

# Trans Community Conference Report 2008



## Our Bodies, Our Minds, Our Environments

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**The Trans Community Conference is a one-day gathering featuring a series of workshops for members of the trans community across the UK. It aims to bring people together to celebrate our diversity of Identities and self-understandings, as well as the different groups, organisations and projects that our community offers.**

The aims of this year's conference were to set out and tackle some of the key issues in the areas of Body Positivity and Sexual Health; Mental Health and Emotional Well Being; Asylum and Trans People and Families and Youth.

The conference was held on Friday 4th July 2008 at the Metropolitan Police, Empress State Building.

This conference was planned, facilitated and run **by** members of the trans community **for** the trans community.

The trans community includes family members, partners and lovers and friends and allies.

We also welcomed others whose professional backgrounds and interests are relevant to trans lives.

In order to plan and run the workshops, Gendered Intelligence gathered a team of 10 volunteers. In conjunction with Central School of Speech and Drama, Gendered Intelligence funded a "Developing Facilitation Skills" course in order that the team learn new skills and practice their own roles for the day.

We hope that this sends a positive message to others that by being involved in your community you can affect change as well as learning new skills.

This report brings together the findings from the day and has been distributed

globally across trans communities, as well as to service providers and voluntary sector organisations.

We hope that the conference itself and this report will offer an opportunity to those who need to know more about trans issues as part of their professional practices, for example youth service provisions, educationalists, sexual health service providers, mental health services, LGBT liaison officers, equality and diversity officers, the police and the Home Office as well as Community and Voluntary Sector bodies amongst others.





**Jay Stewart, convenor of the conference and co-founder of Gendered Intelligence, introduced the day and the team members. Here is a summary.**

Hello and welcome to the Trans Community Conference 2008: Our Bodies, Our Minds, Our Environments.

This is the second conference convened by Gendered Intelligence, and this year we have gathered a team of 10 members from the trans community to think through and decide on the key issues that they wish to concentrate on for this year's conference.

Building on last year's model of having 4 strands, this year's strands are: Asylum & Trans – facilitated by Joseph Swift and Michal Dunkley Clarke; Body Positivity & Sexual Health – facilitated by Joy Kahumbu and Lee Gale; Families & Youth – facilitated by Jacob Smith, Finn Greig, Rachel Gale and Jennifer Murray; and Mental Health & Well Being – facilitated by Claudia Anderson and Jay McNeil.

Each delegate has signed up to a specific strand and committed to that strand for the two workshops, in order to form a group and to work together thinking, discussing, having ideas, being creative and problem solving the various concerns that arise within these four areas.

Our questions are simple. Firstly: What do we know about the trans



community in relation to the areas of Mental Health and Emotional Well Being, Body Positivity and Sexual health, Youth and Families or Asylum?

We have with us here today people from a host of diverse backgrounds, from various professions in health, education, the police and youth services. We also have a host of representatives from various trans organisations.

This room is rich with knowledge and we are going to share and capture some of that today.

Perhaps we will even produce new knowledge as a consequence of bringing people together.

For instance we might ask: what do we know about those claiming asylum in this country based on their trans status?

This is such an important area of concern and I feel excited that there is an opportunity to share knowledge and experiences and I hope some much needed discussion will continue on from this conference and lead onto viable projects.

The second question is: How do we feel? In the planning of today's event, we have talked a lot about identifying our feelings. At first it sounds a bit "... oh no, we're going to talk about our feelings." But really, what else is it about if it's not that?

For instance: How do we feel about our bodies, when they differ or challenge the rigid sexed binaried world in which we live?

Or even: How does hormone therapy affect the way we feel? How can we communicate our feelings effectively?

And in doing this, how might this lead us onto having our needs met and hence feeling good about ourselves as well the environments in which we live?

The facilitators in the Youth and Families strand have highlighted how it can feel frustrating and unfulfilling because being young means that you don't get taken seriously.

This is borne out of an idea that being young means that you do not know yourself and that other people know better.

Well let's take the young people here today seriously and ask them about what they know about themselves and the world around them.

Also partners, siblings, parents and other family members can feel that they only occupy the periphery of the trans community. It's very important to stress that you do not have to be trans to be

part of our community. And today asking our family members "how do you feel?" is important.

I want to quickly set out some context as to what has happened in order to make today's event happen and begin to thank those involved.

Meeting almost weekly from March this year, each strand team has volunteered 30 hours of the time that we came together, as well as meeting up many times between themselves.

The facilitators have conceived, planned and gained facilitation skills in order to deliver this afternoon's workshops at this conference.

I would personally like to thank the facilitators for showing such an enormous commitment.

This conference would not be what it is without you. Extra thanks also goes to Finn Greig for producing the programme and Lee Gale for doing the evaluation forms. In conjunction with Central School of Speech and Drama, Gendered Intelligence has funded a "Developing Facilitation Skills" course so that the teams can learn skills and practice their own roles for today.

We hope that this sends a positive message to others that by being involved in your community you can have an impact, affect change as well as learn new skills.

The Central School of Speech and Drama has been enormously supportive in this year's conference.

It has offered considerable financial assistance and shown a clear commitment to engaging with diverse communities, such as the trans community. I would like to thank Central School of Speech and Drama, in particular the Knowledge Transfer team, and our teacher Richard Fallon who ran the "Developing Facilitation Skills" course.

He has introduced us to practical skills in public speaking, active listening, delivering instructions, as well introducing us to a model called Non-Violent Communication. We also have had time for a bit of tai-chi and salsa!

Such skills go far beyond the facilitation of this conference. It has offered us a new way of thinking and approaching communication with our own family members, our employers, fellow members of the trans community as well as other people we come across in our everyday lives.

On behalf of myself and the facilitators - thank you Richard.

Supporting each strand we have some very interesting organisations and projects doing brilliant work for and with the trans community.

Our Associate Organisations are UKLGIG who are supporting Asylum & Trans strand; SW5 from Terence Higgins Trust who are supporting Body Positivity & Sexual Health; The No Outsiders Project who are supporting Families & Youth; and PACE who are supporting Mental Health and Emotional Well Being.

It is very important to acknowledge the great work that such organisations are doing for and with trans people.

