

# Coming out



A coming out guide for  
trans young people



Introduction	2
Green Light Project	4
What is Coming Out?	6
Support & Advice	8
Things to Think About	9
Coming Out Step by Step	10
Questions & Responses	12
Coming Out to Friends	14
to Family	16
to Partners	18
at School	19
at College/Uni	20
at Work	21
Relationships	22
Transphobia & Bullying	24
Advice for Family & Friends	26
Rights & Legislation	28
Definitions	32
Sex & Gender	36
Myths & Facts	38
Useful Links & Websites	40

**intro**



**We are continually given messages throughout our lives about what it means to be a girl or boy, woman or man. Families, friends, teachers, adverts and magazines tell us that we are supposed to look, dress, behave and feel a certain way just because we are biologically male or female. In reality, though, people look, act and feel both masculine and feminine to varying degrees regardless of their physical body. Very rarely are we told that how we feel inside might be different to how we look on the outside. As a result, most people who feel like this, grow up feeling worried, ashamed, scared or just somehow different.**

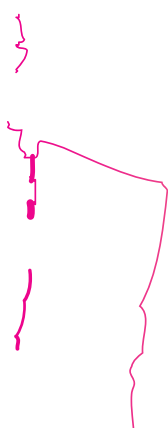
Transgender people are people whose gender identity – who they are internally or their ‘innate’ gender – is different to their physical body or the gender they were assigned at birth. The term transgender, however, describes a whole range of people and takes many forms from cross-dressers to transsexuals to people who reject male and female genders altogether.

This guide has been written by transgender young people, who have drawn on their own personal experiences to make the process of coming out as a trans young person easier for others. Whether you are certain that you are trans or are unsure about your gender, this guide is written to help you understand your own feelings and how to share them with others when you feel ready.

Coming out is different for everyone, and although we hope this guide will help with that process, it won't provide you with a definitive answer to all your questions or tell you the ‘right’ way to do it. What it will hopefully do is give you some useful tips, highlight other people's experiences and provide useful links to further information and support.



# greenlight



**LGBT Youth Scotland's Green Light Project is a national programme to support lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender young people to come out. Funded by the Big Lottery, the project involves working with young people from across Scotland to develop materials that challenge stigma, provide information, and offer advice around coming out.**

By drawing on personal experiences, the project's participants are developing a range of resources to increase people's understanding of the many issues faced by LGBT young people, including peer education workshops, coming out guides, and college and university LGBT society toolkits.

For more information visit: [www.lgbtyouth.org.uk/green-light.htm](http://www.lgbtyouth.org.uk/green-light.htm)

### **LGBT Youth Scotland**

LGBT Youth Scotland is a national youth organisation working towards the inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender young people in the life of Scotland. We provide a range of services and opportunities for young people, families and professionals.

LGBT Youth Scotland runs youth groups, provides online information and advice, provides one to one support, delivers training, carries out schools work, and offers volunteering opportunities for adults and young people.

To find out more, contact us:

Website: [www.lgbtyouth.org.uk](http://www.lgbtyouth.org.uk)

Email: [info@lgbtyouth.org.uk](mailto:info@lgbtyouth.org.uk)

Text: 07781 481 788

## What is Coming Out?

Coming Out is when someone tells someone else their gender identity or sexual orientation. Most of us are brought up to think that everyone's gender identity matches their physical body and that everyone is attracted to the opposite sex. For people who this is the case, they very rarely need to come out, as who they are and who they are attracted to matches what is seen as *normal*. These people may not even consider themselves to have a gender identity or sexual orientation because it's not labelled as *different*.

Trans people, however, have to make the choice to either publicly 'hide' how they feel or tell people their true gender identity. Trans people come out at all stages of their life and to varying degrees. For some it will be essential for them to live fully as themselves, whereas for others it might be that they only come out to themselves.

