



Diversity Glossary

This glossary of terms has been compiled to help members better understand the language, terminology and concepts associated with diversity action.

Affinity network

A group for people with similar diversity interests or characteristics, for example women's networks or LGBT groups. These provide an informal opportunity to discuss issues and build networks, as well as creating a more inclusive environment.

Agile working

Agile working is about bringing people, processes, connectivity and technology, time and place together to find the most appropriate and effective way of working to carry out a particular task. It is working within guidelines (of the task) but without boundaries (of how you achieve it).

BAME

This acronym is used to describe Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups.

Disability

Disabilities are described in the Equality Act 2010 as having a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Disclosure

The action of making new or private information known.

Diversity

Diversity is about recognising, valuing and taking account of people's different backgrounds, knowledge, skills, needs and experiences, and encouraging and using those differences to create a cohesive community and effective workforce.

EHRC

This acronym is used to describe the Equality & Human Rights Commission.

Equality

Equality means treating everyone with fairness and respect and recognising the needs of individuals. It is about addressing existing disadvantage affecting how different people participate in society.

Gender

Gender is the socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that society considers appropriate for men and women. It is separate from 'sex', which is the biological classification of male or female based on physiological and biological features. A person may not necessarily identify themselves as the gender into which they were born.

Implicit Bias

Similar to unconscious bias (see below), but questions the level to which the biases are unconscious especially as people are being made increasingly aware of them. The knowledge that biases are not always explicit confers responsibility towards addressing them.



Inclusion

Inclusion is a sense of belonging: feeling respected, valued for who you are; feeling a level of supportive energy and commitment from others so that you can do your best work.

Intersex

The term "intersex" refers to atypical internal and/or external anatomical sexual characteristics, where features usually regarded as male or female may be mixed to some degree. This is a naturally occurring variation in humans and not a medical condition, and is distinct from transsexuality.

LGBT

This acronym is used to describe lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people. Another common acronym used is LGBTQIA (encompassing queer, intersex and asexual identities).

Positive/ affirmative action

Refers to a range of lawful actions that seek to overcome or minimise disadvantages (e.g. in employment opportunities) that people who share a protected characteristic have experienced, or to meet their different needs.

Positive discrimination

Treating someone with a protected characteristic more favourably to counteract the effects of past discrimination. It is generally not lawful although the duty to make reasonable adjustments is an exception where treating a disabled person more favourably may be required by law.

Queer

Anyone who chooses to identify as such. This can include, but is not limited to, gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, intersex and asexual people. Not all the people in the above subcategories I.D. as queer, and many people NOT in the above groups DO. This term has different meanings to different people. Some still find it offensive, while others reclaim it to encompass the broader sense of history of the gay rights movement. Can also be used as an umbrella term like LGBT, as in "the queer community." Some transgender people express concern that "queer" only applies to sexual orientation.

Transgender

Umbrella term for a person who believes their biological sex does not match their assigned gender.

Transsexual

Refers to a person who has the protected characteristic of gender reassignment. Transsexual is an adjective used to describe people who have such a powerful sense of discomfort with the gender of their body and subsequent social role – a condition called gender dysphoria – that they undertake a personal, social, and sometimes medical, transition to live in the gender identity of their personal conviction. The law does not require a person to undergo a medical procedure to be recognised as a transsexual.

SEB

This acronym is used to describe Socioeconomic Background.

SES

This acronym is used to describe Socioeconomic Status.

Sex

The biological classification of male or female based on physiological and biological features. A person's sex may differ from their gender identity.



Unconscious bias

Unconscious biases are unintentional people preferences. People tend to form positive categories and associations for others like them (physically but also socially) which leads to more negative categories for those who are not alike (the so called 'love prejudice'). When bias control processes are unable to mitigate this rapid and instinctive categorisation and the associations are very strong, they may then impact our behaviour positively or negatively, we do this in quite subtle ways which bypass our self-awareness. Unconscious bias has been shown to influence recruitment and selection decisions. See also 'implicit bias'.

If you would like any terms added to the glossary, please [email Nicola Hannam](#).

Definitions sourced from:

[The Agile Organisation](#)

[ACAS](#)

[Equality Challenge Unit](#)

[EHRC](#)

[London Borough of Havering](#)

[Miller & Katz \(2002\)](#)

[UC Davis](#)

[Council of Europe](#)

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