



# Support services for trans young people in Dumfries & Galloway

A guide for trans young people and their  
parents & carers in Dumfries & Galloway

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## About this guide

This guide was produced in Dumfries and Galloway as part of a partnership project involving LGBT Youth Scotland, Learning Link Scotland, trans young people, parents & carers of trans young people and representatives from a wide range of organisations that provide relevant support for trans young people.

The project aimed to make it easier for trans, non-binary and gender non-conforming young people and their parents/carers to access advice and services. It was intended that this information would enable parents and carers to support young people to thrive in school, engage well in learning, manage their own health and wellbeing, and navigate challenges associated with their gender identity.

During the project, young people met with professionals from services who provide particularly relevant support for trans and non-binary young people. The programme covered 5 key areas: **Coming out, Schools, Local Healthcare, Gender Identity Services, Safety**. Young people developed questions for each professional to guide the discussion around the support and guidance available from their organisation.

This guide was produced collaboratively and shares the Questions and Answers explored in the project discussions as well as information about other services and a wide range of useful resources, links and videos. The term 'trans' is used throughout, but the guidance is intended to be of use to anyone exploring aspects of their gender and their parents and carers. The guide is very much a work in progress and we're hoping to update it as and when we can.

We hope that this resource will enable parents, carers and professionals to better support trans, non-binary and gender non-conforming young people in school, the wider community and in their health and wellbeing. We're very grateful to all those who have provided input to the project.

***"It was good – a lot of questions were answered"*** (trans young person)

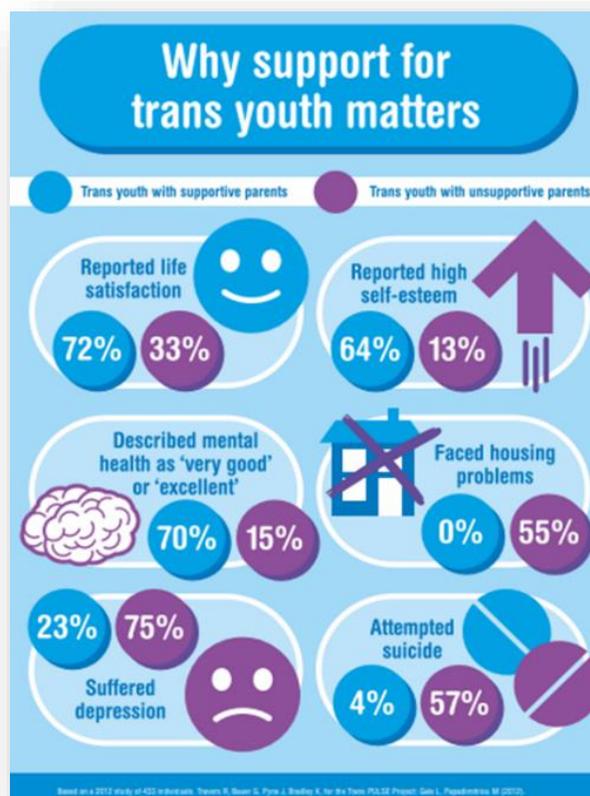
***"A great resource, reflects the experience we have had in supporting our child"*** (parent)

***"A really good project, reaching out to young people and parents/carers"*** (professional involved in the programme)

## Information for parents and carers of trans young people

Having supportive parents or carers can have a massive impact on the life of a trans young person and outcomes for their future as this research from the US shows.<sup>1</sup>

Everyone will feel different to hear that their child is transgender or that they are experiencing 'gender dysphoria'. If you feel upset, worried, or even feel grief, it doesn't make you a bad parent. The fact that you're reading this guide means you are supporting your child. There are many services that can help you and them to manage the challenges of this situation.



## Gender dysphoria

Dysphoria, also referred to as 'gender dysphoria' or 'gender incongruence', refers to feelings of distress, dissociation and/or alienation from our body, which can have negative outcomes on mental health if not addressed. It is linked to a person's sense of self in relation to their gender. It is not uncommon<sup>2</sup> to experience gender dysphoria at some point in life; for some, dysphoria develops from a young age, whereas for others it develops during puberty and into adulthood.

