

**EDC17D005**

**Title:** Guidance for Students who are Transitioning  
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**Issue:** Although gender transition is comparatively uncommon (estimated 1% of the population) the number of people choosing to transition has increased in recent decades due to the greater accessibility of support and improved societal understanding. However, this remains a very sensitive area and those transitioning can be very vulnerable during and after. The University has established much good practice for this group, but written guidance will provide clear and unambiguous signposting both for those transitioning and those supporting them.

**Recommendation:** Feedback on the proposed guidance and approval of the paper is sought from the Committee.

**Resource Implications:** There are no additional resource implications.

**Risk Implications:** Although this group is believed to be relatively low in numbers they are considered highly vulnerable and the introduction of supportive guidance is good practice. The group is also covered by the Equality Act 2010 and the guidance seeks to increase the University's capacity to respond with proper support and build a culture in which individuals feel empowered to disclose if they decide to transition gender. In turn this reduces the risk of any adverse experiences for either the individual or the University.

**Equality and Diversity:** The guidance stems from the core of good practice on Equality and Diversity.

**Timing of decisions:** n/a

**Further Information:** Further information is available from [h.murdoch@uea.ac.uk](mailto:h.murdoch@uea.ac.uk)

**Background:** the University has successfully supported a number of individuals, staff and student, through transition. This guidance makes the existing support network explicit with a 'user friendly' Q&A approach.

**Discussion:** see body of document, presented in a question and answer format.

**Further Information:**

The Guidance for Staff who are Transitioning, following the same format, was approved by the Committee in October 2016. Guidance for Staff supporting Students or Staff through Gender Transition is to be developed during 2018.

# PRACTICAL SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS TRANSITIONING

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## 1. BACKGROUND

### 1.1 Who is this guide for and what's inside?

This guide is aimed at UEA students who either experience gender dysphoria\* or who are currently transitioning/questioning their gender or who have transitioned gender in the past and are looking for relevant avenues of support. It also contains information about organisations that specifically include or support non-binary people. The guide outlines:

- UEA aims, values and policy
- What the law covers
- Practical Issues
- Support Routes (internal and external)

### 1.2 How does UEA support trans and non binary people?

The University aims to create a culture and environment in which it is safe to be oneself without fear of discrimination, harassment or bullying. The University works to improve understanding of a range of characteristics, both those protected under the law and also on a wider spectrum. Our ethos is that a safe and fair culture will support and enable all to flourish and achieve their full potential in both work and study. We have successfully supported a number of staff and students who have either undergone a full gender transition or who choose to live in their preferred gender. It is an entirely individual choice whether a person who either wishes to explore their gender identity or decides to fully transition seeks support – in producing this guidance the University aims to clarify what avenues of support are available on and off campus and in doing so make it clear that the University community welcomes and values transgender students and staff.

One of the University's aims is to create a safe and welcoming environment for learning and working that embraces differences and encourages all members of the University to value diversity.

The trans community is a diverse group including a range of identities and using a variety of terminology. Broadly, this group includes people whose physical sex characteristics do not match their internal gender identity and who choose to take steps to adjust their lives (which may or may not include medical intervention for gender reassignment) to match their true gender.

These steps may include:

- Social transition where name, pronoun, dress changes
- Medical transition (for example, surgery, hormone replacement therapy)
- Legal (for example, obtaining a Gender Recognition Certificate)

Trans includes people who intend or are considering any of the steps above.

### 1.3 Confidentiality

It is important to understand the highly sensitive nature of any information or data relating to an individual who discloses they may transition, are transitioning, have transitioned or will transition gender. If such information is disclosed to any member of University staff they should seek guidance on an anonymised basis (i.e. **without naming** the individual asking for support) from one of the following:

- Human Resources Team
- Equality and Diversity Office
- Student Support Services/Wellbeing Service

Further disclosure is carried out only with the agreement of the individual and on a strictly 'need to know' basis.

