

Guide to Alternative Phrases & Words

The following is a list of diverse phrases and words that could have a potential adverse impact of people of different backgrounds, together with a list of more suitable suggested alternatives sourced from different equality organisations and networks associated with the University.

Note: This is simply a guide for good practice when using terminology in the workplace, as the words used, even without any hatred or intent, could be interpreted negatively by different people.

Potential Adverse Impact	Suggested Alternatives Wording
Equality Strand: Age	
Old man/woman/person, pensioner, OAP, geriatric, senior citizen, the elderly	Older person, elderly person, older people
Equality Strand: Disability	
Blind	If level of sight impairment is high, use "Blind or Seriously Sight Impaired". If level of sight impairment is mild or low, use "Sight Impaired"
Crippled	Offensive – use "people with impairments or long-term health conditions"
Deaf	If level of hearing impairment is high, use "Deaf or Seriously Hearing Impaired". If level of sight impairment is mild or low, use "Hearing Impaired"
Dumb	Offensive – use: Has a speech impediment
Dyslexic	Person with dyslexia
Epileptics	People with epilepsy
Handicap	Impairment, condition, disorder, difficulty
Mad, mentally ill	Can be perceived as offensive depending on the person who is referred to by it – use: Has mental health conditions or issues
Mental age of...	Has severe or profound learning difficulties
Mental handicap	Learning difficulty or learning disability
Spastic	Offensive – use: Person with cerebral palsy
The disabled	People with disabilities
Wheelchair bound	Wheelchair user
Equality Strand: Gender & Sexual Orientation	
Bachelor, bachelorette	Single
Christian name	Offensive for people who are not of Christian faith – use: First name, Forename, Personal name
Forefathers	Ancestors

Gentlemen's agreement	Personal agreement, informal contract
Homosexual, queer	Best practice to use: Gay or Lesbian expect when used by the LGBT community
Man-hours	Work hours, staff hours, hours worked
Man-on-the-street	Ordinary person, ordinary citizen, average voter, average person
Manning the office	Staffing the office
Manpower	Employees or workforce
Middleman	Go-between, liaison, agent
Right hand man	Assistant, helper, second in command
Role specific such as: Chairman/Chairwomen, Foreman	Use sex neutral words: Chairperson, Convenor, Foreperson
Sex change	Gender reassignment
She-male	Offensive – use: Trans (gender) person
Sportsmanlike	Fair, sporting
Spouse	Use dually with Partner – as not everyone is in a heterosexual relationship/marriage
To man...	To staff, to run, to operate
Tranny	Offensive – use: Trans (gender) person
Workman like	Competent
Equality Strand: Race	
Chinamen	The Chinese
Coloured	Offensive in different situations – use: Black, Asian and people from minority ethnic communities
Half-caste	Offensive – use: Mixed-race, mixed heritage, dual-heritage
Oriental	Be more specific: Chinese, Far East Asian, Japanese
Paddy	Offensive – use: Irish or Irish Ethnic Origin
Paki	Offensive due to its relation to racist attacks – define ethnicity such as of Indian, Sri Lankan, Pakistani origin, British Asian
Pikey	Offensive – use: Gypsy or Traveller