The factors that interact in the onset and development of dysphoria are not yet fully understood. However, research suggests that some biological and social factors can increase the chances of experiencing dysphoria.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Rob Travers et al, Impacts of Strong Parental Support for Trans Youth (Children's Aid Society of Toronto and Delisle Youth Services, 2012)

<sup>2</sup> Esther L. Meerwijk & Jae M. Sevelius, Transgender Population Size in the US (American Journal of Public Health, February 2017)

<sup>3</sup> Stephen M Rosenthal, Transgender Youth: Current Concepts (Annals of Pediatric Endocrinology & Metabolism, December 2016)

Puberty, in particular, seems to be a key factor in the development of dysphoria and, for people who experience dysphoria from a young age, puberty can worsen its symptoms<sup>4</sup>.

Puberty is a stage of life marked with transitions, both physical and social. As we leave childhood behind, our bodies experience dramatic changes which are often uncomfortable, distressing and sometimes painful, and they can trigger feelings of disconnection and alienation, impacting our sense of self. In addition, puberty also tends to coincide with significant social transitions, such as the transition from primary to secondary school or the development of sexual and romantic attraction to other people. Therefore, puberty is a key stage in the development of our sense of self and how we relate to the world around us.

Research suggests that feelings of dysphoria can disappear or reduce significantly for many young people as they get older, gain more control over their body, and manage their social relationships<sup>5</sup>. However, for some people, dysphoria is persistent and pervasive throughout their life. This can affect mental health and, if not addressed, it can also have negative consequences to physical health (e.g. development of eating disorders, self-harm, depression, agoraphobia, etc.) For many people for whom this is the case, transitioning socially and/or medically can prevent or minimise negative outcomes on mental health<sup>6</sup>.

### **Do young people need to transition if they experience dysphoria?**

No, not necessarily. Experiencing dysphoria is very common and is not, by itself, an indication of an adult trans identity (although it can be). For many people, dysphoria is reduced or disappears completely a few years after puberty. Other people experience dysphoria throughout their lives but develop strategies to cope with it without the need for transition. For anyone experiencing dysphoria, having active support to explore their gender identity can make a huge difference to their health and wellbeing in both the short and the longer term.

### **Coping with dysphoria**

Young people struggling with dysphoria can be supported to ask for a referral to see a gender specialist and, if later on down the line, they find that their dysphoria

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<sup>4</sup> Jack Drescher & William Byrne, Gender Dysphoric & Gender Variant Children & Adolescents: Summarizing what we know and what we have yet to learn (Journal of Homosexuality, December 2012)

<sup>5</sup> Riittakerttu Kaltiala-Heino et al, Gender dysphoria in adolescence: current perspectives (Adolescent health medicine and therapeutics Journal, March 2018)

<sup>6</sup> Tracy A. Becerra-Culqui, Mental Health of Transgender & Gender Nonconforming Youth compared with their peers (Pediatrics Journal, May 2018)

has reduced or have found helpful coping strategies, they can take their name off the list. The waiting list for the Gender Identity Clinic (see below for more information) is long and varies across different services. It's better to be on the list and have access to an appointment should they need it than not be on the list at all and potentially experiencing worsening symptoms. For this reason, an early referral to the Gender Identity Clinic is always a good idea.

Strategies for dealing with dysphoria are individual – what works for some might not work for others. As a rule, tackling and adjusting social expectations can be very beneficial to reduce feelings of dysphoria in both male-bodied and female-bodied people. This is not easily done in an extremely gendered society that reinforces sexist stereotypes. All young people can benefit from having opportunities to develop a range of different skills and hobbies, to express themselves through their visual appearance, to develop the ability to challenge sexist expectations and norms, as well as increase their knowledge about their own bodies.

Youth groups also give young people opportunities to expand their peer group and can be helpful to develop a wider support network, particularly groups that provide a space for young people to explore their sexual orientation and gender identity.

One to one support or counselling can be very beneficial. A range of services are available in Dumfries and Galloway and are listed later in this guidance.

### **What's the difference between social and medical transition?**

Transitioning is a process that can take anywhere between several months and many years. Social transition may include informal or formal changes to name and pronouns and presenting yourself in your identified gender. Medical transition may include hormone therapy, surgeries, speech therapy. There is more about this in the Gender Identity Services section below.

