

# TRANS GUIDES

## Issue 2

### Support for GPs and Trans Patients



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# INFORMATION FOR GPs



As more patients feel comfortable telling their GPs they are trans, practices may find they need additional information to ensure these patients are best supported. This guide has been designed to address some of the most common questions GP practices may have.

## What do we mean by ‘trans’?

‘Trans’ describes any person whose gender identity is different from the gender they were given at birth. It is an umbrella term which covers a range of identities, including trans women, trans men, and non-binary people. Trans people can dress or present themselves in any way. Being trans is linked to gender identity and a person does not need to have medical procedures or diagnoses in order to be considered trans.

## How do I refer to a patient who is trans?

If unsure how best to refer to someone, you can always ask them. Trans people are used to questions such as ‘which pronouns work best for you?’ or ‘what name do you prefer?’ It’s certainly better to ask than to have a guess and get it wrong! You can also use gender neutral language like ‘they’, ‘them’ or ‘this patient’, as well as using the person’s chosen name.

## **Trans Status Monitoring**

You can't know if a person identifies as trans by looking at them however, by including Trans Status Monitoring on new patient questionnaires you can give patients the opportunity to disclose this information. Trans Status Monitoring can be used in a number of ways to support patients, such as ensuring that all people with a cervix are offered screenings.

## **Do trans people need to be treated differently?**

All patients need to be treated differently, for example, people with allergies need to be treated differently than those without. Like many communities, trans people have specific needs and may experience barriers accessing healthcare. In most cases however, no special arrangements are needed for trans patient. Conditions such as the flu and broken bones affect everyone the same. Some trans people might prefer LGBT-specific services where they are available; specialist LGBT counselling or drug and alcohol services may be better equipped to meet their needs, so it's good practice to offer the patient a choice if possible.

## **Changing a trans patients name or gender marker on the system**

A trans person can change their name and gender marker at a GP practice simply by asking. Having a deed poll can make this easier for the practice and free templates can be found on websites such as [www.freedeedpoll.org](http://www.freedeedpoll.org). There is no such thing as an 'official' deed poll and a Gender Recognition Certificate is not required to change a person's name or gender marker. More information on changing a

trans person's name and gender marker at the practice can be found in the PDC NHAIS Interaction Procedures Guide. Trans peoples' right to change their name and gender marker at the GP is protected by the Gender Recognition Act 2004 and the Data Protection Act 1998.

## **Patient Centred Care**

The term 'trans' includes a diverse group of people. Not all trans people will require the same support or expect the same outcomes and there is no need to treat trans patients differently to other patients at the practice for the majority of their health needs. In some cases however, there will be occasions where a GP might need specific knowledge or understand to provide best for a trans patients' needs.

## **Dignity and Respect**

The most common thing trans people have told us is that they want a GP who accepts and understands them without them feeling judged in any way.

## **Referral to a Gender Identity Clinic (GIC)**

A patient may ask their GP for referral to a Gender Identity Clinic (GIC). There are no prerequisites for a GP to make a referral and guidelines can be found in the Interim Gender Dysphoria Protocol and Service Guideline 2013/14. If someone asks to be referred to a GIC, their GP should refer them directly to a clinic. There are 7 clinics in England and each have different waiting times so some individuals may wish to be referred to a particular clinic. For children and young people under 17 referrals are made to the Tavistock Clinic in London or the satellite service in Leeds.



## Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT)

If a patient chooses to take hormones then their GP is responsible for prescribing and monitoring these for the patient. This includes regular blood tests and monitoring of hormone levels. Guidelines for prescribing and monitoring masculinising and feminising HRT to trans people is available from ***Pride in Practice***. Due to long waiting times for GIC appointments, some people may use private services or buy hormones online before coming to their GP. Doctors have a duty of care to these patients and may offer them bridging prescriptions as described in guidelines from the Royal College of Psychologists and the GMC.

## Speech and Language Therapy

Trans people in Greater Manchester can access free voice and communication therapy courses offered by LGBT Foundation as well as those offered by a GIC.

We hope this guide will help GPs better support trans patients. We acknowledge however that this information is by no means exhaustive. To receive additional support on providing for the needs of trans patients, email [pip@lgbt.foundation](mailto:pip@lgbt.foundation) or visit [lgbt.foundation/pip](https://lgbt.foundation/pip)

# FOR TRANS PEOPLE



There are a range of reasons why trans people visit their GP practice and some of these can feel more challenging than others. It's important to know what rights you have and what support you are entitled to.

## Your rights

- You have the right to be treated with as much respect as any other patient at the practice
- You have the right not to experience discrimination or harassment
- You have the right to have your name and gender recognised at the practice
- You have the right to be referred on to services you require
- You have the right to receive prescribed treatment such as hormones
- You have the right to be offered cancer screenings relevant to you

Discrimination or harassment against a person who is trans is a hate incident and potentially a hate crime. You can report this to the police directly, to a hate crime reporting centre, or contact an organisation such as LGBT Foundation to report it on your behalf.

## **General Healthcare Needs**

For non-trans specific needs, you should expect the same standard of care as any other patient. Conditions such as the 'flu, cancer, mental health issues, and broken bones affect everyone. You should be offered a choice between a mainstream or an LGBT or trans-specific service where available, for example when it comes to counselling or drug and alcohol services.

## **Trans Status Monitoring**

You may be given the option to disclose that you are trans on new patient monitoring forms at the GP. This helps to ensure patients are given the correct information (e.g. regarding cancer screenings) and that trans patients' needs are considered alongside other patient groups when organisations are planning and delivering services. Whether you disclose or not is always up to you.

