EngineeringUK Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Language Guide

This guide has been developed by EngineeringUK, as a guide for EngineeringUK employees on recommended language relevant to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. It has been designed to be an evolving document to ensure consistency and ensure that words used and the way they are used is as inclusive as possible. We are sharing this document more widely, in case other organisations would be interested in seeing the approach we take to such language. EngineeringUK would welcome any feedback on this guidance.

Context

It is helpful to think about the context in which we use certain language, for example, when speaking with young people versus adults, or in reports, emails, or workshops, etc.

Language is always changing, and, as we listen to more and more perspectives, it will continue to develop and change.

Use (where possible)	Avoid	Why
Under-represented young people[i] Schools that meet the EngineeringUK EDI Criteria[ii] Young people from schools that meet the EngineeringUK EDI Criteria OR priority students	Disadvantaged schools/young people[iii]	Disadvantage has negative connotations and the young people from those schools who meet our EDI criteria may not consider themselves disadvantaged
Schools or young people that don't typically participate in …	Hard to reach schools or young people	Schools/young people don't consider themselves hard to reach. It may be that we are not using effective ways of reaching and engaging them
As above	Under-served or hard to reach schools/young people	As above – and, if written without a hyphen, under-served can be mistaken for undeserved
Where possible, refer to the specific ethnic minority group, otherwise use: 'minority ethnic groups' – preferrable	BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) BME - **Please do not use these terms.**	BAME is often used as a catch-all term when it would be more appropriate to refer to trends/stats for specific minority ethnic groups.

Use (where possible)	Avoid	Why
'ethnic minority groups' - acceptable	- **There is government guidance around not using these terms at all.**	BAME also has negative connotations, it is seen by many as a 'white term' to mask their discomfort with racial terms. We usually say 'people with a Mixed ethnic background' or 'people from the Mixed ethnic group'. We don't say 'Mixed people' or 'Mixed race people'. Each specific ethnic group should be capitalised, e.g. Asian, Black, Mixed, White, Gypsy, Irish Traveller. For further information on this, and explanation and reasoning, please visit: https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/style-guide/writing-about-ethnicity
Disabled person / disabled young person	People/a person with a disability	Preferred practice is to use the social model of disability[iv]
deaf people Deaf people[v]	Hearing impaired Hard of hearing	Impairment can be seen to be a negative term and is not the preferred term. Hard of hearing is mainly associated with older people, not often used to refer to young people
Pupils/students/young people	Boys and girls 'Guys' or other language which could be perceived to mean a certain gender.	Unless referring to gender for a specific reason, such as suggesting we target young girls, or those who identify as young girls, gender neutral language is preferable[vi]

Additional Information

Women/men v female/male

We are starting to use a lot of gendered language when talking about our work and the research that we do. It is helpful to remember when we should be using women/men (nouns) and when we should be using female/male (adjectives).

For example:

The workforce is typically male.

The workforce is made up of men.

We would like to encourage more female applicants.

We would like to hire more women.

Gender identity, expression and use of pronouns

Gender binary is the idea that there are only two genders – male and female. In reality, gender is much more like a spectrum – it isn't set in stone and some people have fluid or fluctuating genders. You may have heard people referring to themselves as transgender, cisgender, or non-binary. There is a good guide to gender identity here - https://www.amnesty.org.uk/LGBTQ-equality/gender-identity-beginners-guide-trans-allies

Transgender: Transgender is a term used to describe people whose gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth.

Cisgender: a person whose sense of personal identity and gender corresponds with their birth sex.

Non-binary: Non-binary is used to describe people who feel their gender cannot be defined within the margins of gender binary. Instead, they understand their gender in a way that goes beyond simply identifying as either a man or woman.

Pronouns are the words we use in our everyday language to refer to a person when not using their name. For example. "Kevin just rang. **He** was wondering if we can arrange a meeting next week." Common examples of pronouns include: she/her/hers or he/him/his, and gender neutral pronouns such as they/them/their or ze/zir/hir.

