



Honest Church
Toolkit●

Trans Welcome
#HonestChurch

Many churches describe themselves as “welcoming to everyone”, but for trans people that welcome can be hard to trust. With recent changes in UK law affecting trans people’s daily lives, and a general rise in transphobia and transphobic violence in the UK, it is vital that trans Christians can find places to worship and belong without having to guess whether they will be safe. No one should have to take that gamble when they walk through a church door for the first time... and that’s where Honest Church comes in.

Some churches will have already reflected on their stance around same-sex relationships or women’s roles but may not yet have looked closely at questions of gender diversity and trans welcome. While the original LGBTQ+ Honest Church toolkit does include questions about trans welcome, SCM & Transfigured Mission have partnered to offer this trans specific Honest Church pop-up that goes into greater detail, both for those looking for a church to attend, and those leading one. This is not about asking churches to be perfect, but about encouraging them to be honest, thoughtful, and specific: to consider where they are at in terms of trans welcome and inclusion, communicate that welcome honestly and clearly, and identify changes that could help trans people belong more safely and fully.

The Toolkit

This toolkit is for people who are wanting to broach the topic of trans welcome with a church leader but might not know where to start, and for church leaders who want to consider their trans welcome and improve on it. Inside you'll find a glossary of terms, suggested questions to ask a church leader, questions for church leaders to contemplate, the Honest Church Spectrum of Trans Welcome, and some further resources. We hope you find this toolkit empowering and helpful!

Here's to being honest.

Glossary

A quick note! As with many areas of identity, language is often evolving. The best practice in terms of what words to use often changes as new information comes to light, or perceptions shift. To the best of our ability, this glossary presents words and their definitions that are widely accepted in 2026. The list is not exhaustive, and some trans folk may prefer you to use different words. Do your best with what you know, and be open to making a change!

Transgender: An umbrella term for people whose gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth. Some people use “trans” as a shorter version. ‘Trans’ is a prefix meaning “on the other side of”.

Cisgender: A term for a person whose gender aligns with the sex they were assigned at birth. ‘Cis’ is a prefix meaning “on the same side of”.

Trans+/Trans*: An inclusive umbrella term used by some people to refer to a wide range of trans, non-binary, and gender diverse experiences.

Transition: The process by which a transgender or non-binary person aligns their outward expression, physical traits, or legal status with their gender identity.

Detransition: When someone stops, pauses or reverses part of a social, legal, or medical transition.

Outing: Revealing somebody's trans status without their permission, either before or after they have begun transition.

Gender diversity: A broad phrase for the many different ways people understand, describe, and express their gender.

Non-binary: A person whose gender does not strictly fit into the categories of man or woman.

Glossary

Gender expression: How someone shows or presents their gender, for example through clothing, hair, voice, name, pronouns or behaviour. This may or may not match other people's expectations.

Femme: A word some people use to describe a feminine identity, presentation or way of expressing themselves.

Masc: A word some people use to describe a masculine identity, presentation or way of expressing themselves.

Trans Day of Remembrance: An annual day on 20th November to remember trans people whose lives have been lost to transphobic violence, and to recommit to justice and safety for trans communities.

Trans Day of Visibility: An annual day on 31st March to celebrate transgender people, raise awareness of discrimination, and acknowledge their contributions to society.

Deadnaming: Calling a trans person by a previous name they no longer use.

Misgendering: Referring to someone using the wrong gender, name, title, or pronouns.

Neo-pronouns: Pronouns other than common pronouns such as she, he or they. Examples include ze/zir or xe/xem.

Safe spaces: Spaces where people are intentionally protected from discrimination, harassment or outing, and where their identity, name and pronouns are respected.

Questions to ask as a newcomer /congregation member.

If asking these questions in person is too hard you could email the church leader the list, or ask people in the congregation where they think the church is at in its welcome of trans people.

- Are there any trans people in your congregation, as far you know?
- Would a trans woman/femme be welcome in your women's group?
- Would a trans man/masc be welcome in your men's group?
- Do you provide space for feedback on inclusion & accessibility? If so, how?
- Have you ever been asked to have a service to mark a trans person's transition? Would you offer one if you were asked?
- Do you have a non-discrimination policy that includes "gender expression/identity"?
- Have members of your leadership team received trans inclusion training?

Questions to ask as a newcomer /congregation member (cont.)

- What would your process be for handling an incident where someone expresses transphobic views?
- Do you have any trans people in positions of leadership, or would trans people be able to be in positions of leadership in your church?
- Do you have gender neutral toilets available, and/or are people free to use whichever toilet they feel comfortable using?
- Does your church or community mark Trans Day of Remembrance, or other significant days for trans people?
- Do those in leadership aim to expand their theology in general, and have they specifically thought about trans theology?

