# Courts adopt “All rise, if able” to promote inclusivity amid tradition debate



In recent times, the phrase traditionally used in courts of England and Wales, "All rise!" has come under scrutiny for its perceived lack of inclusivity. An announcement from His Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service has suggested that this time-honoured command be modified to "All rise, if able," ostensibly to accommodate those who may be unable to stand, such as the elderly or disabled. Critics are divided; some view this change as an unnecessary formality, while others see it as a necessary step towards inclusivity.

The evolution of language in public institutions like the courts often reflects broader societal shifts. Detractors, including Conservative MP Jack Rankin, have labelled the adjustment as "unnecessary virtue-signalling," arguing that the focus should remain on urgent matters such as addressing the backlog of trials exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Richard Tice of Reform UK echoed this sentiment, asserting that tradition is being sacrificed at the altar of what he terms 'wokery'.

Supporting the change, officials like Nick Goodwin contend that even the addition of two words can significantly enhance accessibility within the justice system. The argument rests on the belief that language plays a crucial role in creating inclusive environments. However, this rationale raises questions: Does altering historical phrases genuinely affect a person's ability to engage with the judicial system, or is it merely a superficial adjustment designed to placate a vocal minority?

Indeed, the discussion surrounding language in public life extends beyond the courtroom. The NHS has faced similar controversies over terms like "birthing people," which has been critiqued for erasing the identity of women in healthcare narratives. Health Secretary Victoria Atkins has publicly condemned such terminology, asserting the need to maintain clear language that respects the identities of women and mothers. This dispute highlights an ongoing struggle between gender inclusivity and the preservation of traditional language, with both sides voicing concerns over identity and respect.

For instance, Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust adopted a gender-inclusive language policy, promoting terms like "chestfeeding" to cater to transgender and non-binary patients. While these changes are meant to enhance the healthcare experience for marginalized groups, they have instigated a backlash from individuals who feel that such language undermines women's rights and identity. Olympic swimmer Sharron Davies has been particularly vocal on this, calling for respectful debate on the significance of language surrounding women's health.

Moreover, the recent trend towards rebranding, as seen with Sadiq Khan's £6.3 million initiative to rename the London Overground, has faced criticism for being more of a public relations exercise than a substantive shift towards inclusivity. With names that commemorate various groups, including the Windrush generation and female footballers, the move arguably risks diluting the essence of the original identifiers and instead highlights the tendency of leaders to engage in performative acts of inclusivity.

As language evolves in diverse settings, it often invites scepticism. Observers may wonder whether changes are genuinely representative of societal needs or if they serve to reinforce the authority of those who enact them. The Law Society Gazette noted uncertainty on whether the traditional command ever genuinely impeded access to justice, suggesting that perhaps the offence taken by some may be contrived rather than grounded in lived experiences.

The rapid shift in how language is developed and utilised raises poignant questions about the implications of these adjustments. Ultimately, as discussions of gender, identity, and language continue to unfold, this becomes not just a matter of words—it's a question of societal values and the inclusivity we aspire to achieve. As we navigate this complex landscape, it is important that discussions remain grounded in respect and understanding, ensuring that the narratives we create include all voices without dismissing anyone's essential identity.

### Reference Map

1. Article [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-14699011/QUENTIN-LETTS-attack-language-grievance-seekers-chest-feeders-birth-people.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
2. Article [[2]](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/03/07/nhs-trust-south-yorkshire-maternity-role-birthing-people/)
3. Article [[3]](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2021/02/09/midwives-advised-chestfeeding-transgender-patients/)
4. Article [[4]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/health/nhs-chestfeeding-trans-language-change-reasons-b1154382.html)
5. Article [[5]](https://www.gbnews.com/health/sharron-davies-nhs-constitution-chest-feeder-video)
6. Article [[6]](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2024/04/27/nhs-to-limit-trans-ideology-with-new-constitution/)
7. Article [[7]](https://dailycaller.com/2024/02/19/hospital-says-trans-chestfeeding-comparable-womens-breast-milk/)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-14699011/QUENTIN-LETTS-attack-language-grievance-seekers-chest-feeders-birth-people.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/03/07/nhs-trust-south-yorkshire-maternity-role-birthing-people/> - An NHS trust in South Yorkshire faced criticism after advertising a maternity role using the term 'birthing people' instead of 'women'. Health Secretary Victoria Atkins condemned the language, urging the NHS to avoid erasing women from its vocabulary. Conservative MP Nick Fletcher labeled the term 'scandalous and cowardly', emphasizing its disrespect to women and mothers. The controversy highlights ongoing debates over inclusive language in healthcare settings.
3. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2021/02/09/midwives-advised-chestfeeding-transgender-patients/> - Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust implemented a gender-inclusive language policy in its maternity services, advising midwives to use terms like 'chestfeeding' and 'birthing parents' to support transgender and non-binary patients. The policy aims to improve access and health outcomes for marginalized groups, though it has sparked debate over its impact on traditional language and practices in maternity care.
4. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/health/nhs-chestfeeding-trans-language-change-reasons-b1154382.html> - The NHS is considering updating its guidance on terms like 'chestfeeding' to provide clearer language based on biological sex. Health Secretary Victoria Atkins is expected to announce changes to the NHS constitution, potentially prohibiting terms such as 'people with ovaries' and restricting transgender women from being treated in single-sex female wards. The move aims to clarify language and protect sex-based rights in healthcare.
5. <https://www.gbnews.com/health/sharron-davies-nhs-constitution-chest-feeder-video> - Olympic swimmer Sharron Davies welcomed changes to the NHS constitution that emphasize biological sex, criticizing terms like 'chestfeeding' as insulting. She argued that such language undermines women's rights and safety, particularly in healthcare settings. Davies called for open, respectful debate on the issue, highlighting concerns over the impact of gender-inclusive language on women's dignity and privacy.
6. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2024/04/27/nhs-to-limit-trans-ideology-with-new-constitution/> - The NHS plans to restrict transgender ideology in hospitals by banning terms like 'chestfeeding' and emphasizing biological sex in its constitution. Health Secretary Victoria Atkins announced changes to ensure clear language based on biological sex, including prohibiting references to 'people with ovaries' and restricting transgender women from single-sex female wards. The updates aim to protect women's privacy and dignity in healthcare settings.
7. <https://dailycaller.com/2024/02/19/hospital-says-trans-chestfeeding-comparable-womens-breast-milk/> - A UK hospital trust claimed that pharmaceutically induced lactation in transgender women is comparable to breast milk produced by biological women. The University of Sussex Hospitals NHS Trust stated that 'milk' produced by transgender women is 'comparable to that produced following the birth of a baby' by biological women. This assertion has sparked controversy and debate over the safety and efficacy of transgender 'chestfeeding'.