

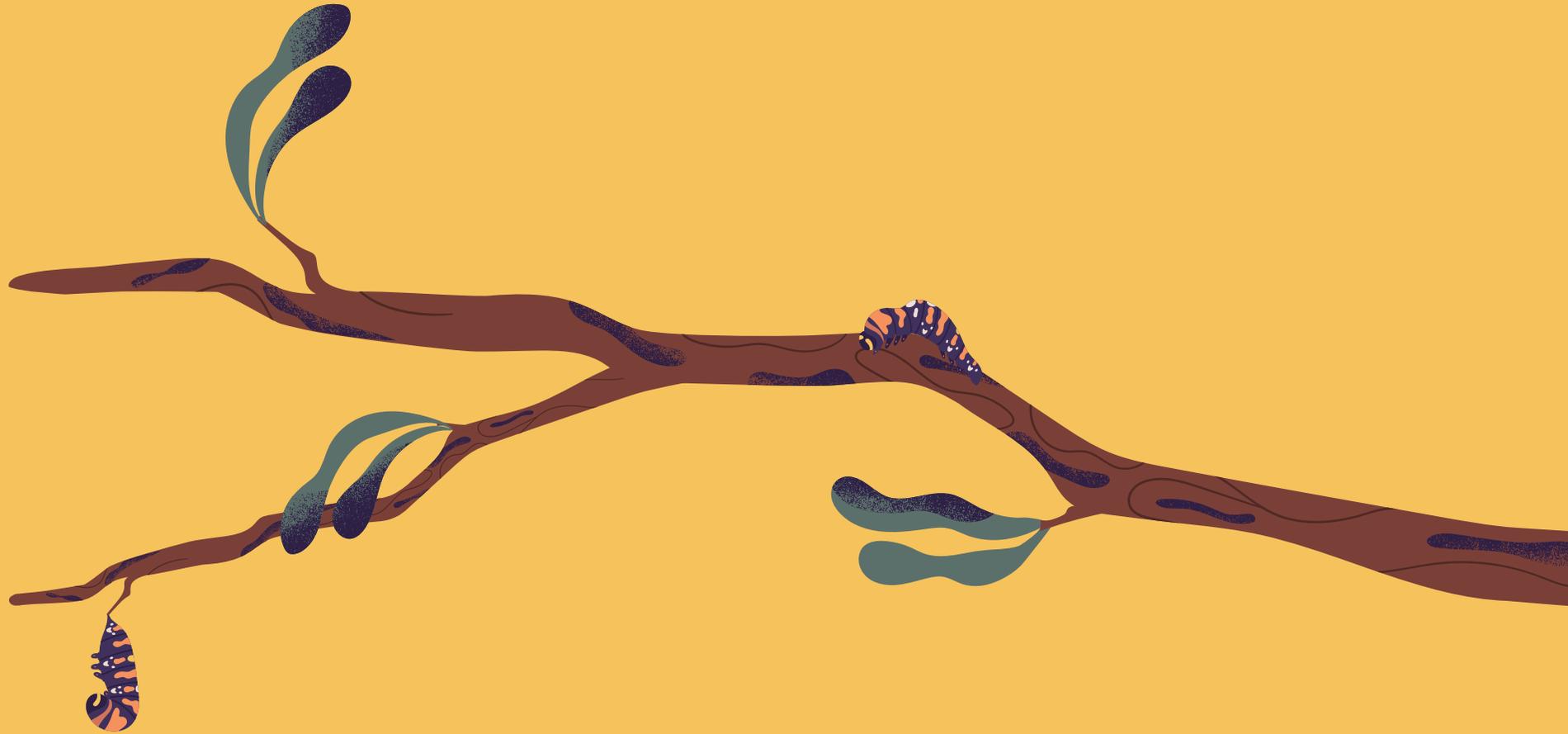


New Zealand Intelligence Community
Te Rōpū Pārongo Tārehu o Aotearoa

Transitioning Guidelines



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Te Rōpū Pārongo Tārehu o Aotearoa

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These transitioning guidelines have been prepared by a New Zealand Intelligence Community (NZIC) working group; comprising members of the Standing Out Network, one of our manager champions, and staff from People and Capability. The guide includes a glossary of terms, provides helpful information as well as practical advice for managers, staff who are in transition (or considering it) and work colleagues supporting team members through the process. They aim to create awareness and to be supportive of all staff at NZIC.