**It is important that the information disclosed is not shared beyond this 'need to know' group thus leading to the trans man or woman being 'outed'**. This could have serious implications and breaches of confidentiality of this nature will be taken seriously and dealt with firmly.

If any member of staff, or a student or visitor asks whether an individual is trans it is important you do not give this information or speculate – the question is in itself an indication that the person is not in the 'need to know' group. If you are not sure if the enquiry is legitimate or not you should always suggest the enquirer contact their Course Director for advice. **Do not** be drawn into general discussion or gossip as this risks disciplinary action.

The Gender Recognition Act establishes that information about an individual entered on to the Gender Recognition Register is strictly confidential and unauthorised disclosure of this information is an offence under Section 22 of the Act.

The Data Protection Act sets out a number of criteria for individuals handling personal data. This includes ensuring that the data is kept securely and is processed only for the purposes for which they were collected; is not divulged to third parties without the subject's consent; is relevant and up to date; and, is disposed of as confidential material when no longer needed for the purposes for which they were collected.

### 1.4 Rights and responsibilities

**All trans students** have the following rights:

- To choose whether or not to disclose their gender identity, and to whom they disclose it, and the circumstances where this may be disclosed
- To request the University to update its documents, records and systems to reflect their new gender role, once they have decided to commence living full time in their new gender role
- To request support during their transition.

**All University staff** have these responsibilities:

- To respect the dignity of all students
- To challenge and/or report incidents of discrimination, bullying and harassment, or victimisation relating to gender identity
- To withhold information about an individual's transgender status from any other person unless given explicit permission by the individual
- To comply with the law in relation to the protected characteristics of gender reassignment that is in force in the UK.

## 1.5 What is the current legal framework covering gender identity/transition?

Current legislation includes the:

- Marriage (Same Sex Couples ) Act 2013
- Equality Act 2010
- Gender Recognition Act 2004
- Gender Reassignment Regulations 1999
- Data Protection Act 1998

**The Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA)** places responsibilities and obligations on organisations which process data about living individuals. It also gives legal rights to individuals in respect of personal data held about them by others. The DPA recognises that certain types of sensitive personal data should be treated with particular regard. This includes data on physical or mental health or condition and sexual life.

**The Gender Recognition Act** outlines the criteria and process through which people can obtain a Gender Recognition Certificate. This certificate enables people to obtain a birth certificate, and other documentation, in their new gender. The Act also made it illegal to disclose information about someone's gender reassignment/transition/status to another without the trans individual's explicit consent.

**The Equality Act** simplified some aspects of equality law and introduced greater parity of rights between the nine identified protected characteristics, of which gender reassignment is one.

The law covers those people who are 'proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning the person's sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex'. The Act uses the term transsexual and identifies a number of circumstances in which it is unlawful to discriminate against transsexual people, namely in the provision of:

- goods
- services
- facilities
- public functions

It is not a requirement to undergo medical treatment or to be under medical supervision to be included as transsexual (the terminology used under the law).

The Act makes it unlawful to discriminate against transsexual people in the following ways:

- **Directly** (e.g. in recruitment by refusing a job to someone on the basis that they are, or that you perceive them to be, or that they have friends or relatives who are, transsexual);
- **Indirectly** (e.g. by putting in a provision, criteria or practice which disadvantages transsexual job applicants or employees without robust, objective justification)
- **Harassment** of a job applicant or employee on the basis of gender reassignment, or sexually, or by subjecting someone to a disadvantage because they reject or submit to harassment
- **Victimisation** of an applicant or employee because they have brought a complaint about discrimination or because they have supported a colleague who has brought such a complaint.

Public Authorities (the University is classed as a 'public authority' under the Equality Act 2010) are also required to work proactively 'to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation in connection with any protected characteristic including transsexual people or in respect of gender reassignment and also to foster good relations between people with different protected characteristics including transsexual people'.

