

Guidance to Identify Queerphobia

Queerphobia, as used in the context of this guidance, refers to any bigotry, prejudice, or discrimination experienced by LGBTIQ+ people, whether or not they identify as Queer .

While this guidance pertains to all LGBTIQ+ people, it does not seek to label all of them as “Queer”, a term which some people may consider loaded due to its history as a slur used against the LGBTIQ+ community, but which others have reappropriated. Using the term queerphobia, a commonly accepted term within the community, is part of reclaiming the term queer.

Other terms used, such as Lesbophobia, Homophobia, Biphobia, Transphobia, Intersexphobia/Interphobia and Acephobia/Aphobia, refer to the bigotry, prejudice and/or discrimination faced by specific communities within the LGBTIQ+ umbrella. These are all equally valid terms to use. For the purpose of this guidance, they are all considered to be forms of queerphobia.

The working definition of queerphobia is as follows:

Queerphobia is bigotry, prejudice or discrimination against the whole or a section of the LGBTIQ+ community, or against someone within or perceived to be part of the LGBTIQ+ community. It is based on the perception that a person’s or a group of people’s—

- *sex;*
- *gender identity;*
- *gender expression;*
- *experience of attraction (e.g. sexual, romantic, etc.), including non-attraction; or*
- *any combination of the above,*

is invalid, harmful or abnormal.

Further guidance about bigoted, prejudiced and discriminatory conduct towards the LGBTIQ+ community is set out below.

Queerphobia

As stated, this guidance uses the term queerphobia as an umbrella term to refer to all bigotry, prejudice or discrimination faced by the LGBTIQ+ community.

This section provides guidance on the broad forms of prejudice faced by members of the LGBTIQ+ community and those perceived to be part of the community. The following sections provide guidance on the specific forms of prejudice faced by different parts of the community.

Self-identification

This guidance asserts that people have autonomy over their individual identity and aspects thereof such as sexuality and gender.

This autonomy extends to how, when and to whom LGBTIQ+ people come out as LGBTIQ+. It also extends to how, when and to whom LGBTIQ+ people display the colours, symbols and flags which are associated with the identification of LGBTIQ+ people.

People also have autonomy over their own bodies. Disrespecting or disregarding another person’s autonomy, whether over their identity or body, is degrading. It can be dehumanising and denote bigotry, prejudice or discrimination.

Everyone has the right to use the labels that they feel most closely fit with their identity and/or knowledge of themselves. Knowingly using a label for a person that doesn't describe their identity and/or knowledge of themselves can denote bigotry, prejudice and/or discrimination.

For example, calling a gay person queer when they don't feel that term fits with their identity and/or knowledge of themselves could be considered homophobic.

Some of the exceptions to this are:

- Using a label that seeks to intentionally confuse who and what is included in the LGBTIQ+ community. For example, the term "Minor Attracted Person (MAP)," which seeks to discredit work towards LGBTIQ+ rights by wrongly suggesting paedophiles are included in the LGBTIQ+ community.
- Also, the term "Sapiosexual," which is supposedly an attraction to intelligence, can be considered to be ableist, classist and in some situations racist or sexist.
- Using a label that suggests there is a difference between a trans person's gender and a cis person's gender, for example: "super straight" or "super gay" - terms used for people who identify as straight/gay, but do not find themselves attracted to trans people of the opposite/same gender.
- Defining a label to disrespect or disregard another person's autonomy, for example, trying to use the word lesbian to only refer to cis women who are attracted to cis women, excluding trans women on the wrongful belief that trans women aren't "real women". Please note, some trans men and nonbinary people also use the word lesbian to describe their attraction to other people, which should be seen as valid if they are choosing to use the label for themselves, but is transphobic if another person is ascribing this to a trans man or nonbinary person who doesn't use the label for themselves.

It is queerphobic to demand or force a person who is (or is perceived to be) LGBTIQ+ to explain or justify their identity and/or knowledge of themselves.

Sexualising LGBTIQ+ people

Treating LGBTIQ+ identities as inherently sexual can be queerphobic.

It is queerphobic to treat the carrying out of an activity by a LGBTIQ+ person as sexual if a non-LGBTIQ+ person could customarily carry out the same activity in the same manner without it being considered sexual.

