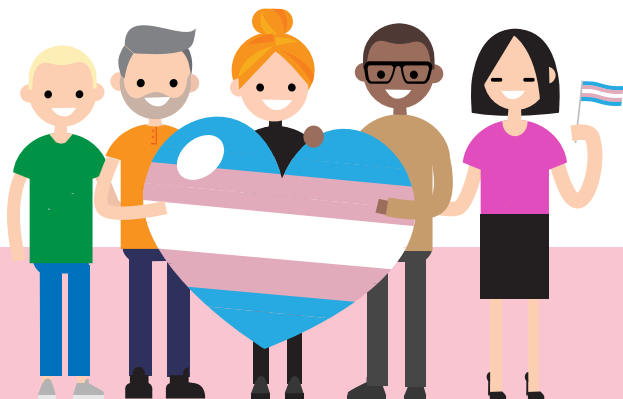


GENDER IDENTITY



INFORMATION AND ADVICE FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

A BIT ABOUT GENDER IDENTITY AND SEX

When someone is born, a healthcare professional lists them as male or female depending on what their genitals look like. This is known as someone's assigned sex at birth.

How someone feels about themselves (whether that's male, female a mix of both or neither), is known as gender identity.



WHEN SEX AND GENDER IDENTITY DON'T MATCH

Gender identity can be fluid and people can identify as one gender but still express traits of another gender (e.g. someone who identifies as female but wears men's clothes).



Sometimes someone's gender identity doesn't match the sex they were assigned at birth, which can cause discomfort or distress. This is known as gender dysphoria (dysphoria means unhappiness or unease).

Gender dysphoria is not a mental illness, but it can affect someone's mental health, by making them feel uncomfortable, unhappy, anxious and like they are struggling to cope.

DIFFERENT GENDER IDENTITIES

There are lots of different gender identities and ways people identify. These include:

Transgender (trans)

Someone whose gender identity does not match with the sex they were assigned at birth.

Non-binary

Non-binary is a spectrum of gender identities which are not exclusively masculine or feminine; this may be a combination of both or neither.

Agender

Someone who identifies as having no gender or being without a gender identity (also called genderless, non-gendered or ungendered).

Genderfluid

A term often used by people whose feelings or sense of self in relation to their gender identity or sexuality are not fixed and can change over time; most commonly paired with another term, e.g gender fluid or sexually fluid.

There are many more gender identities; you can find a list of these, as well as other LGBT+ terms, in the glossary on our website, www.lgbtstoke.co.uk.

Some people find labels important and feel supported knowing others share their identity. Others may choose not to use labels, and just identify as themselves.

However someone identifies should be respected.

GENDER IDENTITY AND PUBERTY

Puberty brings body developments, such as breasts, periods, facial hair and voice changes.

This can be very upsetting for those who feel like they're growing into a gender they don't want to live as.

Hormone blockers may be an option in early puberty, to suspend developments such as breasts or facial hair. Your GP can signpost you to specialist services for further information.

HOW DO I SUPPORT MY CHILD?

Young people's understanding of their own gender identity should be respected. When talking to them, or about them, names and pronouns that they are comfortable with should be used.

Telling you is a brave step towards living the life your child wants to live to be happy. It's important that as a parent or carer you listen to your child and you're there to support them.

There is lots to learn about gender identity, which can be confusing, but there is support available for you and your child.

Mermaids are a UK-based charity who provide support for gender-diverse young people and their families.

Visit their website for more information: www.mermaidsuk.org.uk

YOUR CHILD'S RIGHTS AND THE LAW

The Equality Act 2010 is a law which says that everyone the right to be treated fairly, equally and be respected.

This means:

- Preferred name and pronouns should be used and respected
- Your child should be given equal opportunities
- Your child can use the changing rooms and toilets which match their gender identity
- It's illegal for people to call your child offensive names/ words



The law applies to all people, as well as organisations, including schools, colleges and doctors.

If someone's rights are ignored because of their gender identity, this could be a hate crime or incident.

You can report hate crime and find more information on hate crimes and incidents at www.report-it.org.uk.

You can also report a hate crime by calling the police on 101 (always call 999 in emergencies).

FIVE TOP TIPS FROM OUR TEAM

1. Encourage others to refer to your child by their preferred name and pronouns.
2. Support your child in expressing their gender identity through clothes, make-up and social group.
3. Check out useful websites like gires.org.uk and mermaidsuk.org.uk.
4. Challenge offensive language or "banter" when you hear it. You can find advice on how to do this on the "Being An Ally" section of our website, lgbtstoke.co.uk
5. Listen and let them know that you're there to support them.

MORE INFORMATION & CONTACT DETAILS


You can find more information about gender identity, including information on transitioning, on our website.

www.lgbtstoke.co.uk

Or you can get in touch with our team:

✉ Email lgbt@mpft.nhs.uk

☎ Call 0300 123 0970

Find us on social media
LGBT Stoke NHS / @lgbtstokenhs 

If you would require this document to be translated into another language or in a different format (such as easy read or large print, audio) please contact us on the details above.