

Adding personal pronouns to signatures and profiles

8 November 2023



Our position

Personal pronouns are the words we use every day to refer to each other, both in conversation and in writing. The most common relevant examples are 'he', 'she' and 'they'. We encourage everyone to take the simple step of adding their personal pronouns to their signatures and profiles. Adding pronouns to your signature or profile helps foster an inclusive working environment.

We encourage people to include their personal pronouns in their signatures and profiles as a matter of personal choice; this is not required by Civil Service policy.

Why add pronouns?

Including pronouns is a highly cost-effective action that brings an immediate inclusivity benefit for a wide range of people when their name or the names of others cannot be readily or correctly associated with gender. This includes ethnic minority, LGBTI+, and neurodivergent colleagues and customers.

It is no longer customary to use gendered titles such as 'Mrs', 'Miss', 'Ms' or 'Mr' in either written or spoken English language. Whilst this has removed an element of embedded misogyny, it also means there are fewer cues to help us know which pronouns to use when addressing new contacts. The introduction of hybrid working patterns also means we are increasingly making new contacts remotely rather than in person.

Knowing someone's pronouns in advance means we can avoid having to make assumptions about their gender based on name, voice or appearance, which if incorrect, might cause embarrassment or offence.

Adding personal pronouns is a measure that can help us all feel more confident of addressing each other appropriately.

Who Benefits?

This straightforward action benefits everyone. The Civil Service prides itself on including and serving people with a wide range of cultural and linguistic backgrounds as well as ethnic minority, LGBTI+ and neurodivergent people.

How is this done?

Pronouns can be added to some digital profiles on video conferencing and social media platforms: "[Username] (she/her)". It is not possible to add personal pronouns to profiles that are prepopulated from departmental employee databases, currently this includes staff MS Teams profiles.

Pronouns can be added unobtrusively to signature templates, as demonstrated here:



S [redacted] **(she/her)**
Inclusive Practice Team
Government People Group
Wellington Place Leeds, LS1 4AP
[redacted]@cabinetoffice.gov.uk
0782 [redacted]
Follow us @cabinetofficeuk