

## 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. Binary, Non-binary, those who have undergone treatment and those who are not undergoing treatment are fully included and equal under this definition.
- Cis / Cisgender means not transgender.
- 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, agender/genderless, or many other names.
- 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's services are not open to cis men (those who were assigned male at birth and live as a male).

Nottingham Women's Centre is primarily 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. Our definition of woman is defined on a case-by-case basis.

We believe trans women are women and that the service should be open for anybody who feels their identity intersects with the term 'female' in any way. This definition is inclusive of those who were assigned female, trans people who are female and also trans people who are non-binary. We recognise that some trans people, including trans masculine identifying individuals, 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 these individuals to access our service, if they feel comfortable to do so and feel that this will benefit them (understanding that they are likely to be read as women).

We recognise that in some cases a service user may begin to transition whilst using our service. Transition is an individual process and so we recognise that in some cases trans men may wish to continue using our services, 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, if at all.

We aim to ensure that everybody receives a quality service from us, regardless of whether they are trans or cis. We acknowledge that trans people may face additional barriers in accessing our services and that we must take additional steps to address these, including:

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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.

- 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 and is shared with local trans partner organisations for circulation.
- 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 and non-binary people.

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. This definition includes all trans women and some non-binary people.

We do not ask about an employee or volunteer’s trans status during the recruitment process. We recognize 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 their transition within the workplace 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:

- 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.

### **Working with others**

#### **Partnership work**

The Centre works with a wide range of stakeholders. We will promote the positive experience the Centre has of including trans women and non-binary people and make it clear that we support trans inclusion. We may choose not to work with, or accept funds from, a group or individual if their views conflict with our policy.

#### **Tenants and room hire**

Activities and organisations that operate from the centre need to align with our policy. We reserve the right to refuse access to groups or individuals.

#### **Use of consultants**

The Centre will only employ the services of consultants who support our trans inclusion policy.