When we come together it's very inspiring to hear what great projects are happening, to learn from them and think through other future needs and projects. I would like to thank our Associate Organisations and those representatives who are here today.

We know that your time is precious and your input today will be of great value. As you know our hosts for this year's conference is the Metropolitan Police. Gendered Intelligence has been working closely with Amanda Gutierrez-Cooper who works for the LGBT Strand within the Diversity & Citizen Focus Directorate.

There are other people to acknowledge and they are Simon Croft, for orchestrating the registration process; our signers from Aticus and Sara Davidman, our residential photographer.

These people have been instrumental in the organising of our trans community conference. This year we have asked representatives from the Gender Trust, Michelle and Rory, to 'strand hop' and go into each of the four workshops and give us a bit of feedback at the end of the day.

The other good news is that Gendered Intelligence has successfully gained an Awards for All grant in order to fund the production and distribution of the report. I hope that you have a fantastic and hard working day

**Amanda Gutierrez-Cooper, who works for the LGBT Strand within the Diversity & Citizen Focus Directorate, welcomed delegates to the conference.**

When I welcomed delegates to the Transgender Community Conference on the 4th July 2008 I spoke about the need to stop fixating on our differences or reasons for crossing gender boundaries and to educate each other and share what we have in common.

I touched on the work we had undertaken in the Metropolitan Police Service in partnership with our Transgender Support Group and the desire to be inclusive of all transgender people.

Amongst the anticipated work I mentioned that we would be holding "Transgender Listening" days with our internal transgender community to get their feedback on workplace experiences.

These consultation days have now taken place and the feedback analysed. Amongst the recommendations for improving policy, procedure and practice there was a loud and strong request for formal recognition of the support group.

The Metropolitan Police Service currently has a number of formal Staff Associations for minority communities within its workforce.

Associations such as the Gay Police Association, the Black Police Association, the Hindu Association and so on all contribute to strategic engagement and policy development.



When the Transgender Support Group sat down and listed all the strategic interventions they had made it became clear that there was a strong business need to grant this group Association status.

Consequently we are working in partnership with HR to achieve this step. Much has happened in the transgender world since we all met in July.

The transgender community has found its voice and are being heard. Issues which have long been ignored or sidelined are now being discussed and I get a sense that the majority of people want to "get it right" for transgender people.

Certainly I think this is true of our organisation.

I look forward to being able to report back to you all at next years conference on the improvements we have made in order to be the employer of choice, we wish to be for trans gender people.



**'Strand hoppers' are our invited guests who were asked to visit each workshop and feedback at the end of the day with news about what was discussed in each the four strands. The idea was to track thoughts that seemed to be concurrent across the strands in order to pull out some overall concerns. This year's 'Strand Hoppers' were Michelle and Rory, from the Gender Trust.**

The Gender Trust is the largest registered charity in a position to help adults throughout the United Kingdom who are Transsexual, Gender Dysphoric, Transgender (i.e. those who seek to adjust their lives to live as women or men, or come to terms with their situation despite their genetic background), or those whose lives are affected by gender identity issues.

Their mission is to improve the quality of life of trans people and their families by supporting them and working with anyone who is affected by gender identity issues.

Their vision is that everyone will accept and support the right of trans people to be valued members of society.

The Gender Trust supply:

- Information about trained counsellors, psychologists and psychotherapists, and if required can advise on initiating the proper referral procedure to a choice of psychiatrists.
- Help for those who are Intersex, and try to provide care for partners and families of all these individuals
- Guidance and information for those who may encounter gender issues in the course of their work, including employers, social workers, welfare workers, the media and the medical profession
- Training for employers and other organisations on the legal, medical and social aspects of the lives of transsexual and transgender people.
- The Gender Trust provides confidential care within the guidelines of the British Association of Counselling & Psychotherapy.
- The Gender Trust National Helpline offers confidential help and support to anyone who has enquiries about gender identity issues.

The National Helpline is: 0845 231 0505. The service operates 7 days a week - Mon to Fri 10am to 10pm, & Sat & Sun 1pm to 10pm



THE GENDER TRUST

**137 delegates attended the conference. Of this number 132 people (96.4% response) completed our diversity data form. The form was designed to collect and analyse the diversity of the trans community delegates, such as age, gender and ethnic identities, as well as to find out a bit about delegates' professional backgrounds.**

Rather than ticking boxes and choosing from the options pre-given, we decided to leave a blank space in order to allow delegates to describe themselves using their own terms and definitions.

This was something of an experiment and it was interesting to see how people describe themselves so variously when given the opportunity.

For the purposes of counting these identities for this report, however, things became a lot more complicated.

### Age

About one third of the delegates were under the age of 25, with the majority of attendees belonging to the group between 25 and 65 year-old. There were only a few older members attending this year's conference.

< 25 years	28%
25 - 65 years	69%
65+ years	3%

### Gender Identity

123 (89.8% response) people of 137 delegates disclosed their gender identity.

Through the analysis around gender groups we identified six categories in general: Transwoman, woman/female, transman, man/male, trans, and genderqueer.

This way of categorising attempts to include the diverse spectrum of gender identities within the trans community.

The attendees are well portioned in each group, although the respondents who identify themselves as woman/female constitutes relatively a high portion of attendees (26.8%) among the categories.

In many cases, the respondents perceive their gender identities beyond the heteronormative gender binary system. 26 respondents (more than 20%) have chosen to identify themselves as "trans" or "genderqueer" and 11 respondents have given eclectic answers which indicates that nearly a third of our delegates do not wish to fit into male/female or man/woman categories.