The following sections in this guide will look at all the different stages of the coming out process in more detail. Just remember that coming out is your choice and you should never feel forced to tell people if you don't feel ready. Coming out can be a lifelong process and only you can know when, where and who to tell.

### Coming Out to Yourself

Before you can come out to anyone else, it's important to come out to yourself. This is when you acknowledge your own gender identity and decide how you want to express it. Coming out to yourself gives you the opportunity to explore exactly who you want to be. It might be useful to do some research into different transgender identities, but what's important at this stage is being honest with yourself and taking time to discover how you really feel.



Becoming or expressing who you really want to be might seem impossible or hugely daunting at this stage, but that doesn't mean you won't get there. Many trans people have felt like this, but with the right information, advice and support they have achieved what they once thought they would never be able to do.

When coming out to yourself the following suggestions might be useful:

**1. How do you want to express your gender identity?**

Look over all the categories within the trans umbrella and think about which one seems the closest to how you feel. Think about what is involved in achieving this and how you feel about the process.

**2. Experiment with the idea**

Some people dress up or experiment with different personas while in a private, safe space to see what feels right. This could involve changing your voice, how you walk, or putting on different clothes.

*“Since I was little I always knew I was different. I didn't identify with other young girls. As I went through puberty I thought I might be a lesbian. I knew I was attracted to other girls, but now I'm not so sure. I am experimenting with the idea that I may be a trans man, but I am still not 100% sure”.*

*17 year old, confused*

## Support & Advice

Once you have come out to yourself, you might want to tell people close to you straight away, but for many people this takes time. Before telling friends and family there are a number of ways you can get support to make this easier. Below are a few ideas. For further advice see Useful Links.

### 1. Speak to your GP

They can put you in touch with a Gender Specialist who will be able to discuss your options in more detail.

### 2. Websites

There are now a number of websites for trans people that offer information and advice.

### 3. Online Forums

If you don't feel ready to talk to other people face to face, there are a number of online forums where you can talk to other trans people. This can be a safe and anonymous way to find out more and discuss how you are feeling.

### 4. Support Groups

There are a number of trans support groups where you can meet other trans people in a safe and confidential environment.

## Things to Think About

Coming out to others can be a hugely liberating experience and many people say it feels like a huge weight has been lifted from them. Below is a list of some of these benefits as well as some things to consider.

### Benefits

- Being more true to yourself
- Unloading the burden
- Living as you want to live
- Meeting other like minded people
- Helping/supporting other trans people
- Gradually feeling at ease with yourself
- Educating others/breaking down stereotypes/myths
- Being a positive role model for others

### Considerations

- Transphobia
- Safety
- Negative Reactions
- Being rejected/ostracised
- People not listening/understanding (ignorance)
- People trying to talk you out of it/  
change your mind (scaremongering)
- It is a lengthy process (be patient)
- Be realistic about what you will achieve  
through HRT and surgery
- It's a life changing decision

Coming out rarely is all good or all bad, but if you do have a negative experience, remember that by coming out you will have increased opportunities to meet other trans people, make new friends, and receive support from others.

### Coming Out Step by Step

Telling someone that you are close to can be the hardest part of coming out, so it's important to be prepared. This step by step guide will help you to have all bases covered.

#### Be sure you are ready to tell:

- Be confident in yourself.
- Be sure that you want to come out rather than feeling you have to.

#### Be informed yourself – be prepared to answer questions:

- Educate yourself on the topic so you can educate others.
- If you are well informed you're more likely to be taken seriously.

#### Get support

- See the Support & Advice section, page 8.

#### Think about who, where, when:

- Be sure about who you want to tell and that they are someone you trust.
- Do it somewhere neutral and safe, somewhere neither of you know others.
- Make sure there is plenty of time to talk.

### Decide how you are going to word it:

- Don't be too scripted or formal.
- Don't provide too much information at once.
- Try and be calm.
- Be non-confrontational.

