



# Issues being faced by Transgender People - A Community Cash Report by Chrysalis

## Executive Summary

Transgender individuals in Hampshire are experiencing difficulties when accessing NHS services. Health professionals need to better understand the NHS pathway for transitioning to better help those that they support. This report highlights a number of areas for improvement and makes recommendations (page 14) for NHS services to better service transgender patients.

As a result of this project, Chrysalis has been able to make a range recommendations that will:

- Enable transgender people transitioning through the NHS to do with less stress
- Improve experiences for transgender people
- Help GPs and other health professionals

As part of this project Chrysalis has also produced two leaflets that are available at:  
<http://www.healthwatchhampshire.co.uk/community-cash-fund-201415>

- Understanding Chrysalis: A guide for the NHS
- Information on Gender Identity Clinics

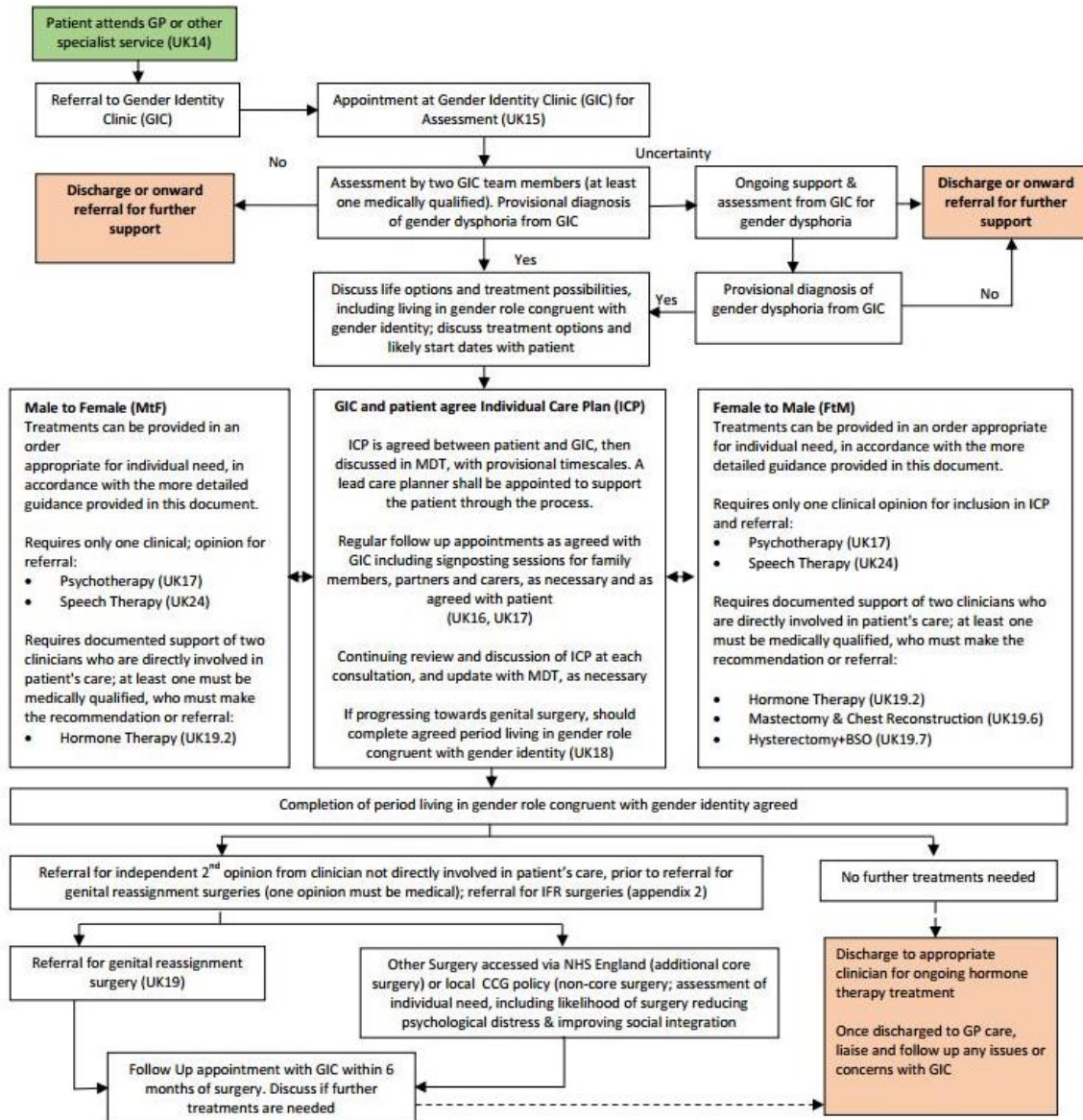
## Background

Chrysalis is a charity supporting people with gender identity issues, many of whom undergo gender reassignment. Our clients often state that they experience delays and difficulties when accessing NHS treatment for gender dysphoria. This can also be seen in a film, produced by Healthwatch Hampshire, where Chrysalis clients describe their experiences:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HYwZxheW\\_Sg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HYwZxheW_Sg)



The current protocol for treatment in England is shown below:



Source: NHS Choices Website



Other sources have also highlighted patient dissatisfaction and issues with NHS treatment for gender dysphoria:

“Within the transgendered community there is widespread dissatisfaction with the quality of medical treatment. This is especially the case within the NHS where quantity is meagre too.”

<http://www.gires.org.uk/priorities.php>

Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust state that, as of April 2015, the average waiting time for male to female surgery is 72 weeks. Furthermore, the number of new referrals tends to be higher than the number of surgeries performed each month:

<http://www.imperial.nhs.uk/services/gendersurgery/faqs/index.htm>

Overall, there is a need to enable those seeking gender reassignment to have a collective voice in order to highlight omissions or deficits in the present system. This will provide the opportunity to make changes to alter or improve the current system to provide a better patient experience.

## Aims & Objectives

- To highlight the areas that transgender people transitioning through the NHS believe could be changed or improved to enable them to transition with less stress.
