

# Social Transition

*Tips written by and for trans, non-binary and intersex people*



the  
clare  
project

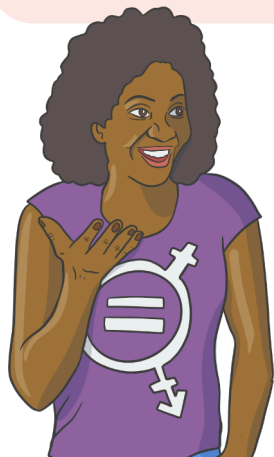
Supporting Trans Communities,  
Campaigning for Inclusion.

## What transition is

**Social transition is a process some transgender, non-binary and intersex (TNBI) people go through to change our gender presentation.**

For some people, the aim of transition is to assume the typical presentation of people who share our gender identity. So, a trans-masculine person might want to change their name and appearance to more like those of a 'typical man', whatever that means to them.

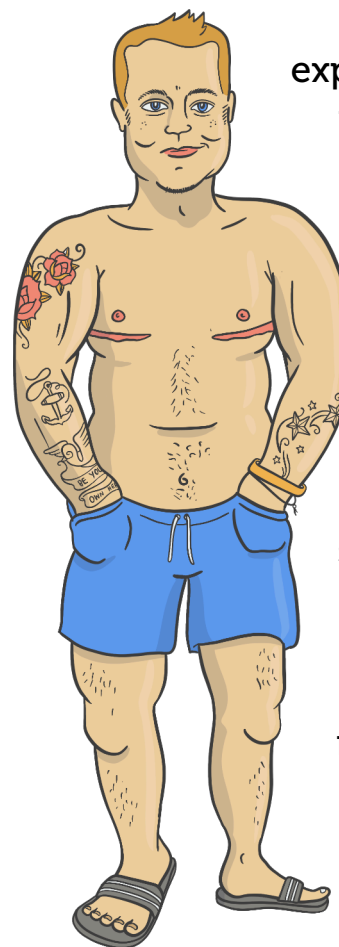
For other people, the aim of transition might be to not present as either a 'typical man or woman'. They might choose gender-neutral or completely unique names, or wear both 'men's clothes' and 'women's clothes'. Many refuse to accept typical ideas about gender and gender roles, full stop.



*This booklet is written by and for TNBI people who are interested in or going through a social transition. We have already produced a booklet on medical transition, which is available on our website.*

## What transition is not

The pressure to 'start' or 'finish' a transition, or to 'pass' as a certain gender, can be stressful. You also might not have the money or resources to do everything you want to straight away. Here are some words of advice from our community members:



"If you're trans, there are certain expectations of what you're supposed to do. But anything can be done by people of any gender."

"There is no fixed beginning or end. Set your own goals. These can change over time, it is different for everyone."

"If you're unsure or out of ideas, stereotypes may be a good starting point for exploration. But there might be more, that is unique and personal to you. Do what is best for you and don't be pressured into anything that may work for other TNBI people. There are no rules."

## Names

One part of many (but not all) people's social transition is changing their name. You may choose:

- An 'opposite gender' name e.g. Karim to Mariam
- A gender-neutral name e.g. Sam, Tokyo
- Any other word, old or invented e.g. River, Fikas

If you do decide to change name, you can try on any name you like, and change as often as you like. You can use one name with one group of people, and use another with a different group of people.

*Being non-binary doesn't mean you need a gender-neutral name.*

*I've just changed my name legally. You need to do something called a deed poll. You can do this with a lawyer, or do it yourself by following guidance at [www.gov.uk/change-name-deed-poll](https://www.gov.uk/change-name-deed-poll). Take a look at our example!*

*If you are not a British citizen, the process for legally changing your name might be different. Check with the country with which you have citizenship.*

## Example

### Deed Poll of Mariam (Previously Karim) Hussein

Address: Flat 1, 1 Deed Poll Road, Brighton, DE1 1ED.  
DOB: 01.01.1970

I, **Karim Hussein**, of Flat 1, 1 Deed Poll Road, Brighton, have given up my name **Karim Hussein** and have adopted for all purposes the name **Mariam Hussein**.

Signed as a deed on 01.01.2021 as Mariam Hussein and Karim Hussein in the presence of:

Witness 1: Mr. Donald Poll, of 10 Deed Poll Road, Brighton, DE1 1ED, United Kingdom.

Witness 2: Dr. Clare Project, of Dorset Gardens Methodist Church, Brighton, BN2 1RL, United Kingdom.