Transwoman <sup>1</sup>	20 (18.6%)	52 (45.4%)
Woman/Female <sup>2</sup>	32 (26.8%)	
Transman <sup>3</sup>	10 (8.2%)	30 (24.6%)
Man/Male	20 (16.4%)	
Trans <sup>4</sup>	15 (12.2%)	37 (30%)
Genderqueer <sup>5</sup>	11 (8.9%)	
Others <sup>6</sup>	11 (8.9%)	

### Note

1. Transwoman category includes: one

"Temporary trans-woman soon to become

woman", two "Woman (MtF)", one "MtF TS", one "MTF transsexual (female)" and one "Woman with trans history", one "ex-trans woman"

2. Woman or Female category includes: two "Cis woman", one "Unusually gendered female", one "Female...woman...girl" and one "Female (happen to be transsexed)"

3. Transman category includes: one "Transboy"

4. Trans category includes: one "Trans (male-ish)", two "Transsexual", one "Transgender" and one "Tranny".

5. Genderqueer category includes: one "Genderqueer/androgynous", one "Genderqueer transman" and one "FtM Genderqueer"

6. There were eleven other eclectic answers including: Non-existent, trans, genderqueer / Just me / Tom-Boy / Questioning / Transgender person of colour / Questioning. Trans. Constantly changing. Generally unsure. Ft? (as opposed to FtM) / Human / Genderqueer, Male-to-Unknown, Gendervariant, Transgender, Genderfucker, Androgynous Dandy, Genderblender / Male to female crossdresser / Transvestite

## Ethnicity

127 people (92.7% response) of 137 delegates identified their ethnicity.

Like gender, we did not pre-categorise the ethnic groups in order to give the freedom for delegates to express their ethnicities using their own definition and terms.

The majority ethnic group is white (85%) and this group is detailed into the subcategories: White British, White European, White North American and White others.

The minority ethnic groups are categorised into.

Mixed race, Asian, Chinese and Others. Unlike the diversity of gender identities at the conference, the ethnic diversity of attendees is not proportioned equally.

However 15% of people from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds at the conference compares favourably to 7.9 % population across the UK (National Statistics, April 2001).

White <sup>1</sup> (85%)	White British	53 (41.7%)
	White European	29 (22.8%)
	White North American	3 (2.4%)
	White Others <sup>2</sup>	4 (3.1%)
Asian		5 (3.9%)
Chinese		2 (1.6%)
African		1 (0.8%)
Mixed <sup>3</sup>		7 (5.5%)
Other ethnics <sup>4</sup>		4 (3.1%)

### Note

1. Among one hundred and eight respondents (85%), nineteen respondents (15%) identified themselves "white" without indicating specific nationalities or cultural groups.

2. White Others ethnic group includes: one "White Jewish", one "Mixed Dual American/British", one "Mixed White" and one "White African".

3. Mixed ethnic group includes: one "Mixed African", one "Mixed Race Carribean", one "Mixed Japanese/White", one "South Asian & White European" and one "White/Chinese".

4. Other Ethnicities include: one "Aboriginal", one "None. I'm not sure. I never asked this before.", one "Sicilian-maori-australian" and one "Slavonic/Roman Gypsy".

## Sexual Orientation

123 (89.8% response) people of 137 delegates responded to the question around sexual orientation.

As with the diversity of gender identities, the categories of the sexual orientation are varied and divided into seven different groups - Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Queer, Heterosexual, Asexual, Pansexual and other eclectic answers. Many people defined their sexual orientation as nonheterosexual by identifying as queer, pansexual and other eclectic answers.

As in the gender categories, this data indicates that categorising sexual orientations in trans communities does require some more complex thinking in order to reflect more variant sexual relationships.

Queer <sup>1</sup>	27 (22%)
Lesbian	16 (13%)
Gay	17 (13.8%)
Bisexual	22 (17.9%)
Heterosexual <sup>2</sup>	26 (21.1%)
Asexual	4 (3.3%)
Pansexual	4 (3.3%)
Others <sup>3</sup>	7 (5.7%)

### Note

1. Queer category includes: "Queer/polysexual", "Bisexual/queer", "gay/queer", "Lesbian/queer".

2. Heterosexual category includes: "Heterosexual woman", "Straight".

3. Other eclectic answers include: "I do not put a label on my sexuality", "People-sexual", "I find this personal and intrusive", "Heterosexual man and lesbian", "Lesbian questioning", "Hetero/Androgynosexual", "Occasional".

### Members of community

We asked delegates to tell us whether they felt that they were members of the trans community.

We were also interested in which professional settings delegates were coming from. 56.9% of delegates were from trans communities, and a relatively high proportion of attendees (20.4%) were from voluntary sector professions.

Examples of those from other backgrounds were NUS LGBT committee members, gender equality and diversity consultants and school teachers.

There were representatives from Institute of Education, Bath University, University of Birmingham, University of Sunderland. Other organisations were Schools Out,

LGBT History Month, The London Fire Brigade, Hackney Domestic Violence and Hate Crime Units, The International Health and Development Research Centre, NSPCC, Nottingham City Youth Service.

There were also many members from various trans and LGBT organisations such as FTM Network, Spectrum London, Gay Youth UK, Queer Youth Network, the Clare Project, Western Boys, Trans Youth Network, REGARD, Transmen Scotland, 4U Project, Scottish Transgender Alliance, a:gender, Out in Oldham!, LGYM, A Place at the Table, Rubicon & LGBT Advisory Group Met Police, The Consortium of LGBT Voluntary and Community Organisations and Gender Identity Research and Education Society (GIRES).

Trans Communities	27 (22%)
Health Professional	16 (13%)
Community Safety Professional	17 (13.8%)
Volunteer Sector Professional	28 (20.4%)
Others <sup>1</sup>	35 (25.5%)





**In order to develop the necessary skills for community members to facilitate their own workshops effectively, Gendered Intelligence ran a “Developing Facilitation Skills” course in conjunction with Central School of Speech and Drama. Our facilitator trainer was Richard Fallon.**



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The aims of this course were:

- To build a powerful group dynamic
- To identify the current areas of importance for the trans community, to gather topics and to establish areas for strands.
- To plan a workshop after being introduced to various models of practice.
- To develop skills and confidence in order to deliver workshops.

These aims were achieved in the first instance by gathering a group consensus of what makes an effective facilitator and what key skills are needed.

It was agreed by the group that to be an effective facilitator you need to:

manage your time effectively, plan and structure your workshop carefully

have good listening skills and emotional intelligence

understand different learning styles.

be able to draw out themes and make links, which hold the logic and move the discussion forward

be able to work effectively with team members

prepare the space in order to create a friendly environment, where delegates will feel safe

set clear boundaries, managing the expectations of the group

establish appropriate dynamic and energy

get the pace right

be able to communicate effectively, speaking clearly and with articulation

In order to deliver an effective workshop much of the course was dedicated to practicing a series of exercises that would release physical tension and anxiety that often arises when speaking in public.

