Working together with schools to support gender diverse young people.

Dr Ashley Miller
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With thanks to colleagues at the GIDS including Marina Bonfatto, Matt Bristow, Hannah Waters, Sarah Davidson, Anastassis Spiliadis, Claudia Zitz and Anna Churcher Clarke
Our service
An introduction to our service

- Established in 1989
- Main bases in London and Leeds
- Nationally funded
- Children and young people up until the age of 18
- Work closely with local services (e.g. schools, CAMHS, etc.)
We support children and young people (and their families) who are experiencing difficulties in the development of their gender identity.
Gender Dysphoria

• Gender diversity/nonconformity refers to the extent to which a person’s gender identity, role or expression differs from the cultural norms prescribed for people of a particular sex.

• Gender dysphoria refers to
  
  • the marked incongruence between one’s experienced/expressed gender and birth-assigned gender (based on physiological sex characteristics). Different ways to identify/define in children and adolescents/adults.

  • Of at least 6 months duration and associated with clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational or other important areas of functioning.

  • Only some gender diverse people experience gender dysphoria at some point in their lives.
Staged Approach

**Assessment**
- Holistic psychosocial assessment
- Other areas of intervention (e.g. psychosocial) also considered

**Blockers**
- Hypothalamic blockers possible from Tanner stage 2
- Early intervention (e.g. below age 15)

**Cross-sex hormones**
- Cross-sex hormones at ca. 16y, if on blocker for at least 12 months
- Partially irreversible

**Surgery**
- Surgery available only within adult services in NHS
The Gender Unicorn

To learn more, go to: www.transstudent.org/gender

Design by Landyn Pan and Anna Moore
Network model

- Young people best supported when GIDS and local services (e.g. CAMHS, schools) work together

- Local services best placed to support wider psychosocial needs and to monitor and manage risk

- Attendance at local network meetings

Network Model

Socio-political environment

CAMHS, Schools, LGBT groups, Youth services

Extended family and friends

Parents / carers and child

TIME / PUBERTY
“Gender reassignment” is a protected characteristic. No requirement to have a medical diagnosis or physical interventions to be covered.

- Duty upon schools (and other bodies) not to discriminate upon this basis.
- How schools implement this in practice can vary (e.g. unisex accessible toilet vs. pupil using the boys’ / girls’ toilets)

• 18% (n=100) of UK respondents reported a positive LGBT environment in school.

• 35% reported a mixed school atmosphere

• 47% a negative LGBT school atmosphere.

• 93% of all respondents to the survey agreed that life would improve if there were ‘measures implemented at school to respect transgender people’ p.96.
Metro Youth Chances 2014

Survey of more than 7000 young people aged 16-25

- 956 Trans young people

Experiences at school (Approx. 685 responses)

- Cyber bullying 34%
- Physical attack 28%
- Name calling / verbal abuse 75%
- Threats/intimidation 48%
At the start of the year [] he took me in to the office and said to me, ‘you do realise that people you know in this area or the country aren’t very accepting of this kind of thing, so you know, expect to get hassled in school’.

*Issues of Bullying around Trans and Gender Variant Students in Schools, Colleges and universities* (Gendered intelligence)
At my first college the vice-principal was absolutely brilliant when I reported transphobic bullying. She got this guy into her office and got him to admit that what he was doing, which was calling me my old name, was hassle. And she said if he did it a second time he’d get suspended.

There’s just this one teacher in my school, [] and she’s been brilliant the whole time. If anyone ever says anything to me she’ll go and speak to them. And she actually puts herself on stuff like the PFC (Press for Change) mailing list and stuff to help educate herself about this stuff’

Issues of Bullying around Trans and Gender Variant Students in Schools, Colleges and universities (Gendered intelligence)
How does your school currently encourage a supportive and inclusive environment for all young people (and staff); including those with a diverse range of gender identities, roles and expressions?
Whole school approach

• School mission statement

• School Policies e.g. Equality policies, anti-bullying policies

• Communicating the above to wider school community

• Education and training e.g. INSET days, PSHE

• LGBT societies in school

• Celebrate differences e.g. books, images, posters, events
School staff

• Develop understanding and knowledge
• Language e.g. build your confidence with terminology
• Diversity- Young people identify in a range of ways
• Differences – in needs and support
• Listen – Don’t make assumptions
Supporting Trans Young People

• Transition – no one way to transition
• Timing – ‘no best time’
• Collaboration and communication
• Confidentiality
• Concerns and worries
• Support
• Keep a developmental frame
Supporting Trans Young People

Names and pronouns

Uniform and dress

Toilets and changing rooms

Sports

Trips
Additional support

• School counsellor
• CAMHS
• Mentors e.g. gendered intelligence
• Local LGBT or trans support groups
Last words - Issues of Bullying around Trans and Gender Variant Students in Schools, Colleges and universities (Gendered intelligence)

Young people that are in primary, secondary, colleges and further education now, if they become exposed to things like policies...or educated on these matters, that they potentially make the people that are going to be out in every day society in the next, 5, 10, to 20 years. And if they’re then outside because policies have happened on the inside from education side of things, then you might start to feel safer, outside that. Work places as well, yeah.
Further sources of support and information

For young people, parents and professionals:
Gendered Intelligence
http://genderedintelligence.co.uk/projects/kip

For young people and parents:
National Trans Youth Network
http://ntyn.org.uk/network/
Good practice guidelines for working with schools

Cornwall Schools Transgender Guidance
www.intercomtrust.org.uk/resources/cornwall_schools_transgender_guidance.pdf

Brighton & Hove Trans* Inclusion Schools Toolkit

Challenging gender stereotypes in the early years – resources
Good practice guidelines for working with schools

Stonewall resources
An Introduction to Supporting LGBT Young People – A Guide for Schools

Getting Started, A toolkit for preventing and tackling homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying in secondary schools.

Getting Started, A toolkit for preventing and tackling homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying in primary schools.

Ten Steps to Tackling Homophobic, Biphobic and Transphobic Language in your School
http://www.stonewall.org.uk/our-work/education-resources

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Our website
www.gids.nhs.uk

- Information for young people, parents, and professionals – including a review of the evidence base

- Coming soon: secure online referrals via the GIDS website

- Paper referrals will be phased out
Selected further reading


THANK YOU!