Questions for church leaders to consider

Once you've considered this list, check out the Honest Church Spectrum of Trans Welcome below.

- Are trans people welcomed and affirmed as they are in your church?
- Would a trans person be likely to have their name, pronouns, and identity respected by both the congregation and the leadership team?
- Would a trans person be likely to experience debate about, or critique of, their identity from either the congregation or the leadership team?
- Do you have policies or systems in place to protect trans people from harassment or judgmental behaviour?
- Has your team ever done any training to help with including trans people?
- Are trans people welcome to use and attend single-gender spaces and groups?
- Would a trans person's identity & privacy be protected from others if that was their wish?

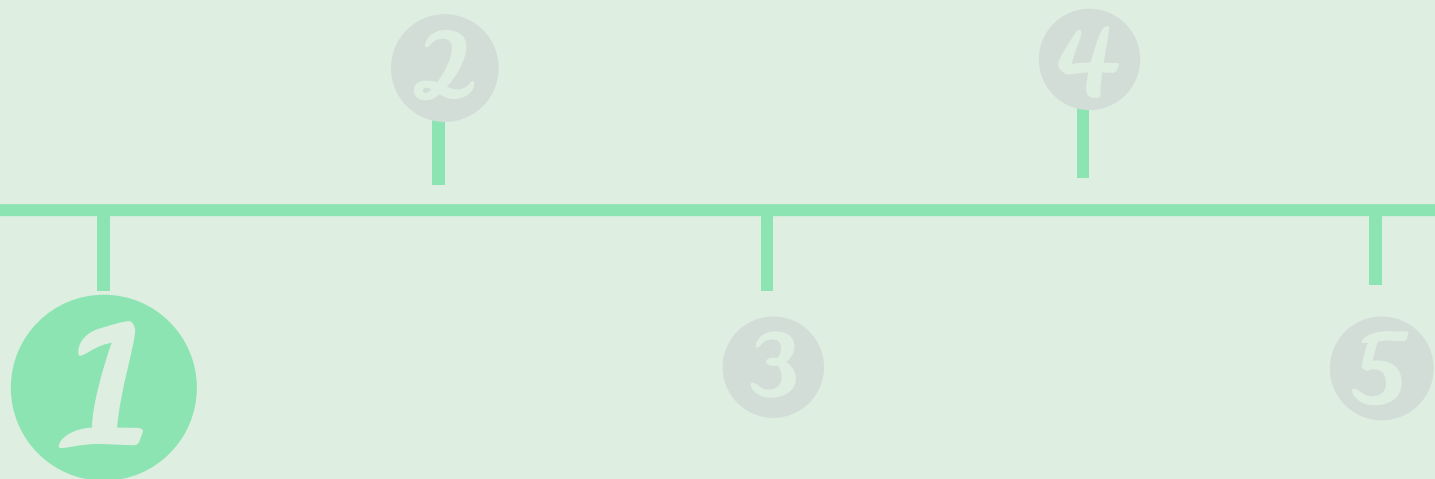
Questions for church leaders to consider (cont.)

- How would you, or others on the leadership team, respond to a complaint about misgendering or deadnaming?
- Do you clearly state anywhere (on your website e.g.) what your church's welcome is like for trans people?
- Are there any barriers to trans people being in positions of leadership?
- How would you hope to support a child in your congregation 'coming-out' as trans?
- How would you hope to support someone who is transitioning when they have already been part of the community?
- Does church leadership understand the hardships and danger trans people are exposed to? Does the church work for trans liberation?
- How would you handle a community member being transphobic, including if this was not directed towards a trans person?
- Are you able to comfortably use they/them or neopronouns?

