

Resources for parents, guardians, and support systems



My child is questioning their gender – what do I do?

There are many [resources](#) available for parents of trans young people, or young people that are questioning their gender. The most important thing to do in response to your child questioning their gender is to offer support.

The importance of parental support

Trans children undergo extreme stresses due to [bullying](#), marginalisation, and negative treatment from [medical professionals](#). Many trans young people are put at risk of [homelessness](#) due to lack of parental support, and [25% of trans people](#) in the UK experience homelessness. By taking the steps to understand and support your child, you can ensure that your child does not become another statistic. Whilst some trans young people may be generally supported by their parents, many do not receive emotional support related to their [gender identity](#).

Studies demonstrate how access to good quality information [aids parents](#) in supporting their child's gender identity. Accounts from supportive parents demonstrate the [benefits](#) that social transition (changing a child's name, pronouns, hair, or clothing) has for their children's wellbeing. These studies highlight how crucial parental support is for the wellbeing and life satisfaction of trans young people. Parental support is associated with [fewer depressive symptoms](#). A growing [body of work](#) has examined the [challenges](#) that supportive parents experience when defending and advocating for the rights of their trans and nonbinary children. It is just as important, then, that parents/guardians of trans children receive the support they need to advocate for their children.





Is being transgender an illness?

In the past, gender diversity was approached as an illness to be treated. The NHS system of trans healthcare has [received criticism](#) for its treatment of gender diversity as a psychiatric problem. The current consensus, however, treats gender diversity not as a pathology, but a [natural form of human diversity](#).

Trans healthcare for young people in the UK

There is currently a tumultuous situation surrounding trans healthcare in the UK, especially for children. Media often reports that trans young people are undergoing irreversible medical transition without the proper safeguarding. This is not the case.

Previously, there was one centralised clinic providing healthcare to trans and gender diverse young people in the UK – the Gender Identity Development Service (GIDS) also known as the Tavistock and Portman. GIDS has an incredibly long waiting list, they are currently seeing young people for their first appointment that were [referred in 2019](#). The problems with waiting times preceded the pandemic but have worsened since then.

In 2023, the decision was made to replace GIDS with two [regional centres](#). This is in response to the growing stress that GIDS has been under. We are still in the transition period.

Details of the referral process can be found [here](#).

Once a child is seen by the Gender Identity Development Service, they will undergo a lengthy assessment period which will decide whether they will receive a diagnosis of gender dysphoria. If they receive this diagnosis, and the decision is made between the child, parents/guardians, and medical professionals, medical interventions can be discussed. More information on the GIDS care pathway can be found [here](#).

Despite the [challenges](#) trans people experience in healthcare, studies of gender affirming care for young people demonstrate [improved mental health outcomes](#).



The efficacy of puberty blockers for young trans people

Puberty blockers are the primary medical intervention for young trans people. Puberty blockers are [reversible](#), and they are not an [experimental treatment](#). Large scale [longitudinal studies](#) into puberty blockers are still [underway](#), however there are many [promising findings](#) on the effectiveness of blockers in improving behavioural and emotional [problems](#), depressive symptoms, and [general functioning](#). Short term research in the UK shows [improved psychosocial functioning](#) after 6 months of puberty suppression, and US studies have shown improvements in [mental health](#) and increased [bodily satisfaction](#) following the use of puberty blockers.

Research supports the capacity of young people and their families to [consent](#) to the treatment. However, following a [controversial court decision](#), puberty blockers for young people under the age of 16 can now only be achieved through a [court order](#).

Many transgender adults wish they could have had [treatment](#) in adolescence. Although puberty blockers do not necessarily lead to further medical interventions, the prevalence of [regret](#) is incredibly low in adults that go on to receive gender affirmation surgeries.

Want to learn more?

[Navigating trans healthcare](#)

[Gender Construction Kit](#)

[Facts about trans lives](#)

Local organisations

[Intercom Trust](#)

[Proud2be](#)

[Sunrise diversity](#)

[Transparent presence](#)

[Space](#)

[Mindline Trans+](#)