These labels are only guidelines, it is up to each person to decide which labels, if any, they identify with. Someone might fit the descriptions listed here and not identify as that term.

Ally

A person who supports a group but is not a member of that group, e.g. “Trans ally”.

Asexual (ace)

A person who feels low or no sexual interest in others of any gender.

Bisexual (bi)

A person who is emotionally and physically attracted to more than one gender. Sometimes used synonymously with pansexual.

Cisgender (cis)

A person whose gender matches the sex they were assigned at birth.

Deadname

Someone’s previous name that they no longer use. It is considered poor etiquette to refer to someone as their deadname unless you have their explicit consent.

Fa’afafine

A Samoan person whose sex assigned at birth was male but takes on a range of behaviours considered feminine, and is accepted as a third gender.

Fem/Femme

Shortening of ‘feminine’.

Gay

A person who is emotionally and/or sexually attracted to the same sex and/or gender. This tends to be more widely used by men than women, and can be both a personal and community identity.

Gender

A person’s identity with regards to the social norms of masculinity and femininity.

Genderfluid

A person whose gender changes frequently.

Gender Identity

Another way to refer to gender. Some people see the addition of ‘identity’ as a way of delegitimising trans people’s genders.

Homophobia

An irrational fear or prejudice against people attracted to the same sex/gender.

Homosexual

A term created in 1868 to describe people sexually attracted to the same sex. It was revolutionary in its time because of its scientific and non-judgemental nature, but today is widely viewed as old-fashioned and clinical.

Intersex

Intersex people are individuals born with any of several variations in sex characteristics including chromosomes, gonads, sex hormones, or genitals that, according to the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, “do not fit the typical definitions for male or female bodies”.

LGBTI+

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, and others; the combination of letters can vary, but LGBTI+ is well recognised. The + sign refers to other identities that are part of the community but not included in the first few letters, such as pansexual.

Lesbian

A woman who is sexually and/or emotionally attracted to other women. This is used as both a personal and community identity.

Mahu

The same as Fa’afafine but in Hawai’i and Tahiti.

Masc

Shortening of ‘masculine’.

Misgender

The act of referring to someone using an incorrectly gendered word, e.g. referring to someone as a woman when they are a man. This is considered a faux pas and may hurt the person in question.

Non-binary (nb, enby)

A person who does not subscribe to conventional gender distinctions but identifies as neither, both, or a combination of male and female.

Pansexual (pan)

A person whose attraction is not limited by gender.

Pronouns

Words used to refer to someone (e.g. she, xe¹, they, he). Many people have set pronouns that should be used when referring to them. These are not necessarily related to someone's gender or gender expression. Since they can't be assumed from appearance, some people proactively inform others of their pronouns.

Preferred pronouns

The pronouns to use when referring to someone, synonymous with 'pronouns'. Some people view the addition of 'preferred' as a way of delegitimising trans people's genders.

Queer

Once an insult, this word has been reclaimed and is used by many to cover the entire range of human and sexual diversity in the same way Rainbow is. Due to its past usage as an insult it can make people uncomfortable, particularly when used by people who are not in the LGBTI+ community.

Rainbow

An umbrella term that covers all forms of sexual and gender minorities. Is easier to say than "LGBTI+", and does not have the offensive history of "Queer" that can make some people uncomfortable. This is typically used to identify a community, not an individual.

Sex

This term is used to refer to someone's biological characteristics through the lens of "masculine" and "feminine". Some people disagree with using masculinity and femininity to describe bodies.