We also spent a lot of time developing and practicing voice work that intends to release that tension, support the breath as well as enhance articulation and audibility.

In order to tackle some of our anxieties, we were also introduced to a series of Ki development exercises in order to build a resourceful state of confidence for public speaking and facilitation.

Using a Non Violent Communication model (NVC) we also centred on articulating feelings and needs as well as authentic listening. This was pictured through an exercise called 'the Giraffe and the Jackal'.

In doing this, we discovered the importance of connecting empathetically with the feelings and needs that are 'alive' inside of us. This is something very important to the trans community and what the conference tries to do.

### **By implementing listening skills as well as emotional intelligence we hoped to draw out the very real issues affecting trans lives.**

#### **What the volunteer facilitators said about the course:**

6 out of 10 volunteers completed our evaluation survey. 3 volunteers rated the overall course as 'Very Good' and 3 volunteers rated the overall course as 'Good'; 5 volunteers rated the course tutors as 'Very Good', 1 volunteer rated the course tutors as 'Good'; 2 volunteers rated gaining new skills as 'Very Good', 3 volunteers rated new skills as 'Good' and 1 volunteer rated new skills as 'Satisfactory'.

When asked to rate the surroundings, 4 volunteers rated them as 'Very Good', 1 volunteer rated them as 'Good' and 1 volunteer did not answer this question.

As a result of participating on the "Developing Facilitation Skills" course, the volunteers told us to what extent they felt that they had gained or improved in the following areas:

#### **Speaking confidently in public**

5 quite a lot improved  
1 not much improved

#### **Being clear and audible**

1 significantly improved  
4 quite a lot improved  
1 not much improved

#### **Creating and sustaining rapport for more effective communication**

2 significantly improved  
3 quite a lot improved  
1 not much improved

#### **Presenting information to a group of people**

3 significantly improved  
1 quite a lot improved  
2 not much improved

#### **Accessing resourceful states to calm you and support you through challenging situations such as job interviews**

5 significantly improved  
1 quite a lot improved

#### **Delivering instructions clearly**

3 significantly improved  
2 quite a lot improved  
1 not much improved

#### **Listening actively and picking up on key points**

4 significantly improved  
1 quite a lot improved  
1 not much improved  
1 not at all improved

#### **Understanding group dynamics**

2 significantly improved  
3 quite a lot improved  
1 not at all improved

#### **Being a team member**

2 significantly improved  
2 quite a lot improved  
2 not much improved

#### **General Confidence**

1 significantly improved  
3 quite a lot improved  
2 not much improved

Here are some comments that the volunteers made:

*"I liked the body work, stretching, loosening up, proper breathing."*  
(Volunteer facilitator)

*"I felt the 'giraffe and jackal' exercises were particularly relevant to my needs – becoming self-aware of feelings eliciting conflict."* (Volunteer facilitator)

*"I felt Akido centring was particularly good and mood manipulation techniques."* (Volunteer facilitator)

*"The most useful were the strand 'rehearsal' sessions. This allowed us to play out our strand, and facilitated analysis of our strand at a very active level."* (Volunteer facilitator)

*"The skills learnt would be useful, not just in facilitation but in every day life"*  
(Volunteer facilitator)

How the facilitation workshops went on the day?

On the whole facilitators felt that their sessions went well. The delegates seemed to find the topics chosen were important ones and the discussions were thought to be rather productive.

*"For me, it seemed to go very well. People got very involved and enjoyed it. It is an interesting topic anyway and quite meaningful for quite a lot of the people there. My thinking is that it would have been great to have more time."*  
(Volunteer facilitator)

*"We did a loose structure with firm objectives and we worked quite well as a team as well, but we wanted to pick up on what Richard said about feeling where someone is or what's alive in someone."* (Volunteer facilitator)

*"I tried to get the quieter ones to speak up."* (Volunteer facilitator)

*"Our strand was quite productive. We had a lot of ideas thrown around, even in the time limit we got a lot done."*  
(Volunteer facilitator)

Facilitating a large group of people is certainly not easy and many of the volunteers found running their workshop a real challenge.

*"I was letting things flow a little bit rather than taking control, even though I wanted to. Afterwards I thought we'd gone a long way but that it had been quite scattered."*  
(Volunteer facilitator)

*"Now that I have had a chance to think about it, I found it overwhelming, being so afraid that people had come to spend the afternoon with us and that we were going to waste their time."*  
(Volunteer facilitator)

*"I think we felt pressured on the day to deliver something from an expert stance. It's about not feeling that we have to be these experts."* (Volunteer facilitator)



On reflection the volunteer facilitators discussed the importance of developing these skills for our community.

It was made very clear that people were very keen to discuss topics, rather than have presentations, and so facilitated discussions are important for the trans community.

Furthermore, it was agreed that it was also of value that the facilitators were members of the trans community.

*"Being a facilitator is different to just having a conversation with someone. I think it is important to remember that people do need instructions."*

**(Volunteer facilitator)**

*"We're talking about a community that doesn't get its voice heard much, so it's understandable that people want to talk more."*

**(Volunteer facilitator)**

*"I think it creates a good image having volunteers doing it rather than people who may not necessarily play such a part in the trans community, employed from outside."*

**(Volunteer facilitator)**

*"I work in public health. I talked about the conference and there were a lot of people interested including the director of public health who is working on a sexual health strategy. I've told everybody. So that felt really positive."*

**(Volunteer facilitator)**





**This strand aimed to develop ways that we, as a community, can support trans people who are seeking asylum in the UK. The delegates were introduced to the legal processes of seeking asylum and then heard from a trans person who is seeking asylum, as well as from those who have been supporting people claiming asylum. Joseph Swift and Michal Dunkley- Clark ran the session, in association with UK Lesbian and Gay Immigration Group. Joseph was directly involved in writing this part of the report.**

### Joseph Swift

I am a 50 year old trans man and since I started hormones four years ago I have been an active member of the FTM London Management Committee.

