



# NHS Lothian Gender Services Information Session

Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> April, 2016



[Click here for the full Q&A notes from the event, provided by NGICNS](#)

Hosted by LGBT Health and Wellbeing (LGBT Health), NHS Lothian and the National Gender Identity Clinical Network for Scotland (NGICNS) this was the second in our series of Q & A information sessions giving trans people in Lothian, the opportunity to meet clinic staff and hear about gender services in a safe and supportive community setting. This event followed a successful pilot session in 2015.

## Background

LGBT Health is a unique organisation in Scotland that aims to reduce the health inequalities experienced by LGBT people. The inequalities in health experienced by trans people are acutely stark. Through our engagement we are aware that many trans people want to know more about gender services available to them in Edinburgh. We also hear that many trans and non-binary people who are involved with the GIC in Lothian, are experiencing frustrations, discomfort and in some cases anxiety worsened by the long waiting times for and between appointments.

Influenced by the positive feedback from the 2015 Gender Information session, the aims of this year's event were to create another supportive and relaxed environment to give patients and potential patients of the Lothian GIC a space to ask questions, hear updates on issues raised at the previous session and perhaps most poignantly, provide an opportunity to meet the current team of people involved in delivering the service. The National Gender Identity Clinical Network (NGICNS) were once again involved with the event and represented on the panel, sharing useful information and updates on how the network's agenda is progressing. The NGICNS was set up to ensure that the national gender identity protocol is being implemented equally across all Scottish health boards.

Both LGBT Health and NHS Lothian are committed to strengthening links between our organisations to create better opportunities for accurate and timely information dissemination, enable more effective signposting and provision of support, whilst giving trans and non-binary patients greater access to relevant information and services.

## Ethos and approach

LGBT Health has developed a strong reputation in delivering safe, inclusive and welcoming services for trans people. Through our extensive work in providing safe spaces for the trans people, we recognise the diversity within this community.

It is our hope that these information sessions hosted jointly with NHS Lothian, would help all trans people and their supporters to feel confident in asking relevant questions and have their voice heard in an inclusive environment. To ensure that the event was inclusive of the diverse range of trans people that LGBT Health and the Lothian GIC engages with (and who may need to access gender services), we actively welcomed trans women, trans men, non-binary and genderqueer

people, along with trans-masculine, trans-feminine people and those who are questioning or exploring their gender identity. Our Transgender Support Programmes in both Edinburgh and Glasgow follow this inclusive approach.

Through a booking system, delegates were able to pose a primary and secondary question which were then collated and themed to present to the panel. The diversity of the trans community was reflected in the range of questions submitted.

## The event

A panel was once again selected to represent key services provided by the clinic and give people an opportunity to meet the team that they are likely to come across. It was hoped this would help to de-mystify the processes involved with accessing services and reduce the anxiety often caused by meeting with clinicians for the first time. In a welcome addition to last year's session, we were delighted at having, Dr Sarah Kennedy, the clinic's lead psychiatrist, join the panel.

The panel included:

- Dr Sarah Kennedy (Psychiatrist)
- Dr Danny Mogford (Psychiatrist)
- Aileen Ferguson (NGICNS)
- Moira Little (Senior Speech and Language Therapist)
- Dr Sarah Miller (Medical Practitioner)
- Jules Stapleton Barnes (LGBT Health and Wellbeing)

"In depth, honest and to the point information on gender services in Lothian"

- event participant

The event was chaired by Tracy Davis, NHS Lothian's Clinical Nurse Manager, who led the panel through pre-submitted questions. Participants were given a choice of whether they would like to ask their own questions or have the Chair ask the questions on their behalf and most opted to have the Chair ask on their behalf. There was also time for questions and comments from the floor throughout the session, which gave people a valuable opportunity to ask for further information or clarity around responses from the panel, but also to engage informally with the panel, in particular with Dr Sarah Kennedy, which was an opportunity well received.

"Some hope and faith in NHS Gender Services restored as we have seen some important questions addressed. Great to see more people involved and the organisations taking notes"

- event participant

## Evaluation & feedback

LGBT Health and the NHS Lothian Gender Services are committed to delivering similar events on an annual basis, so it continues to be important to grasp not only the impact of this event, but how the community feel about the way the events are being delivered.

