



LGBT+ guidance

**for supporting children
and young people in care
in Hampshire and the
Isle of Wight**



Hampshire
County Council

hants.gov.uk

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Foreword

All children go through times in their lives when they are learning to understand and feel comfortable with their gender and sexuality. For some this is more complicated than for others, and, as adults, it is our responsibility to make sure children are growing up in a society where they can feel comfortable talking to the adults around them. This is particularly the case for children in our care, who may have experienced difficult or inconsistent relationships with the adults who care for them.

This guidance has been developed to support adults working with children in our care who are exploring their sexuality and may be, or are, LGBT+. It supports adults to start conversations with children, enables

them to access information and advice, offers guidance about who children can go to and where they can find support.

It is part of a conversation that we all need to take part in, so that the most vulnerable children in our society can trust the adults around them to help them make sense of their lives and develop a strong and confident sense of self.

Cllr Roz Chadd, Chair of the Corporate Parenting Board

Introduction

This practice guidance has been produced to ensure that adults working with children and young people in care who are LGBT+ are meeting the requirements of the Equalities Act and therefore meeting the needs of children and young people in our care.

The Act simplifies, strengthens and harmonises the current legislation to provide Britain with a new discrimination law which protects individuals from unfair treatment and promotes a fair and more equal society. There are nine characteristics protected under the Equality Act 2010. They are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

Hampshire County Council, Isle of Wight council and partner agencies recognise that children and young people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, those uncertain about their sexuality and/or gender identity and those exploring or questioning their sexuality are potentially vulnerable and are likely to need and want access to advice and support as they grow and develop.

Where children are also at risk of harm and/or in the care of the local authority they may be more vulnerable and are likely to be in need of additional support or services. This is because children and young people who are in care will by definition have experienced

difficulties and challenges in their lives and are likely to have experienced a breakdown in their primary relationships. If they are also trying to understand their emerging sexuality or gender identity they will need to know there is someone they can talk to and who they can trust. Finding an adult to trust may be more difficult when a child is in care, particularly if their coming into care coincides with trying to understand their sexuality or gender identity.

This includes those children and young people whose parents/carers or siblings are LGBT+, recognising the impact this might have on the child, especially if they have not been able to access information and support.

Working in consultation with children and young people in care and those in the LGBT+ communities, this guidance has been produced as a practice resource for professionals. It provides some background information and identifies a range of places where children and adults can access practical information, advice and support.

The 'plus'

Why use the letters LGBT+ in our title? The key to this question is in the little + at the end. The full spectrum of human relationships cannot be simplified into four sub-headings.

The plus sign is an indicator that we are aware that many other identities exist beyond lesbian, gay, bisexual or trans and each person should be understood and responded to appropriately.

Good practice

Children will naturally explore their sexuality and gender as they grow up. It should be our aim to create a society where children are able to talk to adults who are confident and comfortable to talk to children and where children feel safe and supported to explore this area of their lives.

Adults, including care staff and foster carers, will not always feel confident and comfortable discussing the issues that children need to talk about so, access to training and information is important. This includes being able to signpost a child to someone who can help. Adults have a legal and moral responsibility for finding useful and suitable resources or to signpost the child to appropriate services.

Providing the right support to a child early on can prevent them from feeling excluded or 'different'. It can also minimise the risk of them exploring these issues in an unsafe environment and potentially exposing themselves to risk of bullying, exploitation or other harm.

Children and young people who identify as trans are known to be particularly vulnerable to bullying and exploitation. They are known to be at greater risk of self harming and are more likely than their peers to attempt to kill themselves.¹

The language and processes that agencies and individuals use that require individuals to identify themselves by gender, can contribute to a sense of disempowerment for those who do not feel comfortable identifying themselves as male or female. Being aware of this and changing our

language will contribute to a change of culture and social acceptances of differences. Adults must listen to children and take their lead from the child for the support and help they need. For example when the child expresses the wish to be identified by a new name, this should be used in face to face meetings as well as in case records or other formats.

