



*Everyone needs a home*

## **Homes First Society's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Two-Spirited (LGBTQ2S) Clients Policy and Procedures**

### **GENERAL PRINCIPLE:**

To ensure services to transgender and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Two-Spirited (LGBTQ2S) residents are provided in a manner that preserves their safety and dignity.

### **Policy:**

Homes First does not discriminate based on gender identity or sexual orientation. This includes (but is not limited to) people who identify as transgender, two-spirited, transsexual, gender-queer, gender-fluid, non-binary, intersex, agender, or questioning. It also includes (but is not limited to) people who define their sexual orientation as lesbian, gay, bisexual, pansexual, two-spirited, queer, asexual, or questioning.

Homes First is inclusive and not merely "tolerant." We support people to express their gender in the way that is most comfortable for them. Harassment and discrimination of any kind are not tolerated.

Homes First will accommodate choice of available sleeping arrangements for residents who are transgender or who have a non-binary gender identification.

### **Procedures:**

#### **Documentation:**

- When completing forms (e.g. intake, admission, housing plan, assisting with an application, etc.) staff are to ask the resident to identify their gender. They do not assume a person's gender based on their appearance.
- If the person wishes to use a name other than the one on their identification, staff respect this choice. In SMIS, the Log Book, the Resident File, and in all other forms of documentation, staff record the resident's preferred name. In SMIS, frontline staff record the resident's preferred name in the "First Name" box. They record the name on the resident's ID card under "Aliases." They record in the "Notes" section that the name on the resident's ID does not match the resident's gender identity. They record which name is on the ID and which name is the resident's preferred name.

#### **Using Names and Pronouns:**

- In speaking with a resident, or speaking about a resident with others, staff always use the resident's preferred name.

- Staff ask the resident which pronoun they prefer (he, she, they, or something else). Staff use this pronoun in all references to the resident. Staff communicate this preference to other staff to ensure they do not mis-gender the resident.

### **Confidentiality:**

- Staff keep information about a resident's gender identification confidential. In some cases, other residents may make assumptions. However, it is up to the resident whether or not to disclose this information.
- Staff may only share information about a resident's transgender status with the resident's permission. For example, to make a referral to a specialized program.

### **Clothing:**

- Transgender and LGBTQ2S residents are never asked to change the way they dress to better conform to others' expectations for their gender. As with all residents, they are required to wear appropriate clothing. For example, street clothing when they are in the shelter's common areas or outside, and bedclothes when they are sleeping in the dorms.

### **Toiletries and Hygiene:**

- Transgender shelter clients may have a need for toiletries and hygiene supplies that is greater than other clients. Frontline staff will provide additional supplies upon request.

### **Medications:**

- Staff are to treat hormones as any other medication. They are not considered a prohibited substance. If a shelter resident requests it, staff can store the resident's hormone medications in the front office. Otherwise, residents keep them in their locked storage.

### **Harassment and Discrimination:**

- All Homes First staff recognize that harassment based on gender identity or sexual orientation is discriminatory behaviour. This type of behaviour is not tolerated. Residents who harass, abuse, assault, or discriminate against other residents will be dealt with according to Shelter Standards service restrictions or the under the *Residential Tenancy Act*.

### **Referrals:**

- Housing Workers, Harm Reduction Workers, and other support workers are aware of LGBTQ2S-specific services in the community and provide appropriate referrals as needed.

### **Training:**

- Within six months of a new staff member's start date, the Human Resources Department schedules the new staff person for training in LGBTQ2S Cultural Competency and Trans Awareness. New staff also receive Anti-Racism/Anti-Oppression training.

### **Roles & Responsibilities:**

- **Staff** (frontline, housing, custodial, other staff, and volunteers) ensures all services are delivered to LGBTQ2S residents in a way that preserves their safety and dignity.
- **Management** ensures training takes place. They also ensure that all interactions, documentation, and bed assignments respect each resident's gender identity.
- **All residents** treat each other with respect.

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- As per Toronto Shelter Standards, 2016: Sections 10.3.3(a)(i).
  - Created on February 17, 2017.
  - Approved by HFS Governance and Nominating Committee on February 25, 2017; to be reviewed in 2022.
  - Approved by HFS Board of Directors on March 28, 2017.
  - This Policy applies to all staff and volunteers of Homes First.