### Be ready for reactions:

- Be prepared for any reaction, see Questions & Reactions, page 12.
- Remember that this might be the first time they have thought of you this way/met any trans person.

### Their first reaction might not be how they actually feel:

- Give people a chance to think and time to get used to it. Remember that it probably took time for you to come to terms with it.

## Questions & Reactions

Depending on who's being asked and who's asking, answers will vary, but the questions and guide answers below will hopefully help you to prepare for some of the common questions and reactions when someone comes out as transgender.

**Q: What does that mean?**

A: Your own definition of how you identify.

**Q: What if you meet a nice boy/girl?**

A: If they are that nice they will accept me for who I am. Who I fancy is not determined by my gender.

**R: You'll never be able to have kids.**

A: There are lots of options for trans people to have kids.

**R: You'll never be a real man/woman.**

A: What's the definition of a real man/woman, who's to say what a man/woman is?

**R: I'll always see you as a son/daughter/brother/sister.**

A: Hopefully over time it will change and it would mean a lot to me if you tried.

**R: But I love having a son/daughter/brother/sister.**

A: I'm still the same person inside, I've just changed on the outside.

**Q: Personal questions about body/surgery/sex life.**

A: It's your choice what you feel comfortable answering. Would you ask someone who wasn't trans that sort of question?

**Q: You don't have a penis/breasts & a vagina how can you be a man/woman?**

A: It's how you feel inside that counts, not what's on the outside.

**R: But I would never have guessed.**

A: Why would you have expected to be able to tell?  
I wouldn't have expected you to.

**R: So that's why you're so masculine/bitchy/etc...**

A: I'm like that because that's who I am not because of my gender. That's just my personality.

If anyone you come out to reacts negatively try and find a safe way to remove yourself from the situation. If their response involved verbal or physical abuse, you may want to report this to the police. See Reporting A Hate Crime for more information.




coming out



## Coming Out to Friends

Many trans people come out because they reach a point where they don't want to hide who they are anymore. Telling friends can provide extra support and can make relationships feel more honest and real. Some friends may not accept it, but real friends will accept you for who you are.

Before coming out to a friend, have a think about the following:

- Decide who you want to tell.
  - Decide who you can trust not to tell others, unless you want them to.
  - It is important when telling a friend to explain that it is your choice to tell others in your own time.
  - Be prepared for questions and to explain your decision.
  - Make sure you are in a safe, neutral space.
  - Be confident about your decision and don't let others try and talk you out of it.
  - Remind them that your gender is only one part of you and that you are still the same person.
  - Explain that your friendship doesn't necessarily have to change.
- 

family



## Coming Out to Family

Telling family members can feel especially daunting because they have known you as the gender you were assigned at birth for longer than most- maybe your whole life. The news may come as a complete shock and they may think that they are somehow to blame. It's important to help them understand that this is a part of you that no-one can change, and that by transitioning (in whatever form), you will become the person you really want to be.

- Remember that this might be the first time they have thought of you this way.
- A lot of parents may think that they have done something wrong and blame themselves.
- Some parents may feel like they have 'lost' a son or daughter and will need time to accept your new gender.
- Remember that the first reactions you get from family members may not be a true representation of how they'll feel in the long term.
- Many parents, with time, can become your biggest advocate, actively supporting you through your transition.

"When Simon told me he was changing his gender, I was a little taken aback, but I listened to what he had to say and was happy that he had found contentment in himself"

*Grandparent of a trans man*

"At first I was upset and felt that my son had died and in a way was grieving, and then eventually, I watched my daughter grow into a confident and beautiful young woman. I love my daughter and wouldn't have her any other way"

*Mother of a trans woman*

## Coming Out to Partners

All relationships can be challenging for a number of reasons, regardless of your gender identity or sexuality. The fear that telling a new or existing partner that you have identified or do identify as transgender, or would like to transition will end a relationship often makes trans people reluctant to come out to their partner.

