

# Top Tips for Trans Inclusion in Youth Work Spaces

Youth clubs and services are spaces where transgender and non-binary young people should feel welcome, relaxed, respected and able to be themselves.

This resource offers practical advice to help you make your setting inclusive for trans and non-binary young people. This is not an exhaustive guide, and we hope you find it useful.

Definitions used:

**Gender identity:** a person's internal sense of self in relation to their gender, which may or may not align with the gender assigned to them at birth.

Some people may use words like trans and non-binary to describe their gender identity.

**Transgender:** sometimes shortened to trans. An umbrella term for those whose gender identity or expression differs in some way from the gender assigned to them at birth.

**Non-binary:** someone who does not identify as only male or female. They may feel like a blend of both or feel like neither.

**Cisgender:** sometimes known as cis. A term for someone whose gender identity or expression matches the gender they were assigned at birth.

**Sexual orientation:** This is different from gender identity. It refers to who a person is romantically, physically and / or sexually attracted to. This includes lesbian, gay, bisexual, heterosexual and asexual identities.

We use the term LGBT+ to be inclusive of lots of identities.



# Create a welcoming environment

The **visibility** of trans and non-binary people is important. Some simple and practical ways to do this are:

- ✓ Putting posters and LGBT+ flags on walls throughout the building
- ✓ Displaying leaflets around the building
- ✓ Staff and volunteers wearing rainbow lanyards and badges
- ✓ Including LGBT+ information in your publicity and social media channels

Create an **Equalities statement** and display it around your building and on your website. If it is not possible to have on display, then highlight the statement wherever possible.

## Be inclusive

### Use of pronouns

- ✓ Always respect and use young people's pronouns. Using the correct pronouns for trans and non-binary young people can make them feel safe and respected. Examples of pronouns are she/her, they/them, he/him.
- ✓ Provide opportunities for young people to say their pronouns. A simple way to do this is for a worker to introduce themselves with their pronouns, then ask the young people what pronouns they use.
- ✓ Include the use of names and pronouns into activities.
- ✓ Check with the young person if they want you to use their pronouns all the time or just in certain circumstances. Some young people may 'come out' in some spaces but not others.
- ✓ Use pronouns and different gender identity options on paperwork. For example, male, female, non-binary, prefer not to say or how do you identify?
- ✓ Provide a space on paperwork for young people to state their preferred name. As with nicknames this may be different to the name used in official documents.



## Use gender inclusive language

- ✓ For example, say 'come on everyone' instead of 'come on girls and boys'. Use siblings instead of 'brother' and 'sister', use 'hi folks' instead of 'hey guys'.
- ✓ If you are not sure, ask young people how they would like to be addressed as a group.

**Avoid making assumptions** about young people's **gender identity** by how they look, dress, and behave.

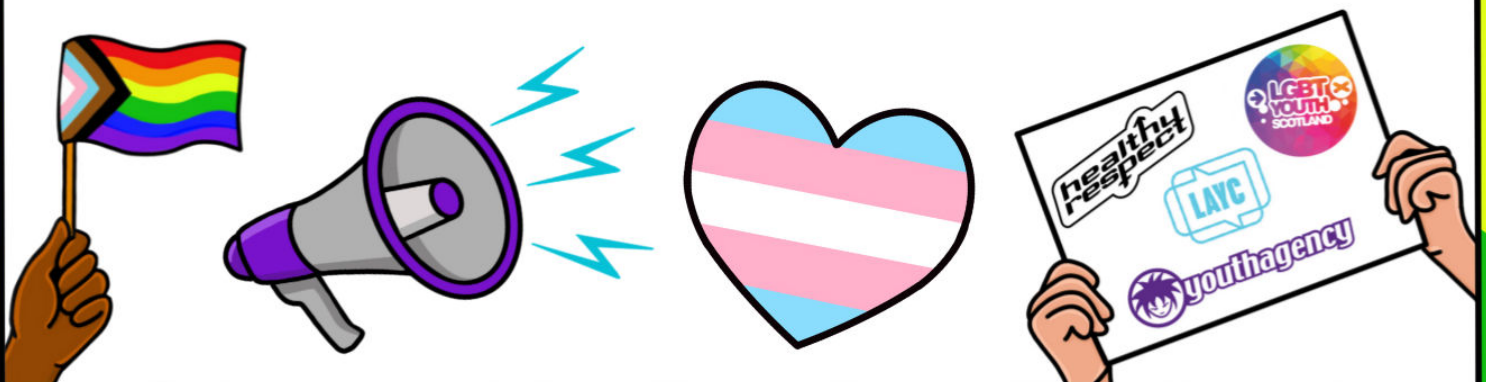
Avoid making assumptions about young people's **sexual orientation**. Young people may be romantically, physically, or sexually attracted to people of any gender, or to nobody at all. This may stay the same throughout their life or may change.