Where the adult is in the role of Corporate Parent (or corporate family) there is a responsibility on that adult to be able to have informed conversations about relationships and sexuality.

Key principles

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the child (UNCRC) has four key principles which are relevant to this aspect of children's lives:

- 1 Non-discrimination (article 2)
- 2 Best interest of the child (article 3)
- 3 Right to life survival and development (article 6)
- 4 Right to be heard (article 12)

¹ www.theguardian.com/education/2017/jun/27/half-of-trans-pupils-in-the-uk-tried-to-take-their-own-lives-survey-finds

Information for foster carers and practitioners

The following information is taken from www.lgbtyouthincare.com

Foster carers and adoptive parents

During preparation and assessment all prospective foster carers and adopters are given opportunities to explore the issues of gender and sexuality. Many foster carers and adopters are themselves from LGBT backgrounds and some children in care will have birth parents or other family members who are LGBT+ themselves. Training and advice via elearning is something that all foster carers and adopters undertake.

Children's home staff

Children's home staff also have experience in working with and supporting children in care who are LGBT+ representatives from each of the Hampshire Children's homes attend termly Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) meetings to explore how they are delivering and supporting relationships and sex education activities in each home. This includes discussing LGBT+ issues and support structures.

The group shares resources and discusses how to support children with particular questions or concerns. Updates are provided regarding county training opportunities. The forum is attended by the Teenage Pregnancy Lead, Adults' Health and Care, Public Health who is able to share strategic and operational developments.

Simple do's and don't's

- **DO** challenge homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language if you hear it.
- **DON'T** assume that every young person in your care is heterosexual or 'straight'.
- **DO** encourage young people to follow their own interests.
- **DON'T** impose gender stereotypes on young people (e.g. dolls are for girls, cars are for boys).
- **DO** make use of the resources and services listed from page 7 onwards.
- **DON'T** push young people into discussing LGBT issues if they don't want to.
- **DO** make LGBT information easily available to young people. They may benefit from contacting support groups and organisations independently.
- **DON'T** pressure young people into 'coming out'.
- **DO** be prepared to learn new language to understand and discuss issues of sexuality, sexual orientation and gender identity.
- **DON'T** feel that you are expected to have all the answers.
- **DO** refer to the child in the way they prefer (both name and pronoun).

Training and education resources

Hampshire LGBT+ Alliance

The LGBT+ Alliance is an alliance of Hampshire-based LGBT+ Networks that have pledged to work together. Their website has information about events and support services in Hampshire.

www.hants.gov.uk/community/lgbt-alliance

Rights and Diversity Education (RADE) Centre

RADE has a selection of resources available to use.

Schools and education settings in Hampshire are a source of advice and information for children. The PHSE lead, pastoral lead or ELSAs are often a particularly good source of support

A **guidance pack** has been developed to support schools and FE colleges and a young people's charter is also being developed, informed by a group of children who meet together to look at equalities and rights and act as advocates for other children.

Hampshire Virtual School

The work of the virtual school is focused on the education and welfare of children and young people looked after (CLA) in the primary, secondary and special sectors as well as with care leavers. The virtual school works in partnership with social workers, schools, and other county children's services and teams.

www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/virtual-school

Further online resources

You've Got a Friend

A guide to supporting lesbian and bisexual women to improve their mental health and wellbeing.

Trans Youth in Fostercare

A guide for trans children in fostercare.

Trans Guides: Issue 1 - Name Change & Gender Recognition Certificates

A guide produced by the LGBT Foundation with useful legal advice.

LGBT Youth in Care

A useful website with various guides for children and carers.

Trans Youth in Care – A Toolkit for Caring Professionals

A toolkit designed to help educate professionals working with trans young people.

Hampshire school library service has created a booklist for secondary schools. Schools can request resources for children in care and publications can also be accessed from the public library for both secondary and primary age children.

Research in Practice

Is accessible to all staff with a hants.gov.uk email address and to all foster carers who have signed up to access the RiP website.

Barnardo's

A website offering training, information and advice for children, parents and professionals.

