



National
Guidance

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Transgender Young People and Visits

Background

A transgender person feels that their gender differs from the sex that they were assigned when they were born. How a person feels internally about their gender – their gender identity – doesn't always match with their biological sex. A transgender person may identify as male or female or may feel that neither of these terms applies and identify as non-binary or otherwise. Gender identity and sexual orientation are separate matters: 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 such individuals may choose to express or describe their gender identity. This ranges from non-binary individuals (whose gender identity does not fit the binary distinction between male and female but 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 – see OEAP National Guidance document [3.2e "Inclusion"](#). 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. Nevertheless, you should not discriminate against anybody, whatever their transgender status. Establishments should have policies which set out how this will be achieved so that all learners can participate equally.

Trans young people can be at risk from bullying, and may experience mental health issues including self-harm. You should be aware of these risks, and ensure that suitable safeguarding arrangements are in place. See OEAP National Guidance documents [4.4n "Mental Health"](#) and [4.3e "Safeguarding"](#).

The Department for Education has published draft guidance for schools and colleges in England on children who are questioning their gender. The guidance document is available at consult.education.gov.uk/equalities-political-impartiality-anti-bullying-team/gender-questioning-children-proposed-guidance.

The subject of gender identity is politically sensitive and can raise strong feelings, so it should be addressed carefully.

Outdoor Learning and Off-Site Visits

Where a visit may involve both trans and cisgender participants, you should consider any individual needs and make any reasonable adjustments that may be required. It is important that you 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.

Decisions should be made on a case-by-case basis, taking all the factors into consideration, and based on principles set out in establishment policies.

Residential Visits

Residential visits may involve the most significant issues, particularly around accommodation, showers and toilet facilities. The STAGER variables (Staff, Timing, Activity, Group, Environment, Remoteness – see OEAP National Guidance document [1b "Foundations"](#)) 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 participant.

Practical solutions could include:

- Access to disabled/neutral gender toilets and showers;
- Showers used at alternative times;
- A separate bedroom (although this may introduce other safeguarding/safety issues);
- A shared bedroom with other transgender young people, or with friends, where there is trust and understanding, with appropriate safeguarding arrangements;
- Private individual 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 sensitive to the welfare and safety both of individuals and of the group. Before the visit there should be understanding and agreement about toilet, showering and bedroom arrangements. Parents can be offered a copy of the establishment's policy and the opportunity to speak individually with the Visit Leader or Head/Manager if necessary.

The charity Gendered Intelligence has published guidance on trans-inclusive residentials, available at

genderedintelligence.co.uk/page/trans-inclusive-residentials.

Overseas Visits

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 or culturally open or 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 passport or other identification documents;
- Potential problems where a passport indicates a non-binary gender, but such a category is not recognised in the country to be visited;
- Countries or states where it is illegal to be openly lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or other (LGBT+), or where discrimination, hostility or violence against LGBT+ people is prevalent (in the USA, for example, attitudes and the legal position vary from state to state);
- Border crossing and police searches – the procedures and sensitivity of officers 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. Local LGBT+ 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 at www.gov.uk/government/publications/applying-for-a-passport-information-for-transgender-and-transsexual-customers

