

Gender Care Services – September update communications

Following on from the results of the gender identity engagement exercise in March 2023, the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) committed to providing the trans and gender diverse (TGD) community with an update by September 2023.

The results provided the DHSC and Manx Care with key information about what the TGD community would like to see provided for them on-island, and we would once again like to thank the community for their open and honest feedback.

It was extremely valuable to hear directly from those with specific lived experience of accessing and receiving Gender Care services as well as general healthcare services. We received feedback from 15 adults through our in-person workshop, and from two more adults by written response. Feedback was also provided by the Department of Education, Sport and Culture's Youth Service team after discussions with 25 members of their LGBT+ youth group (aged 13-18 years).

By way of a service update, the decision has been made to move gender care services from Manx Care's Integrated Mental Health Service to its Integrated Sexual Health Services (ISHS) team to reflect current understanding of gender identity.

Manx Care have committed to reviewing all recent GP requests for referrals to UK Gender Identity Clinics (GIC) to ensure everyone who should be referred has been referred.

Until the new gender care pathway is created, we would ask those seeking gender care to speak to your GP.

The engagement exercise highlighted a lack of accessible information about TGD health. In response to this the DHSC is working on a dedicated Gender Care webpage for those seeking advice and information, we will circulate more details as soon as we have them. This will contain details of trusted online resources, such as the NHS, for those seeking further information or advice. The webpage will be updated with relevant information as it becomes available, and all updates regarding the redesigned pathway will also be available on this page.

Long-term Gender Care Services

The DHSC and Manx Care will work together towards the production of a Clinical Commissioning Policy for Gender Care. This document will outline the services that will/won't be routinely available and funded on Island.

Once this policy document is completed, steps will be taken to review how these services can best be provided. Options will be considered, and costed, and at that point we will be asking for additional feedback from members of the TGD community.

Minister for Health and Social Care, Lawrie Hooper MHK, has said:

'Gender Care is a complex area and, as the TGD community have told us, our service model requires many changes in order to provide an appropriate level of care to those who need it.

The journey from where we are to where we need to be won't be quick but we, along with our colleagues at Manx Care, are determined to provide the best future service that we can.'

Both DHSC and Manx Care are committed to making changes that will improve the health and wellbeing of our TGD community. We openly acknowledge that these changes will take time and we appreciate the patience you have shown us.

Chief Executive Officer of Manx Care, Teresa Cope, added:

'Times and needs have changed and Manx Care recognises that the original service model is no longer fit for purpose. We will work with our colleagues in the DHSC to form a new, more progressive pathway for those seeking Gender Care support in the future.'

As many of you will be aware, UK GIC waiting lists are currently very long. In addition, no UK GIC is currently accepting new referrals from the Isle of Man. We are hoping that an onward referral process to UK GICs will be available in the near future. If you are on a UK GIC waiting list and would like an update on when you will receive an appointment you should contact your GIC directly.

If you are currently receiving care from a UK GIC, and have questions about your care, please contact your GIC directly.

If you wish to be referred to a UK GIC you should contact your GP who can forward your details to the ISHS team; after a UK GIC begins to accept referrals from the Isle of Man, you will be referred onto a UK GIC. This is currently the only way for island residents to be referred to an NHS UK GIC

If you are struggling, or you know somebody who is struggling and requires professional support, please contact your GP.

For further information please contact DHSC Engagement Team on DHSCengagement@gov.im or the Manx Care Advice and Liaison Service (MCALS) on mcals@gov.im or 01624 642642.

Ends

28/09/2023