The Barnardo's online transgender training pack contains useful definitions, reading material and advice on line safety and how to identify and deal with bullying.

Celebrate who you are with Pride!

There are a number of Pride events locally across Hampshire and nationally across the country.

Pride events provide an opportunity for the LGBT+ community to come together to honour, celebrate and support the LGBT+ community.

They are colourful, fun and flag-filled events that normally include a parade and staged entertainment.

Details of individual events are available online.



Support services



GPs

The West Hampshire Clinical Commissioning Group (WHCCG) children's safeguarding team are sharing resources with GP practices to help them consider how to make their waiting rooms LGBT friendly, so that young people feel comfortable discussing their sexuality/gender with their GP.

The Royal College of GPs provides **guidance for the care of LGBT+ patients, and trans people in primary care**. Although these documents are not specific to children and young people, they contain useful advice and information for GPs on how to support this age group and address their health needs.

Stonewall has a guide for the NHS that GP practices can use with an action plan to ensure they meet the needs of this patient group.

Specialist nurses for children in care

Any young person who wishes to can discuss their sexuality or gender with the specialist nurses during their statutory assessments.

Each young person will be seen as an individual and will be given every opportunity within the assessment to discuss in a secure and safe environment their feelings and issues.

As a result, and with their consent, they will be supported to access specific local and national organisations to gain ongoing support for them and their carers.

Child and Adolescent Mental Health services (CAMHS)

CAMHS have noted a significant increase in referrals to their services, including children who are in care. As a result, practices have developed and confidence grown in that practice, including asking children how they want to be referred to, how they want to dress and supporting carers with these discussions.

Where children are being referred for consideration for gender re-assignment treatment, there has been the expectation that referrals to the Tavistock and Portman clinic will usually be made via CAMHS. While this has caused some anxiety among other professionals due to the service being concerned with mental health, at assessment the adolescents who are referred have all had a number of other issues which have required further support from CAMHS. Some young people may also be on the Autistic Spectrum, have a learning difficulty and for Children in Care their identity issues are complex. Integral to the assessment is the screening of risk both in term of mental health but also from exploitation and bullying both in person and on line.

Should referrals be made to the Tavistock and Portman Clinic through a GP or other professionals, they will need on-going support from adults during the long waiting time.

The Hampshire Youth Offending Team (HYOT) identified there was a lack of LGBT+ support available to young people in the New Forest area. The nearest available support was in Southampton city centre and Eastleigh which was not easy for those in the Forest area to access and often acted as a barrier to engagement.

The HYOT contacted secondary schools within the New Forest area, Youth Support

Services, Children's Services, Police, Probation, CAMHS, Health, Youth Crime Prevention Team to gather evidence in an attempt to confirm if anyone else has experienced similar issues due to the lack of LGBT+ support and prove the need for services which resulted in Breakout Youth developing LGBT+ youth groups and 1:1 support across the New Forest.

www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/nhs-services/mental-health-services/camhs-information-for-children-and-young-people

Breakout Youth

Breakout Youth is a Hampshire-wide charity for young people who identify as LGBT+, or those who are unsure or questioning their gender identity and/or sexual orientation.

Groups run in Andover, Basingstoke, Eastleigh, Hart, Isle of Wight, New Forest, Romsey, Rushmoor and Southampton. The service is for children and young people up to the age of 21, or up to 25 if additional needs are present.

They aim to offer a safe and confidential space for young LGBT+ people to socialise, learn and have fun by offering activity-based and educational sessions which encourage young people to join in to help build their confidence.

Breakout Youth can enable young people to access other services they require through signposting and referrals. They can also support members with advice about telling people about their gender or sexual orientation and/or gender identity, as well as helping them to find ways to cope with challenges in their lives and support them to stay safe in their relationships and community.

www.breakoutyouth.org.uk

Y Services for Young People

Y Services for Young People is a local youth work charity which focuses on developing opportunities for young people aged 11 - 19 (and up to 25 if the young person is a care leaver or has additional needs) which support and help them to learn about themselves, others and society, through informal educational activities which combine enjoyment with personal development.