We often use pronouns without giving it much thought and based on the assumptions we make of a person's gender expression (the way you appear or choose to express/present your gender in society). For example, if a person seems to match our own perception of what it is to be female, we will use she/her/hers. However, sometimes a person's gender identity (the way they identify internally) does not match our perception of their gender expression (for example their clothes, hairstyle, or mannerisms). In these cases, using the wrong pronoun can cause embarrassment, hurt and a feeling of disrespect or alienation.

Everyone has a gender identity and expresses it in different ways. By including gender pronouns in email signatures, on name tags or at the beginning of meetings we give others the opportunity to self-identify instead of assuming someone's identity. This is not only helpful for non-binary or trans staff members to indicate their gender pronoun. It is also important to normalise discussions around gender, to minimise misgendering and as a step towards creating a more inclusive space for people of all genders.

If you are CIS gendered, you can include your gender pronouns in your email signature or on your name tag at an event. This shows you are aware that gender identity is complex, and that you will not make assumptions based on a person's appearance. It positions you as a person that will be supportive of trans and non-binary colleagues. Normalising the sharing of our pronouns is a great way to be an ally to the trans and non-binary communities.

If you are interested in reading more about gender pronouns this website is a really useful guide - https://www.mypronouns.org/ and the 'resources' section has some good videos.

We do not currently have a formal policy on gender pronouns. We are happy for people to include them in their email signature. We acknowledge that some people may not feel comfortable sharing their pronouns in the workplace. Please be attentive to the pronouns people have shared with you and if people have not shared their pronouns, you may wish to consider using neutral, non-gendered language.

If organising an event, please consider providing name badges that also have space for delegates to write their own pronouns, such as she/her/hers. However, remember not everyone may feel comfortable to write this on a name tag. In this case simply refer to that person by the name on the tag and avoid using pronouns.

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[i] Where possible please provide an explanation to clarify that this is referring to young people who are from a group who are under-represented in the engineering workforce.
[ii] EngineeringUK EDI Criteria outline the schools in the UK that are likely to have the highest proportion of young people from groups under-represented in the engineering industry.

[iii]There is a distinction between using this term in our research (where it may be appropriate) and for communication purposes. Please avoid using this term, other than in research reports, unless you can explain clearly what it is that you mean or are able to be specific, e.g., 'socioeconomic disadvantage'.

[iv] The Social Model of Disability makes a clear distinction between impairment and disability and explains that it is social and physical 'barriers' that cause 'disability' rather than impairments. These barriers may be attitudinal, intellectual, sensory, or physical. Disabled people are therefore those people with impairments who are disabled by society.

In this model, the word impairment is used to refer to the actual attributes (or lack of attributes) that affect a person, such as the inability to walk or breathe independently. The word disability is used to refer to the

restrictions caused by society when it does not give equivalent attention and accommodation to the needs of individuals with impairments.

The autism community tend to prefer to be referred to as autistic i.e. an autistic person, rather than a person with autism.

[v] The term Deaf (deliberate capitalisation) is used to identify people who are actively engaged with the Deaf community. This usually means that people view themselves as culturally Deaf, use BSL and are part of the Deaf community. When you refer to as deaf with a lowercase 'd' this usually refers to people for whom deafness is predominantly an audiological experience. The term refers to the idea in the strictest sense: the condition and state of being deaf, nothing more. If you are referring to a specific disability, illness or impairment it is worth a quick google (or speak to the EDI team) as there are often useful resources online from the relevant communities. If referring to someone specifically, ask them for their preference.

[vi] This also relates to language used when talking to adults. Using gender-neutral language can be a small step to create a more inclusive environment, and a sign of respect towards people who do not identify exclusively as 'women' or 'men'. For example, using greetings such as 'Hi guys', 'Hi Ladies' or 'Ladies and gentlemen' assumes that everyone you are addressing identifies as a either a woman or a man. However, gender is more complex, and people may identify in a lot of different ways beyond female and male, including identifying as trans or non-binary. By using gender-neutral terms such as 'Hi team', 'Hello everyone', 'Hi all' or 'Hi folks', you avoid making assumptions about the gender of those you are addressing. Being intentional in adopting gender-neutral language can go a long way in making someone feel welcome. It can also reinforce that we are a workplace where gender identity and expression are respected, and diversity is valued.