

# 'Is Britain Fairer?': Key facts and findings on transgender people

**'Is Britain Fairer?' (2015) is the Equality and Human Rights Commission's five-yearly review of equality and human rights in Britain. This factsheet captures some of our key findings on transgender people.**

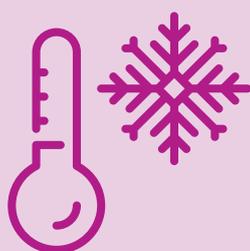
Gender reassignment is a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010. The Act prohibits unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; protects individuals from unfair treatment; and promotes a fair and more equal society. It protects transgender people from being discriminated against in a variety of fields, including employment, education, the exercise of public functions and the provision of services.

The evidence on the experience of transgender people is limited, and most findings stem from small-scale qualitative studies (and not from national survey or administrative datasets). Where there are data, for example in the area of health, the respondents are often self-selected, meaning that the findings cannot be considered to be representative of the group as a whole.

## Transgender people face barriers and discrimination in accessing healthcare services

**Trans people experienced a range of barriers in accessing NHS gender reassignment services, from referral by GPs to funding by Primary Care Trusts and treatment by clinicians.**

This is despite the Department of Health producing guidance on healthcare and gender dysphoria falling under the remit of NHS healthcare services. Evidence from England suggests further problems, including a lack of knowledge on the part of GPs on referring patients to gender identity services or, at worst, GPs allegedly being obstructive and discriminatory.



Experiences of discrimination in the health sector include inappropriate diagnoses, denial of treatment, humiliation, and trans status being raised when seeking treatment for entirely unrelated health concerns. The latter has been described as 'trans cold syndrome', where a clinician views gender history as more important than the presenting medical complaint.

A Trans Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Study in the UK and Ireland in 2012 found that 88% of the (self-selected) sample said they were either currently depressed or had experienced depression previously. Lower levels were evident for those who were undergoing or had undergone a process of transition or gender reassignment. In addition, 53% of participants had self-harmed at some point, and 11% were currently self-harming.



**A study of 382 trans people in the UK and Ireland found that, even within gender identity clinics, 62% of trans people had experienced negative questions, attitudes or services.**

One study found that **63%** of respondents who used mental health services experienced negative questions, attitudes or actions and **26%** might not be willing to use such services again in the future.



Following a survey of problems with healthcare services, a dossier of cases (about allegations of abuse, inappropriate treatment, treatment withheld, and acting against patients' best interests) warranting further investigation was submitted to the General Medical Council in 2013.

**Transphobic discrimination is not limited to healthcare, it occurs in other settings too**

**In England and Wales**, 44,480 hate crimes were recorded by the police in 2013/14. Of the 44,480 recorded crimes, 555 were motivated by transgender identity. In Scotland, there were 5,804 hate crimes of which 25 were motivated by transgender identity.

Transgender individuals in Wales face problems finding and keeping employment, particularly if employers become aware that they are transgender or if they are 'visibly gender variant', a 2012 study found.

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A UK survey of transgender people carried out in 2012 indicates that respondents avoided some activities due to a fear of being harassed or identified as transgender. Many said they avoided public toilets and gyms, and around a quarter said they avoided clothing shops, leisure facilities, clubs or social groups, public transport, travelling abroad, restaurants or bars. Those with 'clear and constant gender identities' as men avoided many more situations than those with 'clear and constant identities' as women. This was particularly the case with public toilets, with 77% of transgender men avoiding them.



The Fundamental Rights Agency's 2012 survey of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people showed that around two-thirds of transgender respondents in the UK had personally felt discriminated against or harassed because of being perceived as transgender in the 12 months prior to the survey.

**The Government is allocating funds to address transphobic bullying**

Financial support is available to charitable organisations to work in schools to prevent and tackle homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying in the form of a £2 million fund administered by the Government Equalities Office.



**Although many schools provide training on how to deal with bullying, this does not often make specific reference to dealing with bullying on the basis of gender reassignment.**