Sex assigned at birth

A medical distinction based on a person's physical characteristics at birth. Usually recorded as male, intersex (see description on previous page), or female i.e. "Assigned ____ at birth".

Sexuality

This term describes one's attraction to other humans. Not limited to homosexuality and heterosexuality.

Takatapui

A Maori term that encompasses not only aspects of sexuality but also cultural identity. Originally meaning "an intimate companion of the same sex" it has grown in use and meaning. Takatapui incorporates both a sense of indigenous identity and communicates sexual orientation and it has also become an umbrella term to build solidarity among sexuality and gender minorities within Maori communities. It is used as both a personal and community identifier.

Transgender (trans)

This term describes a wide variety of people whose genders are different from the sex they were assigned at birth. It is the opposite of cisgender. Some transgender people opt for one or more forms of medical intervention (e.g. hormone replacement therapy, surgery) but many do not. If someone describes themselves as a trans man, they are a transgender person who is currently a man.

Transphobia

An irrational fear or prejudice against trans people or those who break social gender rules.

Transsexual

This term is less common today than transgender. It is typically used for a person who has had, or is in the process of changing their body to conform with their gender.

¹Xe is another pronoun, used the same way as "she", "he", or "they". For example, "Have you met John?" Xe uses xe/xir pronouns". There are other pronouns like xe that are used every day.

A description of transitioning

A change from one gender to another, in as many or as few ways as the transitioning individual is comfortable with. This can include legally, socially, medically, expressively, or otherwise. Transitioning often involves medical treatment to change one's physicality through hormone therapy, and may involve surgery.

In New Zealand, gender diverse and transgender people often struggle for acceptance in society. The Human Rights Commission (HRC) Inquiry into Discrimination Experienced by Transgender People (2008) confirmed that transgender people face significant discrimination in daily life, including the workplace.

The guidelines focus on the process of transitioning from one gender to another; including the different forms it can take e.g. medical treatment, social and legal transitioning, physical presentation. Some information on the transition process is outlined on page 4, and there is a glossary of terms in Appendix, prepared by the Standing Out Network.

Understanding Transition

It is important to be clear from the outset that sex assigned at birth, gender identity, and sexual orientation are three distinctly different matters and should not be confused. Sex assigned at birth is a medical distinction based on a person's physical characteristics at birth. Gender identity is about our personal sense of being female, and/or male, and/or gender diverse. It is different from sexual orientation, which is who we are attracted to and choose as a sexual or romantic partner. Transitioning people may be heterosexual/straight, lesbian, gay, bi or pansexual – just like all other people.

Each of us defines our own gender identity; which means that gender identity and its expression vary greatly. The term 'transition' refers to external changes an individual undergoes, often but not always to be more congruent with their gender identity.

Those changes could mean physical ones, such as use of hormone treatment to change the individual's body shape, appearance and behaviour. Or they could mean social changes, such as dressing and living in their new gender role. There may be legal changes, such as a name change by deed poll. Or it could be a combination of physical, social and legal changes.

The Transition Process

There are many different aspects of transition that your transitioning staff member may follow, although for each person this varies. The stages outlined are indicative only, and are presented in alphabetical order.

Expressive transition

The staff member outwardly expresses their gender, e.g. change in clothing, hair, accessories, etc. This may occur at the same time as social transition, refer below.

Legal transition

The staff member legally changes their gender and/or name.

Social transition

The staff member lives in their new gender role and are treated appropriately. It is a requirement of the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) International Standards of Care that a person must live and work in their new gender for a period of one-year minimum prior to some types of surgical intervention. This is often known as 'Real Life Experience' (RLE), and it means that the person is likely to need to work in their true gender identity before undertaking gender-affirming surgery.

Medical transition (Non-surgical)

There is no single model of treatment but this may involve counselling and psychotherapy, hormones and anti-androgens, facial hair removal, and/or speech therapy. Some steps require a medical diagnosis of "gender dysphoria". Hormone treatment is taken to change the person's body shape, and is normally required for the rest of their life.

