

# A Guide to Inclusive Language



East Anglia's  
Children's Hospices

**This guide has been produced for internal circulation within EACH for employees, volunteers and trustees.**

When it comes to promoting equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI), language plays a crucial role. The words we use have the power to either include individuals and communities or alienate and exclude them. They can reflect and respect the diversity of people's identities, experiences and backgrounds or serve to perpetuate negative stereotypes.

This guide is designed to help provide some insight into inclusive language, but due to the ever-evolving nature of language, and the fact that it means different things to different people, it's impossible to talk in any definitive terms or offer any set rules. However, we hope that this guide will serve as a helpful starting point and encourage readers to think about language and terminology.

## Discriminatory language

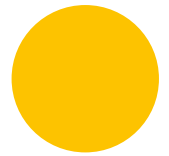
Discriminatory language includes words and phrases that:

- Reinforce stereotypes;
- Reinforce derogatory labels;
- Exclude certain groups of people through assumptions, e.g. assuming that the male or white population is the norm;
- Patronise or trivialise certain people or groups, or their experiences; and
- Cause discomfort or offence.

Discriminatory language is covered by the Equality Act 2010, specifically the nine 'protected characteristics':

1. Age
2. Sex
3. Gender reassignment
4. Sexual orientation
5. Marriage and civil partnership
6. Pregnancy and maternity
7. Race (including ethnic or national origins, colour and nationality)
8. Religion or belief
9. Disability





**TRY TO AVOID**

**USE INSTEAD**

| <b>AGE</b>   |  |
|--|--|
| Old People / Elderly   | Older person   |
| Middle-aged workers  | Experienced workforce  |
| Youngster / Youths   | Teenager / Younger people  |
| <b>SEX</b>   |  |
| Ladies and Gentleman / Guys - try to avoid gender based words and phrases  | Everyone / Colleagues  |
| Girlfriend / Boyfriend / Husband / Wife  | Partner / Spouse   |
| Chairman   | Chair  |
| Manpower   | Resources  |
| Mankind  | Humankind  |
| <b>GENDER REASSIGNMENT</b>   |  |
| Transsexual (now out of date)  | Trans is a common acceptable term. Also use Transgender person or Trans Man or Trans Woman |
| Sex change   | Gender affirming surgery   |
| Changed genders  | Transitioned   |
| <b>SEXUAL ORIENTATION</b>  |  |
| Homosexual   | Gay person   |
| Gays / Lesbians / Bisexuals  | Gay people / Lesbian people / Bisexual people  |
| Sexual preference  | Sexual orientation   |
| Heterosexuals  | Heterosexual people  |
| <p><b>Queer</b><br/>                     Queer has a history of being a slur but also a term of pride and identity for many within this community. While some people use it as an inclusive umbrella term, others find it offensive. It's best to use queer only when it's clear that's how the person self-identifies</p> |  |



**CONTINUED  
OVERLEAF...**

## TRY TO AVOID

## USE INSTEAD

| RACE   |   |
|--|---|
| BAME<br>Should be avoided as it's too broad and lumps together too many different groups   | Person of colour is considered more respectful and empowering   |
| Non White<br>No longer used as it implies White majority and that everyone else is of less status  | Use Asian People, Black people etc  |
| 'Blacks' or 'Browns'<br>Is racially loaded   | Black/Brown is OK to use  |
| Coloured people  | The Black community etc / people of colour  |
| Half-caste<br>An outdated term that is now considered racist and unacceptable to use   |   |
| <b>Mixed race/ Mixed heritage/Dual heritage</b><br>Generally considered ok to use but could use 'People of X Y heritage' eg People of White and Black Caribbean heritage |   |
| RELIGION OR BELIEF   |   |
| Christian name   | First name / forename   |
| Faith  | Religion / belief   |
| DISABILITY   |   |
| Disabled / Special needs   | Person with disability / People living with disability or people living with special needs                  |
| Suffering from X   | Has X condition   |
| Mentally handicapped, handicapped<br>Not used as it is considered outdated, negative and dehumanising  | Learning disability   |
| The blind  | People with blindness, blind, partially sighted people  |
| Hearing impaired   | Deaf, hard of hearing   |
| Suffers with autism  | Is autistic   |
| Normal people  | Neurotypical people (anyone who does not have a neurological condition – such as autism, ADHD and dyslexia) |
| Dwarf, midget  | Someone with restricted growth or short stature   |

It's worth noting that everyone has individual preferences.

**If you're not sure about someone's preferred language and terminology, just ask!**

And finally, what if I get it wrong? If you are making the effort to use respectful language and be inclusive, then it's okay to make mistakes along your journey.

If this happens, apologise, learn from it, and move on.