## 2. PRACTICAL ISSUES AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT

### 2.1 If you're questioning your gender identity or if you're considering whether you want to transition:

#### What sources of support are available?

The support you're looking for will depend on what aspect of transition you're currently dealing with – whether you are either initially exploring your gender identity or are more certain but need advice concerning a later stage - and would benefit from discussion in a safe supportive environment there are a number of routes you might find useful:

#### On Campus:

**2.1a** The **Union of UEA Students** elects an LGBT+ Officer each year to provide support to trans people as well as people who are Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual.

The Union have also produced a helpful booklet 'Transitioning at UEA' available in hard copy (from Union House, UUEAS offices) or online: [https://issuu.com/uea\\_su/docs/trans\\_guide](https://issuu.com/uea_su/docs/trans_guide)

The booklet is full of advice such as how to change your passport or driving licence, how to tell people which pronoun you prefer, how to change your name and where to find support off campus, in the city.

This guidance is intended to complement the Union's booklet to ensure students who change gender are supported effectively by the University too.

UUEAS Offices are on the first floor of Union House (The Hive) which is found at the top of the steps leading to the Square.

#### 2.1b Support from the Student Support Service:

**The Student Support Service is located on the Upper Street behind Waterstones Bookshop and next to the Student's Union building (The Hive). Search for Student Support Centre on the campus map.**

The **Wellbeing Service** is part of Student Support Services. Students are now able to refer themselves to the Wellbeing Service either by visiting or telephoning (01603 592761). Two key parts of the Service are:

- [The Wellbeing \(Mental Health\) Team](#) This team has advisors with a range of experience in supporting and signposting students with gender dysphoria, in the process of transitioning or who have transitioned. The team are sensitive to the potential complexities of life for transgender people and connect with other services and individuals, on and off campus, to help signpost appropriate support beyond their own remit.

- [The Counselling Service](#) Students are able to have up to six appointments with the service which provides a safe place to explore concerns or worries which may be connected with any stage of exploring gender identity, or to do with issues such as coming out to family and friends as well as to other students and staff on campus. The team also connects in with other specialist off-campus services and can help signpost the best support for you.

Appointments for either the Mental Health Team or the Counselling Service can be made by phone on 01603 592761 or email: [studentwellbeing@uea.ac.uk](mailto:studentwellbeing@uea.ac.uk)

You can also look at some additional general self-help resources on the [University's Wellbeing Service web pages](#)

Both these services can help identify and signpost the right additional support services for you. Sometimes there are high levels of demand on both services and waiting times lengthen – if you have quick queries or are happy to ask questions in a more general group setting then you might consider going to a [Wellbeing Session](#) – this is bookable via the Student Services Reception (01603 592761).

**2.1c University Medical Service** is based on campus and can provide advice and support if you want to discuss medical aspects of gender reassignment. The service has successfully supported both students and staff previously seeking this kind of support. To access the Service you must first register as a patient. The service is located on the edge of the campus at the entrance from Bluebell Road, next to the launderette and Nursery.

The telephone number is 01603 251600 and full information can be found on [their webpage](#).

**2.1d UEAPride** is UEA's Student sexuality and gender identity peer support group. For more information, take a look at the [UEAPride Facebook page](#).

### 3 Off Campus:

**3.1** There are several groups which may be of help in the area in giving support and putting you in contact with others who are experiencing/have experienced transition or have explored their personal gender identity in depth.

[Evolve](#): part of the Mancroft Advice Project, based in Norwich, and specifically for young people.

[BLAH LGBT+ Youth Project](#) has groups in Norwich, Kings Lynn, Swaffham, Cromer or Lowestoft and its [website](#) will go live in April 2017.

Details of [support groups throughout the region](#) can be found online, including Norfolk Trans Forum and for the group meeting at the [Catherine Wheel](#) pub in Norwich.

### **3.2 Online Sources of Information:**

[GIRES](#): 'GIRES is a volunteer operated membership charity that, in collaboration with the other groups in its field, hears, helps, empowers and gives a voice to trans and gender non-conforming individuals, including those who are non-binary and non-gender, as well as their families'.

[Press for Change](#): founded by Prof. Stephen Whittle, Press for Change has been one of the leading pressure groups for trans rights. The website has a great deal of practical guidance and advice.