"I've spoken to GIC personnel, who otherwise seem remote and unobtainable without a long wait"

- event participant

The opportunity to anonymously feedback was provided via forms distributed to each attendee which were completed at the end of the session. The opportunity to be supported in completing the form was also provided. 14 forms were completed, giving us the following insight into the key outcomes of the event:

“This was an insight and helpful look as to the service expectations, developments and information points that are provided by NHS Lothian, and it’s useful to see these from a consultants/clinicians point of view”



“Information and reassurance as to the nature of staff”

“More info on what to expect, clearer idea of what’s involved, more confidence in moving forward and it’s less scary now”



“Nice to put faces to names and learn about different facilities”

“I have learned more about the referral process and potential delays in surgery”



“I gained a lot of information and help. It’s made me feel more relaxed and I know what to expect”



“Thanks for putting this event together! It’s really useful to hear from the clinicians and consultants and to hear that they are equally as concerned and involved with the development of the gender programme.  
Thank you!”



“Thank you for the event, maybe next time we could have even more time for questions?”

“Very well organised and very encouraging to see everybody is on the same page, working together to make things better”

## Reflections

Both formal and informal feedback provide reassurance that these information events continue to be a worthwhile and meaningful endeavour for those involved, including of course, NHS Lothian, LGBT Health and NGICNS. The outcomes of the evaluation have fulfilled the aims of the event which has provided a solid base from which to continue to plan similar opportunities.

The Q & A notes provided by NGICNS are a useful record of the responses from the event and to add to this formal record, LGBT Health offers our reflections on some particular responses, which highlight some real positives (which we hope are reassuring) for those accessing, or looking to access the Lothian service. There may also be areas of service provision that may benefit from further consideration and consultation and we hope our reflections are a useful reference to these.

### What to expect from a ‘first appointment’

There were a couple of questions relating to first appointments and what to expect. It was beneficial to hear a response to this from the person who is most likely to see people at these

appointments. With a friendly and approachable style, it was really positive to hear Dr Kennedy speak about the “holistic approach” that they take in regards to appointments but also how encouraging they are in regards to patients finding their own ways to express the things they’d like to say during appointments e.g. writing your story down to bring to the appointment for reference.

It was promising too to hear Dr Kennedy reflecting on how family and friends who have attended the appointments as supporters, has proved to be beneficial in the past which could be helpful if anybody was worried about having to attend alone.

The essence of Dr Kennedy’s response seems to provide a reassurance that no matter what your situation, however you self-identify, the first appointment is an opportunity for you to express what is going on for you, telling your own story in your own way, so that you hear about and have access to the treatment that is relevant for you. Added to this was a reminder that LGBT Health can provide 1:1 support to anybody who would appreciate the opportunity to explore how to prepare for their first appointment.

### Update on provision of NHS Lothian Gender Services

Understandably there was a strong focus on themes relating to service provision and the processes involved in accessing the clinic. In addition to the full Q & A notes we would like to add that we were encouraged to hear that Dr Kennedy and the Lothian Gender Clinic team are keen to work closely with LGBT Health to improve communication around waiting times and service updates. Strengthening the relationship between our services would lead to more timely and accurate information provision and greater insight in to both the needs of the community and the workings of the clinic.

### New full-time Gender Nurse Post

It was also fantastic to hear that there is now a new full-time Gender Nurse, based at Chalmers. David Parker is able to offer appointments to patients, in-between their appointments with a doctor to offer information, support and guidance. So for example, after an appointment with Dr Kennedy, if there is anything that you would like to discuss in relation to your treatment, if you need clarity or reassurance around any medication, process or treatment you are undergoing, you can set up an appointment with David and expect to be seen within just a few weeks. As David is full-time and can offer greater flexibility around appointments, this addition to the clinic’s services could have a hugely positive impact for patients experiencing long waits between appointments. If you would like to arrange an appointment with David Parker you can contact the Chalmers Gender clinic on **0131 536 1070** and ask for the Lothian Gender Clinic Secretary to help set up the appointment.

### Speech and Language Therapy

Affirming information was also shared by the experienced Senior Speech and Language Therapist, Moira Little, who has been working with patients from the Lothian gender clinic for years. As there was a question around whether the service is made readily available to trans masculine, male or non-binary identifying people, it was wonderful to hear Moira exclaim that speech and language therapy takes a very “person-centred” approach and is for anybody, regardless of how they identify, who would like support in changing their voice.

Dr Kennedy also added that this should be offered as a service to any patient during their first appointment, and if in the past it has not been mentioned, this has been accidental. From the

question submitted and other feedback from community members, we ascertained that there have been concerns felt by some individuals about whether this service is not being offered to trans men or masculine identifying people, due to perceptions that they might not require this support. Clarification on this from Dr Kennedy leave us feeling confident that the service is inclusive, and that information about the service will be made readily available to all patients.

LGBT Health also hopes that these notes will provide Lothian GIC patients with the knowledge and confidence to feel confident to ask for such a service, should it feel useful to them.