Medical transition (Surgical)

The staff member undergoes surgery to acquire their desired physical characteristics. Surgical treatment may include genital surgery, breast augmentation or removal, facial feminisation surgery, reduction of the external appearance of larynx and modification of the vocal chords. Surgical procedures may be carried out over a number of years. After any surgery they should have access to post-operative monitoring and ongoing counselling if desired, although both of these will taper off over time.



Not all transitioning people choose to go through all these steps. Others may not be able to for a range of reasons; including financial, medical and surgical availability. Also, the steps may overlap or run concurrently, and each situation is specific to that person.

Note that medical transition is a lengthy process, and can take years after the initial diagnosis of gender dysphoria. Careful and sensitive management of the staff member's workload and well-being is needed.

Private surgery in New Zealand is expensive and the public health system only funds a handful of operations every year. Most people in New Zealand seeking more feminine physical characteristics via surgery will look to Thailand, while New Zealanders seeking more masculine physical characteristics will often have to go further afield to the USA or England. If your staff member decides to pursue this option, getting the support to recover post-operation is important and recovery could take a significant period.

It is almost impossible to identify gender dysphoria from the outside. People may conceal gender-related issues due to both external discrimination and their own internal fears and perceptions. Our staff who consider themselves transgender or want to transition are likely to have been through a turbulent and emotional period of coming to terms with their gender identity. Sensitive management of the person is essential. Any individual who declares themselves to be transgender should be offered the appropriate level of care and support regardless of whether or not they pursue medical transition.

Once you become aware of a staff member who is considering transition, you should research the relevant information and seek out assistance to enable you to appropriately manage this sensitive situation. Further avenues for information on transitioning and other issues are at the end of this guide.

In the next section we look at your role as manager and leader.



Your Role as a Leader

NZIC as an employer, and you as a manager and leader, have a duty of care to both the staff member who has disclosed they are considering transition, as well as to others in the workplace. When the staff member comes to you, encourage them to talk to PERSEC as early as possible about their change in personal circumstances. This is standard practice and consistent with PSR Guidelines, which apply to all staff.

When the initial contact is made by your staff member, it could be informal. It may be as simple as a request for a meeting. It is quite likely that the person has taken some private steps to prepare for disclosure.

The initial engagement with your transitioning team member

- Give them time to discuss with you their current situation and their plans for the future
- Let them set the pace of change (the process is different in every case with regard to timelines and other factors)
- Be open and supportive
- Gain their confidence
- If unclear, ask them what gender they would like to be identified as.

As you discuss how their journey will develop, keep their wishes to the forefront of any planning required.

You may need advice in order to help them, and remember to inform your staff member before going to a third party with sensitive information.

The disclosure of information to third parties, or a sudden increase in attention on the staff member's transition, can cause them harm even if done with good intentions. Make sure you discuss any planned courses of action with your transitioning staff member to ensure they are comfortable and prepared before you take any action that has an impact on their transition.

Creating a supportive environment

You define the degree of inclusion within the team and wider Directorate by your leadership and attitude towards your transitioning staff member. Your approach and behaviour has a strong impact on how that staff member will be treated and respected by others.

Transitioning staff who do not feel safe or confident managing their gender dysphoria can spend a significant amount of their available capacity and energy feeling anxious or hiding aspects of themselves. That is not a situation that NZIC wants as it impacts on performance and on the personal security of the individual and their work colleagues.

Time spent building an inclusive workplace encourages everyone to be themselves. It also allows NZIC to benefit from the strengths of all staff and reduces the likelihood of harmful behaviours, to individuals and to our security.

Proactive leadership

Some people within the team or wider Directorate may have mixed feelings about the transition, and the level of knowledge and collegiality within your work area are factors that could affect staff opinions.

You can proactively lead by:

- open, honest communication
- raising the awareness and understanding of others
- showing genuine support for the transitioning staff member
- monitoring team behaviour, and actively dealing with inappropriate and/or unsupportive staff behaviour.