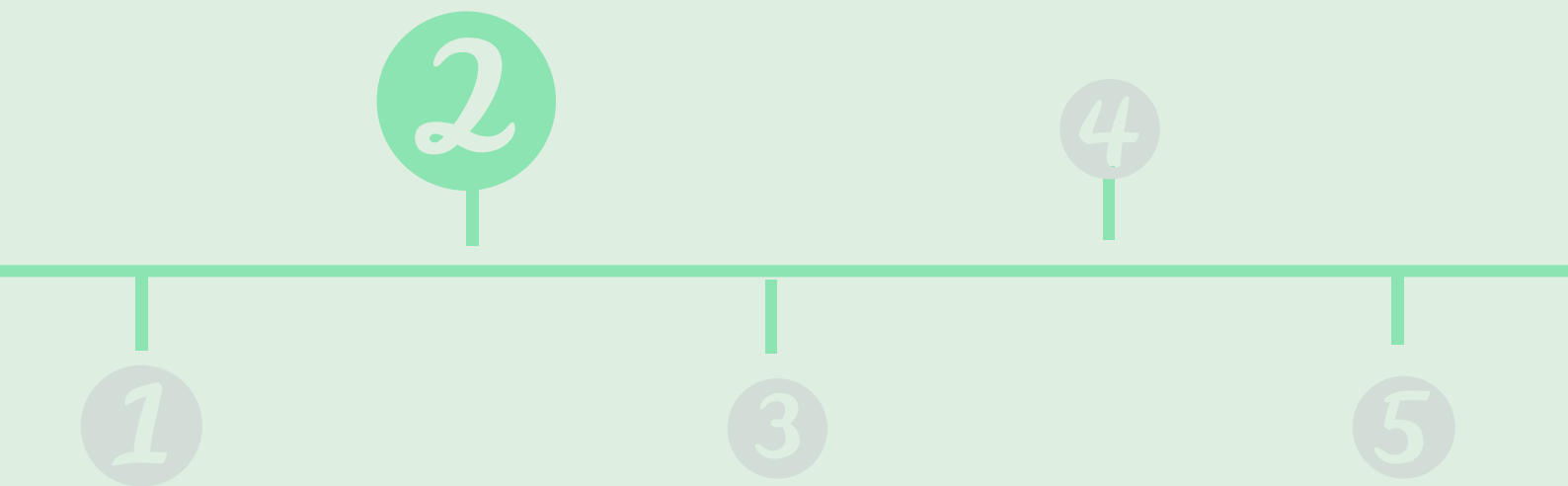
Spectrum of Trans Welcome

Now that you've considered some questions about your church, it's time to see where you fall on the Spectrum of Trans Welcome. Have a read through our descriptions of the churches on the next few pages and think about which church sounds most like yours. It's likely that none of them will be a perfect fit, but it will hopefully give you an idea of where you're at.

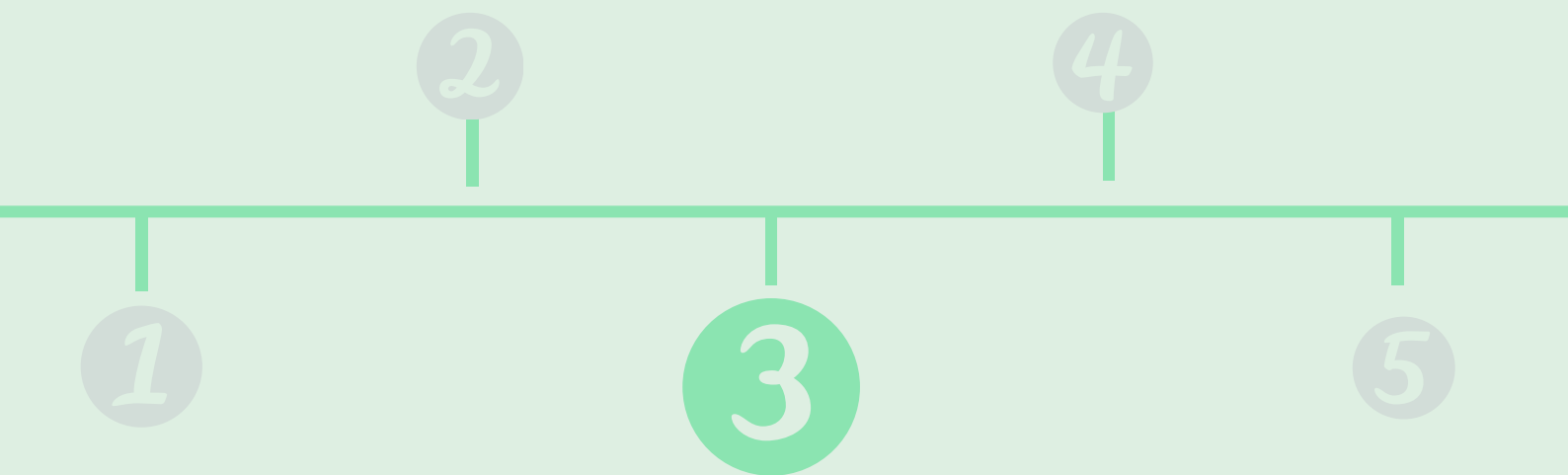
The list over the next few pages is only intended as a tool to help you be honest and describe your church - other words may be more accurate and more honest for you, so feel free to take what is helpful and leave what isn't.