Although some partners may not be able to continue a relationship with someone who changes their gender, many relationships will continue through a transition. Your partner will probably need time to think about how they feel, so try and be patient.

If you have already transitioned and meet someone new it's important to think about what stage in the relationship would be a good time to tell them, if that is what you want to do. It's also important to consider if you don't tell them and they find out later on, how they might feel.

It's important to remember that even if an existing relationship doesn't work out, this doesn't mean you won't meet someone else. Trans people, like everyone else, can have long, happy relationships.

*"I have never identified as a trans woman and have only ever seen myself as a woman. I began transitioning when I was seventeen and have lived successfully up until now as a woman. I have been on hormones for nearly eight years and undergone breast surgery. I have no plans to undergo the full operation as I don't want to risk complications, and generally feel happy as I am now. I have a very supportive partner and family".*

*27 year old woman*

## Coming Out at School

Some trans young people may want to start transitioning when they are still at school. This decision should be thought about carefully, as it could have a huge impact on your experience at school.

Some things to consider are:

- Speaking to your guidance teacher or the head teacher to discuss how the school will support you.
- Ask for a copy of the school's anti-bullying policy to see if it mentions transphobia.
- Get further advice from transgender support groups or online resources.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states that every person under the age of 18 should have the right to education, the right to be kept safe from harm, and the right to have a say in the decisions affecting one's own life. It is your school's responsibility to make sure that you are safe from bullying and discrimination, but if your school are failing to support you properly, you may want to report it to the police. See Rights & Legislation and Reporting A Hate Crime for more information.

A useful guide for schools to support transgender students has been produced by GIRES and can be downloaded from:  
[www.gires.org.uk/assets/Schools/TransphobicBullying.pdf](http://www.gires.org.uk/assets/Schools/TransphobicBullying.pdf)

### Coming Out at College/Uni

Transgender people's experiences of studying at college or university can vary widely and although anti-discrimination legislation exists, sadly not all colleges and universities are proactive in implementing it.

Before enrolling for a course at a college or university, it might be useful to consider the following:

- Check if they have an LGBT society.
- Read the college/university's mission statement to see if it mentions equality and diversity.
- Ask for a copy of the college/university's anti-bullying policy.
- Contact the college by phone or email to state your interest in enrolling on a course and ask them if they have experience of working with trans students.

All Scottish colleges and universities are required by law to deal with any discrimination you face as a trans student, but for them to deal with it you must report it. This is not always easy to do, so perhaps ask a friend to come with you for support.

Guidance for colleges and universities to support trans students has been developed by the Forum on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in Post-School Education and can be downloaded at: [www.scottishtrans.org/uploads/resources/a7002.pdf](http://www.scottishtrans.org/uploads/resources/a7002.pdf)

### **Coming Out at Work**

Most trans people are not out at work despite legislation protecting transsexual people from employment discrimination being in place since 1999. It is also still common for transsexual people to change job at the time of transition to avoid being outed at work. Other transgender people often go to significant lengths in order to reduce the chance of their colleagues and employers finding out they are transgender.

Some people do transition and remain in the same job and are supported by their work, but it is worth taking time to consider this decision. For more information see Rights & Legislation.

A useful guide for employers on supporting transgender employees has been produced by the Scottish Transgender Alliance and Stonewall Scotland, and can be downloaded at:

[www.scottishtrans.org/  
uploads/resources/changing\\_for\\_the\\_better.pdf](http://www.scottishtrans.org/uploads/resources/changing_for_the_better.pdf)



# relationships



**Before entering into a relationship with someone, whether it's casual or serious, it is important to think about what you want from another person. The key to any good relationship is communication and respect.**

If you start going out with someone, you might want to have sex. There are lots of things you can do, like kissing and cuddling, mutual masturbation, touching each other, or oral, vaginal or anal sex. The key to good sex is feeling comfortable with your partner and understanding what each other want. The best way to do this is through talking to each other, being honest, and taking things at your own pace. It is never OK to be pressured into doing things you don't want to. Another good way to find out what you like and don't like sexually is through masturbation and getting to know your own body.