## Create a safe environment

### Be young person centred

If a young person approaches you to discuss their gender identity, they may have taken a long time to consider who to talk to and are looking for an adult to listen and be supportive.

- ✓ Thank them, and actively listen to what they would like to happen.
- ✓ Do not make assumptions.
- ✓ The young person might already have some ideas about how they can be best supported.
- ✓ Never use words like 'confusion' or 'its just a phase'.
- ✓ If you make a mistake (for example use the wrong name or pronoun) apologise and move on.

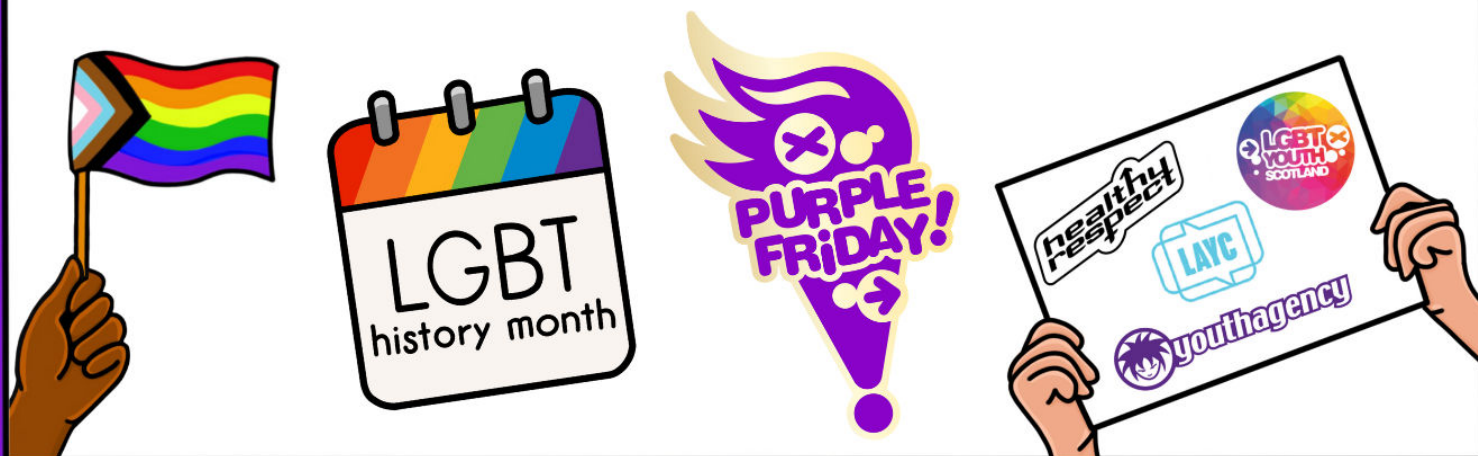


## Challenge homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and gender stereotypes.

- ✓ Challenge bullying behaviours and language including the use of insults or 'banter'. An example would be the term 'it's so gay'.
- ✓ Do not use the names or pronouns that someone no longer uses. This is known as 'dead naming' and 'misgendering'.
- ✓ Create opportunities for young people to feedback or provide suggestions about your service.
- ✓ Create a safe space or group agreement and revisit this regularly.

## Youth work programmes and activities

- ✓ Include LGBT+ identities in all your programmes as well as having a specific focus on LGBT+ topics.
- ✓ Make sure your programmes challenge gender stereotypes. For example, anyone might want to play football, and anyone might want to do nails and beauty.
- ✓ If you are delivering single gender groups allow trans and non-binary young people to choose which group they are most comfortable with.
- ✓ Celebrate key LGBT+ dates. For example, LGBT+ History Month, Purple Friday, and Trans awareness week.



# Recognise Intersectionality

Intersectionality recognises that people have multiple identities that overlap. This means they can experience disadvantage and discrimination in multiple ways, which can lead to poorer experiences and outcomes for young people. Whilst not an exhaustive list this can be due to a range of characteristics some of which are included in the Equalities Act (2010)

- ✓ Sexual orientation
- ✓ Gender reassignment
- ✓ Sex
- ✓ Age
- ✓ Disability
- ✓ Pregnancy and maternity
- ✓ Religion or belief
- ✓ Race
- ✓ Marriage and civil partnership

In addition some young people may experience disadvantage and discrimination due to:

- ✓ Economic status
- ✓ Care experience
- ✓ Being a young carer
- ✓ Having English as an additional language
- ✓ Physical appearance
- ✓ Mental health

**If you need further support on making your youth club or service more LGBT+ inclusive contact LGBT Youth Scotland**

[www.lgbtyouth.org.uk](http://www.lgbtyouth.org.uk)

[info@lgbtyouth.org.uk](mailto:info@lgbtyouth.org.uk)

**For further information and resources contact:**

[www.lgbtyouth.org.uk](http://www.lgbtyouth.org.uk)

[www.layc.org.uk](http://www.layc.org.uk)

[www.healthyrespect.co.uk](http://www.healthyrespect.co.uk)