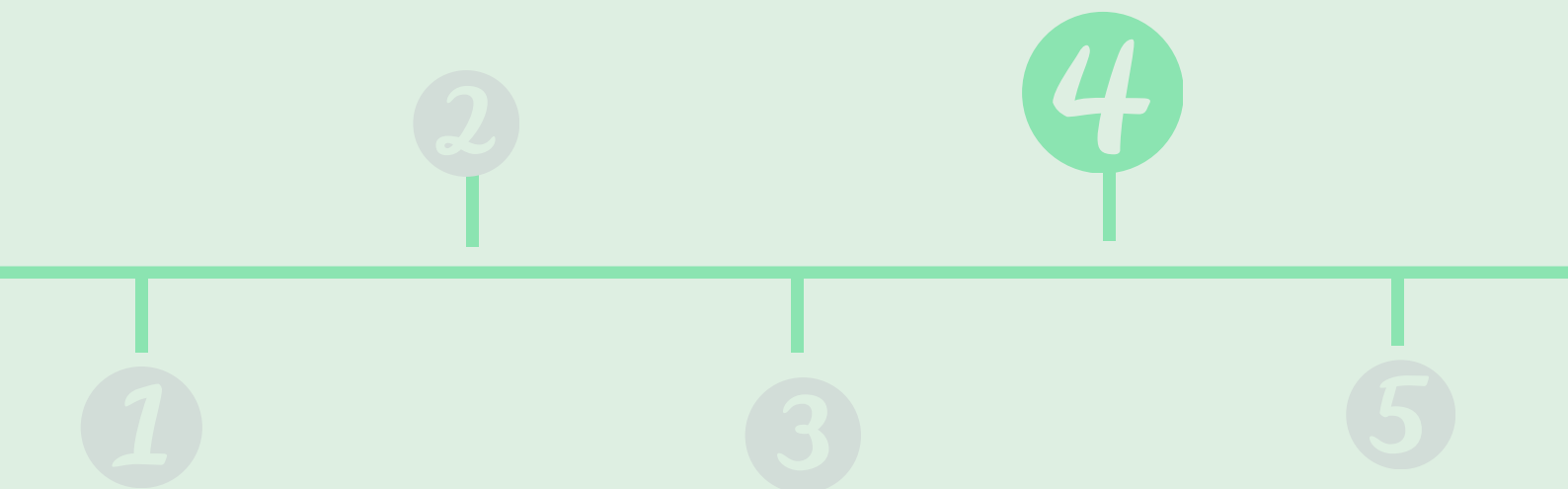
This church probably believes and declares openly that God created only two fixed genders, male and female, and that a person's gender should always align with the sex they were assigned at birth. In this church, trans identities may be treated as confusion, sin, or mental illness, and something to be 'prayed away' in 'conversion therapy'. A trans person in this church would be expected to use their birth name, original pronouns, and gendered spaces associated with their sex assigned at birth, and would likely face barriers to leadership, membership, marriage, and general participation in church life. They may face hostility and would probably be actively encouraged to detransition. This church may actively support organisations who seek to reduce trans rights, and campaign against trans inclusion themselves.