When having sex with someone it is important to make sure you protect yourself from Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) including HIV. You can reduce the risk by using a condom and oil free lubricant for penetrative sex (vaginal & anal) and a condom or dental dam for oral sex. It's important to educate yourself around safer sex and to be willing to discuss it with your partner before you start having sex.

There are lots of leaflets, websites and other resources that are available on safer sex. One example of these is the Healthy Respect website: [www.healthyrespect.co.uk](http://www.healthyrespect.co.uk)

## Transphobia & Bullying

Sadly, many transgender people still experience transphobia and/or bullying at some stage in their life, whether it is at school, college, university, work or in the street. Transphobia is physical or verbal abuse to someone because they are or are assumed to be transgender. Transphobia or bullying can include name calling, being threatened, being hit or kicked, being made fun of, being ignored, or having rumours spread about you. No person deserves to be bullied or to be the victim of transphobia – it is never acceptable.

If you are being bullied or discriminated against because you are transgender, you might want to:

- Talk to someone you trust about it.
- Report it to your school/college/university/employer.
- Report it to the police.
- Get support from a trans or LGBT group.
- Contact victim support if you have been the victim of a hate crime at [www.victimsupportsco.org.uk](http://www.victimsupportsco.org.uk).

Challenging the bullying behaviour on your own is never a good idea, as you might be putting yourself in danger. For more information on bullying, visit: [www.respectme.org.uk](http://www.respectme.org.uk)

## Reporting a Hate Crime

The law changed in 2009 to further protect all transgender people from hate crime. This means that If you are the victim of a crime which was motivated by transphobia, such as being physically harmed while transphobic comments are made, you can report it to the police.

The police have been encouraging reporting of this type of crime and take it very seriously. You can contact the police on 999 in an emergency, or if you don't report it at the time but decide to later, you can do so by contacting your local police station.

If for whatever reason you are unsure about going to the police, then you can make a 'remote report' (sometimes called 3rd party reporting) via a local support agency who are linked into the police. LGBT Youth Scotland is one of these agencies, with remote reporting available at all its local services. LGBT Youth Scotland's website also has detailed information and links to each police force area across Scotland, which list all remote reporting agencies.

Please see [www.lgbtyouth.org.uk/advice/remote-reporting](http://www.lgbtyouth.org.uk/advice/remote-reporting)