Your Role as a Leader

Raising awareness of the transition

The most effective way to prepare people for acceptance of workplace diversity is to raise staff awareness and understanding and, in consultation with the transitioning staff member, to inform others in the team. Encourage your team to read and understand the topic. Creating an open, learning environment where the team is encouraged to learn-and-understand is a very effective way to proactively manage the transition.

Providing ongoing support

- Ensure your transitioning staff member is aware of available support services, and refer them to the list provided in this guide on page 9.
- Consider assisting the staff member to identify a suitable and willing mentor from either within NZIC or an external mentor. This could be someone who can be a sounding board and provide advice and guidance on the day-to-day practicalities of living in the affirmed gender, such as physical appearance and grooming (e.g. shaving facial hair, hairstyling).

Note:

It may be helpful for you to consider using a mentor as well. Someone who has experience and skills in managing a transgender staff member or other sensitive employee situations. Having an appropriate sounding board to bounce ideas off helps with better decision-making, and using someone outside of NZIC can strengthen confidentiality. Discuss this approach with the transitioning staff member to obtain consent and maintain confidence and trust in your relationship.

- Work with your staff member to develop an action plan for transitioning in the workplace. Precise content and timeframes in the plan will be different in each individual case, and regular revisits may be required. Ideas for putting together an action plan are outlined in Appendix one.

Sick Leave and Care Requirements

Transitioning staff may require some time away from the team to cope with the demands of hormone therapy and recovery from surgery. Each case varies, and there are no generic rules that can be applied. For example, it may be appropriate to grant some sick leave to allow the person to start their transition away from any external pressures and let them get used to the changes in their physical and mental state. Surgery could result in the person requiring some months off work to let their body recover. As each case is different, the best advice is to keep discussions going with the transitioning staff member, gauging what they need, and getting advice on what NZIC is able to offer/provide in the situation.

Note:

While NZIC leave entitlements are quite generous, they may not be sufficient to cover all required absences. Options could include leave without pay (LWOP) or a flexible working arrangement (FWA). Discretionary paid leave above standard entitlements may be considered on a case by case basis, but is not an automatic entitlement.

Management of a transitioning staff member comes with additional workload and responsibilities so seek support for yourself during the process.

Refer to the list of resources and support, page 9.

Information for Transitioning Staff

The following section sets out areas that a transitioning staff member may need to consider when transitioning and was prepared by a person with first-hand experience, reflecting their situation.

Communicating your intent to transition

Agreement between you and your manager is important before communication and disclosure of the impending transition. How this is done depends not only on your wishes but also the size and structure of your team and Directorate. In a small team, informing staff together may be the best approach, while in a large Directorate team, it probably is not necessary to inform colleagues who have no direct contact with you. It really does depend on your comfort level with what you want to share and on a judgement call about the varying degrees of comfort within the team as to what is said. Discuss with your manager and decide on appropriate communications that will work for you, and the team.

Informing your manager

Telling your manager may be daunting for you and it may be the first time they have needed to consider transgender issues, particularly in the work environment. It is important that you are open, honest, upfront and understanding with your manager to ensure that the communication channels are open both ways. This will help you to convey your needs as well as address any questions or concerns your manager may have.

Ongoing communication between you and your manager will be important as your needs will change as you go through the transition process. You may need to consider whether you want to transition whilst staying in your current role and team or whether there is an option to be transferred or seconded into another work area

before undergoing the transition process. There are advantages and disadvantages to both, and factors include your working relationship with your current team and how well your colleagues know you and will support you. Talk to your manager about this.

Informing your work colleagues

Communicating with your team and immediate work colleagues is very important. While you have probably had many months, or years, to understand your need to transition, this may be the first time your team and immediate work colleagues have dealt with transition. They may have difficulty reconciling your different identities i.e. getting their head around a work colleague whom they have identified as a male or a female wanting to change. Your ability to effectively communicate with them relies on your assessment of each situation and the people involved. Get help from your manager or someone else whom you trust in the workplace to test out your ideas on communicating your news in different situations or with different work colleagues.

