

Trans Health 101



Defining transgender

- When a person has a difference between their **sex registered at birth** and their **gender identity**, they have **gender incongruence** and may identify as **transgender**.
- Some people identify as a **transgender man** or **transgender woman**. Others may identify as a **non-binary person** when their gender identity is neither exclusively 'male' nor 'female'.



Transition

Transition is the process by which a person may bring their **gender expression** or physical characteristics in line with their gender identity. A person may undertake none, some, or all of the below:

- **Social transition**
Modifying external appearance (e.g. clothing, make up, concealment of breasts). It may involve adopting gendered roles and behaviours.
- **Medical transition**
Gender Affirming Hormone Therapy (GAHT) involves administering sex steroids at safe levels appropriate for the transition goals of the person. These may include:
 - "Puberty blockers": GnRH analogues
 - Masculinising GAHT: Testosterone
 - Feminising GAHT: Oestradiol with or without GnRH analogue
- **Surgical transition**
Surgery that brings the body into alignment with the person's gender identity. Surgical routes may differ based on preference and suitability. Options include:
 - Masculinising: Chest masculinisation (AKA top surgery), metoidioplasty, phalloplasty
 - Feminising: Orchidectomy, vaginoplasty, vulvoplasty, breast augmentation

For more information regarding trans people and SACT, [visit this webpage](#).

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Useful Terms

- **Gender**
A social construct informed by the norms, roles, and behaviours that we attribute to being masculine, feminine, or third gender.
- **Gender affirming care**
Refers to medical, psychological, and social interventions that are provided to transgender and gender-diverse individuals, to help align their physical and social characteristics with their gender identity. Replacing the terms 'Sex Reassignment' and 'Gender Reassignment'.
- **Gender dysphoria**
The discomfort felt between one's gender and their sex registered at birth. This may be experienced mentally, physically, or socially.
- **Gender expression**
The way in which a person expresses a gender identity, typically through their appearance, dress, and behaviour.
- **Non-binary**
A term to describe a gender identity that does not fit within the traditional categories of being exclusively male or female. Non-binary individuals may identify as a combination of both genders, neither gender, a different gender entirely, or as having a gender identity that is fluid and may change over time.
- **Sex**
The underlying biological characteristics including genitalia, chromosomes, and secondary sexual characteristics (such as breast development and facial hair growth).
- **Sex registered at birth**
The declaration of sex made at birth by the clinical staff who delivered a baby, usually based on observable sex characteristics.
- **Top surgery**
Bilateral mastectomy with masculine chest reconstruction undergone as gender affirming care.
- **Transgender**
An umbrella term for a person whose gender identity differs from the sex they were registered at birth.
- **Transgender man / Trans man**
A person who was registered female at birth but has the gender identity of male.
- **Transgender woman / Trans woman**
A person who was registered male at birth but has the gender identity of female.

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Inclusive Language for Consultations with Trans Patients



Purpose

The process of getting to know transgender and non-binary patients may take additional consideration to build a positive rapport. Transgender patients often look for cues about the safety of their environment before revealing information and being transgender or non-binary. Using inclusive language can be a useful way to demonstrate safety for these patients.



Pronouns

Pronouns are used to replace a noun in a sentence. Supporting an individual's personal pronouns is important. Common ways to ask a person's pronouns include:

"Hi, my name is _____ and my pronouns are ___/___, can I ask yours?"

"May I ask your name and pronouns?"

"Can I ask which pronouns you use?"

Personal pronouns are most often shared in the grammatical subject/object method i.e. he/him, she/her, they/them. Use of 'they' as a gender neutral singular pronoun has been around since the late 1300s. A rising feature of pronoun use is the sharing of multiple pronoun forms that someone is comfortable with using (e.g. she/they).



Appropriate Language

Inappropriate language targeted at transgender people tends to focus on their sex registered at birth as a means to deny their gender identity. A common example is referring to a trans woman as a 'biological male'.

There can also be incorrect grammatical uses of transgender terms and language. Transgender is an adjective and should follow this grammatical use. If you are not sure if you are using the word correctly, consider substituting in the word 'tall' to check your grammar. For this reason, the following examples are not appropriate: transman, transgendered man.

Some terms develop over time and previously accepted terms can fall out of favour. Currently acceptable terminology for transgender people is summarised below.

Inappropriate	Use instead	Appropriate
Transsexual		Transgender
Sex change		Transition
Male to female		Trans woman
Female to male		Trans man
Sex change operation		Gender affirming surgery

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Disclosure

To be clear of potential prescribing risks, we must ascertain if the patient has undergone or is presently undergoing gender affirming care. Care must be taken when asking these questions to keep them precise and relevant to avoid being seen as inappropriately curious. Visible markers such as rainbow badges, lanyards, inclusive intake forms can provide signals of safety that promote disclosure.



Legal Protections

If a trans patient has applied for or is in possession of a Gender Recognition Certificate (GRC), they receive certain protections under UK law. This certificate is achievable through the Gender Recognition Act (2004) and allows a patient to update their legal gender on their birth certificate and will affect aspects of marital law, state benefits, and pensions.

- **A person with a GRC is protected against people working in a professional capacity revealing their transgender identity without their consent**
- **A patient does not need to present their Gender Recognition Certificate and it may be considered discrimination if they are asked to see it**

These two protections together create a circumstance whereby we must act with respect of all trans people and gain consent from each individual before sharing their identity. This is an appropriate model of best practice.

The Equality Act 2010 affords transgender and non-binary people protection from discrimination, harassment, or victimisation in employment, and as users of private and public services. This community is covered by the protected characteristic of “gender reassignment” which protects those proposing to undergo, undergoing, or having undergone transition. The protection of non-binary people was confirmed under the Equality Act by case law.



Patients' Records

In England and Wales, when transgender patients re-register their gender on their patient record, they are provided with a new NHS number and clinical record. The newly allocated NHS number will not be linked in any way to the patient's previous NHS number. This method conceals the individual's sex registered at birth, affects their screening invitations, and creates a potential situation by which their clinical history may be incomplete if not completely transferred to the new record.

In Northern Ireland, the Health and Care Number (H&C Number) is the equivalent of the NHS number in England and Wales.

In Scotland, the Community Health Index (CHI) number is the equivalent of the NHS number in England and Wales. When the CHI number is requested to be changed by a trans person, a new medical record is created with a CHI number which reflects the trans patient's gender. The old record and the new record are initially linked and GPs are encouraged to transfer notes. If a patient chooses they may refuse this link between the new and old records.

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