



STAFFORDSHIRE
POLICE

FOI ref no: 15712

26 June 2023

Freedom of Information request first notified to us by email on 8th June 2023.

Thank you for your recent request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, as detailed below:
In your FOI 15016 document, you make a reference to your "Inclusive Language" guidance document. I am doing research on inclusive language in the public sector and would be very interested to see the documentation.

Please treat this as a request under the Freedom of Information Act and provide a copy of the document, and advise date issued if not included in the guidance document.

Staffordshire Police's response to your enquiry is as follows:

Staffordshire Police does hold the requested information.

In your FOI 15016 document, you make a reference to your "Inclusive Language" guidance document. I am doing research on inclusive language in the public sector and would be very interested to see the documentation.

Please treat this as a request under the Freedom of Information Act and provide a copy of the document, and advise date issued if not included in the guidance document.

Please see the attached document below 'FOI 15712 Staffordshire Police Inclusive Language Guidance'.

If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review. Internal review requests should be submitted within two months of the date of receipt of this email and should be addressed to:

foi@staffordshire.police.uk

Or by Post to:

Central Disclosure Unit
Staffordshire Police HQ
PO Box 3167
Stafford
ST16 9JZ



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Please remember to quote the reference number in any future communications.

Freedom of Information
Central Disclosure Unit

Produced by Staffordshire Police
for FOI 15712



Staffordshire Police Inclusive Language Guidance

This document is about writing and/or talking about, and describing people in a way that is inclusive and respectful.

Language is a powerful tool for creating a welcoming and inclusive environment, however we all know how it feels when words make us feel left out or devalued.

Staffordshire Police understand the importance of ensuring we get it right in order to be an inclusive organisation. We have produced this guide to avoid inadvertently making people feel excluded or offended.

IT IS A GUIDE. It is by no means exhaustive or definitive. Language is always changing, and in some instances there will not be a single 'right' way to use it.

In recognising that language creates a common understanding where prejudices can be reinforced, we must all make an effort to increase our understanding of respectful and inclusive words and phrases. Discrimination through language, whether intended or not, causes offence, patronises and may also be unlawful.

We may not always get it right but be clear in your intentions to try and be as inclusive as possible. If you are making the effort to use respectful language and be inclusive then it's OK to make mistakes along your journey.

Sometimes we may get things wrong. If this happens, apologise, learn from your mistake and move on without getting defensive. However, you should be aware that repeated mistakes indicate a lack of respect and can be very distressing.





Age

When we are referring to ages and different stages of life, we need to be clear, accurate and specific.

Examples:

- Baby: during pregnancy, at birth and up to 1 year.
- Toddler: 1 to 3 years
- Child: 4 to 12 years
- Teenager: 13 to 19 years
- Young people: 16 to 24 years
- Adult: generally from age 18 but this may vary. Be specific, for example: "adults aged 19 to 64"

Older people

Try to specify ages: over-65s, over-75s, over-80s.

In some contexts, we use 'older person' or 'older people', for example, where a health condition might affect people in their 60s or in their 90s.

Example:

Anyone can have a fall, but older people are more vulnerable and likely to fall, especially if they have a long-term health condition.

Try not to use the words:

- Elderly
- Middle aged
- OAP
- Old age pensioner
- Pensioner
- Senior



Disabilities and conditions

Not all disabilities are visible and it is important that people shouldn't feel defined by their disability or conditions. Therefore it is important to use positive language and not label people when talking about disabilities and conditions.

Try to say:

- People living with a disability, or disabled person
- People with diabetes
- Wheelchair user
- People with visual impairments, blind people, partially sighted people
- People with hearing impairments, deaf people

Try not to say:

- Afflicted by
- Suffering from
- Victim of
- Confined to a wheelchair
- Handicapped
- Diabetic person
- Sick or diseased person
- The deaf
- The blind

Inclusive language that applies to dDeaf:

dDeaf – term used to describe people with any of the following hearing loss: Deaf, deaf, DeafBlind, deafened, hard of hearing, speech impaired.

(The reason behind the dD is due to the Deaf community reflecting members of society that have been brought up in the Deaf community, predominantly using British Sign Language as their first language, they have their own cultural issues; deaf is often people who have lost their hearing but aren't connected to the wider Deaf community)

DO NOT USE:

The term – 'dumb'. This is offensive and outdated.

There could be a few reasons why people can't / don't speak – non verbal development delay, profoundly deaf with no speech, speech impairment through illness. The word 'dumb' is often a term used as a derogatory term regarding someone's intelligence.