Such activities include, but are not limited to, light displays of affection (such as holding hands), reading to children and wearing drag. Further examples of sexualisation include, but are not limited to:

- Claiming, implying or insinuating that being LGBTIQ+ makes a person a sexual deviant or pervert;
- Claiming, implying or insinuating that it is inappropriate for LGBTIQ+ people to discuss or display their identity, especially in a work or education environment, or in the proximity of children; and

Sexual harassment, including inappropriate touching and comments, or the refusal to take complaints about such harassment seriously.

Claiming LGBTIQ+ people are inherently a danger to others

Claiming, implying or insinuating that a community or person, on the basis of it/them being LGBTIQ+, is a danger to others (whether to others' safety, wellbeing, dignity, personhood, human rights, etc.) is queerphobic. Examples of this form of conduct include, but are not limited to:

- Taking the actions of one or a minority of LGBTIQ+ people to represent an entire community;
- Claiming, implying or insinuating that LGBTIQ+ individuals are paedophiles, rapists, sex offenders, groomers or a safeguarding risk on the basis of their LGBTIQ+ identity;
- Claiming, implying or insinuating that LGBTIQ+ people are inherently a danger in bathrooms, changing/locker rooms, prisons, or any other place;
- Claiming, implying or insinuating it is harmful for children & adolescents to have age-appropriate LGBTIQ+ education;
- Remarks to the effect that an LGBTIQ+ identity makes a person less capable of executing professional duties and trying to block them from certain types of training or work; and
- Claiming, implying or insinuating that there is a conflict between the human rights of the LGBTIQ+ community (or any part of it) and those of any other marginalised group.

Claiming LGBTIQ+ people are abnormal, unnatural and/or can be “cured”

It is queerphobic to claim, imply or insinuate that being LGBTIQ+ is abnormal and/or unnatural, or that not being LGBTIQ+ is “normal” or “natural” when compared to being LGBTIQ+. It is also queerphobic to claim, imply or insinuate that LGBTIQ+ people can and/or should be converted and/or cured of being LGBTIQ+. Examples of this form of conduct include, but are not limited to:

- Advocating for so-called “treatment” or “therapy” that seeks to change someone’s LGBTIQ+ identity and/or knowledge of themselves, commonly known as social, religious or clinical conversion therapy practices;
- Misidentifying neutral terms that describe someone not having an LGBTIQ+ identity as insults, for example: straight, monosexual, cisgender, allosexual, perisex or endosex.
- Saying that an LGBTIQ+ person of any age is confused, in a phase, following a trend (social contagion), or being LGBTIQ+ for attention;
- Claiming, implying or insinuating that, by being LGBTIQ+, a person or group is mentally ill;
- Claiming, implying or insinuating that an LGBTIQ+ person is an abomination or a sinner;
- Claiming, implying or insinuating that an LGBTIQ+ child or adolescent cannot understand or be aware of their own identity and/or knowledge of themselves or are too young to know better;
- Claiming, implying or insinuating that being LGBTIQ+ is a choice; and

Claiming, implying or insinuating that it is right or necessary to forcibly ‘out’ LGBTIQ+ children, adolescents and/or adults to their parents/guardians/family members, with or without the person’s knowledge, or to refer to such a harmful act as ‘safeguarding.’

Homophobia and Lesbophobia

Homophobia refers to bigotry, prejudice or discrimination that is experienced by gay people, or people who are perceived to be gay.

Lesbophobia refers to bigotry, prejudice or discrimination that is experienced by lesbians or people who are perceived to be lesbians.

Homophobia can also be rooted in sexism and the belief that people should conform to patriarchal norms and gendered stereotypes.

Examples of homophobic/lesbophobic conduct can include, but are not limited to:

- Using sexist and/or homophobic remarks and slurs, whether spoken or written (e.g. on social media);
- The refusal to acknowledge the existence of a same-gender partner and having people exclude them and their partner from social events;
- Advocating for banning same-gender couples from marriage;
- Considering civil partnerships as lesser than marriages, as these are equal in law and are still the choice for some same-gender couples over marriage;
- Social exclusion (e.g. from sports); and
- Advocating for people to be banned from donating blood or plasma because they engage in non-heterosexual sexual activities.
- Advocating for banning gay people or lesbians from having children

Biphobia

Biphobia refers to bigotry, prejudice and discrimination that is experienced by Bi+ people or people who are perceived to be Bi+.