- To produce a list of improvements or changes that could be presented to Healthwatch Hampshire.
- To include a list of action points for GPs and other medical personnel.

## Methodology

A questionnaire survey was conducted of Chrysalis clients. Chrysalis clients are either seeking to establish their gender identity or are transitioning from one gender to the other. Chrysalis has both Male to Female and Female to Male beneficiaries who are transitioning. They are all at different stages in their journey.

A questionnaire was designed for clients to complete. The following topics were covered in the questionnaire:

- Experiences with their GP and GP surgery
- Experiences with their gender clinic
- Other medical diagnoses
- Experiences with other NHS services
- Any experience of homelessness
- Experiences within job centres, work environments, universities and on the high street.

Discussions were also held with five current Chrysalis clients and five previous clients to clarify some of the findings found in the questionnaire survey.



Furthermore, as part of this project, Chrysalis has produced two leaflets:

- Understanding Chrysalis: A guide for the NHS
- Information on Gender Identity Clinics

## Responses to the Questionnaire

There were 30 completed questionnaires. 24 were from those who are or have transitioned from male to female, whilst the remaining six respondents were female to male. Not all questions were completed by, or applicable to, all clients. Therefore, the number of respondents for each question are detailed throughout this report, and sometimes denoted by 'N='.

### How did you hear about Chrysalis?

Twenty-five respondents answered this question. The most popular method was via the Chrysalis website (36%), whilst 33% stated their GP or another NHS source, and 12% stated Adult Services. Thus around a third of respondents had 'accessed' Chrysalis via an NHS source.

### Experiences with their GP

The findings from these questions are detailed in Table 1.

The findings suggest that, in general, these patients received a positive experience with their GPs. However, there is room for improvement. For example, 23% did not feel confident in disclosing gender dysphoria to their GP and 19% would not recommend their GP.

There appears to be a lack of knowledge amongst the respondents' GPs. Forty-one percent stated their GP did not understand or know what to do; 48% had to take matters into their own hands; 37% stated their GP did not know the referral process. Such issues can lead to delays in accessing appropriate treatment. This is highlighted by 30% of respondents thinking the time taken to process them was unacceptable and that 40% of respondents had self-medicated. Those clients interviewed by Chrysalis also stated how GPs have little knowledge of the gender dysphoria referral system.

