

Equality & Diversity Profile – Gender Reassignment

This profile presents the current information available. We would like your feedback. Does it reflect your understanding of key issues for gender reassignment? If not, what would you change or add?

Although social attitudes have become more accepting towards trans people, there is a persistent assumption that there are only two genders (female and male) and this gender is the same as biological sex at birth. However, National studies suggest that around 0.6% of the population experience some degree of gender variance (i.e. trans-gender).

Specific areas of disadvantage for transgender people include:

- Transgender people are often victims of violence particularly trans women (Male To Female) as they are visibly trans for several years after starting living in their new gender role. Transphobic violence is more often directed at them than (Female To Male) trans men (1);
- In 2011 (April onwards), there were 275 hate incidents reported to the ARCH partnership, 2 of which were classified as transphobic incidents. It should be recognised however that the number of incidents that actually take place are likely to be under reported;
- Some, particularly young people in these groups struggle to come to terms with their gender identity and experience self-generated, family and/or societal pressure to conform to traditional societal stereotypes. This can lead to difficulties and confusion for individuals, including in terms of low self-esteem, lack of confidence and social isolation and even mental illness;
- Young transgender people report insecure housing, economic hardship, legal problems and difficulty in accessing appropriate healthcare. They have limited family support, high rates of substance abuse and high risk sexual behaviours (1);
- In regards to mental health and emotional well being, the UK's largest survey of trans people (N = 872) found that 34% (more than one in three) of adult transgender people have attempted suicide. Similar rates were reported in a US study (1);
- People from these groups report they often experience and/or expect more subtle prejudice regularly in terms of lack of access to, and being unable to benefit from, services and solutions designed to support the population as a whole. This includes perceptions of prejudices in employment, housing, access to health and Council services and public protection (e.g. police) and social, leisure and culture opportunities. There is therefore a need to better promote how public and private services can support individuals in these groups to their respective communities and to provide meaningful equality & diversity training to front-line staff to help shape these services to best meet the needs of these groups;
- Recognition that people in these groups may suffer from social isolation in their communities because of their sexual or gender orientation, and the need to develop or maintain family and social networks. Furthermore,

some people in these groups may want to celebrate and promote their self and group identity, partly to challenge the expectations of societal norms of gender orientation and its associated prejudices;

1 <http://www.nmhdh.org.uk/our-work/mhep/gender/transgender/>