## **General resources for parents and carers**

- <https://mermaidsuk.org.uk/> Mermaids is a national charity supporting gender-diverse children and young people until their 20th birthday, as well as their families and professionals involved in their care.
- [transparenTsees@gmail.com](mailto:transparenTsees@gmail.com) email, telephone and peer support for parents and other family members
- [She/He/They](#) by Shirley Young is documents the challenges of gender transition for both parents and siblings.
- [Ryland's Story](#) a video documenting the experience of the Whittington family
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MitqjSYtwrQ> Short animation on the brain and trans identity

## Coming out

Coming out as transgender is a personal choice; no-one should feel forced to 'come out' if they don't feel ready. Each individual should make their own choices about when and who to tell. Some trans young people may want to be open with others about their transgender identity and history. Others treat their gender history as private, and do not disclose this to others. If trans young people don't know that their family, friends or teachers are 'trans-friendly', they may assume that, if they come out, people will reject them. This, along with negative media messages and restrictive gender stereotypes, means that many transgender young people delay 'coming out' or speaking to someone about how they feel, which can have a negative impact on mental health. It can be very difficult to transition if you're not out to the people you're living with, so accessing support to come out safely is an important first step towards transition.

## Services

### Relationships Scotland

<https://www.relationships-scotland.org.uk/>

#### **How can Relationships Scotland support trans young people and their parents/carers?**

Relationships Scotland supports individuals, couples and families experiencing relationship difficulties. Counselling support is available to people over the age of 16. For a trans young person over the age of 16, support from Relationships Scotland can help them to manage challenges around coming out to family and managing relationships.

Support from Relationships Scotland could also be very useful for a family member who is finding it difficult to manage their relationship with a trans young person in the family and would benefit from the opportunity to explore their feelings in a confidential space.

A trans young person's family might be at a different stage in their journey of understanding and accepting the young person's identity. Intergenerational mediation can offer a way towards a better alignment of these journeys.

### **How do I get an appointment with Relationships Scotland?**

You can call them or email them to set up an appointment. Once you make contact the service will explain how they work, when they have appointments available and how long it will take to arrange an appointment. There is a suggested donation for each session, but if you cannot afford this, you will be asked if you can make a donation. No one is ever refused services if they cannot afford to make a donation.

### **What happens at an appointment?**

The first appointment will last about 50 minutes. You'll be asked what you want to explore, and subsequent sessions will build upon this, depending on what you need. Counsellors are respectful and non-judgemental, and the service is fully confidential.

### **How can Relationships Scotland help a trans young person to manage their fear around coming out, or negative reactions after they have come out?**

Counsellors will work with the young person at their own speed to explore fears, feelings, and experiences. Everyone is treated with respect, as a human. Counsellors work with people to ensure they understand that it's ok to NOT feel ok and to make space to explore those feelings.

## **Youth Enquiry Service**

<https://www.facebook.com/YouthEnquiryService/>

### **How can the Youth Enquiry Service support trans young people and their carers?**

The Youth Enquiry Service provides a wide range of issue-based groups and opportunities, drop-ins and one-to-one sessions for young people aged 12-25. As well as weekly issue-based groups at the YES base in Dumfries, Youth Information Workers provide support at every secondary school in the region. The YES workers can help trans young people to explore challenges associated with coming out at home, to friends and at school as well as any other issues they might want to discuss in a 1:1.

### **How does a young person get an appointment with a Youth Information Worker?**

In school, the young person can go and speak to the Youth Information Worker at lunch time or ask a teacher if they can organise a 1:1 on their behalf.

### **How can YES help a trans young person to manage their fear around coming out, or negative reactions after they have come out?**

Workers will support young people in a safe and accepting environment to explore concerns, consider options and challenge negative responses. It can be helpful for

a young person to think about the impact of coming out on those around them and discuss any worries about that first.

## LGBT Youth Scotland

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

### **Youth groups**

LGBT Youth Scotland provides youth groups in Dumfries for LGBTI young people and allies aged 13 to 25

- Phoenix: Tuesdays 6pm to 8pm (age 13 – 17)
- Up N Oot: Thursdays 7pm to 9pm (age 18 – 25)
- Spectrum: Every 1st Saturday of the month, 1pm to 3pm (trans young people and allies age 13-25)

### **One to one support**

We provide 1:1 support to young people aged 13-25 who would like to explore challenges around their sexual orientation or gender identity. We can arrange a 1:1 in school, or at our youth space in Dumfries.

Digital 1:1s for young people aged 13-25 are available through our [LiveChat](#) service on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, 6-8pm.

