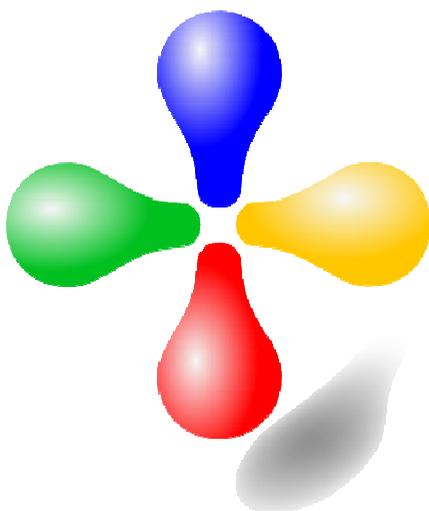


Memorandum of Understanding



TRANS

MEDIA WATCH

Accuracy - Dignity - Respect

transmediawatch.org.uk

Introduction

Trans Media Watch and its partners in the broadcast and print media recognise the need for ongoing communication and co-operation in securing improved representation of transgender people across all media outlets. We acknowledge that fair treatment of transgender people and issues by and within the media is essential to wider social equality.

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to outline the shared aims of the signatories with regard to the representation of transgender people in the media; to establish a set of standards to be applied internally within signatory organisations; and to establish standards for interaction between those organisations and transgender members of the public, their families, friends and colleagues. Signatories agree to give due weight to the aims herein agreed when planning and developing media content.

Definitions

For the purposes of this document, the term **transgender** shall apply to all gender variant persons, including but not exclusive to transsexual people, cross-dressing people, and people who do not identify as having either a male or a female gender. The term **transsexual** shall include all persons who intend to undergo, are undergoing, or have undergone a process of transition to live permanently in a gender role other than the one assigned to them at birth; however, it should be noted that not all persons who have undergone such a transition continue to personally identify as transsexual. This process of transition may include hormonal treatment or surgical procedures but shall not be considered to apply exclusively to situations in which such procedures are involved.

Standards agreed with regard to transgender persons shall also apply in circumstances where an individual is alleged to be transgender but where no personal confirmation of this has been provided.

Further to this, the term **transgender** may apply to issues relating to persons as described above, even where no specific individuals are identified. It may also apply to issues concerning intersex persons where those persons are, actually or potentially, on the receiving end of transphobic prejudice or discrimination.

For the purposes of this document, the terms **transphobia** and **transphobic** shall apply to any actions or expressions which injure, threaten, humiliate or otherwise distress transgender persons in direct relation to their (real or perceived) transgender status, where these actions are motivated by prejudice or fail to show due diligence in regard to the safety and well being of transgender persons. These terms may also be applied to such acts where they target persons closely associated with a transgender person because of the person's transgender status; for instance when a celebrity is subjected to ridicule because that celebrity is in a relationship with a transgender person.

Agreement

Signatories to this document hereby agree to work toward the following aims:-

- **Eliminating transphobia in the media.**
- **Ending the provision of misinformation about transgender issues in the media.**
- **Increasing positive, well-informed representations of transgender people in the media.**
- **Ensuring that transgender people working in or with the media are treated with the same respect as non-transgender people in equivalent positions.**

Signatories further agree to undertake an annual process of review resulting in an annual report on their progress in respect of these aims.

No part of this agreement shall supercede or override any statutory obligation that any signatory may have in respect of regulatory bodies.

Eliminating Transphobia in the Media

Trans Media Watch's research suggests that transphobic media content can directly affect how transgender people are treated in real life.

Signatories to this document aim to practice and support the following:-

- Avoid the use of language which is widely considered to be offensive to transgender people.
- Avoid gratuitous descriptions, comments and references that subject transgender people to ridicule.
- Avoid sensationalist reference to transgender persons or issues, especially where their gender history has no direct bearing on the subject of a media item.
- Avoid references to the medical histories of transgender persons except where they are directly relevant to the subject of a media item.
- Avoid using pronouns and gendered descriptors that conflict with the personal identities of individual transgender people.
- In accordance with the Gender Recognition Act, avoid revealing the previous names of transsexual persons except where explicit permission is given to do so.

Ending the Provision of Misinformation about Transgender People in the Media

Because transgender people are a minority group and many members of the public are not aware of knowing any transgender people personally, they are particularly vulnerable to misrepresentation.

Accordingly, the signatories to this document aim to practice and support the following:-

- Ensure that any statistics in relation to transgender people come from reputable, contemporary sources.
- Ensure that statistics and theories referenced in relation to transgender people are up to date, except where they are clearly placed in a historical context.
- Consult with transgender people themselves when developing major pieces of work that analyse or reflect on the transgender experience.
- Ensure that staff have adequate training in relation to transgender issues, especially where those staff are dealing with news content on short deadlines.
- Ensure that content bought in from other companies, individuals and agencies is consistent with these standards.

Increasing Positive, Well-Informed Representations of Transgender People in the Media

Conservative estimates of the size of the transgender population in the UK put it at about 1% to 2% of the general population. Although transgender people frequently appear in the media as stigmatised stereotypes, such as sex workers, there are disproportionately few portrayals of ordinary transgender people getting on with their lives. Similarly, whilst it is not uncommon to see items focusing on the tragic struggles and losses faced by some transgender people, there is a disproportionate shortage of positive items reflecting happy and successful transgender lives.

The signatories to this document aim to practice and support the following:-

- Plan and develop media items that represent transgender people in a positive manner.
- Increase visibility of transgender people and transgender issues in wider contexts.
- Provide positive role models for young transgender people.

Ensuring that Transgender People Working in or with the Media are Treated with the Same Respect as Non-Transgender People in Equivalent Positions

Improving the treatment of transgender people in the media starts with developing positive and open environments for transgender people within media organisations themselves. It also means that transgender individuals working with those organisations should be assured of respectful, fair treatment.

With this in mind, the signatories to this document agree to practice and support the following:-

- Provide adequate training to employees to prevent transphobic harassment in the workplace.
- Ensure the presence of adequate channels through which staff experiencing transphobic harassment in the workplace may seek assistance.
- Refrain from placing undue pressure on transgender members of the public, their families, friends and colleagues, to talk about their transgender histories.