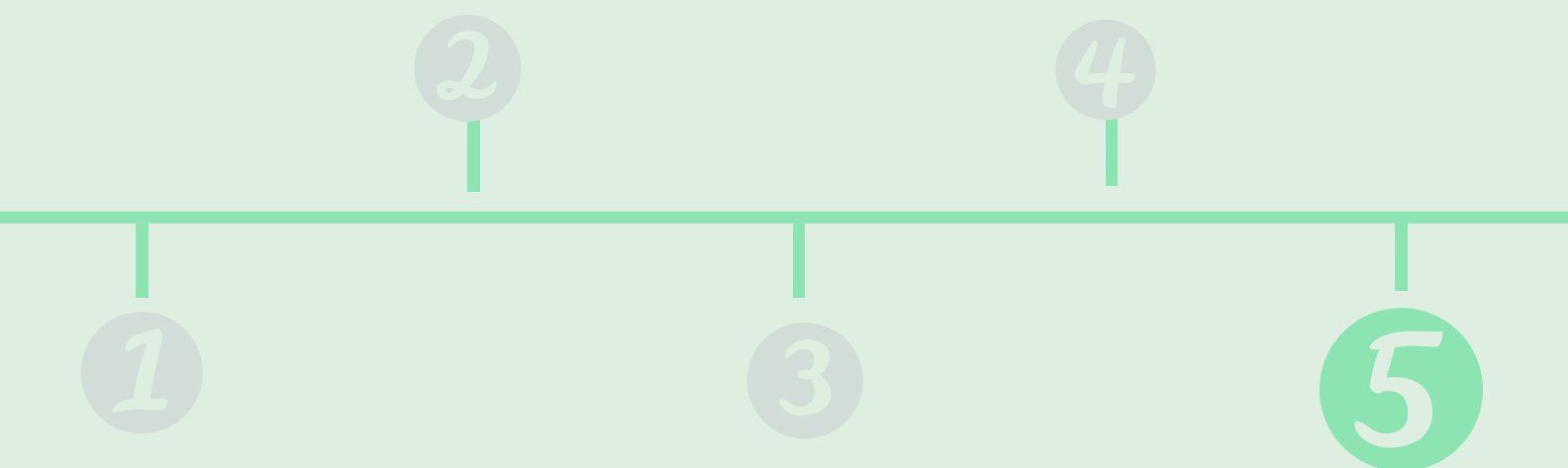
This church probably believes that God created only two fixed genders, but may be more hesitant to state that publicly, either online or in sermons. They probably believe that a person's gender should align with the sex they were assigned at birth and would likely see trans identities as coming from a place of mental illness or confusion. They may offer to pray for the trans person, and this may well include 'conversion therapy'. If a trans person came to this church, they might be welcomed and allowed to participate in the life of the church, but their identity may be shared with others without their consent, and there may be barriers to leadership, membership, and marriage. They may be misgendered by people in the congregation on principle, and not publicly respected or affirmed in their gender identity by the leadership. Others in the congregation may respect their pronouns publicly, but some of those may privately hold views that are not affirming of trans folk.



In this church it is likely that gender diversity of any kind is not mentioned, although cis-gendered experience is the passively assumed norm and events and sermons may still use gendered language. The minister may be personally either unsure of their theological stance on matters relating to trans people or they may be personally affirming when asked but disinclined to speak publicly about it. Individuals or couples who are trans are likely to be welcomed personally. Some members of the congregation will particularly welcome them with enthusiasm, but there may be individuals who complain to the minister about their presence or make it known they have a problem. It is unlikely the congregation will be generally au fait with current inclusive terminology but there will generally be no intent to cause offence. There may be other trans people in the congregation or there may not. There is nothing formalised preventing a trans person fully engaging with the life of the church, including access to leadership roles, but it is unlikely a newcomer will see any trans people in such roles.



In this church the leadership and many of the congregation believe in the affirmation of trans people and are comfortable both privately and publicly stating that belief. They might have trans people in their congregation, or they might not. They would likely offer a service or prayers for renaming if asked to, though it may not be something they think to offer. Members of the congregation and leadership are comfortable asking people their pronouns and offering their own. Some people in the congregation and leadership might feel out of their depth on matters to do with trans people and may not be au fait with all the terminology, but they actively try not to cause harm. Trans people may be unconsciously presented as “other” here, rather than “part of” the community, or in theology. Liturgy might not have been amended or changed to reflect the diversity of the congregation/or to use expansive language, but they would be open to if someone raised it.



This church is likely to have trans people in the congregation and might well have trans people on the leadership team too. There are no barriers to trans people's full participation in church life and sacraments. Trans affirmation is regularly talked about, and it is not unusual to hear trans theology mentioned in a sermon. Trans people would know who to talk to if they need support. People make sure to challenge transphobia, and there is a willingness to listen and learn, both in the congregation and leadership. In liturgy and prayers, it is common for everyone to feel included - in language and content. The church likely donates to pro trans organisations, and members of the congregation and leadership actively campaign for trans rights.

Further support and resources

Improving Your Church's Trans Welcome

Check out our supplementary resource "Improving Your Church's Trans Welcome" for more information and ideas!

honestchurch.org.uk

Student Christian Movement

If you are a student or recent graduate you can become a member of the Student Christian Movement and be part of a welcoming and affirming community. We also have a Trans Theology Group who meet online for discussion sessions on all sorts of theology with a queer and trans vibe, often with guest speakers, and socials too.

www.movement.org.uk/membership

Transfigured Mission

Transfigured Mission is a UK-based campaign led by transgender and non-binary Christians that advocates for the full inclusion, dignity, and rights of trans people within churches and wider society.

transfiguredmission.uk/

Trans Affirming Churches: How to Celebrate Gender-Variant People and Their Loved Ones

With the help of their many years of experience working with trans people negotiating their relationships with religious institutions, the authors have created this accessible, valuable guide that will educate and improve churches' relationship with trans people.

uk.jkp.com/products/trans-affirming-churches