Overall, 29% stated that their GPs actions / inactions had made them feel depressed or frustrated, and for some of these even suicidal.



Table 1: Chrysalis clients' experience with their GP

<b>Question</b>	<b>Yes / Agreed</b>	<b>No / Disagreed</b>	<b>Respondents</b>
Did you feel confident to disclose to your GP?	73%	23%	30
Did your GP understand/ know what to do?	55%	41%	29
Were you treated sympathetically?	83%	7%	30
Did you have to take matters into your own hands?	48%	48%	29
Did you have to tell your GP what they needed to do?	53%	40%	30
Did you provide information for GP?	73%	23%	30
Are you satisfied with the time taken to process your information?	70%	27%	30
Was / is the time taken within acceptable limits?	67%	30%	30
Did your GP know the referral process?	57%	37%	30
Did your GP empathize with you?	80%	13%	30
Is your GP helpful?	79%	10%	29
Has your GP asked you how you would like to be addressed?	67%	30%	30
Have you self-medicated?	40%	60%	30
Have you disclosed self medication to your GP?	70%	30%	10
Did your GP support you to enable safe self medication?	33%	67%	9
Has your GP prescribed so that you do not need to self medicate?	74%	26%	19
Is your GP aware that you use chest binders?	83%	17%	6
Has your GP explained the possible consequences of wearing chest binders?	17%	83%	6
Do you feel that your GP is 'tied by the system'?	52%	30%	23
Would you recommend your GP?	62%	19%	26
Have the actions or inactions of your GP made you feel frustrated or depressed?	29%	64%	28
Have the actions or inactions of your GP ever made you feel suicidal?	11%	89%	28

Percentages don't add up to 100 due to Don't Know responses and rounding



## Experiences with their GP surgery

The findings from these questions are detailed in Table 2.

Table 2: Chrysalis clients' experience with their GP surgery

Question	Yes / Agreed	No / Disagreed	Respondents
Do staff use the right pronouns when addressing you?	82%	14%	28
Do staff use your preferred name?	93%	3%	29
Are you called correctly into your appointment?	90%	7%	29
Do the reception staff treat you with respect?	86%	7%	29
Do you feel comfortable in the waiting room?	79%	17%	29
Are you addressed correctly during telephone conversations?	89%	4%	27
Have you been discriminated against by your surgery staff?	3%	93%	29
Would you recommend your Surgery to other transgender people?	66%	17%	29

Percentages don't add up to 100 due to Don't Know responses and rounding

In general the respondents' experience of their GP surgery was good with a few exceptions.

## Experiences with their gender clinic

Twenty-nine clients answered this question. Four had yet to attend a gender clinic. Of those that had, most (16 clients - 64%) had been to the Charing Cross NHS Gender Identity Clinic in London. Four clients had been to the Exeter NHS Gender Identity Clinic, four to the private TransHealth London Gender Clinic and one to a private clinic in Harley Street, London. The remainder of this section will concentrate on those 20 clients who have attended an NHS Gender Identity Clinic.

The first question in this section addresses how long patients have to wait for an initial appointment at a gender clinic. Seventeen clients answered this question. Responses ranged from under three months to one year. The generally accepted waiting time to see an NHS consultant is within 18 weeks from referral. All four Exeter patients had an appointment within this time frame. However, only two (of 13 respondents - 15%) Charing Cross patients had done so. Other respondents mentioned they were still waiting for an appointment.

The length of time between follow up appointments also varied widely, between 'about a month' and 12 months. Again, none of the four Exeter patients had to wait over 18 weeks for a follow up appointment, whilst 75% (N=12) of Charing Cross patients had waited over 18 weeks for a follow-up appointment.

The findings from the remaining questions in this section, for NHS patients only, are detailed in the table below.



