



One minute guide

Working with trans young people

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What do we mean by trans and how should services work with trans young people?

Trans is an umbrella term to describe people whose gender is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with, the sex they were assigned at birth. Trans people may describe themselves using one or more of a wide variety of terms, including (but not limited to) trans, non-binary, gender queer, gender non-conforming and gender fluid. Trans people are part of the LGBTQ+ community which includes lesbian, gay and bi young people. There are separate one minute guides for working with [lesbian and gay young people](#) and [bi young people](#).

These and other useful terms are defined by Stonewall in their [glossary](#). Terminology is updated regularly through usage and increased understanding of people's experiences, and it is important for practitioners to keep themselves informed.

Many trans young people are aware of their gender identity from a young age, though they may not have shared this with anybody. Any of the young people you are working with may identify as trans; you should not make assumptions about any young person's gender identity.

All young people want places to go and things to do in a safe environment where they feel valued, accepted and included. Children and Families Services have a moral duty to provide such environments for all young people, including trans young people. The [Equality Act 2010](#) made gender reassignment a [protected characteristic](#), which means that any service, whether publicly funded or not, cannot lawfully discriminate against trans people. In addition, the Act introduced the [Public Sector Equality Duty](#), which means that services have to consider how they can address inequalities experienced by trans people.

What is 'coming out'?

The process of trans people telling others about their gender identity is often referred to as 'coming out'. Coming out to somebody can be very stressful, as young people may fear rejection or discrimination. For this reason, young people will often tell someone they trust and have confidence in. If a young person comes out to you, they may simply want someone to talk to about what can be a confusing and scary time for them, or they may want support in accessing further information, some of which is available through this guide.

It is important not to share information about a young person's sexuality with other family members or young people without the young person's consent. This includes sharing with other practitioners, for example on referral forms. Doing so without their consent is called 'outing' and can be very harmful. Sharing personal or sensitive information about someone without their consent could be a breach of their rights under data protection legislation. This should only be considered in exceptional circumstances, which should be discussed with your line manager and/ or safeguarding lead.

Respect for trans young people

The Leeds City Council Children and Families leadership endorse an affirmative approach to supporting trans and non-binary children and young people, and expect practitioners to work in line with this approach; that is, believing what children and young people tell us about their own gender identity and respecting their wishes in relation to, for example, their [pronouns](#) (he, she, her, him, they, them etc) and the name they wish to be known as.

It is good practice to introduce yourself using your own pronouns. If you aren't sure what the right pronoun is, please ask, and note that people's pronouns may change over time. If you make a mistake with pronouns, apologise, correct yourself and move on. Young people may refer to the name on their birth certificate as their 'deadname', as they no longer identify with it. It is good practice to record on their file and/ or on agency systems their new name and gender identity, although there will be some instances, e.g. those requiring birth certificates, where this is not legally permissible. Further information on recording is available from this [guide](#); while the specifics of recording refer to the children's social work Mosaic system, the best practice information and legislative basis of the guide apply more broadly.

It is important to respect people's boundaries, which means not asking intrusive questions. Young people who identify as trans are often exploring their gender identity; during this time, it is important to give them the space and freedom needed for this exploration, free from external pressures. People's gender identity should be respected without judgement.

What barriers or challenges might trans young people face?

There is a limited amount of research available about the specific barriers faced by trans young people, compared to LGBT groups as a whole (more information is available from the one minute guide to [working with lesbian and gay young people](#)). Research by Stonewall suggests there is a higher prevalence of mental health difficulties and higher levels of discrimination against trans young people than non-trans young people.

It should be noted that while some trans young people will be keen to explore medical care in relation to their gender identity, this is not the case for all trans young people and so it is not appropriate to make assumptions. Medical care for trans young people has been subject to media and political scrutiny in recent years, and the routes to access such care have undergone significant changes. The current NHS position is explained [here](#).

What is available for trans young people locally and nationally?

Leeds has a youth group for trans young people aged 13-18, 'Transtastic'. The group meets regularly and offers a safe space for trans young people to socialise and access 1-1 confidential support. You can contact the Youth Service on 0113 3786840 or email youth.service@leeds.gov.uk to request a leaflet, a referral pack or a call back. **Young people can contact this group directly, they do not need to be referred by a practitioner.**

The Leeds [School Wellbeing Service](#) has a number of resources on their website as well as an [A-Z guide](#) of LGBTQ+ resources.

Nationally, a wide range of resources and sources of support are available, for example: [Stonewall](#), the national LGBTQ+ charity.

Gender Identity Research and Education Society ([GIRES](#)) is a UK-wide organisation that works to improve the lives of trans and gender diverse people of all ages.

[Galop](#), for LGBT people experiencing hate crime, sexual violence or domestic abuse.