



TRANS INCLUSION POLICY – FOR SURVIVORS ACCESSING OUR SERVICE

Nottinghamshire Sexual Violence Support Services offers a range of services for survivors of sexual violence and their supporters, who are 18+ and are living in Nottingham/shire. Support is available by telephone, in person and via our online counselling rooms.

Our service is available to all survivors regardless of their gender or other protected characteristic. We are sensitive to the needs of different genders accessing our service and as part of this, service users are able to choose their preferred gender of support worker and we offer services to women in women only spaces.

Where a person is transgender or their gender is different to that assigned to them at birth, we seek to offer our services in line with the survivor's acquired gender. We will seek to support non-binary survivors in the way that is most comfortable to them during their contact with our service.

Definitions

'Trans' or 'transgender' describes people whose gender identity (also known as their acquired gender) differs from their sex assigned at birth. They are umbrella terms covering people who:

- are intending to undergo, are undergoing, or have undergone gender reassignment at any stage;
- identify as having a gender different from that which they were assigned at birth and are planning or have had medical interventions such as hormones or surgery;
- identify as having a gender different from that which they were assigned at birth, but who are not planning any medical intervention; and/or,
- are non-binary – that is, they are not solely male or female. They may define themselves as both, neither or something entirely different. They may or not have medical interventions to align their body with their non-binary gender identity.

These are not mutually exclusive alternatives.

Transitioning

'Transitioning' is the process undertaken by a trans person in order to bring their gender presentation into alignment with their gender identity. This can often involve social transitioning, such as dressing differently, using a different name and pronoun (eg she, he or they) and changing official documentation. Some trans people may choose to have medical treatment, such as hormones or surgery although this is not always the case.

Gender Recognition Certificate (GRC)

A Gender Recognition Certificate (GRC) enables people aged over eighteen to gain full legal recognition for the gender in which they live. Applications are considered by the Gender Recognition Panel. A trans person does not need to have undergone medical treatment, including hormones or surgery in order to obtain a GRC. We believe a trans person's gender is not dependent on certificates, hormones or surgery.

Transgender Service Users

People who are trans, non-binary or whose gender does not match the sex assigned to them at birth can be worried about how different services will respond to them. They might be concerned that they will not be able to access certain services because they do not have a GRC or have not undergone certain treatments.

We believe a trans person's gender is not dependent on certificates, hormones or surgery. We will always respond to you in your acquired gender using your pronouns. We will work with you to ensure that you get the support you want in the way that best meets your needs.

We will take a person-centred approach to the inclusion of non-binary people within our service and will listen closely to you as you decide which aspects of the service most closely match your identity and needs.

People who transition while using our service

We recognise that in some cases a service user may begin to explore their gender or transition whilst using our service. We understand that the process of transitioning can vary in length depending on the choices of the individual, and can range from a period of questioning and exploration, through to social and medical transition.

Different transition stages can impact survivors in many different ways meaning that changes in support or a break in support might be required. We will always work with survivors to try and adapt our support what best meets their needs at the time. This might include things like changing the frequency of appointments, changing the support offered or planning a break in support to allow for recovery following surgery.

We will support survivors to make choices in terms of accessing services and facilities in the gender that best suits them at the time.

For people who are transitioning while they are using the service we will work in a person-centred way to help survivors negotiate this change. As a service that is able to provide services to all genders, we can reassure services users that:

- There will be no change in the level of service offered regardless of gender or transition status.
- The support workers or counsellor would remain the same wherever possible, unless a change was requested by the survivor.

Confidentiality

We know that people who are trans may have specific worries about being outed or information regarding their trans status being passed on without their consent.

We have a robust confidentiality policy in place and all our staff are trained in the requirements of GDPR. We run through confidentiality and instances where we might need to break this when a person first contacts our service. Our [Confidentiality Policy](#) and the [Client's Confidentiality Agreement](#) which explain more about confidentiality and limitations can be found on our website: <https://nottssvss.org.uk/resources/useful-policies/> We can provide you with a hard copy if you prefer.

Where we are requested by a trans service user to make a referral on their behalf into another service, we will discuss and agree with them what information is passed on before making the referral.

Staff Training and Understanding

We understand that to enable trans service users to have confidence in accessing our services it is vital that the service and its staff are aware of trans people, their rights and needs. As part of this commitment we:

- Affirm trans people (and all people) as the expert on their own lives. We understand that each person's experience is different and one trans person cannot know about or speak up for all trans people.
- Will not make assumptions about the user's gender
- Will use correct and respectful language about transgender service users' identity (eg using the pronouns you give us).
- Provide regular training at all levels (staff and volunteers) on how to support transgender service users and more generally on issues affecting trans people
- Will keep up to date on the different services available to trans people both those which are trans-specific and those which are recognised as trans-friendly.
- Will challenge transphobia and recognise that is our job, not the service user's job, to challenge discrimination.
- Will create publicity that is welcoming of trans people.
- Will manage our social media platforms to ensure that they remain a safe space for trans people to interact with our service.
- Understand that a service user might be worried how their gender identity may impact the use of a service. We can offer an opportunity to discuss any initial concerns separately from any counselling or support offered either over the telephone or face-to-face and you are welcome to bring somebody with you to this.

Transgender Employees and Volunteers

We have a separate policy for our transgender employees and volunteers which can be viewed on request by anybody interested in this aspect of our work.

Review of Policy

We usually review policies on a two-yearly basis or sooner where legislative changes require it. If you think any aspect of this policy is out of date or you have any queries around it, please do let us know.

*Last review: November 2022
Next review due: November 2024*