Bi+ refers to people who are multi-gender attracted. These can be people who identify as bisexual/biromantic, polysexual/polyromantic, omnisexual/omniromantic, pansexual/panromantic or any other identity that describes someone being attracted to more than one gender.

Examples of biphobic conduct include, but are not limited to:

- Claiming, implying or insinuating that being multi-gender attracted is just a transitional stage or phase and that Bi+ people are really heterosexual or homosexual.
- Referring to Bi+ persons as greedy.
- Claiming, implying or insinuating that a person's sexual orientation is based on their partner's gender, or that their orientation changes based on their partner's gender.
- Claiming, implying or insinuating that a Bi+ person is not a part of the LGBTIQ+ community if they are perceived to be in a non-LGBTIQ+ relationship.
- Claiming, implying or insinuating that Bi+ people are more promiscuous than others, are never monogamous or are more likely to cheat on partners.
- Claiming, implying or insinuating that Bi+ people are responsible for bringing HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) from one gendered population to another.
- Claiming, implying or insinuating that a Bi+ identity is transphobic.

Transphobia and Enbyphobia

Transphobia refers to bigotry, prejudice and discrimination that is experienced by trans (transgender) and gender-diverse people, or people who are perceived to be trans or gender-diverse.

Enbyphobia refers to bigotry, prejudice and discrimination that is experienced by nonbinary (often shortened to 'enby' or 'nb') people or people who are perceived to be nonbinary.

Trans is an umbrella term to describe people whose gender is not the same as or does not sit accurately with the sex they were assigned at birth. Trans and gender diverse people may describe themselves using one or more of a variety of terms.

The terms 'trans' and 'nonbinary' are not mutually exclusive. Trans people are not required to have undergone any medical or social transition to be considered trans.

Transphobic behaviour typically includes actions which convey a view that —

- trans women are not “real women”, are men and/or are male people;
- trans men are not “real men”, are women and/or are female people; and/or
- non-binary genders and identities do not exist or are invalid.

Denying or Refusing to Respect Trans People’s Gender Identity

Some people may have had little or no experience or engagement with issues affecting trans people, which sometimes leads to genuine errors or misunderstandings relating to a trans person’s gender identity, or to the nature or effect of a policy or practice.

Genuine errors and misunderstandings can still have potentially harmful effects, and so action should still be taken to address them when they are identified, whether through the issuing of an apology, a retraction and/or training. A person volunteering a timely apology (to the person who they have affected) usually indicates an error or misunderstanding.

Where a person persistently, unapologetically and/or knowingly carries out transphobic conduct, this should not be interpreted as a genuine error. This is especially true if they have been challenged by others, and have been directed to resources to help them learn about trans rights and transphobia. Indeed, feigned ignorance of trans issues is a common transphobic tactic which is often used to avoid accountability.

When ignorance is pleaded, taking account of the history of that person’s conduct may assist the process of determining whether an allegation of them being deliberately transphobic is well-founded.

Although it is sometimes based on prejudice, the refusal to date, have sex, or form a relationship with trans people is not itself transphobic; however, when this is expressed by claiming, implying or insinuating that it is abnormal to be attracted to trans people or that a trans person’s gender is not valid, that expression is transphobic.

The following list, which is not exhaustive, provides examples of conduct which is transphobic when carried out persistently, unapologetically and/or knowingly:

- Using transphobic remarks and slurs, whether spoken or written (e.g. on social media);
- Deadnaming – i.e. calling someone by their birth name (or some other previous name) after they have changed their name. In the early phases of transition, or if someone is not aware of the transition or is not well-informed about transition, accidental mistakes may be made as people get used to new names;
- Misgendering – i.e. referring to someone using a word, especially a pronoun or a form of address, which does not correctly reflect the gender with which they identify and/or know themselves to be;
- Mockery or dismissal of new names and pronouns and the identity they reflect. This often takes the form of inappropriate comparisons, suggesting trans people do not mean what they say (for example by describing them as “confused” or “just trying to be controversial”), or suggesting trans identities are a fad, including through comments such as, “I’m too old to understand all this”;