Karim Hussein



Mariam Hussein



Mr Donald Poll



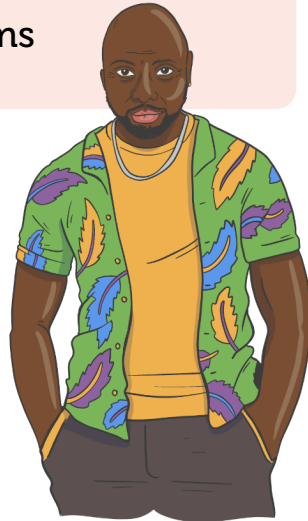
Dr Clare Project

## Pronouns and titles

As well as changing our names, people may also want to change their pronouns (how people refer to them). Example pronouns include:

- he/him/his
- she/her/hers
- they/them/theirs
- xe/xem/xyr
- ze/hir/hirs
- ey/em/eir
- it/it/its
- e/em/ems

*Being male or masculine doesn't mean you have to have to use he/him. Being female or feminine doesn't mean you have to use she/her. Being non-binary doesn't mean you have to use they/them.*



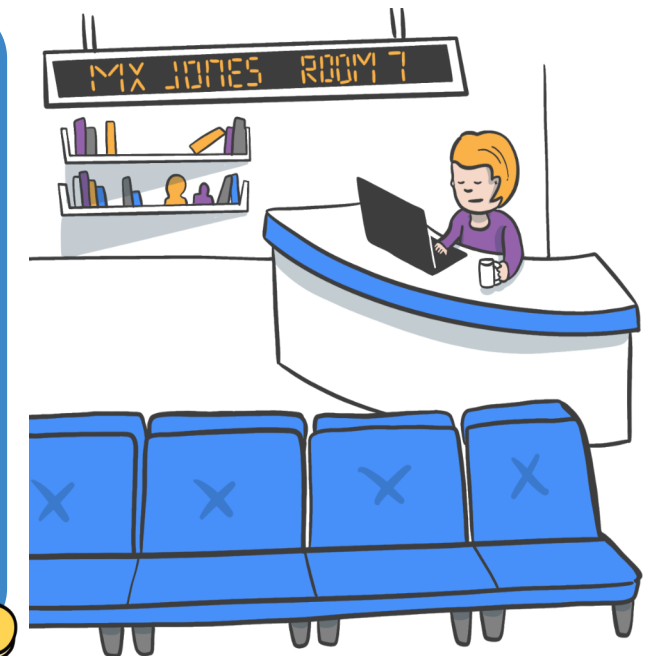
Similarly, we might wish to change our titles. We might also do this for professional or feminist reasons. Titles and pronouns are self-defined, you do not legally change them. Examples include:

- |                  |                            |                          |
|------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| • Binary titles: | • Professional titles e.g. | • Gender neutral titles: |
| Mr., Mrs.,       | Dr., Colonel,              | Mx., Misc.,              |
| Miss., Ms.       | Professor, etc.            | Ind., etc                |

## NHS records

If you have changed your name, you will need to let your GP practice know. They can either add your new name as a 'preferred name' on the system or change your name completely. You also need to decide if you want to change the sex you are registered as. You will be registered as Male or Female. Your GP can change your sex on your records - male and female are unfortunately the only options available at the moment! You can also ask your GP to put an 'alert' on their system with your gender and preferred pronouns.

*Some GPs do refuse, and expect the Gender Identity Clinic to do this sort of stuff. I think a lot of them just don't know that they actually can do it and that it is easy.*



## Bank

You can change your name and title with your bank. You should go to the bank in person with your bank card and your deed poll. If you don't go in person, they may also ask you to send a form of ID.



## Identification

If you have a new name, it is important to update your ID documents.

To change your name on your passport you need a deed poll, and a letter from a bank etc. with your new name on it. To change your sex from M to F or vice versa, you need a doctor's letter saying that your 'transition is to be permanent'.

For your driving licence, you need to send the DVLA your old licence, your deed poll, and a 'D1 Form' you can get from the post office. The neutral title Mx is an option for driving licences.

## Gender Recognition Certificate

A few people choose to have their gender 'legally changed'. Again, frustratingly, you can only do this from male to female or vice versa. To 'legally change' gender you need to apply for a Gender Recognition Certificate. Having a GRC changes how marriage laws apply to you, which prison you would be housed in if you got sent to prison, and it changes the sex displayed on your birth certificate.

To apply for a GRC you need to be over 18, have had a gender dysphoria diagnosis, have had a medical transition, have 'lived in your acquired gender role for two years' (usually seen as two years since your legal name change) and 'intend to live in that role permanently'. If you are married, your spouse needs to agree to your gender change, or else you only get an 'interim certificate'.



*We at The Clare Project believe non-binary and intersex identities should be legally recognised and that the rules around marriage, medical transition and living in a 'gender role' are exclusionary and discriminatory.*



## Clothing

The most important rule when choosing what you are going to wear is: what is going to make you feel good? These might be comfortable, practical trackies, a dress with pockets, or a thong and rainbow wings. The key is: what clothing you wear does not define your gender identity.

Having said that, some people will want to change their appearance to look more 'traditionally masculine', more 'traditionally feminine', to look 'androgynous' or to mess up binary ideas of what gender 'looks like'. Your desire might be reflected in your choice of clothing.