DeafBlind covers anyone with any range of hearing / sight loss. The person may be profoundly deaf with impaired sight, or vice versa. This can affect any age but is rising due to an ageing population.



Neurodiversity

Neurodiversity relates to the fact that no two brains are the same.

Autism, dyslexia, dyspraxia and ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) are all included in the range of neurodivergence seen in around 10% of the UK population.

Understanding and appreciating these normal differences emphasises the importance of not using negative language in association with neurodiversity.

Try to use:

- Neurodiverse person
- Person with autism
- Autistic
- Autism spectrum
- Person with dyslexia
- Dyslexic

Try not to use:

- Autism Spectrum Disorder (Note: referring to the Autism Spectrum is fine, but 'Disorder' is offensive to some autistic people)
- High-functioning, low-functioning (unless an autistic person is using it about themselves)

Example:

The victim has a learning difficulty. We think they may be autistic or have Asperger's.



Mental health

When we refer to mental health this could be anything from our emotional, psychological, and social well-being.

Try to say:

- Mental health condition
- Mental health problems
- A person with depression
- People with anxiety

Try not to say:

- Suffers with anxiety
- Mental disorder
- Mentally ill/mental illness
- Struggles with depression

Example:

The person has anxiety and depression.

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Ethnicity, religion and nationality

When referring to people's ethnicity or religion, we need to ensure this is done if and when it's relevant to the context of communications.

Try to use:

- 'ethnicity', not 'race' and 'other ethnic groups' is much better received than 'ethnic minorities'
- Dual heritage*
- Mixed heritage*
- South East Asian
- Asian

*Be specific where you can "White and Black / Asian and White etc."

Try not to use:

- BAME
- BME
- Half caste
- Mixed race
- Coloured
- Oriental

Use a capital letter when you're writing about ethnicity or when you're asking members of the community or colleagues for their ethnic group.

Examples:

"Black, Asian, African, Black British or Caribbean" or "people from a White British background"
Use lower-case when you're writing about skin colour.

You're more likely to be stop and searched, in the UK, if you are a Black male of African or Caribbean origin.

Further Information

Try to follow the guidance on writing about ethnicity from the Race Disparity Unit on GOV.UK. Be as specific as you can.

<https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/style-guide/writing-about-ethnicity>

Skin colour

We refer to skin colour in our content when we need to describe individuals and/or when their skin tone may look different by way of a reaction.

Try to use:

- brown and black skin

Try not to use:

- 'dark skin' or 'darker skin'

Example:

The lady has brown skin and self-defines as dual heritage.



Faith

We only refer to people's religion or faith if it's relevant to the information we are communicating. In those cases we use the following:

Names of religions and religious groups take an upper case.

Groups of individuals from the same faith should be referred to as a community, such as members of the Muslim community or Jewish people.

We do not assume a person's religious belief by their name or country of origin.

Try to use:

- First name, given name
- Religion, Faith, Belief, Christian people, Hindu people, Jewish people,
- Muslim people etc.

Try not to use:

- Christian name
- Christians, Hindus, Jews, Muslims etc.

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Sex, gender and sexuality

The language around sex, gender and sexuality changes regularly and it's an area that people hold strong and differing opinions about. We try to make sure that we are in touch with the communities we are writing for and we update this guidance regularly.

Many people think that the terms sex and gender are the same but they mean something different. It is important to be clear about the differences and when to use the terms correctly.

Sex

Sex is biological (male or female). It's based not only on the genes we inherit, but also on how our external and internal sex and reproductive organs work and respond to hormones. Sex is the label that's recorded when a baby's birth is registered.

Sex assigned or registered at birth

We use the phrase 'sex assigned at birth' when we're talking about trans and gender dysphoria, as this is the language our audience uses. In other cases, we use 'the sex someone was registered with at birth' because research shows that most people understand this better as it refers to an actual event.

Intersex

A term used to describe a person who may have the biological attributes of both sexes or whose biological attributes do not fit with societal assumptions about what constitutes male or female. Intersex people may identify as male, female or non-binary.

We use 'intersex' in some content about people with differences in sex development (DSD) because some people prefer it to DSD.

DSD involves genes, hormones and reproductive organs, including genitals. A person's physical sex development, internally, externally or both can be different to most other people's.

Most people with DSD have a clear sex that is registered at birth. Some adults with DSD prefer the term 'intersex' to DSD but they may want to keep their legal sex as male or female. Other people see 'intersex' as distinct from male and female.



