National Gender Identity Clinical Network Scotland - Frequently Asked Questions

Below are some resources GPs and other health professionals with gender patients may find useful.

If you have any comments or queries, please do not hesitate to contact us on nss.ngicns@nhs.net, call 0131 275 6192 or use the ‘Contact Us’ feature of our website; www.ngicns.scot.nhs.uk

We are always keen to hear feedback on our work, or to include any additional questions you may have – please feel free to contact us using the details above.

1. Terminology

What are the key terms?

‘Gender Dysphoria’ - A difference between one’s experienced/expressed gender and assigned gender/birth sex, causing or expected to cause significant distress or problems functioning, and has lasted at least six months.

‘Gender Identity’ - Refers to a personal sense of identity as masculine or feminine, and how one is seen by society. Most people have no issue with their gender, as it correlates with their sex assigned at birth. This is known as being ‘cisgendered’. Cisgender has its origin in the Latin-derived prefix cis, meaning "on this side of". Gender identity is a spectrum.

‘Transgender’ or ‘Trans’ - An ‘umbrella’ term which encompasses all those people whose gender identity or gender expression differs in some way from the gender assumptions their society made about them when they were born.

‘Transsexual’ - This term is used to describe someone who consistently self-identifies as the opposite gender from the gender they were labelled with at birth. Transsexual people often
experience intense gender dysphoria. Depending on the range of options and information available to them during their life, transsexual people may try to cope in a variety of ways. Many will manage (some while still children, most as young adults, and some much later in life) to find a way of transitioning to live fully in the gender that they self identify as. Many transsexual people take hormones and some also have surgery to make their physical bodies match their gender identity better. Transsexual people are just one of the many different kinds of transgender people.

‘Non-binary’ means any gender identity which does not fit within the binary of male and female.

2. Epidemiology

How large is the transgender population in Scotland?

Estimate approx. 0.6% population may identify as trans\(^1\) = 32,428 people (Population of Scotland: c. 5,404,700\(^2\))

Estimate 50% may be interested in medical interventions = 16,214 people

What is the waiting time like for treatment?

At the time of writing (April 2018), waiting times for GIC appointments were as follows:

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\(^1\) The Williams Institute, June 2016
\(^2\) Population of Scotland, as at mid-2016, accessed 21.03.2018
https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/bulletins/annualmidyearpopulationestimates/mid2016#main-points

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3. Legislation and Guidance on Treatment

What legislative requirements exist for provision of gender services?

NHS Scotland Gender Reassignment Protocol

Explanatory notes

The World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) Standards of Care
https://www.wpath.org/publications/soc
The Equality Act, 2010

- Defines gender reassignment as a “protected characteristic”
- This always applies when someone is seeking referral/treatment for gender dysphoria regardless of transition progress
- The person is protected against direct or indirect discrimination

Gender Recognition Act, 2004 (Under Review)

- Confers right for person to obtain a new birth certificate with their correct gender
- The person must be supported by way of a report completed by registered gender specialist AND GP evidence that they have been living as preferred gender for 2 years
- They do not need to undergo any medical interventions, but must have a diagnosis
- Enables the person to change pension and tax records
- Gives the person legal protection against their gender history being disclosed (may be a criminal offence)
- It is possible this will be replaced Scotland by a self-declaration system in the near future

4. Pathways

What treatments might a patient undergo?

Pathways (Natal Male) Some / all below;
- Facial hair removal – provided by salons, NHS funded
- Speech and language therapy
- Wigs
- Fertility Preservation
- Endocrinology
- Psychological therapies
- Genital reassignment surgery – Two opinions, Nuffield Brighton
- Other surgeries- Facial Feminisation Surgery, crycothyroid shave

Pathways (Natal Female) Some / all below;
- Fertility Preservation
- Endocrinology
- Psychological therapies
- Chest reconstruction surgery- one opinion, Pennine Acute, Manchester
5. Gender Identity Clinics (GICs)

**What is the role of the Gender Identity Clinics (GICs)?**

- Assessment
- Referrals for pathway interventions
- Treatment recommendation, initiation and titration
- Monitoring the patient’s hormone levels until stable
- Transition support
- Discharge but with open door for advice and access to re-engage
- Advice to primary care

**Where are the Gender Identity Services in Scotland?**

There are four main centres;

- Glasgow (‘Sandyford’) for people up to 16 ½ years (accepts self referral)
- Glasgow (‘Sandyford’) for adults (accepts self referral)
- Edinburgh (‘Chalmers’) for people over 16 ½ years (will be seen from 17th birthday, GP referral)
- Aberdeen has a pilot adult service at present (March 2018) (GP referral)
- Inverness has an adult service (GP referral)

For contact details and addresses, see [http://www.ngicns.scot.nhs.uk/services/gender-identity-clinics/](http://www.ngicns.scot.nhs.uk/services/gender-identity-clinics/)