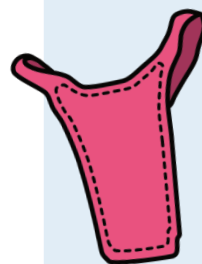


*Buying a whole new wardrobe can be hard if you are not comfortable going into gendered shops or changing rooms. It can be so disheartening when things don't 'look right' as well, and shoes can be a nightmare. I used to buy big bundles of clothes online until I found the style and size that fits me, and that makes my body shape look more feminine.*

## Bits and Boobs

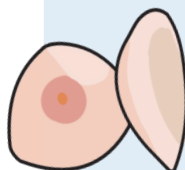
As well as clothing, people might also want to make their chest or genitals look bigger or smaller.

**Packing:** This is when people wear something, often a silicone penis, to make their genitals look bigger. There are also packers you can use to stand to pee or to have sex with. These tend to be a lot more expensive.



**Tucking:** This is the opposite, where people pull their genitals 'up and back' and keep them hidden there with gaff pants. Be very careful - never force anything to move in a way that hurts, and don't pull on anything too hard!

**Binding:** This is when people use a 'binder' (sort of tight vest) to make their chest look flatter. Be careful - binding too much can cause pain and breathing problems.



**Breast forms:** Breast forms ('chicken fillets') are small inserts that you place inside a bra to make your chest appear bigger. You can also try breast plates and/or padded bras.

## Staying safe

Asserting yourself and changing your gender presentation might not always feel or be safe. Sometimes, if it puts you at significant risk of harm, you might not be able to do so at all.

Also, especially if you 'look' gender non-conforming or trans-feminine, and/or are a Person of Colour, it might be worth following some basic safety advice if you are going out at night. Walk in groups if you can. Let someone know when you are going to be home. Stay in well-lit areas. Trust your instincts. Drink in moderation.



*If people react badly, remember that you are never the problem, they are.*

*You know who you are. Who you are doesn't change or diminish if you are closeted. Your identity is still valid, you are still you.*

## Staying well

Unfortunately, when you are undergoing or have gone through a social transition process, people will sometimes misgender you, ask you personal questions, or struggle to accept the changes you are making. This can be disheartening and you might start feeling stressed out, anxious or low. As well as having a good relationship with your GP and (hopefully) some friends or family members, it can be really helpful to reach out to the wider TNBI community for support.



*There will be immense pressure to 'be trans' a certain way, even from some doctors. Sometimes you have to do things like present more 'binary' than you actually feel in order to access medical support and things like that. It's rubbish.*

*If you have a community behind you, the opinions of strangers will feel much less important. They are less important!*



## Final words

**Here are a few final words of advice from our TNBI community members.**

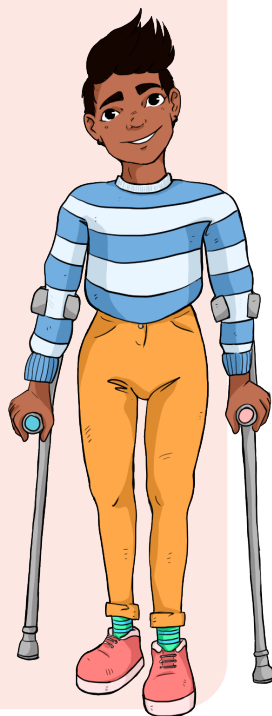
"People think you click your fingers and things will just change, but it's such a mental journey as well as a social one. That's actually the biggest bit."

"I spent a lot of time figuring out if my voice was something I should change or should want to change. It was hard to work on my voice around my family, it was easier when I was in shops and around my community to practice."

"You might not have much money. Local trans charities or online support groups sometimes have access to binders or run clothes swaps."

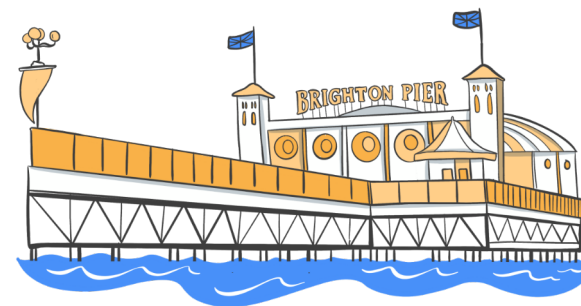
"If you use other languages, consider what terms or grammatical forms you want to use. Some languages can be really difficult for nonbinary folx but our community can be creative!"

"Go at your own pace, just be you."



**This booklet was designed and produced by  
The Clare Project**

This is the Spring 2021 edition.  
Booklet available in other formats on request.



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The Clare Project began in 2000 when a group of trans women started meeting in the back room of a hairdressing salon to discuss issues affecting their local community. We are now a registered charity run by and for trans, non-binary and intersex (TNBI) people in Brighton, Hove and East Sussex. We have welcomed thousands of TNBI people through our doors, regardless of their gender identity or expression.

We run support groups, information sessions workshops and socials for local TNBI people as well as providing information and training for individuals and organisations on TNBI community needs. Our contact details are on the last page of this booklet. Please get in touch with us for more information or to access our support. We are here for you.



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