

# Glossary

These explanations offer a guide to some of the words used in this publication and the exhibition, but are not intended to be definitive.

**Ally** – a straight and/or cis person who supports members of the LGBT+ community.

**Bi or Bisexual** – someone who is emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to more than one gender.

**Cisgender/cis** – used to describe a person whose gender identity corresponds to their birth sex

**Coming out** – short for ‘coming out of the closet’, the phrase is used to describe a person telling others they are gay, lesbian, bisexual, trans or queer.

**Cross-dresser** – a person who wears the clothes of another gender, not necessarily related to their gender identity. It can be performative, either on stage or in daily life, or political, to challenge gender norms and roles. It can also be for sexual pleasure.

**Cruising** – commonly used to describe the act of searching for casual sex, usually with a stranger, out on the street or in public spaces. More recently, cruising has also moved online through apps including GRINDR.

**Drag** – the act of performing another gender, usually theatrically and/or for public entertainment. Those who impersonate men are described as drag kings, while people who impersonate women are known as drag queens.

**Feminism** – the belief that women should have equal rights to men.

**Gay** – a man who is attracted emotionally, romantically or sexually to other men.

**Gender** – describes the socially constructed characteristics of women and men, such as expected dress codes and behaviour. These expectations are usually based on a person’s perceived biological sex. Gender is described as socially constructed because these expectations vary from society to society and have evolved over time.

**Gender expression** – how a person chooses to outwardly express their gender, for example through their clothing, appearance and mannerisms.

**Gender identity** – a person’s own sense of their gender, whether male, female or non-binary. A person’s gender identity may or may not correspond to their birth sex.

**Gender binary** – the artificial division of sex and gender into just two distinct, opposing options: male or female, masculine or feminine.

**Heterosexual/Straight** – used to describe the sexuality of someone who is attracted emotionally, romantically or sexually to people of the opposite sex.

**Heteronormativity** – the belief or assumption that all people are heterosexual.

**HIV/AIDS** – the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) attacks the immune system and weakens a person’s ability to fight infections and diseases. Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) is a term used to describe the final stage of HIV infection, when the body can no longer fight life-threatening infections. With early diagnosis and effective treatment, most people with HIV will not go on to develop AIDS.

**Homophobia** – the fear or dislike of someone who is lesbian, gay and (sometimes) bisexual.

**Homosexual** – used from the 19th century onwards to describe someone, usually male, who is attracted emotionally, romantically or sexually to people of the same sex. The word ‘gay’ is more commonly used today.

**Hydrofeminism** – a philosophy or belief that humanity is fundamentally part of the natural world and not separate from or privileged to it.

**Intersectionality** – acknowledges that a person’s identity is informed by their gender, sexuality, race, class and ability, amongst other things, and that their experiences of oppression will be influenced accordingly. For example, a Black trans woman will experience transphobia differently to a white trans woman.

**Intersex** – used to describe a person whose biological attributes do not match the typical definitions for male or female. Intersex people may identify as male, female or non-binary.

**Lesbian** – a woman who is attracted emotionally, romantically or sexually to other women.

**LGBT+** – an umbrella term for the main groups within the overall gay and transgender community, including lesbian women, gay men, bisexual and trans people (LGBT). The + recognises sexualities and gender identities not included within the traditional acronym.

**Non-binary** – a broad term used to describe any gender identity that is not one of the two binary genders, male or female.

**Outing** – when someone’s sexuality or gender identity is disclosed to others without their consent.

**Patriarchy** – a system of society in which men hold the power and women are largely excluded from it.

**Polari** – a secretive form of language most commonly associated with the gay community. Its use can be traced as far back as the 16th century. It fell out of common use in the late 1960s.

**Polyandrous** – a form of polygamy where a woman takes two or more husbands at the same time.

**PrEP** – stands for Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis, a medication programme, which, when taken correctly, can prevent the user from contracting HIV if they are exposed to the virus.

**Queer** – once a term of abuse used against the community, it is now increasingly used as an alternative umbrella term to LGBT+. For some people, queer specifically refers to those whose identities lie beyond traditional categories of sexuality or gender identity.

**Same-sex** – used to describe a relationship involving people of the same sex.

**Section 28** – part of the Local Government Act 1988, Section 28 stated that councils should not ‘intentionally promote homosexuality or publish material with the intention of promoting homosexuality’ in schools or other areas of their work. It was repealed in Scotland in 2000 and in the rest of the UK in 2003.

**Sex** – assigned to a person on the basis of their primary sex characteristics, particularly their genitalia and reproductive functions. Sometimes the terms ‘sex’ and ‘gender’ are interchanged but they are different things.

**Trans** – an umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from the sex they were assigned at birth.

**Transphobia** – fear or dislike of someone who is trans.