



10 Tips for a Trans-Positive Workplace



1. Cultural Competence takes work

Trans people are different and have different needs, which require learning. Go to credible trans-led sources: not the media, not just the trans person you happen to know, and not just generic LGBT organisations.

2. Language matters

Treat a trans person as if they've just revealed their secret identity, and that's who they always were. Even when you talk about them in the past, they were that person, you just didn't know. Stick to the right names, pronouns and gendered words, and avoid inaccurate terms like "sex change".

3. Does everything really need to be gendered?

Review all the ways you record gender and all the gendered practices of your organisation (e.g. clothing; forms with M/F, Mr/Mrs; greeting customers with sir/madam; gendering callers by sound of voice on the phone). But it's legal and important to monitor gender and gender identity for equality purposes.

4. Misgendering Matters

Take misgendering of all kinds seriously and realise the pain it causes. If you do it accidentally, apologise and move on. If it happens maliciously, treat it as the transphobia it is.

5. Don't assume it's going to be a problem

Don't anticipate problems, and set an accepting, congratulatory tone (rather than worried/shamed) to model a positive response. If a customer or colleague does have a problem, don't centre their needs and prejudices.

6: Work Can be a sanctuary

Commit to being supportive, kind and understanding. Regular meet-ups to check in and an open door policy work wonders. Appreciate the mental health impact of being trans. Understand the employee may be openly trans at work but not at home, or vice versa.

7: We are not all about surgery

Treat all medical leave as the life-saving treatment it is. Do not assume what treatment, if any, a trans person will have, and don't wait for treatment to happen to consider them fully as who they say they are. Also - private parts are private, don't ask about them.

8: There are trans people here already, you just don't know it

So make the environment trans-positive through good policy, and know your legal duties under the Equality Act 2010. Mention trans people in E&D policies. Have a protocol for staff transitioning (e.g. support; legal duties; changing name consistently throughout documents and IT systems; communicating the change to staff). Also have a best practice policy for trans customers/clients.

9: Understand the challenges trans people face in the workplace

Surveys show trans people face discrimination at every stage of employment. Be aware of the kinds of discrimination, including subtle micro-aggressions trans employees might face that can easily be dismissed or overlooked.

10. Celebrate Diversity

Stonewall says "We know that people perform better when they can be themselves". What better way to signal that a workplace allows people to be themselves than one that is trans-positive? Be celebratory of difference, let everyone know it as an asset that will make your organisation stronger.