[Stonewall](#): since 2016 Stonewall, the leading LGB pressure group, have included trans people in their lobbying and provide a number of guidance booklets and information pages.

For information about sexual health:

[Sexual Health Information](#): this provides a list of local organisations and services which promote support for the LGBT+ community.

[Terence Higgins Trust](#): Terence Higgins Trust is the UK's leading HIV and sexual health charity, providing a wide range of services to more than 100,000 people a year. The charity also campaigns and lobbies for greater political and public understanding of the personal, social and medical impact of HIV and sexual ill health.

### **3.3 How do I let people at UEA know I am a trans person?**

#### **Considering disclosure while you are a student:**

##### **Why might you decide to disclose?**

The University hopes that anyone studying or working at the University who is considering transition, or who is already transitioning to affirm their gender, will choose to disclose so we can provide support. However, we do stress, it is an absolutely individual decision whether to disclose or not and there is no pressure to do so. We respect your right not to disclose this information but must also make you aware we cannot anticipate your needs if you decide against disclosure.

##### **How to make a formal disclosure**

You can notify the University of your intention to transition by letter, noted or sent as 'Strictly Confidential', to:

Head of Student Services  
University of East Anglia  
Norwich Research Park  
Norwich, NR4 7TJ,

or by email to [j.sharp@uea.ac.uk](mailto:j.sharp@uea.ac.uk) choosing the 'confidential' option before sending the email.

Your letter or email should include your name as it is currently held by the University, your Student Number and your date of birth.

Importantly, you should know that emails may be retained on UEA systems for auditing purposes. The risk of your gender status being revealed to others in the future as a result of retention of emails is considered to be low, however, if you are concerned about your gender status being revealed to others in the future, you can choose to avoid using email or limit any information you send by email or other electronic methods.

The Head of Student Services will contact you to discuss an appointment to help determine what support is available and who can support you, with your agreement.

When you meet with the Head you can discuss what changes to your personal records you would like. The Head will arrange for this to be done for you via the Student Services Team. If you are not ready to make changes to your records at that point you can arrange to let Student Services know later what changes to make, once you are ready.

The Student Services Team have clear steps to take care of record changes and once the record is changed from one gender to another the history of records under your previous identity are automatically removed from the SITS (the main student database at the University) system. Once you have met with the Head, the appropriate person in the Student Services Team will liaise with you to explain changes and to ensure you give your consent to the processes involved.

It is understood by staff handling student records that a Gender Recognition Certificate is not required and should not be requested when making such a record change. However, we initially ask for a written request to allow us to make the required alterations and deed poll/statutory declaration evidence of a change of name. If liaison is needed with other departments the Student Services Team will discuss this with you first and either get your permission or ensure you are aware of any limitations non-permission may place on the support you receive. At all times you will decide the extent of disclosure.

### **3.4 When I register as a student what are the gender options and personal titles I can choose?**

When you register as a student the questions/options you'll see are:

- Female
- Male
- Non binary
- Gender fluid or
- Other – with a text box for you to express your identity as you feel is appropriate.

Additionally, when you enter your name, you will have a choice of title (e.g. Mr, Miss, Ms, Dr, Professor etc) and to this list we have added 'Mixer' with the abbreviation of Mx for those who prefer to identify with a non binary-gender option.

### 3.5 I will be changing my name – do I have to have a deed poll?

The Citizens Advice Bureau has [an excellent leaflet](#) explaining all general options around changing your name, in detail. To summarise – you don't legally have to have a deed poll to change your **name** but can use a Statutory Declaration. This is accepted by the University – and also by the UK Passport Office. But note, **this is only for a name change**. If you want to change your gender on official documents such as your passport, or on your records here at the University you would need to provide either a gender recognition certificate or a letter from a doctor confirming the change is likely to be permanent, along with a deed poll or statutory declaration. The Student Services Office can help with the details.