There are many ways to respectfully disclose your gender identity to your work colleagues. How you wish to have it announced is something you will need to discuss with your manager. Be clear about what information you are happy to have discussed and what you are not.

Possible options include:

- your manager calls a team meeting and makes an announcement on your behalf; or
- you talk directly to your team.

In either situation, you or your manager may ask to have a support person to help answer questions e.g. staff from People and Capability, Psychological Services, Vitae (our Employee Assistance Programme), and/or someone who has first-hand experience of transitioning. The initial disclosure may not be enough information for some staff in your work area. You may want to talk to your manager about how you would like your work colleagues to get good and helpful easy-to-understand information.

Also consider setting up an opportunity (e.g. a session at a team meeting, or a BYO lunch session) where people are allowed to ask you, your mentor or another specialist questions to which they will receive open, honest and factually correct information. Decide your tolerance level for being approached by individual work colleagues wanting to know more; you may want to put some clear parameters around impromptu chats or excessive inquiry from some colleagues.

It is also important to remember that colleagues may unintentionally use your previous name or pronoun, without due thought, because this is what they are most familiar with. Be tolerant of these unintended mistakes as your colleagues adjust to you living in your new (and true) gender role.

Information for Transitioning Staff

Working in your new gender role

The initial period of working in your new gender role may be awkward for you and for those around you, but this can be greatly reduced with some careful planning and forethought.

It is important to feel that you are able to be yourself. Just because you are transitioning does not mean the workplace can disregard diversity and inclusion principles. An inclusive workplace means accepting everyone for who they are, irrespective of their age, ethnicity, sex, gender, gender identity, sexual preference, religion, marital status or cultural background. You should not feel the need to put on a facade at work, and if your work colleagues are demonstrating the NZIC values (i.e. “walking the talk”) they should be empowering you and others to be themselves.

After you have announced your plan to socially or expressively transition you may initially want to keep a low profile and take a short leave break while you adjust your appearance and grooming. Doing that may reduce any confusion for others with potential ambiguity during transition, but this can also be a time for your work colleagues to get used to the idea of you turning up to work in a different gender role. It is your call, in discussion with your manager, about what will work best for you.

Adjusting your appearance and grooming can take time, for example if you are transitioning from male to female you may want to grow your hair and use a wig (or wigs) in the interim. Deciding on the way you want to physically present yourself can be a significant part of transitioning. To overcome any associated workplace awkwardness, particularly during the early stages of social and hormonal realignment, you might decide to negotiate some annual or sick leave, leave without pay, and/or discretionary leave. Talk to your manager, and also check with the HR Business Partner team in People and Capability (P&C).

For the majority of your medical transition, you won't need to use sick leave unless you are undertaking surgery treatment. The amount of time you need off will determine what leave options you can use.

P&C are also available to you and to your manager, so talk to them about the role they can play in providing you with support and advice.

To assist with your transition, you may like to have a mentor. The role of a mentor can be whatever you negotiate it to be. Obviously, both you and your mentor have to be comfortable with the arrangement, and the role could include:

- being a supportive sounding board
- providing free and frank advice
- being a point of contact, or conduit, for questions from work colleagues related to gender transition
- providing advice on living and working in your new gender role e.g. appearance and grooming.

Most people choose a mentor of their affirmed gender, and someone they trust and know is likely to be supportive and honest. If that person is external to the NZIC, and does not have a Top Secret Special (TSS) clearance, let our manager know and also inform PERSEC for their information and advice on any potential risks.

Practicalities and Available Resources

Bathrooms

You have a right to use bathroom facilities (including toilets, showers and changing areas) that are appropriate to your affirmed gender. Let your manager or P&C know if you experience any issues.

Health and Wellbeing

You have access to our Psychological Services team on a self-referral basis, as outlined in our Health and Wellbeing Support Services; refer to the Human Resources Toolkit. For some transgender staff, access to a “cleared” Psychologist to discuss any aspects of transitioning that may arise could be helpful. You also have access to our Employee Assistance Programme (Vitae) on your manager’s referral; which is available to all staff.