The organisation advocates for and empowers local young people to have a voice and a place within their local community. They have a proven record of developing high quality youth work projects which meet identified community needs. Y Services is successful in raising the aspirations of young people through increased confidence and self-belief by providing engaging development opportunities.

There is a weekly LGBT+ Youth Group from 6.30 to 9pm, as well as 1:1 support based in the school/college or community in the Fareham, Gosport, Havant/Waterlooville and Winchester/southern parishes areas.



Other training and opportunities offered are:

- Support to refer young people to various provisions, including specialist services (Tavistock and Portman GIDS) as well as other youth opportunities and LGBT+ Groups, Health and wellbeing drop in sessions, Y Keep safe (raising awareness of CSE, unhealthy relationships etc. and providing strategies to improve resilience and understanding)
- Information stands at parent's evenings, freshers' fairs, conference and professional network events
- Parents and carers of transgender young people support group. Meets on the first Saturday of every month, 10am – midday at Xperience Young Persons Centre, Trinity Street, Fareham, PO16 7SJ
- Sold service for PSHE lesson delivery
- Sold service for bespoke staff training

For more information, contact the Y Services LGBT+ Youth Development Worker Dawn Tracy at dawn@yservices.co.uk or call **07503 353636**, or alternatively email info@yservices.co.uk or call **07585 115022**

www.yservices.co.uk

Tavistock and Portman Gender Identity Development Service (GIDS)

GIDS is a highly specialised clinic for young people presenting with difficulties with their gender identity, established in 1989. They are commissioned by NHS England who set the service specifications for how they work.

Some people feel uncomfortable with the gender they were assigned at birth whilst others are unhappy with the gender role that society requires. GIDS help their clients to explore their feelings and choose the path that best suits their ideals.

gids.nhs.uk

Chrysalis

Chrysalis provides support, advice, advocacy, counselling and wellbeing for those who are transgender and their significant others across Hampshire and East Dorset.

If you are working with trans young people and want some additional training, support or advice then please contact their office team on info@chrysalis-gii.org

Chrysalis offer generic and bespoke training courses around general transgender awareness and more specifically on working with trans clients. They can also offer supervision and consultancy.

Face to face services are for 18+ so carers, older siblings and partners of trans young people would be welcomed at our Significant Others support groups which provide facilitated, non-judgemental, peer support space and workshops as well as one-to-one counselling.

www.chrysalis-gii.org

Mermaids

Mermaids is a national organisation that focuses on supporting children, young people, and their families to achieve a happier life in the face of great adversity. They work to raise awareness about gender nonconformity in children and young people amongst professionals and the general public. They also campaign for the recognition of gender dysphoria in young people and lobby for improvements in professional services.

Helpline: 0344 334 0550

(Monday to Friday – 9am to 9pm)

www.mermaidsuk.org.uk

Kroma

Kroma is an LGBT+ organisation focusing on adults. Their aim is to empower and enable the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and alternative (LGBT+) communities, their families and friends, through awareness, inclusiveness and supportiveness. The majority of Kroma's work is provided through weekly meetups for all LGBT+ communities in local coffee shops throughout Hampshire.

www.kromalgbt.org.uk

LGBT switchboard

Young people can also access advice by calling the LGBT switchboard on **0300 330 0630**.

While this was initially set up with adults in mind, it can be accessed by young people. However, in the experience of established youth work services, children and young people prefer to access support and advice face to face



Lesbian and Gay Liaison Officers (LAGLOS)

Established in 1996, LAGLOS are a mix of police officers and police staff members who have additional awareness, insight and training on matters relating to sexual orientation and gender identities.

Hampshire Constabulary is striving towards an ever stronger commitment to recognising and respecting equality and inclusion in its workforce and communities. The discrimination, bullying and harassment of anyone because of their sexual orientation or gender identity must be tackled with dedication and determination.