### 3.6 How can I be sure my data will be treated as strictly confidential?

The University takes its responsibilities around confidentiality very seriously. It would be a criminal offence (under Section 22 of the Gender Recognition Act (2004)) for a member of University staff to disclose to another person that the individual concerned in their discussion was born a different gender, if this happened without the consent of the person concerned.

All staff handling either student or staff details are trained on the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998. Confidentiality is understood to be paramount among the teams dealing with student records, enquiries or data.

All staff are also required to complete the on line Equality and Diversity Module training 'Diversity in the Workplace' which covers the issue of confidentiality and sensitive data and also has a section covering trans rights. This is in addition to the training which goes on at a local level within Hubs and central/School/Faculty teams.

We also provide staff training on 'Trans and Gender Identity Awareness' with over 100 staff trained during 2016/17, many from teams who staff the main hubs and Library.

Should you ever have a concern about the way your personal information is being handled you should contact the Head of Student Services by email: [j.sharp@uea.ac.uk](mailto:j.sharp@uea.ac.uk) or write to:

The Head of Student Services  
University of East Anglia  
Norwich Research Park  
Norwich  
NR4 7TJ

### 3.7 When UEA gathers data about me how will it be used?

The University records information about its student population by age, gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation and religion and belief. The information is used in reports and the first four of those characteristics are typically shown at UEA level, Faculty level and/or by School, usually by headcount (i.e. numbers of students) and what percentage of the University's student population the figures represent. Sexual Orientation and Religion and Belief are shown at UEA level only, and not taken to lower levels (Faculty or School) due to the sensitive nature of the data. Numbers of Transgender students are not collected in this way, although through support work we are aware that a number of students who either have transitioned or who are transitioning study here. Individual's details are not passed on internally without the explicit consent of the person concerned and never with a view to compiling statistics.

It is possible we would introduce collecting this information in the future. By this we mean giving students the opportunity to declare this amongst a range of personal characteristics when they register here. At the same time, in every category of question we always give the option 'prefer not to say'.

The reason for collecting such information is to allow us to analyse how effective the University is in enabling each and every student to fulfil their potential. We are still improving our reports, but they cover such things as retention of students from a range of characteristics, degree results, admissions patterns, access to services. We look at how we can improve our work where data and qualitative feedback tell us we could do better for certain student groups, for example, by improving the physical campus for disabled students to have best possible access.

When analysing data we look at numbers and the patterns that emerge – we don't include personal details and although the data is based on SITS it is extracted separately and away from individual records.

### 3.8 Can I change my records during the time I'm a student at UEA?

Yes. Please also see the guidance at 3.3 of this Guidance, under 'How to make a formal disclosure'.

In the first instance write to:

Head of Student Services  
University of East Anglia  
Norwich Research Park  
Norwich, NR4 7TJ,

or email [j.sharp@uea.ac.uk](mailto:j.sharp@uea.ac.uk) choosing the 'confidential' option before sending the email.

Your letter or email should include your name as it is currently held by the University, your Student Number and your date of birth.

Let the Head of Student Services know that you have decided to live in your preferred gender and what changes you require to your record so he can oversee the process.

### **3.9 How do I get a new version of my transcript or my degree certificate?**

Please contact the Student Records Office in the first instance. You will be entitled to one free copy of both your transcript and your award certificate.

The Student Records Office  
Finance, Planning and Governance  
University of East Anglia  
Norwich Research Park  
Norwich  
NR4 7TJ

Email [student.records@uea.ac.uk](mailto:student.records@uea.ac.uk)

### **3.10 How do I get a new campus card once I'm living in my gender?**

Replacing your Campus Card can be done online, see Section 3 on the Portal page '[Replacing Your Campus Card](#)'.

Staff on the IT Service Desk team have received the Trans and Gender Identity Awareness Training and have supported other students wishing to replace their card for reasons of gender transition.

### **3.11 I have to complete a placement as part of my course – how will I be supported?**

If you are transitioning or have transitioned prior to the placement on your course and have any concerns about taking part in the placement please speak to your Course Tutor in the first instance.