- Using phrases or language to describe trans people which are designed to suggest that trans people are a separate category of person from the gender they identify as or that their gender identity is not valid. Examples include referring to a trans woman or non-binary person as a “biological man” or a trans man or non-binary person as a “biological woman”, which eradicates the trans person’s gender identity and/or knowledge of themselves in favour of their biology assigned at birth. This also includes, but not exclusively, the terms “trans-identified-male,” “trans-identified-female,” “trans-identified-man,” “trans-identified-woman” and so on;
- Using a word, especially a (neo)pronoun or form of address, for a person who feels that it does not correctly reflect their gender, or wilfully omitting a word that affirms their gender;
- Sharing images or videos of a person pre-transition without permission, especially when this degrades or humiliates the person in the image or video;
- Claiming that gender is defined by and corresponds directly, exactly, and only with a person’s sex; and
- Forcibly ‘outing’ trans or non-binary people to others, like parents/guardians/family, potentially referring to such an act as ‘safeguarding and/or expressing the view that such an act is virtuous and/or necessary.’

Misrepresenting and Excluding Trans People

Examples of this form of conduct can include, but are not limited to:

- Making mendacious, dehumanising, demonising, or stereotypical allegations about trans people or their cisgender allies. This includes spreading the idea of a “trans ideology”, or the idea of a “trans conspiracy” which asserts undue influence over media or government or claiming that cisgender allies support trans rights initiatives out of fear or bribery rather than a genuine belief that trans rights are human rights;
- Applying double standards by requiring trans people to perform behaviours that are not expected or demanded of groups with privilege (e.g. white cisgendered men) in society – for example, criticising both trans women who do not conform to female stereotypes for not being feminine enough and trans women who do conform for perpetuating sexism;
- Claiming, implying or insinuating that forcing a trans person to use the bathroom of their birth-assigned gender will protect women and/or children, even if it would in reality increase the chance of violence being inflicted on the trans person;
- Claiming, implying or insinuating that trans people, because they are trans, should be separated from the rest of society, required to use segregated facilities, or denied access to facilities which would be required in order for them to fully participate in public life;
- Advocating for trans people to be segregated and not allowed to participate in sports (or physical education classes) as the gender they know themselves to be;
- Claiming, implying or insinuating that trans people should not be able to participate in sports as the gender they know themselves to be, due to a perceived advantage, only due to birth assignment not matching gender identity;
- Claiming, implying or insinuating that that trans people are a threat simply because they are trans or implying that trans people are sexual predators; and
- Using the actions of certain trans individuals as a representation of the entire trans community.

Trans Healthcare

Trans people including young trans people need access to appropriate gender-affirming healthcare if desired by a trans person, as per the consensus of the medical profession.

Transphobic conduct relating to trans healthcare can include, but is not limited to:

- Claiming, implying or insinuating that gender dysphoria is a form of, or is caused by, mental illness;
- Advocating the withdrawal or defunding of access to transition-related medical treatment for trans people, including for young trans people from the onset of puberty;
- Referring to gender-affirming surgeries as mutilation;
- Claiming, implying or insinuating that gender-affirming healthcare is uniquely harmful to the environment;
- Claiming, implying or insinuating that trans people are gay people in denial and wish to have sex reassignment surgery to attempt to restore 'heteronormativity,' or are pressured to transition;
- Claiming, implying or insinuating that someone being trans inherently means that they will or should seek transition-related medical treatment; and
- Claiming, implying or insinuating that trans people will regret accessing gender-affirming healthcare, when the evidence demonstrates that gender-affirming care has some of the lowest regret rates within healthcare and trans people need access to gender-affirming care.

Further Resource on Transphobia

For more examples of conduct which can be considered transphobic, a useful resource is the TransActual living document, "What is transphobia?"¹

Intersexphobia/Interphobia

Intersexphobia or Interphobia refers to bigotry, prejudice or discrimination that is experienced by intersex people or people who are perceived to be intersex.

Intersexphobia primarily stems from the belief that intersex bodies are a disorder, syndrome, birth defect, or a condition, even when told that intersex is about having natural bodily variations.

Intersex variations such as Congenital Adrenal Hyperplasia (CAH), Klinefelter Syndrome, Hypospadias, Turners Syndrome, etc are normal human variations and are not "birth defects", disorders, or syndromes.

Some intersex people can also consider themselves trans if their gender identity doesn't match the sex assigned to them at birth, though this is for each individual to decide for themselves and an intersex person should not be labelled as trans if they don't wish to be.

