to be called by a different name and/or pronoun

We will work collaboratively with the employee or volunteer to mutually agree the timescale for their transition, recognising that this may include the option of continuing to work in a woman only role for a period of weeks or months during the early stages of transition, or indefinitely in the case of some non-binary people.

## **Our position in relation to other groups that use Nottingham Women's Centre**

Open access groups that other organisations run at the Centre need to operate within our policy.

Private bookings for events and meetings that we do not advertise retain the right to define the criteria for attendance at their group or service. However, we expect all groups to consider the position of trans women in relation to their group and to ensure that their provision is lawful.

We reserve the right to refuse access to groups who operate exclusionary practices which fall outside of the law.