### **Resources and advice**

LGBT Youth Scotland has a wide range of resources and information on our [website](#), covering everything from advice for parents of LGBT people to bullying and hate crime reporting.

## Coming out resources

- LGBT Youth Scotland [coming out guides](#)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ll888Z31moE&feature=youtu.be> Short video made by British trans man Alex Bertie

# Schools

Schools have a duty to support transgender pupils and ensure that they are as safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected and included as any other pupil.

LGBT Youth Scotland has provided training and guidance on supporting Trans pupils to teachers from all secondary and many primary schools in Dumfries and Galloway. If a young person needs additional support within school to learn or engage in school life, they or their parent/carer can speak to a teacher they trust or contact LGBT Youth Scotland for more information and/or support.

## **What should trans young people and their parents/carers expect from schools around appropriate provision of toilets and changing facilities?**

Firstly, young people should expect that the school will listen to their views. If a young person would like to use the toilets/ changing rooms that align with their gender identity there is no reason why this cannot be arranged. Some schools may need time to make decisions. However, they should find a place where the young person feels comfortable using the facilities as soon as possible, as this can have an impact on their ability to learn and general wellbeing.

In some circumstances, usually depending on the facilities available and needs of the pupils, the school may need to arrange for a trans young person to use the changing rooms before and/or after other pupils. A young person may prefer to use an accessible toilet and changing room, and the school should make this straightforward, ensuring that there is welcoming and inclusive signage. It's important that young people tell the school what they need and keep talking to them if they are experiencing any challenges.

## **How can young people challenge misinformation or outdated information that arises in class, without offending teachers or being perceived as challenging?**

Schools want to do the right thing and provide up to date information, but they may not have the right information available to them or may not know about the experiences of trans young people.

If a young person wants to discuss something that came up in a class, it's likely to be better to do that on a one to one basis before or after a class. We'd recommend that a young person asks if they can chat to the teacher and find out when would be a good time for the chat to happen. Teachers don't always understand how difficult it can be for trans pupils, so they need pupils to share information with them, so they're better informed. It's always better to say something than nothing at all. Don't assume that teachers aren't interested, they

are. Just remember that they may have many priorities to balance on a day to day basis, so be patient and remind them if necessary

If the conversation doesn't go well, a young person can speak to a pupil support teacher or head of house to help decide what to do next. They can also speak to their peers in the Equalities Group, LGBT+ Group or Gender Sexual orientation Alliance (GSA). It might be that some more training is needed for staff in the school.

### **What support could a school provide to a young person who is not 'out' at home, or whose parents/carers don't support their identity?**

The school's highest priority is a young person. If they are not 'out' at home, or not accepted at home in their true gender, a school can still support the young person, so it's important to ask for help.

If a young person's gender identity and expression is having a direct impact on their wellbeing, then teachers can make decisions that they feel are in the best interests of that pupil. For example, a young person could ask that teachers and pupils call them by a different name and to include this in the 'known as' section on the school file. This is common practice, as many young people have 'nick names' that they prefer to use. A young person could also discuss with teachers not gendering them in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable or using more appropriate pronouns whilst the young person is in school. To change a name officially on the school records, the school will most likely need written permission from a young person's parent/carer if they are under 16. If a young person has more than one adult with parental responsibilities in their life, they may also ask permission from both parent(s) or carer(s). However, a young person who is over 16 should be able to provide written permission themselves.

The Pupil Support Team, or a teacher that a young person feels comfortable with, can also provide one to one support. They may ask a young person about their parent(s)/ carer(s) views and are often happy to meet with them.

Importantly, the school should always listen to a young person's views and where possible, get the young person's consent before speaking with parents/carers, so a young person should feel safe to share information with a teacher.

### **What could a school do to make social dance a better experience for trans young people?**

A school can allow pupils to choose their partners and specify that pairings of any gender are welcome. They can also use the terms 'leader' and 'follower' to avoid gendered roles. If the school that you or your child attends doesn't do this, ask to chat to a PE teacher to suggest this.

## How could pupils encourage schools to make it easier for young people to come out?

Young people can encourage the school to implement training for staff. The school could also set up an active Equalities Group, LGBT+ Group or Gender Sexual orientation Alliance (GSA) for pupils. Staff need to be better at challenging discrimination, so that it's less daunting to come out. Teachers could also ensure that information is embedded into the curriculum and visible within the school. A key way to do this is to ensure transgender role models more visible or mentioned as this can help young people to feel less isolated.

