

## Communication Resource

# Gender Identification

This resource is designed to support staff in understanding and respecting patients' gender identities. Unfortunately, LGBTIQ+SB people, particularly trans and gender diverse individuals, are often invisible or misrepresented within society and healthcare. Proper identification of sex and gender ensures better care and inclusivity, leading to reduced distress and more positive healthcare experiences.

## Language and Terms

Sex and gender are often mistakenly used interchangeably. While for many individuals, their sex and gender align, there are those who identify with a gender different from the sex assigned or presumed at birth.

The term LGBTIQ+ encompasses individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer, asexual, or otherwise diverse in gender and/or sexuality.

For more information refer to the [SA Health - Gender and Sexuality Inclusive Language Guide](#)

## How to Ask about Sex and Gender

All consumers should be asked about their recorded sex and gender identity to support clear and accurate data capture as per the Australian Data Standards (2020). For more information refer to the 'Sex and Gender Identification – Data Allocation' Tool.

The easiest way to ask a consumer about their sex and gender is to use inclusive language (e.g., 'they' or 'their' instead of 'he/she' or 'his/her'). Proceed to ask about recorded sex first, using some of the examples below:

### Pronouns

Wherever possible, document and use the consumer's pronouns. Common pronouns include:

**He/him**

**She/her**

**They/them**

For more information read the [SA Health Pronoun Guide](#)

*The Australian Data Standards (2020) require recording of sex and gender.*

### Sex

Biological sex characteristics observed at birth or infancy

- Male
- Female
- Another Term

### Gender

Social and cultural difference in identity expression

- Man/Male
- Woman/Female
- Non-Binary
- I use a different Term (please specify)
- Prefer not to answer

**"What was your sex recorded at birth?"**

AND

**"How [do/does] [you/they/name] describe [your/their] gender?"**

or

**"What is [your/their] gender?"**

Support any consumer who is interested, or those with differing sex and gender, to use the [Gender, Bodies and Relationships Passport](#), which is a free resource.



## Expectations of Documentation

It's important to remember that some systems, such as Sunrise, currently add pronouns or prefixes (Mr/Miss etc) to certain letters or reports automatically. These may not be correct if the system does not support appropriate documentation of sex and gender.

### Developing Forms

When developing medical record or local forms (such as referral forms) ensure that sex, gender and pronouns are able to be captured.

#### Example:

Patient Details:		
Legal Name:		Chosen Name:
Date of Birth:	Age:	Current Pronouns:
Sex assigned/presumed at birth:		Gender:
Address:		Postcode:

### Documenting When Only Sex Information Available

At times IT systems do not have the option for separating sex and gender, if this is the case ensure accurate documentation of both sex and gender is available in other areas. This may include examples such as handover sheets, clinical notes, or referrals.

### Other Resources

- > SA Health Sex and Gender Identification – Data Allocation, Data Collection Tool (access via SA Health intranet)
- > [SA Health - Gender and Sexuality Inclusive Language Guide](#)
- > [SA Health Pronoun Guide](#)
- > [SA Health Statewide Gender Diversity Model of Care](#)
- > [Standard for Sex, Gender, Variations of Sex Characteristics and Sexual Orientation Variables](#)
- > [Gender, Bodies and Relationships Passport](#)
- > [TransHub](#) – Information on transgender and gender diverse care
- > [Rainbow Directory SA](#) – LGBTIQ+SB inclusive services in South Australia

For more information

**Safety and Quality unit**  
**Department for Health and Wellbeing**  
**11 Hindmarsh Sq**  
**Adelaide 5000**  
[www.sahealth.sa.gov.au](http://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au)

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# When legal identification differs from patient's identity

In some cases, a patient's legal identity, such as their Medicare information or ID band, may not align with their current gender identity. When this happens, it's important to approach the situation with sensitivity and clear communication.

**C**

## Communicate the discrepancy upfront

Example: "I'm sorry about this, but I just want to let you know that your ID band still reflects your previous name."

**A**

## Affirm their identity

Use their affirmed name, gender and pronouns, showing respect for their identity.

**R**

## Resolve with workarounds where possible

Practical solutions, like bed cards with their correct name.

**E**

## Encourage Feedback

Let them know they can share their experience and feedback to help improve future processes.  
Information at [sahealth.gov.au/feedback](https://sahealth.gov.au/feedback)