Table 3: Chrysalis clients' experiences of an NHS Gender Clinic

Question	Yes / Agreed	No / Disagreed	Respondents
Are you getting all of the treatment you expected?	71%	24%	17
Is it difficult to get to your Gender Clinic?	52%	37%	19
Are you addressed correctly by staff?	100%	0%	20
Do you feel comfortable in the waiting room?	95%	5%	20
Was your experience at the clinic what you expected	89%	11%	19
Are you happy with your treatment at the clinic?	83%	11%	18
Was your initial referral acknowledged by the clinic?	94%	6%	18
What are your thoughts about the way the clinic communicates with you?	38%	31%	16

Percentages don't add up to 100 due to Don't Know responses and rounding

Experiences of an NHS gender clinic varied. Exeter patients were positive about this clinic, except two respondents said it was difficult to get to. Overall, 52% said it was difficult to get to their respective Gender Clinic. Otherwise, 24% of respondents felt they weren't getting the treatment they expected and 31% were negative about the communication they had from their clinic (all Charing Cross patients). In other respects respondents were generally positive about being addressed correctly, experiences of the clinic, the waiting room and treatment at the clinic.

Interviewed Chrysalis clients stated that the NHS pathway takes too long to access and that the 'system' was overwhelmed. People who had previously transitioned said services were quicker then, but after care and dealing with current problems takes too long to sort out. Those transitioning from female to male were happier with how the pathway was working than those transitioning from male to female.

### Other medical diagnoses

The findings from these questions are detailed in Table 4. It shows that those undergoing gender reassignment may well have other medical issues. In particular, mental health is a concern with high levels of reported depression, self-harm and contemplation of suicide. However, only 36% of respondents reported having received a mental health diagnosis. It should also be noted that a number of respondents may have issues with excessive drinking of alcohol, eating disorders and drug usage.

Forty-two percent of respondents thought they were dyslexic (N=26), though not all had been tested for dyslexia. Four respondents classified their dyslexia as severe. Forty-two percent also confirmed they had difficulty spelling words (N=26). Otherwise, 31% said they suffered from difficulty with numbers (N=26) and two respondents had difficulty with colours.



Table 4: Other medical diagnoses for Chrysalis clients

Question	Yes / Agreed	No / Disagreed	Respondents
Have you ever suffered from depression?	90%	10%	29
Have you self harmed in any way?	62%	38%	29
Have you ever contemplated suicide?	72%	28%	29
Are you or have you been a heavy drinker?	43%	57%	30
Have you ever used non prescribed drugs?	41%	59%	29
Have you been anorexic or bulimic?	21%	79%	28
Do you struggle to keep your eating under control?	50%	50%	28
Have you been diagnosed as being on the autistic spectrum?	21%	79%	29
Has this diagnosis conflicted with your treatment path?	7%	93%	29
Do you have any mental health diagnosis?	36%	64%	28
Do you have any physical health diagnosis?	41%	59%	29
Does any previous diagnosis conflict with your Gender treatment?	11%	89%	28

### Experiences with NHS Hospitals

The findings from these questions are detailed in Table 5. Clearly only some of the respondents have experience of being a hospital patient. For those that had, their experience in regard to their gender identity was generally positive.





Table 5: Chrysalis clients' experiences of NHS hospitals

Question	Yes / Agreed / Good	No / Disagreed / Bad	Respondents
Have you ever been to an A&E department?	68%	32%	28
How would you rate the experience?	37%	32%	19
Did they respect your confidentiality?	83%	6%	18
Did they refer to you in the appropriate gender?	80%	13%	15
Have you been admitted to hospital as an emergency?	63%	32%	19
Have you been admitted for scheduled treatment?	65%	29%	17
Were you assigned to right ward (male or female)?	75%	13%	8
Were you able to protect your modesty in the ward?	78%	11%	9
Were you offered a side room?	0%	83%	6
Did you experience discrimination from hospital staff?	13%	80%	15
Did you experience discrimination from the other patients?	0%	92%	12
Was being transgender an issue?	15%	77%	13

Percentages don't add up to 100 due to Don't Know responses and rounding

### Experience of the NHS Ambulance Service

The findings from these questions are detailed in Table 6. For those that had used the ambulance service, their experience in regard to their gender identity was generally positive.