When it comes to the specific psychological assessment reports required at different points of transition, this is unlikely to be provided by the NZIC Psychological Services team because this is a particular specialist field.

Personal Security

Inform PERSEC of the change in your personal circumstances, consistent with PSR Guidelines that apply to all staff. Note there are no additional security considerations or requirements regarding an employee’s decision to come out as transgender or to transition.

Administration

Talk to the HR Business Partner team, and/or the Payroll Services team regarding any questions about forms of address and change of name, records, privacy of your personal information.

Bullying and harassment

The NZIC has an organisational response to discrimination on the grounds of gender identity or reassignment. We are committed to creating and maintaining a workplace free from bullying, discrimination, and harassment.

Read our Workplace Anti-Bullying and Undesirable Behaviour Policy. This defines different forms of undesirable behaviour so that it can be identified, reported and prevented. The policy also explains the informal and formal options for resolution and the support available to everyone.

Potential impact on performance and career

Discuss with your manager if you have any concerns about your transitioning and its potential impact on performance and career, and involve the P&C team as needed.

Wellbeing & Support

Internal Support:

Standing Out Network

✉ DL-Standing Out

HR Partner Team

✉ P&C Human Resources

NZIC Psychological Services

✉ PSYCH2

✉ PsychologyServices@NZIC.govt.nz (Low side)

External Support:

OUTline NZ

📞 (09) 937 64830

Ministry of Health Helpline

📞 1737 (Text or Call)

Mental Health Foundation

🌐 mentalhealth.org.nz

Diversity NZ

✉ hello@diversitynz.com

📞 (09) 937 64830

RainbowYOUTH

🌐 ry.org.nz

Gender Minorities Aotearoa

🌐 genderminorities.com

Human Rights Commission

✉ info@hrc.co.nz

📞 0800 496 877



Appendix One - Action Plan



Consider the following points when, as a manager, you and your transitioning staff member co-design an action plan for workplace transitioning.

1. The expected time for change of name, personal details and social gender.
2. Whether the staff member wishes to inform their colleagues personally or would prefer this be done for them. Provision of information and support structures to the team and work colleagues will also be necessary.
3. Which amendments will need to be made to records and systems, and the expected point in time in the transition process that these will occur.
4. Updating recognised relationship details if applicable.
5. The expected timeline of any medical and surgical procedures. This will probably develop as the transition progresses and each transitioning person is not expected to precisely know times and dates at the start.
6. The amount of time off required for medical appointments, treatments and surgical procedures. An appropriate amount of time needs to be considered for the initial transition where the staff member might need some time away to adjust to their affirmed gender before returning to work.
7. Whether the staff member wishes to consider leave options early in the process to cover all likely absences i.e. options such as leave without pay (LWOP) or flexible working arrangements (FWA).

Ensure the details of the action plan and notes of any discussions or meetings will be kept strictly confidential, with information only being released by consent of the transitioning staff member. PERSEC do not require this information as they have been separately informed of the staff member's change in personal circumstances.

8. Identify potential triggers and appropriate responses e.g. "if X happens, we will do Y". Always keep in mind that situations may arise that were not considered, therefore, it is important to ensure mechanisms are in place, including open communication channels, to address these unforeseen situations and maintain trust and support.

Key Takeaways

The circumstances and preferences of the transitioning staff member carry unique complexity. The plan must remain fluid, be frequently updated, and the transitioning staff member owns and controls the plan in terms of timelines and events.

The above requirements need to be balanced with the requirements of the workplace, NZIC and any support needs. For example, any early notification by the transitioning staff member will help manage potential impacts on the team and work.

The disclosure of information about a staff member's transition must be managed carefully and sensitively to prevent harassment or discrimination occurring. Obtaining consent of the transitioning staff member is required and should be part of the agreed action plan.






**Be
You.**



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