



<http://oeapng.info>

Frequently Asked Questions – Transgender Young People and visits

What do I need to know and do?

A Transgender person feels that their gender differs from the one they were given when they were born. A person's sex is based on biology but their gender, how they feel internally about their gender identity, doesn't always match with the biology. A transgender person may identify as male or female or may feel that neither of these terms applies and identify as non-binary. Gender identity and sexual orientation are separate matters and a transgender individual may have any sexual orientation.

The terms 'transgender' and 'trans' are used here to cover the wide range of ways in which individuals may choose to express or describe their gender identity. This ranges from non-binary individuals (whose gender identity does not fit within the binary of male and female and who feel no change process is required to express their gender), to those undergoing permanent gender reassignment and gender confirmation treatments. The term 'cisgender' is used to apply to those people whose sex appearance, gender identity and gender expression match with the sex they were assigned at birth.

A person making changes in the way they express their gender, to match how they feel inside, can be said to be transitioning. This can be a long or short process, which may or may not involve medical procedures.

The Equality Act 2010 includes 'gender reassignment', 'sex' and 'sexual orientation' as protected characteristics. This means that protection from discrimination for many transgender people is enshrined in law; however this protection does not currently extend to those identifying as non-binary.

In the context of outdoor learning and off-site visits, establishments must not discriminate against a 'trans' young person because of their transgender status. Establishments should have an Equalities Policy, which includes setting out how this will be achieved so that all young people can participate equally.

Where off-site visits may involve both trans and cisgender participants, you should consider any individual needs and any reasonable adjustments that may be required. It is important that Visit Leaders do not make assumptions or resort to

'labels' but engage in dialogue with the transgender person and, where appropriate, with the whole group, and/or the parent/s to find acceptable solutions.

Each visit and individual should be considered separately. Residential visits may involve the most significant issues around accommodation and showers/toilet facilities. The SAGE variables (Staff, Activity, Group, Environment) will all influence the wider context, as will the age, sexual maturity and gender identity of the individual and where they may be in any transition process. It is important not to dictate someone's gender when making accommodation, changing, toilet and showering arrangements. A solution should be agreed with the individual young person. Practical arrangements may include:

- Access to disabled/neutral gender toilets
- Showers of the identified gender used by agreement at alternative times.
- A separate bedroom (although this may introduce other safeguarding/safety issues)
- Shared bedroom with other transgender young people or with friends where there is trust and understanding.
- Sensitivity around organising changing areas.

If parents of other young people taking part in the visit express concern, you should explain that the establishment is following its Equalities Policy, which is both sensitive to individuals and also to the welfare and safety of the group. Before the visit there will be understanding and agreement about toilet, showering and bedroom arrangements. Parents can be offered a copy of the Equalities Policy and the opportunity to speak individually with the Visit Leader or Head teacher if necessary.

In summary, it is not possible to make hard and fast rules; decisions should be made on a case-by-case basis, taking all of the above, and any other factors into consideration.

Transgender people should encounter few problems while travelling, as long as the visit is well planned. However, there are countries that are not as legally and culturally open or as accepting as the UK. You may need to consider some potentially serious issues when planning an overseas visit. These include, but are not limited to:

- Potential problems entering a country if the person does not appear to be of the gender indicated on their identification.
- Potential problems where a passport indicates a non-binary gender but such a category is not recognised in the country to be visited.
- Countries where it is illegal to be openly lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) or where violent discrimination in the form of hate crime is condoned by the authorities.
- Countries or states where LGBT people may be refused accommodation or services. In the United States, for example, both attitudes and the legal position vary from state to state.
- Border crossing and police searches – the procedures and sensitivity of officers will vary widely.

Visit Leaders should make themselves aware of the issues in the countries being visited. The International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association

website www.ilga.org has more information about countries that pose a risk to Trans individuals (at the time of writing this website did not work well on some mobile devices). Local LGBTI associations in countries to be visited may also be a useful source of country-specific guidance.

Information about obtaining a UK passport in an acquired gender or to change the gender on a UK passport may be found on the gov.uk website. You may need to copy and paste the link into your browser:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/applying-for-a-passport-information-for-transgender-and-transsexual-customers

