

## A. Gender neutral terms for professions in Cornish

## B. Non-binary pronouns in Cornish

A report by Dr Ken George

This paper is taken from a more detailed paper by Dr Ken George which covered an online discussion which he hosted in 2021 and subsequent email submissions. This paper is to provide summary information to Cornish language speakers and students for use of the language and reflects current thinking in the community. This is likely to continue to evolve and the Akademi Kernewek will issue updates as and when is useful.

### A. Grammatical gender of professions

This has been a subject of debate for some decades, and affects languages with grammatical gender (including Cornish) more than those without (notably English). There appear to be two diametrically opposed schools of thought. The first says that in order to recognize that women can do jobs which were formerly the preserve of men, it is desirable to have feminine forms of job-titles, and to use them in advertisements. For example, an advertisement for a teacher in Germany needs to mention both. The second school of thought says that job-titles should be gender-neutral; i.e. one should not be able to tell from the title whether the job is done by a man or a woman.

In the texts, feminine forms with **-es** are most frequently found tacked on to nouns which are spelled with **-or** and **-ador** in KK and SWF.

In order to accommodate both schools of thought, the Akademi Kernewek has decided to adopt the following approach:

1. Generally, to only use a gender-neutral ending for new entries for professions in the dictionary **-er / -ader**.
2. To provide a gender-neutral ending alternative to existing entries for professions in the dictionary using the suffixes **-er / -ader** as the default for current use.
3. To retain terms for professions already in the dictionary with masculine and feminine endings using **-or / -ador** (m.) and **-ores / -adores** (f.).

Generally, nouns ending in **-er** and **-ader** will be grammatically masculine, and used for anyone: e.g. **keryer** 'a shoemaker, male or female'; **an keryer koth** 'an old cobbler'.

The problem is felt to be less acute for nouns with suffixes **-ek**, **-yas**, and **-ydh**, which could be used for both human genders. The feminine form of **-ek** is **-oges** (found in only two words in the texts), and that of **-yas** is **-yades** (a malformation by Lhuyd). The form **-ydh** was made up by Nance. The Akademi will provide new entries for professions using the suffixes **-ek**, **-yas**, and **-ydh** alone, and will retain existing entries with masculine and feminine forms.

## B. Non-Binary Pronouns

Several suggestions for a set of non-binary pronouns were submitted which are summarised in the table below. Akademi Kernewek considers that there should be a clear basis for coining new pronouns. Set A were submitted following community use and research in Yeth an Werins. Set B in the table below is based on Irish, which has a few vestigial neuter forms. Set C is based on the forms the neuter pronouns in Proto-Celtic might have taken in Cornish if they had survived. Set D are developed from examples in the texts where the third person plural was used to refer to persons of unknown gender; e.g. *dallethens neb a vynno*, using the ending *-ns*.

	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
Independent	<b>hynn</b>	<b>ed, hed</b>	<b>hun</b>	<b>ins</b>
Possessive	<b>esom</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>eydh</b>	<b>agans</b>
Infixed	<b>'gh</b>	<b>'a</b>	<b>'h</b>	<b>'ns</b>
Demonstrative			<b>humma hunna</b>	<b>hemmans hennans</b>
Pronominal prepositions			<b>-es</b>	<b>-ans</b>
The verb <b>a'm beus</b>	<b>'gh</b>		<b>a'h teves</b>	<b>a'ns teves</b>

The intention is to provide options for Cornish speakers to use by devising such pronouns as far as possible within the existing grammatical framework.

### Supporting documents

- Non-binary pronouns – proposals 2021
- Non-binary pronouns – second set of proposals 2021