The school's Equalities Group, LGBT+ Group or GSA could develop a guide for staff, helping them to be more aware of how best they can support trans young people. Young people and supportive teachers should celebrate and promote allies as much as possible within the school.

## Schools Resources

- <https://www.lgbtyouth.org.uk/media/1344/supporting-transgender-young-people.pdf> - Guidance for schools on supporting trans pupils
- <https://lgbtyouth.org.uk/media/1290/developing-a-gsa.pdf> - Toolkit for Young People and Teachers on Setting Up A Gender and Sexual Orientation Alliance
- <https://respectme.org.uk/> - Resources and support around bullying for young people and parents/carers
- <https://lgbtyouth.org.uk/media/1299/addressing-inclusion.pdf> - Guidance on addressing homophobia, biphobia and transphobia and dealing with bullying incidents
- <https://lgbtyouth.org.uk/media/1585/lgbtys-curriculum-inclusion.pdf> - [Information](#) on curriculum inclusion and LGBT mapping across Curriculum for Excellence

## Local Healthcare

Trans young people can access a range of supportive healthcare services within Dumfries and Galloway. Not all healthcare providers have in depth knowledge of transgender young people and their needs, so it can be helpful to be well prepared before a visit.

### Services

#### GP surgeries

It's a good idea for a young person to speak with a GP about their trans identity. If they already have a good relationship with their GP, they should make the most of this. The GP may be able to help with other issues that a young person is experiencing around health or refer on to other more appropriate services.

If a young person or their parents/carers don't find their GP helpful, they can ask to see another GP. A parent/carer or the young person can also make a complaint to the practice, if you feel treatment has not been appropriate. Although GPs would rather not receive complaints at all, they'd certainly rather you made a complaint than kept quiet, as this allows them to consider whether they need to change their practice.

#### Sexual Health

<https://www.sexualhealthdg.co.uk/>

Sexual health provides advice and support around contraception, testing for STIs, pregnancy and termination. They also provide counselling and free contraception.

#### Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)

<https://www.facebook.com/DGCAMHS/>

CAMHS offers a community-based service throughout Dumfries & Galloway, to children and young people who are experiencing mental health problems/disorder and their families/carers.

### **What's the best way to be referred to CAMHS?**

A young person can refer themselves or they can be referred by a GP, school nurse or other professional. To self-refer, use the contact email, or phone number on the website. All referrals are treated the same and go through the same process, whether it's a self-referral or a referral from a professional.

### **How long should we wait for an appointment?**

From referral a young person should receive a letter advising of the outcome and/or receive guidance about their appointment. If you don't hear anything from CAMHS within 3 weeks of the referral, call them to check how the referral is progressing. There is a waiting list, so appointments are not immediate, but if the case is considered urgent, a young person will receive a call or face to face appointment within 48 hours, Monday-Friday.

### **What should we expect at the first appointment?**

The first appointment will be around 50 minutes long. A young person can choose whether they have a parent/carer come along at the first appointment, if they are over the age of 12, they don't have to have a parent/carer there. The CAMHS professional will always check with a young person about what is ok to share with their parents/carers if they're not present at the appointment, though if the CAMHS professional has concerns about a young person's safety, some information will need to be shared. They will start by finding out personal information, such as how a young person wishes to be contacted and what names and pronouns they use. They will then find out more about the young person's 'mental health environment': home life, school, friends, spare time. They'll find out what matters to the young person and carry out a mental health needs assessment. The CAMHS worker and young person will then agree a goal for treatment. Subsequent appointments will be focussed around that goal, exploring what the young person can do themselves and what the service or family can do to move towards it.

### **What happens at the end of treatment from CAMHS?**

When a young person and their CAMHS worker agree that their mental health has improved sufficiently, their treatment will end, and they will be discharged from the service. If they need to access the service again, they'll need to complete a new referral. However, if a young person is in crisis and calls the service, they'll always be contacted within 48 hours Monday-Friday.

It's important for a young person to continue to engage with CAMHS if they want to be treated. If they fail to attend an appointment, CAMHS will contact the young person twice to offer further appointments. They will be given a final date to respond by and if CAMHS don't hear from the young person, they will be discharged from the service.