It is their responsibility to ensure you will be welcomed onto your placement and they can liaise with Student Support Services or the University's Equality and Diversity Office ([equality@uea.ac.uk](mailto:equality@uea.ac.uk), or (59)1898) for further advice. If your placement also involves you working abroad it is important to ensure you will be in a trans friendly country and you are encouraged to discuss this with your Course Tutor or Adviser about this in good time.

### **3.12 I'm living in University Accommodation while I'm transitioning – who do I talk to if there's a problem?**

Each residence on campus has a Senior Resident allocated to it. The Senior Residents have been trained in a number of aspects of helping any student settle into life at UEA and in the residence.

They can help with advice or signposting to other people who can support with all the everyday issues that may occur, whether they are of a practical nature or to do with the emotional side of adjusting to life in a new place. They have all been trained on issues of dignity and respect

### 3.13 If I encounter bullying behaviour from others what can I do about it on campus/off campus?

On campus contact:

- Union of UEA Students (UUEAS)
- Student Support Services
- Your Academic Adviser

You can report specific instances of trans related bullying/hate incidents to the Security Team at the Security Lodge who will log the details. This can help the University know if there is a particular problem developing on campus – for example, if two or three people report similar instances over a week - and measures can then be put in place to tackle it.

- **Off campus**

The Norfolk Constabulary (police) support the trans community and you can visit their website for information about their approach to policing and equality: <http://www.norfolk.police.uk/aboutus/equalitydiversity/gender.aspx>

To report a specific incident call 999 or to speak to someone about concerns you may have in your immediate community you can call 01953 423788 or 423793.

Also, see the local support groups, listed at section 3 of this guidance.

### 3.14 I am transitioning and will continue to use Sportspark facilities – is there someone I can talk to about changing facilities or any other questions I might have?

The key contact at the Sportspark if you would like to discuss specific facilities or concerns to do with transitioning is Anna Linsmith ([a.linsmith@uea.ac.uk](mailto:a.linsmith@uea.ac.uk)). All staff in the Sportspark have received training on equality and diversity relating to customer support.

### 3.15 Are there any gender neutral toilet facilities on campus?

The University has a number of gender neutral toilets available across the campus, so there should always be one near your place of study. The

[campus map](#) highlights them with this symbol  To see them please ensure you have selected the Campus Facilities tab at the bottom of the map. The main toilets on the ground floor of the Hive are all gender neutral.

**If you use this guide but think other things could be included please contact the University's Equality and Diversity Office: [equality@uea.ac.uk](mailto:equality@uea.ac.uk), Tel: (59)1898, (59)7209 or 59(1823).**

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### **Terminology\***

*\*This appendix is adapted from terminology provided by GIRES, November 2013*

#### **Introduction**

Terminology in the 'transgender' field is constantly changing as our understanding and perceptions of gender variance develop. The concept of a 'normal' gender expression, associated with a simple 'man/woman' divide, is itself open to question.

#### **Affirmed Gender**

The term 'affirmed' gender, is now becoming more common in describing the post-transition gender role which, at that stage, accords with the gender identity. The gender identity does not change when a person transitions; the gender role and appearance come into alignment with it. This would usually include dress and presentation and will often have been assisted by medical intervention. 'Affirmed' should be used in preference to 'acquired'; the latter is the language of the Gender Recognition Act, and is more appropriately used to describe the new legal gender status of the individual.

#### **Cisgender**

Those who are cisgender have little or no discordance between their gender identity and their gender role or sex anatomy. These factors are well aligned in a cisgendered person. Trans people who have completed transition to the point that they are comfortable, may then be regarded as cisgender.

#### **Gender confirmation treatment**

Those transitioning permanently usually have gender confirmation treatment that includes hormone therapy and often surgery to bring the sex characteristics of the body more in line with the gender identity. Such surgery is sometimes referred to as gender (or sex) reassignment surgery. The term 'sex change' is not considered appropriate or polite.