My interest in asylum law and human rights started when I worked as an administrator at JUSTICE, the human rights and law reform charity.

My real understanding of the lived experience of especially trans people seeking asylum, began when I started to support a trans man who was seeking asylum.



### Michal Dunkley – Clark

I am currently a trainee practitioner counsellor in the person-centred model.

I have been a support worker and advocate for trans people for about 5 years.

I recognised myself instinctively as having a female persona in adolescence but had no language for it. I would consider myself gender variant or genderqueer.



UKLGIG provides support to lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and trans people seeking asylum by providing information on the asylum process, finding expert legal representation, providing research and a safe environment for mutual support.

The group holds monthly meetings where asylum seekers meet with others in a similar situation and with sympathetic, experienced volunteer lawyers and interpreters.



In this workshop we wanted to bring people together to discuss the asylum process, especially as it is experienced by trans asylum seekers, and then to think of ways that we, as a community, can support trans people who are seeking asylum in the UK.

In the first part of the workshop, Andrew Pretzell, a barrister at the Chambers of Ami Feder, Lamb Building, Temple introduced participants to the legal processes of seeking asylum and spoke from his experience of acting for (and winning refugee status for) a male trans asylum seeker.

We also heard about the difficulties faced by trans asylum seekers from two people who already offer support.

These were Sebastian Rocca, the Director of UKLGIG (UK Lesbian and Gay Immigration Group) and Joe Swift.

Also participating in the workshop were representatives from the Metropolitan Police Service, a:gender (a support network for transsexual, transgender and intersex staff in the civil service) and activists working within schools and the workplace.

In the second part of the workshop we thought about the ways in which we might be able to improve the lives of asylum seekers and the outcome of their claim for asylum.

The legal definition of a refugee is someone who:

“owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside his country of nationality and is unable or, owing to such a fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence ... is unable or, owing to such a fear, is unwilling to return to it.”

**Trans people can seek asylum in the UK as a member of a ‘particular social group’.**

**Much of the work of their legal teams are focused on collecting proof that the person is trans and has a real fear of persecution in their home country.**

Put very simply, the process of claiming asylum in the UK consists of telling an immigration officer at the port of entry into the UK that you wish to claim asylum or by attending a regional Asylum Screening Unit (ASU) such as Lunar House in Croydon.

A screening interview is carried out to collect basic information such as name, country of origin and reason for claiming asylum. A detailed interview is normally carried out some time later and then a decision is made on the evidence provided at this interview.

If the claim is refused, the asylum seeker has the right to appeal. Any asylum seeker without financial resources can obtain legal aid to instruct a solicitor. Since April 2007, the New Asylum Model (NAM) has been used, where the Home Office places an emphasis on the speed of dealing with claims for asylum.

At the screening interview, an immigration officer makes a decision on whether a case can be 'fast tracked'. This means that, in their opinion, they can make a decision on the case very quickly. This decision is often negative.

People whose cases are 'fast tracked' are detained in immigration removal centres and their interview and decision can occur in less than a week.

A single officer ('the case owner') is allocated to the case at the screening interview and is responsible for making the decision.

**In all asylum cases, but especially complicated ones like those of LGBT claimants, it is really important to seek help from a solicitor with experience of working with cases based on gender identity and sexual identity.**

**It is also important to prepare a statement with accompanying evidence before claiming asylum.**

Problems faced by trans asylum seekers:

The workshop gathered some of the problems experienced by trans people claiming asylum. This has been summed up in the following key points:

**Trans asylum seekers may identify themselves as gay or lesbian**

- They may come from countries where talking about sexual orientation and gender identity is taboo.
- Some asylum seekers may never have heard of 'trans' and therefore may not know how to describe themselves.
- Identifying as trans might bring shame especially if they have been told all of their life that they are 'wrong'.

### There is a need for support, information and contact with other trans people

- Many trans asylum seekers need a lot of help to build trust so that they feel comfortable to speak about their issues and about claiming asylum. This includes building trust in authorities so that they know, for example, the police will protect them if they are assaulted or abused on the street.
- Trans people may require information about how to change their name, what treatment is available and how to access it, even basic information about living as a trans person.
- Trans people claiming asylum may require emotional support to help cope with low confidence and self esteem or experiences of trauma.
- They may not know how to register with a GP or how to begin to access treatment from a gender identity clinic.
- If in detention, the need for this support and information will be even greater.
- In many cases, trans asylum seekers need a 'mentor' to help them to access this information and to introduce them to the trans community here in the UK.

### There are specific accommodation needs

- In common with gay and lesbian asylum seekers, trans asylum seekers are often at risk from the communities from their home country

and so may not be able to seek accommodation or support from them.

- National Asylum Support Service (NASS) staff are not trained to recognise or be sensitive to trans safety issues.
  - There are specific accommodation issues regarding personal safety. For instance, single sex accommodation can be problematic.
  - Trans people may be at risk from other asylum seekers from their home country.
  - Trans people may fear putting their family back home at risk if accommodated with people from their own country as their gender identity might be revealed or discovered.
- ### Detention in an Immigration Removal Centre is a key area of concern
- Trans people are often detained and nearly always will be put in an Immigration Removal Centre with those of their birth gender. For example, trans men are detained at Yarl's Wood Immigration Removal Centre for women.

- Harassment and abuse from fellow detainees and staff is a frequent occurrence.
- It has been experienced that detention centre staff (nurses, counsellors etc) impose beliefs on trans asylum seekers. For example, religion has been used to try to 'cure' trans asylum seekers.



- There is a sense of extreme isolation for trans people being detained. Current protection is given by isolating trans asylum seekers and by advising them 'not to leave their room'.

- Trans asylum seekers are vulnerable people and often have complicated cases. In short they should not be detained by the Home Office's own rules.

### There is a lack of knowledge amongst legal professionals

- The lack of knowledge about trans people generally is reflected in the legal system.

- Many immigration barristers have no experience or understanding of trans asylum cases. In a recent case a well known barrister assessed the case of a trans person with no merits and suggested there was nothing left to do. That was felt to be wrong and the trans asylum seeker is still here and has now got good prospects of winning.

