



# **A Co-produced, Community-based Voice Service for Trans and Non-binary People:**

## **Service Users' Views on Terminology, and Pathology-based Language**

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# The service

**Trans and gender-diverse  
community in Greater  
Manchester, UK**

Indigo Gender Service (2024)



# Terminology

## Speech and Language Therapy for trans and non-binary people

- Current term used by the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT) is **Voice and Communication Therapy (VCT)**
- The term avoids language linked to pathology and was the title of the groundbreaking book by Adler, Hirsch, and Mordaunt (2006)
- Adopted by WPATH for speech and voice therapy (2011)
- Variations around the term are used:
  - Gender Affirming Voice and Communication (ASHA, n.d.)
- ***Little or no information on how service users were involved in coining these terms***

# Why consider terminology?

(Health Research  
Authority., 2024)

*Speech and Language Therapy (SLT) to  
Voice and Communication Therapy (VCT)*

De-pathologising language

Co-produced services:  
community values and understanding

‘cis’ clinicians' perspectives ≠  
community's understanding

“Trans people are the experts of their own  
experience”  
(Indigo Gender Service, 2024)

# Co-production session

- 2 evening co-production sessions
- Safe space: Relaxed seating with food and soft drinks provided
- 3 Speech and Language Therapists (SLTs), and 2 student SLTs
- Invited a total of 36 (15+21) service users who had completed VCT
- 6 service users attended (April 2024)
- 4 service users attended (October 2024)

# What did service users say about terminology?

## Themes raised by the group

- **'Therapy'** implies **disorder**
- **Distinctions** from 'Talking therapies' (Counselling) as this has caused confusion
- **Verbose**: Long and difficult to understand terms
- **Gender Affirming** was widely recognised, but some service users found the term 'patronising'.



# Conclusions

- No single term is acceptable to **all** service users
- Agreement that current terminology is confusing and/or unacceptable, but **voice** must be included
- Alternative terms to VCT suggested by Service Users were:
  - Voice exploration (3/10)
  - Voice coaching (3/10)

# Next steps

- Further service user groups to reach a consensus
- Difficult to get a representative sample as many service users are reluctant to share their views (may participate but won't consent to sharing of findings)
- Making the service more co-produced while maintaining the requirements of commissioner and a modern NHS funded service
  - Therapy Outcome Measures (TOMs) New non-pathology scale by Pert (Enderby & John 2025)
  - Gabbitas et al. (2025) reported on making TOMS into a Patient Reported Outcome Measure (PROM)
  - Feedback being sought from the RCSLT Clinical Excellence Network



# References

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