## Speech and Language Therapy

### **What age can young people get therapy and how do they get referred?**

The children and young person's (CYP) speech and language therapy service can be accessed up until the age of 18yrs and the adult service thereafter. The CYP service will offer support and guidance on how to keep the voice healthy as well as any questions about voice and communication. The adult speech and language therapy service offers this supportive service too and voice exercises that help an individual to modify the voice to fit with their gender identity. A young person can refer themselves to the service or ask a parent/carer, someone from LGBT Youth Scotland, a doctor or other healthcare professional, to refer on their behalf. The referral form is on their website:

[http://www.nhs.uk/Departments\\_and\\_Services/Speech\\_and\\_Language\\_Therapy/Adult\\_SLT/Adult\\_SLT](http://www.nhs.uk/Departments_and_Services/Speech_and_Language_Therapy/Adult_SLT/Adult_SLT)

### **What happens if you have therapy? How long would it last?**

Once the referral is received the young person will be offered an initial appointment with a speech and language therapist. The initial appointment is an opportunity to get to know each other. The speech and language therapist will ask some questions around why assistance was requested, what is important to the young person and what they would like to be different. They will listen to the answers carefully so that they can work together with the young person to plan therapy that will be unique to them and their situation and needs. This means that there is no standard answer to how long therapy will last. Some people benefit from one session, others have many more. Discharge is agreed with the therapist when it is agreed that the young person's goals have been reached.

### **Can you suggest exercises, videos or techniques that might be useful for trans young people at home?**

Anyone can change their voice and communication styles, it's not too difficult a task. There are many exercises, videos and techniques available online. The issue with voice is that it takes lots of muscles and muscle stamina to be able to maintain a change in voice over any length of time. Therefore, voice therapy is about ensuring that you build up muscle strength and stamina to avoid any vocal injuries/strain whilst also directing voice modification. That is why it is not advisable to use any videos or techniques without first having an initial appointment with a speech and language therapist first. They can advise on how to get the best out of online videos or exercises (see link below) and offer a young person their own unique programme to work on.

## Healthcare Resources

- <https://www.lgbtyouth.org.uk/media/1469/good-sex-is-guide-for-trans-young-people.pdf> - Good sex guide for trans young people
- <https://youngminds.org.uk/> - Mental health resources and advice for young people and parents/carers
- <https://hampshirecamhs.nhs.uk/> - Mental health resources for young people, parents & carers and professionals
- <https://www.anxietycanada.com/> - Tools and resources to help with anxiety. Mindshift App
- <https://www.themix.org.uk/mental-health> - Mental health tools and support for people 25 and under
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Z6Q359a5mU&list=PLnhF6aFSY3hWneHjboMgpDi8fesMOZJDS> – Trans Programme Voice Coaching Series made by Speech and Language Therapist Department at Manchester University in partnership with the LGBT Foundation.

## Gender Identity Services

There are several gender specialist clinics in Scotland. Only two offer services for young people. The clinic for young people from Dumfries & Galloway is Sandyford Gender Clinic, based in Glasgow.

### Sandyford Gender Clinic

Sandyford Gender Clinic offers a comprehensive gender identity service available to anyone who is uncomfortable or uncertain about their gender identity or expression of their gender.

The service primarily assists people who are transgender to facilitate medical and surgical treatments, enabling greater comfort in the face of gender incongruence. However, the service is also available to any person who feels uncomfortable or is questioning their gender identity whether they wish to change their gender or not.

#### **Does a young person have to be referred by a healthcare professional or can they self-refer?**

A young person can be referred by their GP or another healthcare professional or they can self-refer. It can be a good idea to get a referral through the GP, so that they are aware of this aspect of an individual's healthcare and can provide support around it. It can be a good idea to take along some of the information about the Gender Identity Service in the resources section below if you are worried that the GP may not have much information about what you need.

If a young person wants to self-refer, they can use the form on the Sandyford clinic website (see below) or call the clinic and a receptionist will take details over the phone. The clinic takes self-referrals from young people aged 12 and above.

#### **At what age can a young person access the gender clinic without parental consent?**

The clinic will work with a young person aged over 12 and under 16 without a parent or carer's consent, but this would be very rare. Generally, they prefer to treat a young person with the full support and consent of their parent/carer.