## **Gender Identity Clinic (GIC) Referral**

Not all trans people will need a referral to a GIC but for many people this is where information is most needed. GPs are required to refer you to a GIC without any conditions if you request it. If GPs are unfamiliar with the guidelines, direct them to the Interim Gender Dysphoria Protocol and Service Guideline 2013/14. A guide to this document written in plain English can be found online by searching for Action for Trans Health Interim Protocol

Guide. There are 7 GICs in England and waiting lists vary. Because of this, you may wish to be referred somewhere other than your geographically closest GIC. More information about these GICs can be found on the NHS Choices website.

## **Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT)**

GPs are responsible for prescribing HRT medication to trans patients where this has been recommended by a GIC. This includes monitoring your ongoing health through regular check-ups and blood tests if you begin HRT. GPs have a duty of care and should never withdraw your hormone prescriptions without good medical reasons. Before being prescribed hormones a blood test will be taken. This make sure the dosage of hormones is right for you and manage any existing health conditions that might be affected by HRT. This test is usually carried out at your GP practice. If you have been recommended for HRT by a private gender specialist, your GP should prescribe this for you and carry out regular blood and health checks. If you are self-medicating with hormones bought online or from a friend, you can ask your GP to book you in for regular blood tests or offer you a bridging prescription until you are formally prescribed medication by a GIC. Both of these are within guidelines from the Royal College of Psychiatrists.

This guide is designed to support trans people visiting their GP but it is by no means exhaustive. If you need to know more, call LGBT Foundation on **0345 3 30 30 30** or visit **[www.lgbt.foundation](http://www.lgbt.foundation)**



# LINKS & FURTHER INFO

## Legislation

### **Gender Recognition Act 2004**

Legally allows a person to change their legal gender in the UK. Makes disclosing a person's gender history without their consent an offence. Enshrines a person's right to change their name and gender marker at the GP.

### **Equality Act 2010**

Legally protects a trans person from discrimination in the workplace and wider society based upon the protected characteristic of 'gender reassignment'.

## Information from the NHS

### **The Interim Gender Dysphoria Protocol and Service Guideline 2013/14**

Guidance for GPs on providing care for Gender Dysphoria.

[www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/int-gend-proto.pdf](http://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/int-gend-proto.pdf)

## NHS Website

Contains information about Gender Dysphoria.

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/Gender-dysphoria](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/Gender-dysphoria)

## E-learning

### **Gender Variance**

E-learning for GPs - available on the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) website.

[www.elearning.rcgp.org.uk/gendervariance](http://www.elearning.rcgp.org.uk/gendervariance)

### **Reporting Hate Crimes**

Harassment and discrimination on the grounds of a person's sexual orientation, gender identity or trans status are hate crimes. These can be reported to the police in person, through a hate crime reporting centre, the LGBT Foundation website or at [www.gov.uk/report-hate-crime](http://www.gov.uk/report-hate-crime)

## Supporting Patients

### Accessing Gender Identity Services

Guide produced by Brighton and Hove CCG to ensure that trans people get the best possible healthcare from GPs and other services.

[www.gp.brightonandhoveccg.nhs.uk/supporting-patients-accessing-gender-identity-services](http://www.gp.brightonandhoveccg.nhs.uk/supporting-patients-accessing-gender-identity-services)

### PDS NHAIS Interaction Procedures Guide

Practical support on changing a patient's name and gender marker on the GP practice computer systems.

### Action for Trans Health's Interim Protocol Guide (from a patient's perspective)

[www.actionfortranshealth.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/ATH-Interim-Protocol-Guide-1.pdf](http://www.actionfortranshealth.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/ATH-Interim-Protocol-Guide-1.pdf)

## Transforming Outcomes

A trans needs assessment designed to better support the needs of trans people in accessing services.

[lgbt.foundation/transformingoutcomes](http://lgbt.foundation/transformingoutcomes)

## Information from Third Sector Organisations

### LGBT Foundation

A national charity delivering wide range of services to LGBT communities including:

- Pride in Practice - LGBT support for primary care services
- Trans Programme - support for trans people

[www.lgbt.foundation](http://www.lgbt.foundation)

### Action for Trans Health (ATH)

An organisation that seeks to improve trans people's access to healthcare through advocacy, campaigning and training, for and by trans people.

[www.actionfortranshealth.org.uk](http://www.actionfortranshealth.org.uk)

## **Gender Identity Research and Education Society (GIRES)**

A community interest company that delivers programmes and offers support, development and training for trans people and services that work with trans people.

[www.gires.org.uk](http://www.gires.org.uk)

## **Mermaids**

An organisation that works specifically with young gender diverse people and their parents.

[www.mermaidsuk.org.uk](http://www.mermaidsuk.org.uk)

## **The Proud Trust**

An organisation that works to aid young LGBT people through events, workshops, training and research.

[www.theproudtrust.org](http://www.theproudtrust.org)

## **UK Trans Info**

A national charity focused on improving the lives of trans and non-binary people in the UK. It offers legal and medical information for to trans people.

[www.uktrans.info](http://www.uktrans.info)

There are many groups, bodies and organisations doing fantastic work to support trans people and this list is by no means exhaustive.

If you need further support or information you can contact LGBT foundation on **0345 3 30 30 30** or visit **www.lgbt.foundation**

For more information about Pride in Practice, a quality assurance support service designed to strengthen and develop the relationship between GP Practices, Dentists, Pharmacies and Optometrists visit **lgbt.foundation/prideinpractice**

We believe in a  
fair and equal  
society where all  
lesbian, gay,  
bisexual and trans  
people can achieve  
their full potential.

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**0345 3 30 30 30** or emailing **info@lgbt.foundation**

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