

Gender Reassignment

Evidence of health inequalities affecting trans people

Demographics

A **trans person** is someone who feels that their gender identity does not correspond to the one they were given at birth. Transgender in the UK is an umbrella term for people whose gender identity and / or gender expression differs from their birth sex. Many prefer the word trans for the same thing.¹ About 1 in every 11,500 people in the world is transsexual. Transsexual people feel they belong to the gender opposite to the one assigned to them at birth².

One of the greatest difficulties in measuring or estimating the size of the trans population is that **no systematic or reliable data** has been collected through the Census or through other Government-sponsored surveys. One study suggested that the number of trans people in the UK could be around 65,000 (Johnson, 2001, p. 7), while another notes that the number of gender variant people could be around 300,000 (GIRES, 2008b).³

The **Equality Act 2010** protects all trans people from discrimination whether you are under medical supervision or not.

One important issue in conducting research on the trans population is the extent to which trans issues can be successfully included in wider research on LGBT people. To date, the trans population has frequently been grouped with lesbian, gay and bisexual people, not least because it has been politically expedient to do so (Keogh *et al*, 2006). Nevertheless, the appropriateness of the grouping of LGBT people is questionable given that trans issues primarily relate to **gender identity**, while the issues faced by LGB people primarily relate to sexual orientation.⁴

National Data

Trans people are also susceptible to **depression** and at risk of **suicide**. A 2007 report highlighted that 34% of respondents in a survey of 872 trans people had

¹ www.gires.org.uk/glossary

² Trans: A practical Guide for the NHS (Department of Health, 2008)

³ www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded_files/research/trans_research_review_rep27.doc

⁴ Ibid

considered suicide one or more times before receiving professional assessment and support.⁵

There is evidence to suggest that for some trans people, the NHS has at times contributed towards anguish and distress. 20% of the trans people surveyed for the report mentioned above reported that their health care was either affected or refused by GPs who knew they were trans. 60% of trans people thought their GPs and other health professionals wanted to be more helpful and supportive but felt unable to do so through **lack of training and information**.⁶

Local data

There has not been any organisation in Bradford and Airedale providing support to trans people or campaigning for trans equality. Steps are now being taken to address this.

Evidence gathered via national online forums showed that trans men, who still have a cervix, have had difficulties accessing **cervical screening**.⁷

Anecdotal evidence highlights that some staff in local NHS trusts have felt uncertain about how best to support trans patients and ensure they are treated with **dignity and respect**.

Staff

It is not possible to record whether staff members are transgender on the NHS electronic staff record (ESR).

At one local trust, a trans woman who had been a member of staff, left the organisation after experiencing transphobic **harassment** that she did not feel able to raise formally.

⁵ Whittle S, Turner L and Al-Alami M, The Equalities Review, Feb 2007

⁶ Trans: A practical Guide for the NHS (Department of Health, 2008)

⁷ NHSBA equality analysis work