### **How long should a young person expect to wait to hear from the GIC after they have been referred?**

After referral, an email will be sent within a week, to confirm that the referral has been received. At the moment, the waiting time between referral and first appointment is around 18 months. A young person will be contacted around 3 months before their appointment to let them know the date. Currently appointments for young people from Dumfries & Galloway are all held at the Sandyford Clinic.

### **Do you have any advice for young people to help deal with the long waiting time?**

Keep busy and surround yourself with supportive people. Get specialist help from local support services if you need it. Develop interests, try to take your mind off the wait and keep your mental health as good as possible.

### **What happens at the first appointment?**

This very much depends on the young person, what they want and what they want to share information about. A young person can have a parent, carer, friend or partner in the meeting if they like, but it's not necessary. The clinician will find out more about you and your life, the support you have available, your gender history, where you are currently, your hopes and aspirations and where you see things going. The process goes as slowly as the young person needs it to. It's a good idea for a young person to write down everything that they want to share before the appointment.

After the first appointment the clinician will meet the young person again every 3-4 months. The first few appointments are when they'll assess the young person and decide with them what's most suitable for the individual.

### **How can a young person get hormones prescribed?**

Assessment at the Gender Identity Clinic usually takes a minimum of 3 or 4 appointments. If puberty blockers are considered suitable, the clinician will pass the young person to an endocrinologist with a specialism in young people. Blockers are only suitable if you are at an earlier stage of puberty. They are considered reversible, in that no lasting effect is anticipated once you stop taking them. Gender affirming hormones (testosterone, oestrogen and other hormones) have a permanent impact, so the clinicians need to be fully agreed that this is the most appropriate course of treatment for a young person before they are prescribed. No hormonal treatment is prescribed before the age of 16.

### **How soon can a young person get surgery? Where would surgery take place?**

Surgery is not available until you are 18. Generally, a young person will have been on hormonal treatment for 3-5 years before surgery. It can take up to 5 years for gender affirming hormones to take full effect (around the same time as puberty takes) and surgery is more effective once that has happened.

### **What's the best way for a young person to ease themselves into social transition?**

Start at home, get comfortable in your own skin, in your own space. Take time to tweak everything so you feel as comfortable as you can, then speak to family and/or friends. As your confidence builds, think about how and when to transition outside. Chat with professionals at school at an early stage so they can support you through the process of your public social transition.

## **Gender Identity Resources**

- <https://www.sandyford.scot/sexual-health-services/gender-identity-service/> - Sandyford Gender clinic website
- <https://youtu.be/jpu4sD-Te8c> - Video about Sandyford's services
- [https://www.sandyford.scot/media/3744/304280\\_1\\_1-yp-gender-service-information.pdf](https://www.sandyford.scot/media/3744/304280_1_1-yp-gender-service-information.pdf) - Information about the young peoples' gender service
- [https://youtu.be/6m\\_bzmkK8vw](https://youtu.be/6m_bzmkK8vw) - Video about visiting the Chalmers clinic in Edinburgh (not accessible to Dumfries and Galloway young people, but a great video)

# Safety

LGBT Youth Scotland's [Life in Scotland for LGBT Young People](#) research indicated that 41% of trans young people had experienced Hate Crime, but only half of them had reported it. It's important for our health, wellbeing and confidence that we feel safe and respected, so we provide more information about Hate crime below.

## Police Scotland

### How do we report Hate Crime?

Police Scotland has developed a range of reporting methods to try and meet the needs of victims. It's not necessary to report the matter in person at a Police Station as we appreciate this can be a stressful experience for a number of reasons. The methods available are:

- Attend at a Police Office
- Stop a Police Officer in the street
- Phone 999 in an emergency situation
- Emergency SMS 999 (for deaf people)
- Phone 101 for non-emergency (main contact number)
- Online hate crime form on Police Scotland website
- BSL Scotland – video interpreting for British Sign Language
- BTP Text for reporting on train
- Crimestoppers
- Third Party Reporting – e.g. guidance teacher at school

It should also be noted that **any** person who perceives an incident to be motivated by malice and ill-will towards a protected group can report the matter – it doesn't have to be reported by the person who has experienced it.

### What happens if you report a Hate Crime? What is the process?

First and foremost, the Police will maintain a 'victim centred' approach to such reports. They recognise that the impact of hate crime or incident on the victim or others, can be significant. They will reassure you, take time to explain the Police procedure and signpost you if willing, to a partner agency for further support/information such as Victim Support. The Police will ask if you have any particular needs that they need to meet throughout the investigation, e.g. cultural considerations, assistance of Appropriate Adult etc.

