



PRONOUNS FACTSHEET

International Pronouns Day is on October 18th each year and seeks to make respecting, sharing and educating about pronouns an everyday occurrence. Respecting an individual's pronouns that they determine for themselves is a simple and fundamental step to making PHW an inclusive workplace for all.

To help support our staff, we have developed the below links to help acknowledge and share pronouns and easy process.



1. What are pronouns and why do they matter?

A gender pronoun is the pronoun that a person uses for themselves. They are words an individual expects others to use when talking about or to them.

Like many other aspects of our lives, our pronouns are for us to decide. They are an expression of who we are and how we want to be presented to the world. It is up to you to decide what pronouns you feel comfortable with; no one can take that right from you.

The most commonly used pronouns are 'he, him, his' and 'she, her, hers'. People who are trans, non-binary and gender nonconforming may choose to use pronouns that don't confirm to binary female/male gender categorisations such as 'they, them, their' or 'ze, zim, zirs' among others.

Being referred to by the wrong pronouns is a real problem for many people. For most of us, our singular and visible gender identity and/or expression is never questioned, and we are rarely, if ever, misgendered. But not everybody has that privilege. Those that are often referred to with the wrong pronouns feel disrespected and invalidated and alienated.

2. How do I ask someone their pronouns?

At the start of meetings, you can go around and introduce each other by sharing your name, your role and if you're comfortable, your pronouns. Or, if this is a colleague you have worked with before, but you are unsure of their pronouns, just politely ask 'Can you remind me of your pronouns, please?'

If you get someone's pronouns wrong, quickly apologise and restate the correct pronouns, and move on. Mistakes happen and everyone slips up from time to time. If you have never met someone/if you don't know someone trans, non-binary, or gender nonconforming, it's understandable that you may not be familiar with addressing someone by a different pronoun.

The best thing to do in this situation is to apologise and correct yourself.

e.g., 'Sorry, I meant (insert pronoun).'

If you realise after the fact, apologise in private and move on, don't dwell on the mistake or make a fuss.

To constantly and purposely misgendered someone is considered harassment, an act that goes against our [Respect and Resolution Policy](#) for which Public Health Wales has zero tolerance.





3. Taking inclusion one step at a time

At Public Health Wales, we have introduced pronouns into the conversation by adding them to our email signatures template. Think about adding yours if you haven't done so already – [template here](#).

You can also add your pronouns to your Microsoft 365 and Teams – [details here](#).

Adding pronouns to your email signature is completely optional, not a requirement but it is a great first step to being truly inclusive. It brings awareness to something that many people might not have thought about before and serves as a consistent reminder that you're an ally and that inclusion is important to you.

4. Gender-neutral language

The language we use can have a great effect on those around us. Inclusive language is essential to any high-functioning workplace and to ensure that everyone always feels welcome. You should always use your colleague's chosen name, title and pronouns (e.g., Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms, Mx or none of these). You should also never assume a person's sexuality or gender. Please be mindful of the language you use in case you inadvertently say something that could be hurtful or offensive; if you need further help or advice with this please get in touch with the Diversity and Inclusion team and our staff networks.

This means that we should be using gender-neutral language when addressing or describing others – this eliminates biased, binary, heteronormative and/or sexist tendencies in language.

Some examples you may wish to adopt are:

- Men and women – people
- Ladies and gentlemen – esteemed guests
- Boys and girls / sons and daughters – children
- Brothers and sisters – siblings
- His or hers – theirs
- He or she – they
- Him or her – them
- Dear Sir/Madam – Dear [name], or simply replace with "Good morning/afternoon" etc

Stonewall Glossary of terms can be found [here](#)

Please watch our Trans Lived Experience videos on Skills Boosters [here](#).