Table 6: Chrysalis clients' experiences of the NHS Ambulance Service

Question	Yes / Agreed	No / Disagreed	Respondents
Do you have fears about needing an ambulance?	13%	83%	24
Do you have any experience with the Ambulance Service?	64%	32%	25
Did the crew automatically assign your correct gender?	77%	15%	13
Did you have to explain anatomical differences?	25%	67%	12
Did you feel comfortable with the crew?	88%	6%	16
Did they show you respect?	88%	6%	16
Did they use your correct pronouns?	92%	0%	13
Was transfer of information given discretely?	91%	0%	11

Percentages don't add up to 100 due to Don't Know responses and rounding



## Experience of other NHS services



The findings from these questions are detailed in Table 7. For those clients that had used other NHS services, their experience in regard to their gender identity was generally positive. However, a significant number of respondents (45%) reported being asked inappropriate questions by NHS staff.

Table 7: Chrysalis clients' experience of other NHS services

Question	Yes / Agreed	No / Disagreed	Respondents
Do you have contact with any other NHS Services	54%	46%	24
Was your referral information correctly presented?	92%	8%	12
Were / are, the staff discrete about you being transgender?	83%	17%	12
Have you ever been asked inappropriate questions by any NHS staff?	45%	55%	11
Do you have confidence in the confidentiality of the NHS?	77%	8%	13

Percentages don't add up to 100 due to Don't Know responses and rounding

## Homelessness

The findings from these questions are detailed in Table 8. Although not common, some respondents have experienced homelessness and housing related issues. About a third stated that being transgender made finding a new home difficult. There was some support for a 'safe house' being available.

Table 8: Chrysalis clients' experience of homelessness

Question	Yes / Agreed	No / Disagreed	Respondents
Have you been made homeless as a result of being transgender?	16%	84%	25
Have your family ejected you from your home?	19%	81%	21
Have you felt unwelcome in your home?	36%	64%	22
Have you needed a place to stay?	23%	77%	22
Have you ever been a 'sofa surfer'?	18%	82%	22
Would a 'safe house' have helped?	29%	71%	14
Has being transgender made finding a new home more difficult?	31%	63%	16
Would you have liked the opportunity to move into a safe house for a short period?	54%	38%	13
Has any prospective landlord asked about your gender status?	23%	69%	13
Have you ever needed to seek sanctuary in a 'refuge'?	13%	87%	15

Percentages don't add up to 100 due to Don't Know responses and rounding



## Experiences within Job Centres

The findings from these questions are detailed in Table 9.

Table 9: Chrysalis clients' experiences within Job Centres

Question	Yes / Agreed	No / Disagreed	Respondents
Have you declared to the Job Centre that you are transgender?	64%	36%	14
Have they offered you private consultations?	20%	70%	10
Are you aware that as a protected person they have specific guidelines?	50%	50%	14
Are you aware that your medical diagnosis entitles you to claim expenses to appointments at gender clinics?	23%	77%	13
Have you been offered appropriate retraining?	10%	90%	10
Are you treated with respect?	82%	18%	11
Are you addressed with the appropriate pronouns and name?	83%	17%	12
Have they persistently expected you to seek inappropriate employment?	22%	88%	9
Have you experienced discrimination from other job seekers?	0%	100%	11

Percentages don't add up to 100 due to Don't Know responses and rounding

It is difficult to put much interpretation on these results, given the limited number of respondents who have attended a job centre. Some experiences appear positive (e.g. lack of discrimination from others) and some negative (e.g. lack of private consultations). However, they do suggest that transgender job seekers could be more aware of their rights.

## Experiences with work environments

The findings from these questions are detailed in Table 10. For those respondents, who have transitioned in the workplace, their management and colleagues have generally been supportive. However, a number have experienced difficulties (47%) and discrimination (29%).