### Counselling

There's more good news in relation to therapeutic support and we (LGBT Health) were able to provide an update on a free LGBT counselling service delivered in partnership by LGBT Health and Waverley Care, here in Lothian. This service is free, although donations are gratefully accepted.

If you would like to self-refer for our counselling service, simply contact us via phone or email on **0131 523 1100** or via [counselling@lgbthealth.org.uk](mailto:counselling@lgbthealth.org.uk) and we will provide an electronic referral form for you to complete. This form can also be sent to you by mail if easier, or we can complete the form with you over the phone.

### **Next Steps**

LGBT Health looks forward to delivering a 'Meet and Greet' session, in partnership with NHS Lothian, for all Lothian GIC patients in the near future. It is hoped that this session will help introduce patients of the clinic to additional support opportunities provided by LGBT Health, as well as offer the chance for patients to meet staff from both organisations.

The Q & A sessions continue to provide a valuable opportunity for individuals to ask questions, raise issues and air their concerns in safe, supportive and progressive way. We hope to continue these sessions on an annual basis.

Finally, LGBT Health is delighted to be able to continue to provide ongoing practical and emotional support for trans people in Scotland, and we are feeling incredibly positive about working closely with NHS Lothian to ensure services for trans people in Lothian continue to strengthen.

### **Useful contacts and information**

#### **NHS Lothian Gender Clinic at Chalmers Centre, Edinburgh**

For info: [NHS Lothian Gender Clinic](#)

#### **LGBT Health and Wellbeing**

LGBT Health delivers a varied programme of services, groups, courses and events in Edinburgh and Glasgow. We welcome people with a diverse range of identities.

W: [www.lgbthealth.org.uk](http://www.lgbthealth.org.uk) T: **0131 523 1100**

#### **Transgender Support Programme (Lothian and Glasgow)**

A holistic programme of support for trans people delivered in both Edinburgh and Glasgow, including newsletter, information and 1:1 support, managing transition courses, confidence building workshops and regular social events.

Contacts: Jules Stapleton Barnes, Development Worker (Lothian)

E: [jules@lgbthealth.org.uk](mailto:jules@lgbthealth.org.uk) T: **0131 652 3281**

Katrina Mitchell, Development Worker (Glasgow)

E: [katrina@lgbtheathl.org.uk](mailto:katrina@lgbtheathl.org.uk) T: **0141 271 2330** (Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesday morning)

### **Scottish Transgender Alliance**

The Scottish Transgender Alliance works to improve gender identity and gender reassignment equality, rights and inclusion in Scotland. James Morton is the STA Manager.

Email: [sta@equality-network.org](mailto:sta@equality-network.org) W: <http://www.scottishtrans.org> T: **0131 467 6039**

### **Trans Community Groups in Lothian**

*In their own words*

#### **Edinburgh Trans Women 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday of month 7.30-9.30pm**

Support group aimed at transsexual women at any stage of transition, women who are transgender and live as women full-time or part-time or for those who are questioning their gender identity. The group meets 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday of each month 7.30-9.30pm, LGBT Health and Wellbeing, 9 Howe Street, Edinburgh, EH6 3TE.

*ETW look forward to meeting you and prefer you to email us the first time you want to visit. This helps with security and helps us get ready to welcome you.*

Group contact: [info@edinburghtranswomen.org.uk](mailto:info@edinburghtranswomen.org.uk)

#### **Trans Men Scotland Monthly group**

Transmen Scotland is a new social meet up for trans men, including non-binary folks who identify as trans masculine meeting in both Edinburgh and Glasgow at LGBT Health and Wellbeing premises. The group is free of charge and for ages 16+ only. For dates, times and venue information, please contact group to join the mailing list.

Group contact: [transmenscotlandsocial@gmail.com](mailto:transmenscotlandsocial@gmail.com)

#### **Beyond Gender Tuesday evenings from 7–9pm**

Tuesday evenings 7–9pm Group for transgender, non-binary and intersex people and their friends aged 13–25. We provide opportunities for young people aged 13 – 25 and their peers to meet, have fun and access appropriate information, support and learning opportunities, as well as providing opportunities for people to participate in local and national decision making. And have fun in a safe space where they can be themselves. Contact: [gemma.moncrieff@lgbtyouth.org.uk](mailto:gemma.moncrieff@lgbtyouth.org.uk) or visit <https://www.lgbtyouth.org.uk/edinburgh>

**InfiniT (Beyond Gender Unders)** Fortnightly Mondays, 5.30-7.30pm, LGBT Youth Scotland, Citadel House, 40 Commercial St, EH6 6JD

A new group for transgender, non-binary, intersex and questioning young people aged 11-16. A space for people to meet, have fun and to let us know if they need support at school. Contact E: [ann.marriott@lgbtyouth.org.uk](mailto:ann.marriott@lgbtyouth.org.uk) Tel: **0131 5553940** W: <https://www.lgbtyouth.org.uk/edinburgh>

#### **Non-Binary Scotland Meeting every second Friday from 6pm-9pm**

Non-Binary Scotland is a group which provides support and social opportunities for people who either self-identify as out with the gender binary of men and women, or are questioning whether they might.