6. Primary Care

**What is the role of Primary Care?**

- Referral to GIC
- Referrals to weight management / mental health / smoking cessation
- Prescribing and medicine administration
- Monitoring hormones once stable
- Follow up care post surgery
WORKING TOWARDS AN IMPROVED AND EQUITABLE NHS SERVICE PROVISION FOR GENDER SERVICES

- Adhoc investigations / referrals
- Initiating CHI change

Referral options (Children and Young People)
- Contact Sandyford to discuss the consultation
- Local services (incl. CAMHS) for support with any comorbid mental health issues
- Telephone consultation with parents is available

Scenario: A young person comes to you and discloses that they hold concerns about their gender identity

- Don’t panic!
- Say “thank you” – they won’t have told many people this, they must trust you
- Ask what name and pronoun you should use to address them.
- Check if that is all the time or in certain circumstances. If they don’t know that is fine, no need to press them.
- Ask what support they are looking for.
- Ask if they have spoken to their family and to school.
- Accept what they say about their gender. Ask about their mental health and how they are coping.
- Try to gain an idea about their expectations.
- Keep in mind that for many young people their identity development will be evolving and there will be things they don’t know.
- Try to not let the discussion develop into a “are you sure?” conversation.

Referral options

- If unsure please contact the Sandyford service to discuss the consultation
- If a young person is wishing to access NHS specialist help:
  - YP Gender Identity Service referral
  - Gender Counselling at the Sandyford
- If a young person is presenting with mental health difficulties refer to local CAMHS.
Referral options (Adult services)
- Refer to Local GIC.
- Local services for support with any comorbid mental health issues.

7. Surgery

Where does surgery take place?

Under current NHS contract arrangements, referral for these surgeries is via GIC and funded via NHS Scotland;

- Male to female genital surgery – Brighton (Mr Thomas and team)
- Female to Male genital surgery – London (Mr Ralph and team)
- Chest reconstruction (for people assigned female at birth) – Manchester (Miss Dabritz and team)

Aftercare


8. CHI Change

- Currently Community Health Index (CHI numbers) only allow for ‘male’ or ‘female’. This is unsatisfactory and is likely to change by 2020. CHI change is initiated via the GP practice
- The number of people identifying as ‘non-binary’ or ‘other’ gender identity is increasing
- When someone begins to transition it reasonable for them to ask you to help change their gender. Check titles are also amended
- Changing gender (and CHI) will enrol people into the screening programmes of that gender
- The right time to change this is when the patient asks you to.
- Contact practitioner services to arrange change of a CHI number. The patient will receive a letter asking them to confirm the request to change CHI.
Confidentiality

**What details can I share with other clinical staff?**

- Gender Recognition Act 2004, Section 22 states that it is a criminal offence to disclose someone's gender history without their consent, whether or not they have applied for a gender recognition certificate. You need the person's consent.

- All normal rules apply and please be aware of the risk of accidental disclosure.

- You should only disclose gender history where clinically essential and you have the person's consent.

9. **Name Change**

**What might I be asked for when someone is changing their name?**

Anyone in Scotland has the right to change their name whenever they wish. A letter from the patient’s doctor is required, stating either that the patient is ‘a female-to-male trans man who is living permanently as a man’ or ‘a male-to-female trans woman who is living permanently as a woman’. However, changing gender on a UK driving licence or UK passport does not change a person’s legal gender, which is tied to a UK birth certificate.

10. **Diagnostic criteria**

**ICD-10 Diagnostic criteria**

Transsexualism (F64.0) [GID in adults/adolescents] has 3 criteria:

1. A desire to live and be accepted as a member of the opposite sex, usually accompanied by the wish to make his or her body as congruent as possible with the preferred sex through surgery and hormone treatment.

2. The transsexual identity has been present persistently for at least 2 years.

3. The disorder is not a symptom of another mental disorder or a genetic, intersex or chromosomal abnormality.

Diagnostic manuals define attempt to draw together criteria to describe the experience of someone who wishes to change gender. This is an area that is evolving but, for now, the...
current ICD-10 criteria for adolescents and adults is as below: (Note that there is an implied binary model of gender at play in this criteria with no reference to non-binary people or any openness to gender fluidity)

**ICD-10 Diagnostic criteria**

‘Gender Incongruence’ in forthcoming ICD11 (due 2018)

Moving to new chapter: Sexual Health

‘Gender Dysphoria’ in DSM-V

*(currently sits in Disorders of Adult personality & development chapter in ICD 10)*

11. **Terminology**

*I'm nervous about using the correct pronoun and descriptors, what should I do?*

Asking people’s pronouns validates, shows respect and empathy. If in any doubt, please just ask trans identifying people which pronouns they prefer.

