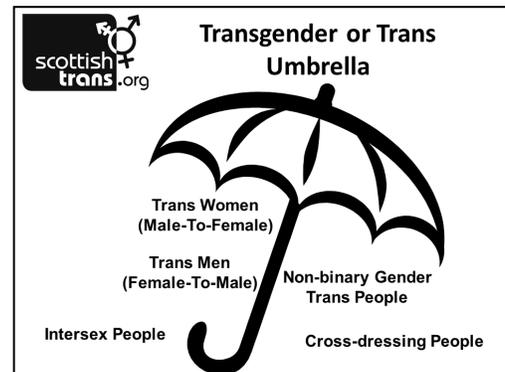


Why do I need to know about Transgender people?

The Equality Act 2010 prohibits gender reassignment discrimination, harassment and victimisation in many areas including in the provision of goods, facilities and services. The public sector equality duty within the Equality Act also places an obligation on public bodies to eliminate unlawful treatment, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people with protected characteristics and those without.

In Scotland the terms Transgender people and Trans people are used as an umbrella, an inclusive term to describe a wide variety of people whose gender identity or expression differs from the assumptions and expectations of the society we live in. The Equality Act makes it clear that a person does not need to have any medical diagnoses or treatment to have the protected characteristic of gender reassignment: it is a personal process of moving away from one's birth gender to one's self identified gender, often called 'transition'.

As you know, your professional code of conduct requires you to not discriminate against anyone when providing healthcare, this includes Trans people. Treating people with dignity and respect and allowing family and friends to be a part of the patients' journey will aid recovery and have a real clinical impact on the individual's health and wellbeing.



How should I know what, if anything, to do differently for Trans people?

- Talk to them! Ask patients' views and treat them as an expert on their own circumstances and care needs. You will meet people with various gender identities and at many stages of Transition, so there is no one size fits all.
- Don't be afraid to 'get it wrong'. It is more important for you to be open and supportive. If you are unsure how a patient's circumstances may affect your service delivery, you should talk to them and work it out with them.
- Not all Trans people may choose to disclose that they are Trans. If they do, this should be handled confidentially, sensitively and respectfully.
- You should not try and guess or make assumptions about someone's gender identity based on their appearance or mannerisms.
- You should ensure any advice you give and the service you deliver is appropriate to the patient's needs and not based on stereotypes.

So they've told me, what do I do now?

- If a patient has felt comfortable enough to trust you with this information it is important to treat it confidentially and respectfully.
- It's more comfortable for the service user if you don't express an opinion around their Trans status e.g. surprise, shock or delight.
- Someone's Trans status is highly confidential information. If it is relevant to their healthcare, pass it on to the relevant person, if not respect the privacy of the patient.
- If a Transgender patient is wearing a wig or prosthetic and it requires to be removed, as with any person receiving treatment, it should be done with sensitivity and privacy and replaced when appropriate.

What do I say? I don't want to get it wrong!

- We recognise that there is often a fear of 'getting it wrong' and using the 'wrong language'. However if you are respectful etc. of service users and their circumstances and don't use language that makes assumptions about them you'll be fine.
- Use non gender-specific language that is inclusive of Trans people.
- Words like 'partner' and 'parents' don't assume people's gender, but are inclusive of Trans and non-Trans people.
- You may find that relatives or other visitors may use different pronouns to the service user e.g. she instead of he. It is important that you respect the service user's gender identity and continue to use the pronouns they use.

This person's unconscious and I'm not sure what gender they are!

- If you are unable to ascertain their gender identity based on their appearance, checking ID or medical records, and speaking to friends or relatives, avoid placing them into gender based services until you can.
- Remember that you can't assume someone's gender based solely on their physical characteristics.
- It is important to aid recovery that a Trans person is not put under unnecessary stress by being placed into services not appropriate to their gender.

It's not me but someone else that's discriminating, what can I do?

- You should challenge any discriminatory behaviour of colleagues and other patients.
- It is important when seeking to resolve a situation where discrimination has occurred that any action is taken against the perpetrator and not the victim e.g. do not move the victim from a ward, remove the perpetrator.
- Any discrimination in services is covered by the Equality Act 2010 and may result in court action.

Inpatient Care – What do I do?

Where inpatient wards are divided by sex (female/male only wards), Trans people will be offered accommodation that matches the **gender in which they are currently living**. Placing a Trans woman on a male only ward or Trans man on a female only ward against their wishes would be insensitive and may constitute discrimination.

However, some male or female only wards are configured to offer specialist after care treatment for sex-specific issues. For example a man requiring a prostatectomy may receive post surgical care in a male urology ward and be treated by a specialist nursing team trained to respond to any post operative complications that may arise.

Many Trans people will require this level of post surgical care for clinical issues commonly associated with their birth assigned sex – for example, a Trans man may require a hysterectomy. Where these cases occur, Trans patients must be involved in all discussions relating to appropriate accommodation which might, for example, include them being placed in a single occupancy room within a sex specific ward. Clinical/surgical teams will be required to demonstrate all reasonable steps have been taken to meet the needs of the Trans patient. In the event that clinical risk clearly outweighs choice of gender-appropriate accommodation, the Trans patient must be involved in discussions in advance of admission. (Adapted from NHS GG&C Transgender Policy 2010)

If you require advice or information please contact: Lynn Waddell, NHS Forth Valley Equality and Diversity Project Manager. E-Mail: lynn.waddell@nhs.net or Tel No 01324 614653; Contact - The Scottish Transgender Alliance www.scottishTrans.org or LGBT Youth Scotland Web: www.lgbtyouth.org.uk