- Legal professionals, including judges, barristers and solicitors need training about claiming asylum on the grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity.

There is a lack of knowledge and perhaps even a lack of respect for trans people amongst case workers, detention centre staff and NASS employees

- Some trans people have been exposed to harassment during the screening process and the asylum interview. An example of this would be by publically announcing the female (passport) name of a trans man wearing male clothing. Consequently, other asylum seekers approached him as they were curious about this disparity.

- It has been known that staff refuse to use the chosen pronoun or name of the trans person.

- Ignorance about trans issues often leads to the trans person being fast tracked as immigration staff think they can deal with the case quickly.

- Trans people have felt humiliated by staff medically examining their genitalia.

- Meetings between non lawyers and trans detainees are held in a public space with no privacy at all.

- A wide variety of professionals involved in immigration and asylum, including Home Office staff, need guidelines on how to work with trans people.

### There is a lack of evidence regarding trans people's Country of Origin Information (COI)

- There is very little published research of the persecution faced by trans people in many countries.

- This is reflected in the COI reports which may lack information or contain partial or wrong information. The immigration judges and case owners often rely on these reports to make their decision.

- This is one of the reasons why trans cases should not be fast tracked, as time is needed to collect the evidence.

### There are issues with the use of interpreters by the UK Borders Agency (UK BA)

- Interpreters may be from the same country or background as the trans asylum seeker and may be transphobic or simply not understand what trans is.

- Of course, if the trans person claiming asylum has little English, they will not know if what they are saying is being correctly translated.

- The hostility shown by the interpreter may also make them less able to tell their story.

### Suggestions of ways we can support trans asylum seekers

With regards to these very difficult situations facing trans people who claim asylum, the group discussed some necessary solutions and ways forward.

### Individuals can get involved by:

- Telephone and email support, especially of those trans asylum seekers held in immigration removal centres.

- Meeting up with asylum seekers on a regular basis. Introducing them to trans support groups and taking them to trans community meetings and events.

- Help those seeking asylum to register with a trans friendly GP, join a library, join free training courses at local colleges and to access mental health services and/or trans friendly counselling.

- Visit those detained in Immigration Removal Centres. Provide them with appropriate clothing, re-cycled mobile phones (without camera) and phone cards or credit.

- Once you have made friends, you can act as a witness for an asylum seeker by writing a letter to the court or giving evidence in court.

- Offering surety. This is like standing bail for an asylum seeker. You agree to take responsibility for the asylum seeker during their claim for asylum, and in particular to make sure that they obey the conditions of their bail. You would pay a fine if the asylum seeker breaks their bail conditions. This is often necessary for someone to get out of detention.

- Offer free accommodation. This may include full support if the asylum seeker is not eligible for NASS financial support.

### Political work and campaigning

Members of the trans community can work together to impact on policy and the law. We can do this by:

- Making links with policy makers in the Home Office in order to bring LGBT awareness to staff training as well as research. (UKLGIG is a member of the Advisory Panel on Country Information (APCI) which has been set up by Parliament to oversee research carried out by the Home Office.)
- Contacting your regional representative at the Equalities and Human Rights Commission to get to know them and to raise trans asylum issues with them. (Trans sits within 'Gender' at the Commission but the Equalities Review suggested that trans should be a separate seventh strand.)
- Write a response or contact your MP to campaign for the inclusion of all transgendered people, not just transsexuals in the Single Equality Bill. The Bill was published in June 2008.
- Ask for a copy of the UK Borders and Immigration Agency's equality and diversity scheme. Currently it does NOT include any LGBT recommendations. You could write to them and ask for the inclusion of specific material regarding LGBT people.
- Contacting politicians to highlight these issues, for example in Liam Burns, Lynn Hammer, Harriet Harmon and Jackie Smith.

### Training on trans issues

Training around trans issues is needed at all levels, including the policy makers and research staff at the Home Office and the Ministry of Justice, judges, NAM (New Asylum Model) teams, detention centre staff (employed by Serco), Asylum and Immigration Tribunal (AIT) staff, interpreters and UK BA staff at ports and asylum screening centres.

Here are some suggestions to tackle this big area:

- We could start by writing for a copy of current internal procedures and then ask for a review.
- NAM teams and judges are often trained by barristers contracted by commercial training companies. We could make sure that training includes trans issues by finding out who holds current contracts and training the trainers.
- Encourage the use of case studies in training and not just information stalls and lectures.
- Support a:gender in the work they already do in regard to Home Office practices, by meeting with representatives and to give them relevant information.
- Provide training for solicitors and barristers working with trans asylum seekers. For example in the writing of statements and the arguments used to aid the removal of trans asylum seekers from detention.

- Provide training for the nongovernmental organisations supporting asylum seekers in the UK so that they can recognise trans asylum seekers and be sensitive to their special needs.
- Locate and advertise counsellors and therapists experienced in working with trans people and offer training to others.

### Long term goals

There is a great deal of work to be done in this area and it is important to think through long term strategies. Some of the ways we can do this is by:

- Obtaining funding and staff to specifically support trans asylum seekers.
- Employing LGBT liaison officers within the UK BIA, as in the police service, who could be contacted by any LGBT person claiming asylum.
- Having NAM case owners especially trained in interviewing LGBT asylum seekers and assessing LGBT claims for asylum.
- Improve the privacy rights and needs of trans asylum seekers in Home Office buildings and detention centres, particularly in the provision of private interview and meeting spaces.
- Collect information about trans friendly and knowledgeable interpreters, and encourage the Home Office to use these.
- Gain funding for a hostel especially for trans asylum seekers.

- Establish volunteer programmes for befrienders, witnesses and statement writers. (The Consortium of LGBT Organisations has a brokerage system for LGBT volunteers. We could place an advert in ILPA and EIN newsletters to publicise the need for volunteers. A host organisation would be needed to run the programme.)

- Distributing leaflets for LGBT asylum seekers at all ports and asylum screening centres in multiple languages with telephone numbers and email addresses of support groups and organisations.

- Raising the awareness of the problems faced by trans asylum seekers amongst trans support groups all over the country.