People who demonstrate gender fluidity or who are being open for the first time about their sexual orientation can be among the most vulnerable that police must protect. A homophobic, biphobic or transphobic incident is any incident perceived as such by the victim or anyone else. Incidents can include abusive or threatening language at work, in public places, or in private. A victim does not have to be lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender. Crucially, it's how an incident is perceived by a victim or anyone else that determines the nature of any crime.

If a child or young person is affected by a crime because of their sexual orientation or gender identity, any police officer or member of police staff can help. Hampshire Constabulary is able to strengthen this support with approximately 90 LAGLOs.

If the reporting person wishes to remain anonymous, this request will be respected. Non-urgent matters should be reported by phoning **101**. Mini-com users can phone **18001 101**.

In an emergency, always dial 999.

Information can be given anonymously by phoning the independent Crimestoppers charity on **111 555 0800**.

Third Party Reporting Centres (TPRCs) for reporting hate crime

It is widely accepted that hate crimes are under reported. Not all victims are comfortable with reporting their experiences directly to the police. Possible reasons for this may include:

- Lack of awareness of ways to report hate crime
- Victims find visiting police stations intimidating or daunting
- Victims believe the police won't believe them or take them seriously
- Individuals are unaware they are victims of hate crimes
- Lack of support to help victims make a report, e.g. interpreters
- Victims fear being outed in terms of their sexuality or disability

TPRCs overcome these barriers by providing an alternative to directly reporting to the police, without which a number of hate incidents and crimes would never be reported or recorded.

www.hampshire-pcc.gov.uk/hatecrime/third-party-reporting-centres

Glossary of terms

This is a list of some of the words and phrases that can be associated with people who are LGBT+. It covers terms related to sexual orientation and gender identity.

Ally

Generally used to describe a person who supports equal civil rights, LGBT+ and gender equality, LGBT+ social movements, and who challenges homophobia, biphobia and transphobia.

Androgyne

Being androgyne means that your gender identity is androgynous – both male and female.

Androsexual

Being androsexual means you only have sexual feelings towards men, regardless of your own gender.

Asexual

Being asexual means you are not interested in, or do not desire, sexual activity with anyone of any gender.

Binary gender system

A system that forces people into one of two categories – either male or female (man or woman, boy or girl). In this system men and women are also generally expected to look and behave in a particular way.

Biphobia

The dislike, fear or hatred of people who are bisexual.

Bisexual

Being bisexual means you are emotionally and physically attracted to more than one gender – in most cases, this means both girls/women and boys/men.



Cisgender

Being cisgender means that your gender identity matches the gender you were assigned at birth.

Coming out

Acknowledging to yourself or to others that you are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning (LGBT+).

Demisexual

Being demisexual means you need to form a strong emotional connection with someone before you will find them attractive sexually.

Discrimination

When you are treated less favourably than someone else because of something about you, such as your real or perceived sexual orientation.

Gay

Being gay means you are emotionally and physically attracted to someone of the same sex or gender. It is generally used to refer to boys or men who are emotionally and physically attracted to other boys or men. Some girls and women prefer to refer to themselves as gay rather than lesbian.

Gender capitalist

A person who recognises there are certain advantages and disadvantages to being a specific sex or gender and capitalises on that theory.

Gender identity

A person's perception of their own gender.

Genderfluid

Someone or something that is genderfluid has a flexible definition of gender. For example, this could mean a country or community that recognises more than two genders. Or it could refer to a person who does not identify with a single gender, or who moves between genders.

Genderless

Someone or something that has no gender identity.

Gender stereotype

The assumption that people of a particular gender must carry out distinct roles, or act in a specific way.

Genderqueer

Being genderqueer usually means the same thing as having a non-binary gender – your gender identity is neither exclusively male nor exclusively female.

Gender variant

People who are gender variant can identify as both sexes and may present themselves in a way that's unusual for most people of their

biological sex. They could be androgynous (both male and female), or identify as a masculine female or feminine male.

Gynsexual

Being gynsexual means you only have sexual feelings towards women, regardless of your own gender.