Table 10: Chrysalis clients' experiences of work environments

Question	Yes / Agreed	No / Disagreed	Respondents
Are you transitioning in the workplace?	85%	15%	20
Have you disclosed to your manager?	94%	6%	16
Have they been supportive?	88%	12%	16
Have you been involved in preparing a transition plan?	36%	64%	14
Have your management sought guidance and support to enable smooth transition?	53%	47%	15
Do you feel confident transitioning at work?	88%	6%	17
Have you met any difficulties?	47%	53%	15
Is the rest of the workforce supportive?	88%	6%	16
Have you met any discrimination?	29%	71%	17

Percentages don't add up to 100 due to Don't Know responses and rounding

### Experiences with universities

These results are not reported as only four respondents were attending university.

### Experiences 'on the high street'

The findings from these questions are detailed in Table 11. Clearly a number of respondents have had negative experiences 'on the high street'. Twenty-eight percent have felt animosity from shop staff, 42% have purposely been called by the wrong pronoun and 30% thought they had been openly discriminated against. Overall, 75% thought the public didn't have an understanding of being transgender.

Table 11: Chrysalis clients' experiences 'on the high street'

Question	Yes / Agreed	No / Disagreed	Respondents
Do you believe most shops make an effort to be inclusive?	68%	32%	25
Have you felt animosity from shop staff?	28%	68%	25
Has anyone called you by the wrong pronoun purposefully?	42%	54%	26
Have you felt animosity from other shoppers?	31%	65%	26
Have you been openly discriminated against?	30%	67%	27
Has anyone discriminated against anyone you are with?	12%	85%	26
Have you ever reported an act of discrimination?	21%	75%	24
Do you feel that being a protected characteristic has helped transgender people?	88%	8%	24
Do you believe that the public have an understanding of being transgender?	25%	75%	28
Do you hope that awareness of being transgender could be more widely understood?	96%	4%	28

Percentages don't add up to 100 due to Don't Know responses and rounding



### **Recommended GPs and surgeries**

The following GPs and GP surgeries were recommended by respondents.

Dr Hatfull, Osborne Surgery, Fareham  
Dr P Ryan, Curlew Practice  
Dr Forster, Brockhurst Medical Centre, Gosport  
Dr Yeandle, Bridgemary Medical Centre  
Dr Ferguson, Shirley Health Centre, Southampton  
Dr A Z Kadri, St Peter Surgery  
Dr M Donnan, Shirley Avenue Surgery, Southampton  
Dr Powell, Abbeymead Surgery, Romsey  
Dr McNichol, Whiteley Surgery  
Dr Rickenbach, Park & St Francis Surgery, Chandlers Ford  
Dr Nicola Holroyd, North Baddesley Health Centre  
Dr Taylor, St Andrews Surgery

### **GPs and Surgeries that need more training about the NHS England Gender Dysphoria Protocol and equality**

The following places and GP were mentioned by respondents as in need of education about transgender issues

St Mary's, Southampton  
Waterside Health Centre  
Shirley Health Centre  
Woolston lodge, Southampton  
Whiteley Surgery  
Weston Lane Surgery, Southampton

Some surgeries appear in both the above lists. This could be due to differing experiences with staff within the relevant surgery.



## Recommendations

Areas that transgender people transitioning through the NHS believe could be changed or improved to enable them to transition with less stress

- Improve GP's knowledge of the NHS pathway, gender reassignment and gender dysphoria
- Reduce delays in being referred to a Gender Identity Clinic
- Continue improving transgender awareness / empathy amongst all staff
- No need to self-medicate
- Less distance to travel to a Gender Identity Clinic
- Reduce delays in seeing a consultant
- Reduce delays between consultation appointments
- Improve the pathway for those transitioning from male to female
- Improve communication from the Charing Cross Gender Identity Clinic
- No inappropriate questions from NHS staff
- Increase awareness / empathy amongst NHS staff
- Increase GP knowledge of the condition and NHS pathway
- Speed up the referral process to Gender Identity Clinics
- Reduce delays seen at the Charing Cross Gender Identity Clinic
- Improve communication at the Charing Cross Gender Identity Clinic
- Have a Gender Identity Clinic within or nearer to Hampshire

## List of action points for GPs and other medical personnel

- Increase awareness / empathy amongst NHS staff
- Increase GP knowledge of the condition and NHS pathway
- Speed up referral process to Gender Identity Clinics
- Reduce the need to self-medicate and support those who are

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