Whether you are genderqueer, androgyne, third-gender, non-gender, agender, gender-fluid, gender-non-conforming or have any other non-binary identity you are always welcome! Non-Binary Scotland began in November 2013. We will be meeting fortnightly in Edinburgh. We meet in

a safe space at least once a month. Some, but not all, of our events and meetings are also open to significant others, partners, friends, family and allies of non-binary people.

You can contact Non-Binary Scotland by emailing: [nonbinaryscotland@gmail.com](mailto:nonbinaryscotland@gmail.com)

Find out about meet-ups: <http://www.meetup.com/Non-Binary-Scotland/>

You can tweet us: @NonBinaryScot

You can become a member of our Facebook group at:

<http://www.facebook.com/groups/nonbinaryscotland/>

### **Our Tribe Last Saturday of each month, 7pm**

Transgender and looking for a supportive place to explore or express your faith? OUR TRIBE is the LGBT welcoming and affirming Christian ministry at Augustine United Church, Edinburgh. It is a joint ministry with worldwide denomination of Metropolitan Community Churches. All are welcome - friends, family and allies. We meet on the last Saturday of each month and start at 7pm. Please feel free to arrive from 6.30/45pm at Augustine United Church, 41 George IV Bridge, Edinburgh, EH1 1EL.

If you would like further information contact Rev Maxwell Reay [ourtribe.auc@gmail.com](mailto:ourtribe.auc@gmail.com) or call **07957 543359**

### **TransparenTsees (East)**

Supported by LGBT Youth Scotland and TransparenTsees West, TransparenTsees East is aimed at supporting families in the East of Scotland, of young transgender, non-binary and children questioning their gender. The group meets monthly on a Monday 6-8pm (Please get in contact if you wish to attend)

Contact: [ann.marriott@lgbtyouth.org.uk](mailto:ann.marriott@lgbtyouth.org.uk) Tel: **0131 555 3940**

### **Links to useful documents:**

- **Gender Recognition Certificate:** If you are aged 18 or over you can apply when you have 2 years' evidence of living in your preferred gender. This is the process for getting a new birth certificate and being legally recognised as the gender you identify as. Currently only 'male' and 'female' genders are legally recognised. See the official government information at <https://www.gov.uk/apply-gender-recognition-certificate>
- **Changing your name:** you can start using a new name without needing to officially record this. If you want to change your personal details with organisations, you will usually be asked for a legal document showing your change of name. The most common ways for trans people legally changing name are by Statutory Declaration or Deed Poll. You can download a Q&A information sheet [here](#). The Scottish Courts Service's standard Statutory Declaration document for changing name is [Statutory Declaration Change of Name](#). You can download an alternative format used by some transgender people [here](#).
- **National Insurance and HMRC records:** if you change your name and title with HMRC (including your National Insurance record) they automatically categorise transgender people's records as 'restricted access'. This is to protect your sensitive information. Some people can find this problematic when claiming benefits, as most Job Centre staff and call centre workers at HMRC are unable to access your information and resolve any issues. You can contact HMRC to ask your file not to be under 'restricted access'. You can phone

03000 534730, or write to HMRC, Special Section D, Room BP9207, Benton Park View, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE98 1ZZ. For further information see <https://www.gov.uk/tell-hmrc-change-of-details/gender-change>

- **Gender Reassignment Protocol for Scotland (2012):** This sets out the treatments available on the NHS for people in Scotland. The full protocol is at [http://www.sehd.scot.nhs.uk/mels/CEL2012\\_26.pdf](http://www.sehd.scot.nhs.uk/mels/CEL2012_26.pdf)
- **National Gender Identity Clinical Network for Scotland (NGICNS):** this National Managed Clinical Network was set up to support the Gender Reassignment Protocol for Scotland. It aims to ensure equitable access to planned gender identity services. They hold occasional events, aimed primarily at people who may want to access treatment via the Gender Reassignment Protocol for Scotland. Send a message via their contact form for information requests or further details about future events. Visit online: [ngicns.scot.nhs.uk](http://ngicns.scot.nhs.uk)