Heterosexual

Being heterosexual means you are emotionally and physically attracted to people of the opposite sex or gender. Another commonly used word for this is 'straight'.

Heterosexism

A system of beliefs and behaviours based on the assumption that heterosexuality is better than homosexuality. This is very closely related to homophobia.

Homophobia

The dislike, fear or hatred of people who are gay or lesbian. It is often used to describe prejudice towards bisexual and transgender people too, but the terms biphobia and transphobia are becoming more commonly used.

Homophobic bullying

Homophobic bullying is when someone's actual or perceived LGBT+ sexual orientation or non-binary gender identity is used to exclude, threaten, hurt or humiliate them.

Homosexual

Being homosexual means you are emotionally or physically attracted to people of the same sex. These days people who are lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB) rarely use this term to describe themselves. This is because it has historically been used to medicalise or criminalise LGB people. The terms lesbian, gay and bisexual are generally preferable.



Internalised homophobia

Negative feelings that a person has about being gay, lesbian or bisexual themselves. This can affect the way they see themselves.

Intersex

Someone who is intersex is born with sexual anatomy, reproductive organs and/or chromosome patterns that do not fit into the typical definition of a male or female biological sex.

Lesbian

Being a lesbian means you are a girl or woman who is emotionally and physically attracted to other girls or women.

LGBT

Acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender.

LGBTQ

Acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning. A general term commonly used in European Union countries.

Non-binary gender

A gender that is neither exclusively male nor exclusively female. This can also be known as genderqueer.

Out

Being open about your sexual orientation or transgender identity.

Pansexual

Someone who is pansexual is not limited in sexual choice based on biological sex, gender or gender identity.

Polysexual

Similar in meaning to pansexual. Someone who is polysexual is not limited in sexual choice with regard to biological sex, gender or gender identity.

Pride festival

An annual festival to celebrate being lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning.

Queer

Identifying as queer means that you don't want your sexual orientation to be reduced to a specific term, such as heterosexual, homosexual or bisexual. Lots of different people identify as queer, and many of them think the binary gender system is too limiting. This term is also often used by and about people who are traditionally seen as lesbian or gay.

Questioning

Someone who is questioning in relation to LGBT+ issues is still establishing their sexual and/or gender identity.

Sex

A person's biological sex is indicated by their genitals, internal reproductive system, chromosomes and secondary sexual characteristics, such as breasts, facial and body hair, voice and body shape. In the context of gender identity, sex is often used to mean biological sex rather than the act of having sex.

Sexual orientation

A term used to describe who a person is emotionally and physically attracted to. For example, a person who is attracted to the opposite sex or gender might describe their sexual orientation as straight.

Sexuality

Everybody has a sexuality – it describes a person's sexual experiences and expression. It includes a person's sexual orientation, sexual practice and behaviour. It also involves cultural and social expectations and behaviours.

Skoliosexual

Being skoliosexual means you have a potential sexual attraction to people who have a non-binary gender identity. This is an inclusive term and doesn't generally describe an attraction to specific genitalia or birth assignments.

Straight

Being straight means you are emotionally and physically attracted to people of the opposite gender.

Trans

This is a general term that applies to a range of people whose gender identity or gender expression differs in some way from the assumptions made about them when they were born. This includes men and women who are transgender, people who

are intersex, androgyne or polygender, and people who cross-dress.

Transgender/transsexual

Being transgender or transsexual means that you feel that your personal gender identity does not fit with either your biological sex, or with the expectations that society puts onto your gender.

Transman

A person who was born female, and sees themselves as male. Their gender identity is male.

Transperson

A person who chooses not to conform with, or doesn't fit in with, a binary gender system. They may identify as a transman or transwoman, or as something else entirely, such as genderqueer. There are many different trans identities, and trans does not only refer to people who have had (or want to have) gender-reassignment surgery.

Transphobia

The dislike, fear or hatred of people who are transgender.

Transwoman

A person who was born male, and sees themselves as female. Their gender identity is female.