# advice for family + friends

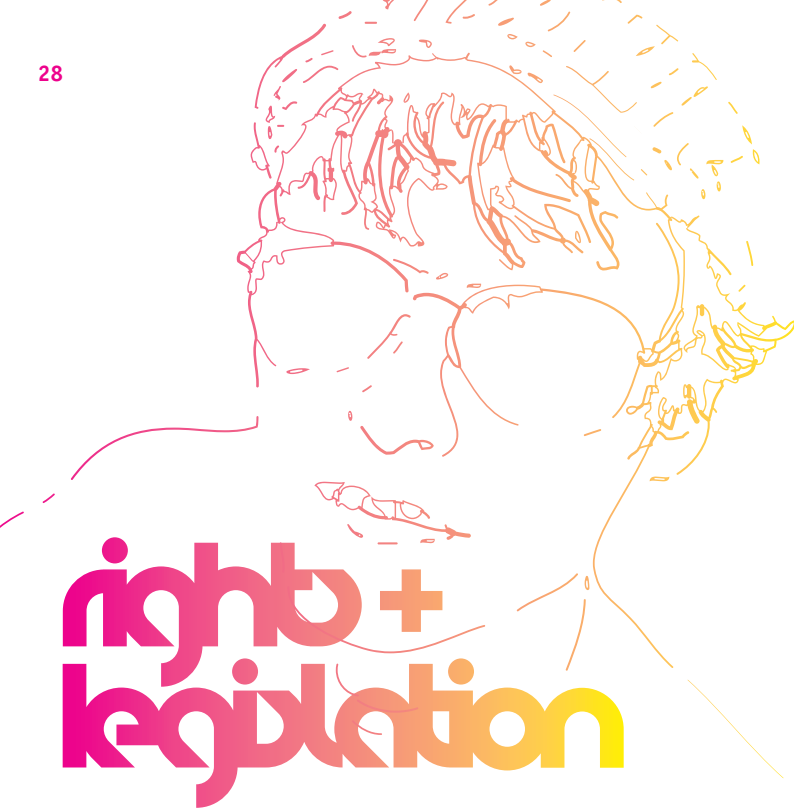


**If someone close to you comes out as transgender, you may feel unsure about how you feel about it or how to respond. It will probably take time to get used to the idea, especially if you weren't expecting it. It is important to let the person know that you still care about them, even if you don't understand it all straight away.**

Regardless of your initial thoughts or feelings, remember that just because someone identifies as transgender doesn't make them any less of a friend or family member. Think about how you felt about them before they told you and ask yourself why this would change just because the gender they were defined with at birth is different to the gender they feel inside.

It's OK to let the person know that it might take you time to get used to the idea, but that you will do your best to support them. It's also OK to ask questions, as this shows that you are taking them seriously. At the same time, try and be sensitive about how they are feeling- it's not easy coming out to someone close to you. Other sections of this booklet can help to answer some of these questions or how to ask them in a sensitive way.

Many transgender people are now coming out and beginning to transition at a younger age due to increased information and greater acceptance. If a friend or family member comes out as transgender at a young age, it can be easy to dismiss it as a phase. Most people who come out have put a lot of thought into it before telling someone, so it is important to take it seriously. Try and let the person explore their gender identity without trying to change or pressure them.



**rights +  
legislation**

There have been lots of new pieces of legislation over the last few years which give transgender people more rights to be recognised, included and kept safe from harm. This section lists a few of the key pieces of legislation and what they mean for you.

### The Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999

This piece of law means that it is against the law for anyone to discriminate or harass a trans person who is intending to have, is having, or has had gender reassignment while at work, while attending skills based training or while at college or university.

### Sex Discrimination (Amendment of Legislation) Regulations 2008

This piece of law is exactly the same as above but it provides these rights in the provision of goods, facilities and services, which includes for example while shopping, attending any public service such as health care or education or any private services such as at a hotel or bed and breakfast.

### The Gender Recognition Act 2004

This piece of law means that you can now apply to have your birth certificate changed so that your birth certificate, passport, driving license etc matches with your acquired gender. Importantly it also makes it a crime for someone to disclose a person's previous transgender history in certain circumstances.

For example: a human resources officer in a company who finds out that a new employee has undergone gender reassignment in the past may commit a crime if they pass this information on to others in the company.

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### The Offences (Aggravation by Prejudice) (Scotland) Act 2009

This piece of law gives further protections to all transgender people who experience any crime which includes a transphobic element, for example if someone is physically harmed while transphobic comments are made.

The Equality Bill is a piece of law which is going through parliament just now (Winter 2009) which we hope will extend protections and rights to more transgender people – please keep an eye on LGBT Youth Scotland’s website for more information. [www.lgbtyouth.org.uk/information](http://www.lgbtyouth.org.uk/information)

### Name Change

Many trans people may wish to change their name, either permanently from one name to a new name or they may simply wish to use a different name when with friends.

Most transsexual people permanently change their name when they are living full time as the gender which matches their gender identity. If you would like to legally change your name, you are able to do so at any time and with relative ease. There are a few different ways to change your name but the easiest is by ‘statutory declaration’, which basically means you complete a form and get a solicitor to witness your completion of it, which then makes it ‘certified’, this can then be used to change the name on your passport, alongside a letter from your doctor stating you are living permanently as a man or a woman.