Examples of intersexphobic conduct can include, but are not limited to:

- Claiming, implying or insinuating that intersex bodies should be hormonally or surgically "fixed" to conform to male and female sex and gender norms. This leads to violent discrimination, acted out through non-consensual genital surgeries on children. This doesn't include when intersex people seek out and consent to medical interventions themselves;

¹ What is transphobia? - Available at <https://www.transactual.org.uk/transphobia>, accessed on 28th July 2023

- Claiming, implying or insinuating that all intersex people are unhealthy and/or mentally affected;
- Claiming, implying or insinuating that XY chromosomes creates a male and XX chromosomes creates a female. When intersex XY women exist, and intersex XX men exist.
- Claiming, implying or insinuating that sex is biologically binary in humans or can be simply or wholly defined without being exclusionary;
- Claiming, implying or insinuating that gender is created by genitals, reproductive systems, hormones, and/or chromosomes, as gender can not be accurately medically determined through any medical tests or lab work;
- Advocating for regulations against intersex female athletes (with high levels of natural testosterone) which require them to undergo medically unnecessary, “feminising”, medical treatments such as hormone therapy, in order to compete as women;
- Claiming, implying or insinuating that intersex female athletes, who have higher natural testosterone, are somehow breaking the rules, and are deserving of punishment, treatment as criminals and/or exclusion from sporting events; and
- When an intersex person's gender identity is either that they are a man or that they are a woman, claiming, implying or insinuating that they cannot be a “real” woman or a “real” man, due to their body, chromosomes, hormones, or any other factor.

Further Resource on Intersexphobia/Interphobia

For a greater understanding of discrimination faced by intersex people, the Protecting Intersex People in Europe: A toolkit for law and policymakers, from OII Europe and ILGA-Europe is recommended²

Aphobia/Acephobia/Arophobia

Acephobia refers to bigotry, prejudice and discrimination that is experienced by asexual people or people who are perceived to be asexual.

Arophobia refers to bigotry, prejudice and discrimination that is experienced by aromantic people or people who are perceived to be aromantic.

Aphobia is an alternative term for acephobia and/or arophobia.

Examples of aphobic conduct can include, but are not limited to:

- Claiming, implying or insinuating that asexual and/or aromantic people are deficient or broken; that it is a result of a disability, mental illness, or sexual abuse;
- Claiming, implying or insinuating that an asexual and/or aromantic identity is ableist;
- Claiming, implying or insinuating that an asexual and/or aromantic person has just not met the “right” person;
- Claiming, implying or insinuating that asexual and/or aromantic people cannot experience any kind of love or have relationships;

² Protecting Intersex People in Europe: A toolkit for law and policy makers - Available at <https://oiieurope.org/protecting-intersex-people-in-europe-a-toolkit-for-law-and-policy-makers>, accessed on 28th July 2023

- Claiming, implying or insinuating that asexual people are just “prudes;” or that being asexual is a choice rather than an orientation, so they don’t face oppression and are damaging the LGBTIQ+ cause; and
- Claiming, implying or insinuating that aromantic people are just promiscuous; that being aromantic is a choice rather than an orientation, so that they don’t face oppression; and that they are damaging the LGBTIQ+ cause.

References

OII Europe (2019). *Protecting Intersex People in Europe: A toolkit for law and policy makers*. Available at <https://oiieurope.org/protecting-intersex-people-in-europe-a-toolkit-for-law-and-policy-makers> (Accessed 28 July 2023).

Trans Actual UK (no date). *What is transphobia?* Available at: <https://www.transactual.org.uk/transphobia> (Accessed 28 July 2023).

Other Resources:

A list of ILGA-Europe member organisations and charities, which support LGBTIQ+ people and their allies:

ILGA, (2022). *Membership | ILGA-Europe*. Available at: <https://www.ilga-europe.org/about-us/membership/> (Accessed 28 July 2023).

Stonewall Glossary of Terms:

Stonewall (2020). *List of LGBTQ+ terms*. Available at: <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/list-lgbtq-terms> (Accessed 28 July 2023).

This document was developed by LGBTIQ+ Greens and we encourage anyone with any questions to consult the LGBTIQ+ Greens committee.

All links and information in this document are current as of July 2023.