All information provided is taken in the strictest confidence. It is not necessary for the person reporting to disclose information about their race, religion, disability, sexuality or transgender identity, and whether or not the victim is actually a member of the social group that has been targeted is immaterial. No sensitive information will be disclosed without the express permission of the victim.

Police Scotland will, of course, have to ask what has happened and will ask suitable questions to make sure they obtain all the information possible to make an informed decision on how to proceed with the matter. They may take a statement which could form part of the evidence in a criminal case.

Should the matter be identified as a crime, they will look at all potential avenues where they can gather evidence from, e.g. other witnesses, CCTV, mobile phone recordings etc.

Should a culprit be identified, the Police have an arrest process to follow that may or not may include that person being interviewed. Should they be charged, they will be reported to the appropriate authority depending on their age (Procurator Fiscal or Children's Reporter). They can only be charged where the Police can establish that a recognisable crime has been committed and that the person charged has been identified as the person responsible.

A person could be bailed by the Police which may or may not include conditions such as not contacting/approaching you if this is relevant to the reported incident.

The individual reporting the Hate Crime will be kept up to date throughout this process but can contact the enquiry officer at any time to ask for an update or provide further information.

Ultimately if a crime is detected and a report submitted to the Procurator Fiscal, the matter may be heard in court if the culprit pleads not guilty. You may then be asked to attend and give your evidence in person.

### **Why should we report Hate Crime?**

Police Scotland recognise that hate crime can have a devastating impact on the victim, their families and the wider community. Public confidence can be seriously affected if the Police response is seen to be ineffective. This can lead to victims feeling more isolated and fearful of what might happen next and potentially less likely to report further incidents, as well as create an environment for hostility and

prejudice to thrive and damage the fabric of society. Hate crime is therefore a priority for Police Scotland and they actively encourage all victims of hate crime to report it. They are aware of the massive underreporting of hate crime and understand there are a lot of reasons for this. They don't want lack of confidence in the Police to be one of them so please don't hesitate to report such matters. They will take them seriously, support you and carry out a full enquiry.

**If you report an incident to the school and the police and both say it's not a matter for them, what should you do next?**

If anyone reports a Hate Crime, it will be looked at by the Police as to the exact circumstances surrounding the incident. It may be decided after discussion with you, that it is not appropriate or proportional for the incident to be dealt with as a formal Police enquiry.

Incidents within the school environment should be dealt with in the school but the Police link officer in that school may also be involved. Every incident is treated on its own merits.

**How does the law protect trans people?**

There are a number of offences that can be committed that form the basis of hate crimes such as breach of the peace or assault. However, the Offences (Aggravation by Prejudice) Scotland Act 2009 creates a statutory aggravation to protect victims of crime who are targeted as a result of hatred of their actual or presumed disability, sexual orientation or transgender identity.

There is an onus on the Court to take account of any prejudice element relating to sexual orientation or transgender identity to a crime or offence when determining an appropriate sentence. This allows for stiffer penalties to be imposed. The charge will be subject to the normal standard of proof, but the prejudice element will not require corroboration so that the evidence of a single witness will be sufficient to establish the offence as aggravated.

Although these are not hate crimes, the Gender Recognition Act 2004 and Equality Act 2010 may be of relevance to anyone who feels they have been discriminated against and is covered by the list of protected characteristics that includes gender reassignment and are protected from discrimination in various environments including being in education.

### **How does the law protect non binary people?**

At the moment, being non-binary is not recognised as a legal gender in the United Kingdom. As such, as a non-protected characteristic there is no legislation as previously detailed that offers specific protection to this group of people. However, Hate Crime legislation in relation to being or being perceived to be transgender would still apply. Also, non-binary people are subject to the same standards of care, support and protection by the Police as anyone else should they be a victim of crime.

## **Safety Resources**

- <https://youtu.be/Wj1NoF7kQe4> - Short video about experience of transphobic hate crime
- <https://youtu.be/iWmjfha96R8> - Human rights commission video about hate crime
- <https://youtu.be/045BSIx8Bl5> - West Yorkshire Police video about reporting hate crime
- <https://www.scotland.police.uk/contact-us/hate-crime-and-third-party-reporting/third-party-reporting-centres> - Third Party Hate Crime reporting centres in Scotland

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