#### **Gender Identity**

Gender Identity describes the way in which one psychologically identifies oneself, typically, as a boy/man or as a girl/woman. However, some people experience a gender identity that is somewhat, or completely, inconsistent with their sex appearance. They may regard themselves as gender neutral, that is, non-gendered, or as embracing aspects of both man and woman and, possibly, falling on a supposed spectrum between the two. People have the right to self-identify, and many people, especially among the young, reject the whole idea of binary tick-boxes, and use more wide-ranging, open terms such as pan-gender, poly-gender, third gender, gender queer, and so on.

#### **Gender Recognition Certificate**

In 2004 the Gender Recognition Act was passed, and it became effective in 2005. Those trans people who have undergone a permanent change of gender status may endorse their new gender status by obtaining legal recognition in the form of a Gender Recognition Certificate (GRC). Applicants must provide paper evidence to the Gender Recognition Panel indicating that they have already changed their name, title and gender role, on a continuous basis, for at least two years, and that they have the intention to live in the altered gender role for the rest of their lives. A medical opinion indicating that the applicant has experienced gender dysphoria is necessary, and some details regarding treatment. However, no surgery is required. Successful applicants acquire the new gender status 'for all purposes', entitling them to a new

birth certificate registered under the changed name and title, provided that the birth was registered in the UK.

The GRC has strict privacy provisions which must not be breached by any person acquiring such information in an 'official capacity'. Disclosure to a third party would be a criminal offence (GRA s22).

The Marriage (Same-Sex Couples) Act, 2013, will allow trans people to obtain a GRC within a pre-existing marriage, which will then become a 'same-sex' marriage. When a trans person obtains a GRC within a pre-existing Civil Partnership, that partnership must be changed into a marriage.

### **Gender role**

The gender role is the social role - the interaction with others - which both gives expression to the inner gender identity and reinforces it. Despite the greater gender equality in modern Western culture in terms of the subjects studied in school and at university; the choice of friends; work and domestic arrangements; dress and leisure pursuits, there is still a presumption of conformity with society's 'rules' about what is appropriate for a man or a woman, a boy or a girl, especially in terms of appearance. A significant departure from stereotypical gender expression often causes anxiety and discomfort in those who witness it.

### **Gender variance/ gender nonconformity/ gender dysphoria**

Occasionally an individual may feel that their physical appearance does not coincide with their own psychological sense of their gender identity. This may have its origins before birth. Research studies indicate that small parts of the baby's brain may develop along a different pathway from the sex of the rest of the body. This could result in a future mismatch between gender identity and sex appearance. If a person then dresses and/or behaves in a way that is perceived by others to be outside typical cultural gender expressions; this behaviour may be described as gender variance or gender nonconformity. Where conforming with society's cultural expectations causes a persistent personal discomfort, this may be described as gender dysphoria (dysphoria means unhappiness). Gender dysphoria is a recognised condition for which medical treatment may be appropriate in some cases. However, each individual is unique and will experience gender variance to a different degree, responding to social circumstances differently. Gender variant expressions should not be regarded as psychopathological, but as a natural part of human experience. The discomfort described as gender dysphoria stems, in large part, from the stress associated with the reactions of others towards people who experience and express their gender differently.

### **Intersex conditions**

There are a number of intersex conditions (recently renamed Disorders of Sex Development – a clinical description which many in the UK refuse to adopt). In some intersex conditions, the appearance at birth is atypical, being neither clearly male nor female. The sex (male or female) and the anticipated gender role (boy or girl) assigned at that time, may not be consistent with the core gender identity and may, therefore, result in a need to change the gender role at a later stage. In addition, some of these individuals may have had surgery neo-natally to create (usually) a female appearance. An individual raised as a girl, following such surgery is at risk of identifying as a boy whose phallus has been removed.

