

## Factsheet 16

# Trans issues and later life

July 2024

### About this factsheet

This factsheet provides information about later life for trans people. It is intended to provide information and advice and does not offer any opinions or views on the subject matter. The focus is on growing older for

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## 1 Who is trans?

Trans people are people whose gender identity differs from or does not match or sit comfortably with their biological sex. Trans is an umbrella term that embraces many different gender identities. Trans people may describe themselves using one or more of a wide variety of terms including, but not limited to transgender, transsexual, gender queer, gender non-conforming and gender variant.

A trans person may or may not become fully bodily reassigned in their acquired gender. They may or may not receive hormone therapy, have gender related surgery, or obtain legal recognition of their change of gender.

This factsheet focuses on trans people living permanently in their acquired gender and those who are seeking to do so. Acquired gender is a legal term used in the *Gender Recognition Act 2004*. It refers to the gender which a person is living in and seeking legal recognition of.

There may be some specific considerations, for example in employment, with family and friends, government bodies, and health and care providers. Gender reassignment means you are protected by law under the *Equality Act 2010* against discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.

### Note

**Affirmed gender** describes a - the gender with which they identify has been affirmed. We use the term *acquired gender* to align with language used in the *Gender Recognition Act 2004*.

**Gender identity**- your internal sense of being male or female, both or neither.

**Gender reassignment**-describes the process a trans person undertakes to transition socially and/or medically to live in their acquired gender.

## 2 Trans and other identities

Many trans people report identifying as a member of the opposite sex from an early age. At some time in their life, many seek professional advice, perhaps after long periods of cross-dressing publicly or privately. This may be influenced by their personal and social circumstances, family support, and degree of motivation.

The medical term for discomfort or distress caused by a mismatch between gender identity and biological sex is *gender dysphoria*. Some trans people and organisations prefer the terms *gender incongruence* or *gender variance*.

## Transition

If you identify as trans, you may wish to consider if and how you want to transition. Transition is not a standard or pre-determined process. People approach it in different ways depending on their individual circumstances, needs and preferences.

Do you wish to have hormone therapy, surgery, or legal recognition of your gender reassignment? None are a requirement for transition, though many people proceed to pursue some, if not all, of the above.

The term trans man is used to describe a person whose biological sex is female but who identifies and lives as a male. They may refer to themselves as a man with a trans history. Similarly, a person whose biological sex is male but who identifies as a female may refer to themselves as a trans woman or a woman with a trans history.

You may also see the abbreviations FtM (female to male) and MtF (male to female), but these can be questionable as for example, a trans woman may never have identified as male in the first place.

It is important to recognise that having taken steps to live a life that aligns with their gender identity, people may not identify as trans.

## 2.2 People who identify as non-binary

Non-binary describes gender identities that are not exclusively masculine  
*gender binary*

It may mean you feel you have no gender.

You may come across other terms such as gender variance or gender  
fluid to



## Developing a treatment plan

If the assessment suggests you have gender dysphoria, GDC staff work with you to agree



#### **4.1.1 The trans man's transition**

A trans man may undergo masculinising hormone therapy by taking the hormone testosterone. Masculinising hormone therapy can be done alone or along with masculinising surgery.

When taking masculinising hormones, physical and emotional changes you may experience include:





## Health screening

Knowledge is improving as people age. There are still unanswered questions about what later life and health are like for the generation of trans people in their 60s and over who have taken hormone therapy for 40 years or more. Many are living with gender reassignment surgeries performed using different techniques of the 1960s and 70s.

## 7 Your rights

### 7.1 The Gender Recognition Act: the basics

*The Gender Recognition Act 2004 (GRA)*, introduced in April 2005, is the framework that gives legal recognition to a trans person's acquired gender and recognises a trans person as someone who lives permanently in their acquired gender and intends to do so for the rest of their life.

Whilst most applicants must provide evidence of a diagnosis of gender dysphoria, there is no requirement to undergo hormone therapy or gender reassignment surgery.

#### **What gender recognition means**

The GRA enables trans people





## 8 Hate crime





## **Trans men**

Do I still look feminine when undressed?

Do I still have breasts?

## Direct payments for care at home

If eligible for financial help from a local authority, you have the option to receive it as a direct payment. This means you arrange services yourself, or with support from a third party. You can choose to recruit a personal assistant, who can respond to your individual needs and preferences and offer continuity of care at home.

In **England** see Age UK factsheet 24, *Personal budgets and direct payments in social care*. In **Wales** see Age Cymru factsheet 24w, *Direct payments for social care services in Wales*.

## 10.2 Sheltered housing and residential care

If you have eligible needs that can be best met by sheltered housing or in a care home, you (and your carer if you have one) should identify possible locations and visit all establishments you are considering.

## **NHS services**

The LGBT Foundation offers a quality assurance scheme to help GP







**Pansexual:** term used to describe someone who is attracted to individuals of any sex or gender identity.

**Penectomy:** surgical removal of penile tissue.

**Phalloplasty:** surgical procedure to construct a penis.

**Scrotoplasty:** surgical procedure that creates a scrotum for testicular implants.

**Trans or transgender:** umbrella terms that embrace the many different identities of people whose gender identity differs from their biological sex.

**Trans\*:** an asterisk is sometimes added as a way of including all trans, non-binary and gender nonconforming identities.

**Transsexual:** used largely in medical or legal circumstances to describe someone who proposes to undergo or has undergone gender reassignment.

**Transition:** the process of social and/or medical changes a person may take to live in their gender identity. This may include hormone therapy, surgery, social and legal changes.

**Transvestite:** a person who enjoys





**Financial Conduct Authority**

[www.fca.org.uk](http://www.fca.org.uk)

Telephone

**LGBT+ Cymru Helpline**

[www.lgbtcymru.org.uk](http://www.lgbtcymru.org.uk)

Telephone 0800 917 9996

Provides information, advice and confidential support on various issues that affect LGBTQ+ people, their families and friends.

**Llais**

[www.llaiswales.org](http://www.llaiswales.org)

Telephone 029 20 235558

A body that represents the voices and opinions of people in Wales in regard to health and social care services. Can provide complaints advocacy service.

**Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman**

[www.lgo.org.uk](http://www.lgo.org.uk)

Telephone helpline 0300 061 0614

Investigates complaints about local authorities and social care providers.

**NHS Gender Dysphoria National Referral Support Service (GDNRSS)**

Support line 01522 857799

The GDNRSS Coordinates access to gender reassignment surgery for men and women.

**NHS 111 Wales**

[www.111.wales.nhs.uk/](http://www.111.wales.nhs.uk/)

Telephone helpline 111

Service offering a telephone helpline and web information on finding local health services in Wales and on a wide range of health conditions.

**NHS website**

[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

A comprehensive web information service to help you learn more about a wide range of health conditions, find NHS services in England, improve and make choices about your health and manage long term cond m (n)-3(g)-3( )8(te)-5(rm)6f nhs.uk/





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### Next update July 2025

The evidence sources used to create this factsheet are available on request. Contact [resources@ageuk.org.uk](mailto:resources@ageuk.org.uk)

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