### Conclusion

Michal and I (the co-facilitators of this strand) would be the first to admit that this workshop was the beginning of a long journey to raise awareness about the problems faced by trans people seeking asylum in the UK, both within the trans community, and also with the authorities who have responsibility for handling claims for asylum in the UK. Many issues were discussed in the short time we had. We hope this information will inform and initiate change.

Our ideal outcome would be that these problems and possible solutions generate groups of volunteers willing to develop support for trans people who are seeking asylum.

If you would like to share ideas and experiences with other people interested in supporting trans asylum seekers, please join our [Yahoo group](#).

A paper written by Andrew Pretzell (Barrister at Law) detailing the refugee law and process of claiming asylum in the UK is available as a file on this [Yahoo Group](#).

Here is what some of the delegates said about the workshop:

*"It is useful to me as I am almost uniquely based to take this back to all the chief constables in the country who are probably putting quite a lot of effort into what each of their constabularies can do for the trans communities that they serve including asylum seekers."* (Delegate)

*"I do presentations to staff at the Home Office. Up to this point it has been a very academic exercise of how to treat these sorts of people when they arrive at your desk. I've now actually got concrete information that I can take back to them and say that I now know where they're getting it wrong in certain areas. These are the elements of your job that we think you could be doing something to improve."* (Delegate)

*"I am not trans or an asylum seeker but all the work I'm doing with people in primary schools will be informed by having been in on this discussion."* (Delegate)

Thank you to Sebastian and Andi for all the support given to this conference and to trans asylum seekers.





### Evaluation

8 of the 20 delegates attending this strand completed our evaluation forms.  
Here is a summary of what they said:

In what way do you think attending this strand might be useful to you now/in the future?

To provide information to show groups that I am working with.

Prison visits for trans

To inform people working in schools

I gained a better understanding of issues

What did you like about the workshop?

Good speakers and subjects

Well structured and good results

Very friendly

The variety of experienced people

Is there anything that you would recommend the strand team do differently next time?

Stay in the room for coffee, etc.

Gather together more specific accounts for new asylum seekers.

General comments:

Enjoyable day well worth all the effort to get here.

Thank you very much!

Just excellent

**This strand looked at body positivity and how trans people can become empowered to celebrate their bodies. We also discussed the various expectations trans people, those close to them, as well as society has of gendered bodies. The workshop then went on to discuss the concerns that trans people have around sexual health, the difficulties they have in accessing sexual health services and ways to move towards gaining inclusive sexual health provision for all trans people. The strand was open to all trans people, their lovers and friends. Joy Kahumbu and Lee Gale ran the session, in association with SW5, from Terence Higgins Trust.**



Joy Kahumbu

I work in Public Health and recently developed a Hackney Youth Service project for young LGBT people. I was determined to provide a space and service that included Trans properly.

I am happy and proud that the Green Door is a place where young trans people can expect their needs to be given equal weight to other young people.



Lee Gale

I started hormones 6 and a half years ago and soon after began working within the trans community.

I recently worked on the Transtastic Men Calendar project, aimed at raising awareness of the trans male body.

Since then I became more interested in working with trans people and their perception and acceptance of their bodies.



SW5 aims to provide advice and support to male and transgender people working in the sex industry.

We support those who wish to continue selling sex (seeing it as choice) and those who want to exit the profession.

We offer advice on dealing with clients, safety whilst working, staying within the law, isolation and depression. We run a sexual health clinic offering HIV testing.

We also discuss selling sex to pay for Sex Reassignment Surgery, and support those who cross dress whilst working. We are free, confidential, and nonjudgemental.

We maintain an excellent relationship with other agencies including those within the trans community.



The group identified the aims of the sessions as the following:

- To help empower trans people to reclaim their bodies and feel more comfortable and at ease
- To discuss the various expectations that trans people and those around them have of trans bodies
- To discuss ways to move towards gaining inclusive sexual health provision for all trans people
- To discuss the various concerns trans people have surrounding sexual health
- To provide a safe, confidential space for people to discuss the issues openly within the strand

### Body Positivity

In groups of 3, delegates were first asked to choose words used to describe their body. Each person was asked to take their chosen main descriptive word and place it on the wall between two points labelled 'positive' and 'negative'.

From this delegates discussed their own perceptions of these various words.

It was also possible for people to move the words around if they felt it be better placed elsewhere.

Again this was to discuss how meanings vary from people to people, as well as ask questions such as: "why do you use certain words?" and most importantly "how do they make us feel?"

In the workshop the group produced a 'Body Positivity Ideas Sheet', which explored the different ways in which the trans community can feel more positive about their bodies. Firstly the group identified the barriers and then the group sought a solution. Here is a summary of some of the key points that came up:

Self Acceptance	
Barriers:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Other people's expectations and judgements of non-normative bodies</li><li>• Finding good information about being all the different types of bodies there are</li></ul>
Solutions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Education and raising awareness</li><li>• Build self confidence</li><li>• Gain allies</li><li>• Build a physical (noncyber) social community and support groups</li></ul>

*"We need spaces or places where we can be ourselves without fear."*  
(Delegate)

### Providing spaces for people who do not fit into a gender binary system

Barriers:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bias towards binary gender identities</li> <li>• Hierarchy of transness</li> </ul>
Solutions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing a language to express gender identity as diverse</li> <li>• Using Art / Writing / Theatre / Performance / Movies / Oral history to discuss gender diversity in our communities</li> <li>• Deliver workshops</li> </ul>

*"I'm not speaking for everyone but from experience, if your looking for support, there is a lot of bias towards binary trans identities" (Delegate)*

### Self confidence with regards to interacting with others

Barriers:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Isolation and feeling 'different' (especially young people)</li> </ul>
Solutions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Come together and feel a sense of pride</li> <li>• Organising celebratory events</li> <li>• Provide a safe space for young people</li> </ul>

### Positive images of trans people's bodies in the media

Barriers:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The media continues to cast trans as 'different' in order to sell stories</li> </ul>
Solutions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide our own images</li> </ul>

