

Pronouns Guidance

Pronouns have become more commonly discussed in recent years with the rise in visibility of various identities, and the growing awareness of the fact that people may not identify with the gender assigned at birth, or with any gender at all.

What Are Pronouns?

Pronouns are the words we use in place of a noun. For example instead of 'man', we use he/him/his, for 'woman', she/her/hers. Gender neutral or gender inclusive pronouns (e.g. they/them/theirs/ze) refer to pronouns that do not associate the individual we are talking about with a specific gender. You can find out and read more about [pronouns](#) to support your understanding.

Sex does not predetermine a person's gender and some people's gender doesn't sit comfortably with the sex they were assigned at birth. A person's gender identity is their internal sense of their own gender and what feels right for them. This might be male, female, non-binary (outside of male or female), genderless, or some other gender identity.

The importance of using pronouns correctly

Using someone's correct personal pronouns is a way to respect their identity and helps create an inclusive environment. Often, people make assumptions about the gender of another person based on the person's appearance or name. These assumptions aren't always correct, and **can send a potentially harmful message** - that people have to look a certain way to demonstrate the gender that they are or are not.

How to Use and Share Pronouns

- Use the pronouns 'they/them' until you know someone's pronouns, e.g. "There is someone to see you", I'll ask them to take a seat".
- Consider including pronouns in your email signature, under your name and job title, e.g. "Pronouns: She/Her".
- Consider saying your pronouns when you introduce yourself at the start of a meeting. Not only will this encourage your colleagues to do the same, but it will help everyone get used to talking about pronouns.
- If you're not sure, politely ask people what their pronouns are.

If you make a mistake

We all make mistakes. If you get someone's pronouns wrong, apologise and correct yourself and try your best to get it right in the future. You can also show solidarity with someone who uses pronouns that others may mistake by politely correcting someone who has used the wrong pronoun.