Some people prefer to use gender neutral pronouns (they/them/their); these are grammatically correct in the singular and plural *(Used to refer to a person of unspecified gender, Oxford English Dictionary)*.


Using the term ‘Assigned female/male (at birth)’ or the equivalent ‘natal female/male’ is unlikely to offend.

*What happens if I make a mistake in how I address someone?*

Acknowledge the error, apologise, give the person a chance to respond if they want to, and move on, e.g. ‘I’m sorry, I’ve just used your incorrect name/pronouns’.

12. **Further sources of information and support (also see**

Is there guidance available for treatment?

Endocrinology Guidance (due for update later in 2018)
http://www.ngicns.scot.nhs.uk/endocrine-guidance/

General Medical Council, guidance for doctors treating transgender patients:
http://www.gmc-uk.org/guidance/ethical_guidance/28851.asp

Gender Identity Research and Education Society (GIRES), GIRES
Transgender Awareness Training – e-Learning Course
E-Learning Module (Caring for Gender Non-Conforming Young People)

Medical and Dental Defence Union (MDDUS)
Link to Medical and Dental Defence Union (MDDUS) page on treating transgender patients

Royal College of General Practitioners, e-learning CPD module on gender variance:
(This is accessible by all health professionals on registration)
http://elearning.rcgp.org.uk/course/info.php?popup=0&id=169

Royal College of Psychiatrists, good practice guidelines for the assessment and treatment of adults with gender dysphoria, College Report CR181
http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/files/pdfversion/CR181

What other support is available?


Amnesty International  Being Transgender’ Podcasts and other information.
Amnesty International have produced a series of podcasts exploring what it means to be transgender or non-binary in the UK today. These podcasts can be viewed in iTunes or via Windows Media player.

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Gender Identity Research and Education Society  Information for trans people, their families and the professionals who care for them.  http://www.gires.org.uk/

LGBT Health & Wellbeing  http://www.lgbthealth.org.uk/  Promoting the health, wellbeing and equality of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people in Scotland. Please follow this link http://www.lgbthealth.org.uk/online-resources/ for a comprehensive collection of online publications, including What is transgender?  an information booklet for people with a learning disability and/or difficulty, the Transgender Workplace Support Guide, and the Gender Identity Booklet  an information booklet co-produced with the Scottish Transgender Alliance for transgender people in Scotland, their families and friends.

LGBT Helpline Scotland  Providing information and emotional support to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people and their families, friends and supporters across Scotland. Also offer support to those questioning or wanting to discuss their sexuality or gender identity.

http://www.lgbt-helpline-scotland.org.uk/

LGBT Youth Scotland  Youth and community-based organisation for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people in Scotland, providing access to help or advice when young people need it.

https://www.lgbtyouth.org.uk/

Me and T  Me and T is a community group for friends, family and partners of trans people.

https://meandtscotland.wordpress.com/

Mermaids  Family and individual support for teenagers and children with gender identity issues.

http://www.mermaidsuk.org.uk/
Scottish Transgender Alliance  Working to improve gender identity and gender reassignment equality, rights and inclusion in Scotland.  
http://www.scottishtrans.org/

Stonewall Scotland  Supports individuals to work out how they can make a difference for LGBT people at work, at home and in their communities, and with organisations to ensure they offer inclusive, equal and inspiring environments for LGBT people.  
http://www.stonewallscotland.org.uk/

TransparenTsees  Parent Support Group  
Glasgow: This parent support group runs on the first Thursday of the month from 6pm till 7.45pm. Venue is in the meeting room on the top floor at Sandyford Counselling and Support Service (SCASS) at Sauchiehall Street, 2-6 Sandyford Place, Glasgow G3 7NB. If you would like to find out more, please email transparentsees@gmail.com.

Edinburgh: The first East of Scotland Group was held on 1st February 2016, 6pm until 8pm, in Sofi’s Bar, 65 Henderson Street, Edinburgh EH6 6ED. The group is held on the first Monday of every month. Please contact transparentsees@gmail.com for more details.

Perth: Meetings are held on the 3rd Thursday of the month from 6.15 till 8.15pm, in Mindspace, 18-20 York Place, Perth, PH2 8EH. Please contact transparentsees@gmail.com for more details.

Elgin: The Elgin group meet on the 2nd Tuesday of the month from 6.15-8.15. The address is Moray Resource Centre, Maisondieu Road, Elgin, IV30 1RX. Please contact transparentsees@gmail.com for more details.

UK Trans Info  Works to improve the lives of trans and non-binary people

NGICNS Clinical Lead: Dr David Gerber  
Chair: Linda Graham  
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If there are other questions you would like included here, or if you have any other question or queries, please contact Aileen Ferguson on 0131 275 6192 or NSS.ngicns@nhs.net

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