Inconsistencies in development may be associated with atypical sex chromosomes such as Klinefelter syndrome (XXY), Jacob's syndrome (XYY), or atypical combinations of 'X' and 'Y', such as XXYYY, XYYY and so on, including mosaicism (more than one chromosomal configuration in the same individual). Genetic anomalies that are particularly associated with unusual genital appearance are:

Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome, Congenital Adrenal Hyperplasia, 5 $\alpha$  reductase or 17 $\beta$  Hydroxysteroid Dehydrogenase (HSD) deficiencies. Most of these conditions are associated with unusual pre-natal hormone levels. Other conditions such as Cloacal Extrophy may be included in this group since babies with this condition may have poor genital development.

## **Sex**

**Sex** refers to differences in physical appearance (e.g. reproductive organs) and brain characteristics that lead to a person being categorised as male or female. This is distinct from **gender identity**, which is the inner sense of knowing that we are men or women, and **gender role**, which describes how we behave in society.

It is often assumed that our sex appearance, general identity and gender role will be consistent with each other, so that an apparently male infant will identify as a boy, and vice versa.

## **Transgender**

'Transgender' has had different meanings over time, and in different societies. Currently, it is used as an inclusive term describing all those whose gender expression falls outside the typical gender norm. It is often the preferred term for those who change their role permanently, as well as others who, for example, cross-dress intermittently for a variety of reasons including erotic factors (also referred to as transvestism). Those who live continuously outside gender norms, sometimes with, and sometimes without, medical intervention are covered by this term. There is a growing acknowledgement that although there is a great deal of difference between say, drag artists and people who change their role permanently, there are nonetheless areas in the transgender field where the distinctions are more blurred; for example, someone who cross-dresses intermittently for some years, may later change fully to the opposite gender role.

## **Transition**

Transition is the term used to describe the permanent change of gender role in all spheres of life: in the family, at work, in leisure pursuits and in society generally. A few people make this change overnight, but many do so gradually over a period of time, changing their presentation intermittently and sometimes whilst undergoing early medical interventions such as hormone therapy.

## **Trans men and trans women**

The expression 'trans' is often used synonymously with 'transgender' in its broadest sense. However, sometimes its use is specific; for instance, those born with female appearance but identifying as men may be referred to as 'trans men'; and those born with male appearance but identifying as women may be referred to as 'trans women'. The terms may also be used to imply a direction of travel, rather than a complete transformation of a person's gender status. Many trans people, having transitioned permanently, prefer to be regarded as ordinary men and women. In these cases, where it becomes essential to refer to their pre-transition status, the phrase 'woman (or man) of trans history' may be used.

## **Transsexualism**

The terms 'transsexualism' and 'transsexual' are gradually being replaced with more acceptable terminology. These terms apply only to those whose gender dysphoria may require medical intervention, possibly including hormone therapy and surgical procedures to change the appearance. Often these treatments are associated with a permanent transition to a gender role that accords with the gender identity, thus alleviating much or all of the discomfort. A transsexual person, is someone who

'proposes to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone gender reassignment' (Equality Act 2010). The word 'transsexual' should be used as an adjective, not a noun. It is, therefore, never appropriate to refer to an individual as 'a transsexual', or to transsexual people, as 'transsexuals'. Most people experiencing gender dysphoria prefer the general terms, 'trans' and 'transgender'; the abbreviation 'tranny' is also unacceptable.

### **Sexual orientation**

Sexual orientation is a separate issue from gender identity. Sexual orientation is associated with the sexual attraction between one person and another. This is quite different from the internal knowledge of one's own identity. Trans people may be gay, straight, bisexual or, occasionally, asexual. Their sexual relationships may remain the same through the transition process, or they may change. So a person who is living as a man, and is in a heterosexual relationship with a woman may, having transitioned to live as a woman, continue to be attracted to women and seek a lesbian relationship – or – may be attracted to men, and therefore seek a heterosexual relationship with a man. Sometimes trans people make lasting relationships with other trans people, so the possibilities are many and varied, and do not necessarily fit comfortably into typical categorisations of sexual behaviours. Those who remain in a long-term relationship, despite one partner having transitioned cannot be categorised by any existing terminology, since the sexual orientation of the non-trans partner does not change; the orientation of the trans partner may or may not shift, as described above.