There is more detailed information in the gender identity booklet, including a sample ‘statutory declaration’ letter, this can be downloaded from:

[www.lgbthealth.org.uk/sites/default/files/gender\\_identity.pdf](http://www.lgbthealth.org.uk/sites/default/files/gender_identity.pdf)



## Transitioning

Transitioning is the process by which some trans people change their gender expression to match their gender identity, or begin to change from living as one gender to another. This process can vary hugely and can range from minor changes to permanent changes. Everyone is different, and the level of transition will depend on personal feelings.

Some stages in transitioning can include:

- Dressing in different clothes
- Changing the way you talk
- Adjusting mannerisms
- Changing your body through exercise
- Changing your hair or wearing a wig
- Using make up
- Hair removal
- Changing your name
- Taking hormones
- Surgery

Transitioning can take time and it is a good idea to start with some of the minor changes to see how you feel. If you decide that you want to take hormones or get surgery, you will need to be referred to a Gender Specialist through your doctor.

“After telling my GP I wanted to have a sex change, I was referred to a bisexual support group as that was the only group available that I could remotely fit into even though I wasn’t bisexual at all. Surgery and hormones have also changed a lot since my day; the surgery is a lot more advanced, but on the down side, the waiting time is a lot longer. Being trans will still be taboo for a long time, but it’s getting better”.

*Samantha, 40 year old trans woman*



# definition

**There are a whole host of categories within the transgender umbrella and terms associated with being transgender. Different people define themselves in different ways, below is a short list of some of the most common terms and definitions.**

### **Transgender**

An umbrella term used to include all categories within the trans community, including transsexuals, cross-dressers, androgynes, and polygender people.

### **Transsexual**

Someone whose physical body does not match their gender identity and changes their physical appearance usually through hormones and surgery to better align their physical body and gender identity.

### **Transsexual man**

Someone who is born with a female body, but whose gender identity is male and transitions to live permanently as a man.

### **Transsexual woman**

Someone who is born with a male body, but whose gender identity is female and transitions to live permanently as a woman.

### **Cross Dresser**

Someone who is happy with their physical gender but dresses as the opposite gender at times for various reasons.

*continued over*

### Intersex

Someone who is born with genitals and/or their internal reproductive organs which are not clearly male or female. Doctors may make a decision as to assign one gender shortly after birth.

### Androgyne

Someone who doesn't clearly fit into the typical masculine and feminine gender roles of society physically and/or emotionally.

### Polygender

People who reject defining their gender as simply male or female.

### Gender Queer/Fluid

Similar to Polygender, people who see themselves as being both male and female or neither.

### Drag King/Queen

Someone who dresses and takes on the persona and gender characteristics of the opposite sex usually in an exaggerated form. This is mainly for performance or fun.

### Gender Dysphoria

A term used to describe when someone has ongoing uncomfortable or uncertain feelings about their assigned gender at birth.

### Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT)

A course of hormones which are taken to replace the hormones which are naturally produced by the body as part of the transitioning process.

### Gender Reassignment Surgery

Surgical procedures by which a person's physical appearance and function of their existing sexual characteristics are altered to resemble that of the other sex.

### Coming Out

When someone tells someone else their gender identity (or sexual orientation). Most trans people will have to come out to many people throughout their lives.

### Transphobia

Physical or verbal abuse to someone because they are or assumed to be transgender.

### Going Full Time

When someone begins to live permanently as the gender they feel inside. In the UK trans people must 'go full time' for a year before having access to hormones and surgery.



**sex+gender**

**The terms sex and gender are often very confusing as people use them both to mean the same thing at different times. Sex and gender are both part of who we are, but don't always match up.**

When thinking about your sex and gender, it is often useful to look at them under the three headings below:

### Sex

The physical body with which you are born (or the biological differences between men and women)

### Gender Identity

How you feel inside (or the characteristics and attributes associated with men or women within society)

### Gender Expression

How you publically present yourself (the behaviours, mannerisms and actions associated with men and women within society)

Everyone's sex, gender identity and gender expression can be seen as a point on a sliding scale rather than being either just male or female. For many people their biological sex, gender identity, and gender expression will be at different points on the scale, and for some this will be ok. For many trans people, however, their gender identity and biological sex will be so different that they want to change their body in some way. This is known as transitioning.