Sex, gender and sexuality

Gender

Gender is more complex. It refers to our internal sense of who we are and how we see and describe ourselves.

Someone may see themselves as a man, a woman or neither (non-binary). Being non-binary can mean having no gender, a different gender, or being in between genders. Gender can be fixed or fluid. Some people identify with a gender opposite to the sex they were registered with.

We use the word 'gender' when we're:

- Discussing the social idea or identity as opposed to the biological sex, for example, if we're writing about gender dysphoria or transgender communities
- Writing about a survey or report based on gender, such as gender diversity
- Writing about the results of a national census, where there is a question about gender identity as well as sex to identify the trans (including non-binary) population

Gender neutral language

We make content gender neutral as far as possible. In general, we word our content to avoid masculine and feminine pronouns ('he' or 'she'). Instead we use 'you' where appropriate and sometimes 'they' when we need a gender-neutral pronoun (unless this is confusing).

Try to use:

- Chair, chairperson
- Police officer
- Cleaner
- Spokesperson
- Official, diplomat, political figure, leader

Try not to use:

- Chairman
- Policeman
- Cleaning lady
- Spokesman
- Statesman

Avoid gender-biased expressions or expressions that reinforce gender stereotypes:

- 'Man up'
- 'That's a woman's job'
- 'Cry like a girl'
- 'Grow a pair'



Sex, gender and sexuality

'Woman' or 'female'?

Female and woman mean different things but are often used interchangeably.

The term 'woman' refers specifically to human beings, while 'female' could refer to the sex of any species that is capable of producing children.

Referring to women as females is perceived by many as reducing a woman to her reproductive parts and abilities.

Not all women are biologically female, and the conflation of 'female' to 'woman' erases gender-nonconforming people and members of the trans community.

The word female in its primary usage is an adjective. When clearly talking about human beings, use of female as an adjective is correct. However it should always be relevant to the context e.g. female representation, female participation, female personnel.

Pronouns

Words we use to refer to people's gender in conversation - for example, 'he' or 'she'. Some people may prefer others to refer to them in gender neutral language and use pronouns such as they/their and ze/zir.

- He/him/his
- She/her/hers
- They/them/their and other gender-neutral pronouns

Example:

"May I ask how you prefer me to address you?" or "Please remind me how you would like to be addressed"

Transgender

We use the term 'transgender' or 'trans' as an umbrella term to describe people whose current gender identity or way of expressing their gender differs from the sex they were registered with at birth. Some, but not all, trans people want to transition (change) socially or medically or both.

We use 'trans woman' for someone who was registered male at birth and now identifies as a woman and 'trans man' for someone who was registered female at birth and now identifies as a man.

Otherwise, we leave out the word 'trans' and just refer to men and women, if relevant.



Sex, gender and sexuality

Sexuality

We use the below language about sexual orientation (please also see Staffordshire Police LGBT+ Glossary)

- Lesbian
- Gay
- Bisexual
- Queer

Queer is a term used by those wanting to reject specific labels of romantic orientation, sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

It can also be a way of rejecting the perceived norms of the LGBT community (racism, sizeism, ableism etc.). Although some LGBT people view the word as a slur, it was reclaimed in the late 80s by the queer community who have embraced it.

'Queer' can be used as an adjective to describe individuals who don't identify as straight, but historically it has also had negative connotations so, if used, should be used with care.

Try to use:

- Lesbian people, gay people, bisexual people
- Heterosexual people, straight people
- Sexual orientation
- Partner, spouse
- Only use 'LGBTQ+' when referring to both sexual orientation and gender identity-based communities
- Straight CIS gendered, ally

Try not to use:

- Lesbians, gays, bisexual
- Heterosexuals
- Sexual preference
- Girlfriend, boyfriend, wife husband
- Don't use 'LGBTQ+' if you are only talking about gender or gender identity
- Don't use 'straight' as the opposite of LGBTQ+' (transgender people can be any sexual orientation, including 'straight')



Socio-economic



Socio-economic is a term relating to or concerned with the interaction of social and economic factors, such as income, education, employment, community safety.

This is a term used to describe an area of community which can influence how people that live there are view and how they view themselves.

Try to use:

- Under-resourced
- Low-opportunity
- Communities with high-poverty rates
- People experiencing homelessness
- Communities with access to fewer opportunities

Try not to use:

- Disadvantaged
- Hard-to-reach
- (The) homeless
- Recipients

Please let us know how this has worked for you and, in particular, if you have research findings to share. This will help us improve it for everyone.

If you have any questions, you can contact us by email:
positive.action@staffordshire.police.uk