### Gender Identity v Sexual Orientation

Another common mistake is when people confuse gender identity for sexual orientation. Your gender identity is about who you feel inside whereas your sexual orientation is about to whom you are attracted. A lot of people think that if you are transgender, you are automatically gay or lesbian. Just like anyone else, trans people can be lesbian, gay, bisexual or straight.

## Myths & Facts

When people don't know much about a subject or group of people, they tend to make assumptions and jump to all sorts of conclusions without finding out the truth. This leads to a lot of common myths forming. Trans people are still hugely under-represented in the media and information about being trans can still be hard to find. Below is a list of some of the myths surrounding trans people.

**Myth: All people who are transgender need to undergo surgery.**

Fact: Being transgender means different things to different people- everyone's journey is different.

**Myth: Trans people are gay.**

Fact: Being trans is about gender not sexuality – trans people can be gay, straight or bi.

**Myth: You only get trans women, you don't get trans men.**

Fact: There are lots of trans men but currently, trans women have received more media attention.

**Myth: Transgender identities are immoral.**

Fact: Many trans people have faith and there are a growing number of trans friendly places of worship.

**Myth: Surgery/hormones will mean your body will change overnight.**

Fact: Everybody's body changes differently and at different paces. There's no set timeline.



**Myth: All trans people stick out like sore thumbs.**

Fact: Everybody is different whether they are trans or not.

**Myth: If you are a cross-dresser or gender queer you want to change gender.**

Fact: Not all trans people want to change their gender; it's about the person being happy and doing what makes them feel comfortable.

**Myth: All trans people are confused.**

Fact: Trans people are no more confused or no less confused than anyone else.

**Myth: Being transgender is a choice.**

Fact: Being trans is no more a choice than being tall, straight or black. Trans people however have to choose how honest they are with themselves and others.

**Myth: All trans people are depressed and unhappy.**

Fact: Many trans people live happy, successful and fulfilled lives.

**Myth: If you are transsexual and haven't had surgery you shouldn't want to have sex.**

Fact: Some transsexual people will still have sexual feelings and still want to have sex – it's whatever feels right for you.

## Useful Links & Websites

### **LGBT Youth Scotland**

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

### **Scottish Transgender Alliance**

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

### **Human Rights Campaign**

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

### **Gender Identity Research and Education Society**

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

### **Mermaids**

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

### **Equality Network**

[www.equality-network.org](http://www.equality-network.org)

### **National LGBT Forum**

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

### **Queer Youth Network (Online Forum)**

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

### **Stonewall Scotland**

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

### **Scotland's LGBT Domestic Abuse Project**

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

### **Gay & Lesbian Youth Northern Ireland**

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

### **Belong To**

Irish LGBT Youth Organisation

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

### **International Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Youth and Student Organisation**

[www.iglyo.com](http://www.iglyo.com)

### **International Gay and Lesbian Association**

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



### **About the authors**

This guide was written by Lowissa Jai, Simon Strachan, Sara Griffin and Andrew Easton through facilitated discussions held by LGBT Youth Scotland.

## **LGBT Youth Scotland**

Centrum Buildings  
38 Queen Street  
Glasgow  
G1 3DX

Telephone: 0141 548 8121  
Email: [info@lgbtyouth.org.uk](mailto:info@lgbtyouth.org.uk)  
Website: [www.lgbtyouth.org.uk](http://www.lgbtyouth.org.uk)



A company limited by guarantee 244805. Registered charity SC024047.  
Registered office: The Citadel, 39-40 Commercial Street, Edinburgh EH6 6JD.