### Promote trans bodies as okay with or without medical intervention (hormones and surgery)

Barriers:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mainstream media might not be very positive</li> <li>• Difficulties with not conforming</li> <li>• Public Perception</li> </ul>
Solutions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taking Responsibility</li> <li>• Finding funding as positive role models, e.g. calendars, photo exhibitions</li> <li>• Education of others</li> <li>• Workshops</li> </ul>

*"The media revels in keeping us different to sell stories and using trans as something freaky and different, but not in a good way." (Delegate)*



*"We need to have positive images of trans people's bodies. In the media and calendars etc, just showing trans people are normal people."*

(Delegate)

Treatment to Block Puberty	
Barriers:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medical closed minds</li> </ul>
Solutions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Looking at procedures in other countries</li> </ul>

Get fit and healthy	
Barriers:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being exposed in a public space and others reactions to different bodies</li> <li>• Inhibition</li> <li>• Fear</li> <li>• Embarrassment</li> </ul>
Solutions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Private trans gym</li> <li>• Implement good practice at sport centres in how to support us</li> <li>• Trans swim</li> <li>• Peer support/Allies</li> </ul>

### Visually celebrating our diversity

Barriers:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finding people to put themselves forward to be made visible through photographs and story telling etc.</li> <li>• Funding</li> <li>• Distributing to wider network – who will see it?</li> <li>• Time &amp; commitment</li> <li>• Confidence</li> </ul>
Solutions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use the internet as a cheap and highly accessible resource.</li> <li>• Promote trans bodies as okay with or without medical intervention (hormones and surgery)</li> <li>• Offer rewards for trans people getting involved.</li> </ul>

*"I think it's about pride and solidarity and people coming together in a safe space to express that. I was really struck at Transfabulous when a trans guy started dancing naked. I'm not suggesting that we have trans guys dance around naked but definitely a space to express that pride and solidarity. (Delegate)"*

*"We need to decide on the pros and cons of visibility and invisibility."(Delegate)"*

*"We were talking about how to reward people for doing it (being visible as a trans person) such as prizes, being celebrated or getting famous." (Delegate)*

### Sexual Health

In the second part of the session the group discussed sexual health and trans people's sexual health needs. Here three key questions were asked:

#### What is sexual health?

It was discussed how all people are sexual beings and therefore sexuality and sexual practices impacts on our life in all sorts of ways, including emotionally. Sexual health is about Sexually Transmitted Infections and medical treatment specific to our genitalia.

However the group also agreed that it's about general well-being, sensuality, negotiating consent and gaining confidence around sexual encounters with people.

#### Why do we have sex?

Like all people sex is an important part of our life, in building relationships, establishing closeness and intimacy. Sex is also about fulfilling our desires and fantasies.

#### Where did you get your information about sex?

It was discussed that gaining information about sex and sexual health came from different aspects. Some people said that their parents or siblings were places to

have these discussions, however, for others this was not a place to go. Sex and Relationship education in schools was felt to be unsatisfactory if you are not heterosexual. Likewise people didn't feel that they could approach GPs and sometimes even sexual health providers.

*"I wouldn't go to a sexual health clinic because I don't like getting into situations that I don't know enough about." (Delegate)*

#### Group role-play

The group role-played being different types of characters who needed to access sexual health services.

Some of the delegates who work in sexual health took the role of advisors, whilst other delegates played out the scenario that they were given by the facilitators. Here are some comments that people made during the feedback section:

*"In my role play I could feel how odd it would be, uncomfortable, to be a young trans man and needing to have a sexual health check. The service provider was supportive, but I don't know if I could even talk about it and get the point of having it handled. Do you know what? I don't think I'd do it." (Delegate)*

*"In my role play I told my service provider that I had had unprotected sex, but there wasn't a chance to go into why I'd had unprotected sex." (Delegate)*

It became very clear that these encounters means to talk directly about what kind of sex people are doing? There is a very direct conversation to be had about genital contact and as a trans person that is not necessarily easy.

*"Could I talk to my service provider about having vaginal sex, as a gay trans man?"*  
(Delegate)

From this there was a recommendation to practice what you are going to say with friends or other community members before going into sexual health providers.

*"We need to practice accessing services through role plays with each other, with friends..."* (Joy, Facilitator)

It was also agreed that it is important for trans people to understand a bit more about the employee providing sexual health care.

*"I felt really out of my depth. All of the people I talked to were trans. It made me feel quite nervous"* (Delegate, playing a sexual health provider)

It became clear that providers also need tools to understand what our needs are. We can take some responsibility and take the time to do some of that work. Indeed, front line staff are the people who can turn people away.

It is crucial for providers to train staff around trans issues. This is clearly an equality issue, but it was felt that currently trans issues do not seem to carry the same weight as other strands of equality.

Thanks to Del and Michelle for their contribution to the workshop as well as for their commitment to ensuring that the sexual health service provision at THT is accessible to trans people and that there is a good understanding of the various needs from our community.

*"We've been carrying out a lot of research around what THT have been doing with regards to trans people and their sexual health needs"* (Del, SW5)

*"We want the trans community to feel okay about approaching THT for their sexual health needs."* (Michelle, THT))



### Evaluation

20 of the 30 delegates attending this strand completed our evaluation forms.  
Here is a summary of what they said:

In what way do you think attending this strand might be useful to you now/in the future?

Networking, ideas for further work

Feeding back to my peer group

It gave me an opportunity to share other's experiences

A greater awareness of the issues which I will take into my professional work in mental health

I am beginning to think about gender issues and to start to be more aware of my own prejudice and stereotyping.

As a manager of Terence Higgins Trust, understanding the needs of trans service users

I felt involved. The workshop gave me a sense of increased confidence in my body and that being trans is okay.

The information about getting good sexual healthcare

I am going to get a smear test.

What did you like about the workshop?

It went deep.

Facilitators were friendly and approachable.

The small group work

Being a participant

Role play exercise

Meeting and listening to others

The openness and willingness to listen and learn

The openness of the facilitators and peers

Thought provoking – good opportunity to integrate

Very active. Chance to come up with new ideas. Knowing that people are going to take these ideas to help trans people long term

Hands on everyone gets to contribute

Thought provoking, comfortable safe space to talk

Openness of participants

Is there anything that you would recommend the strand team do differently next time?

Timing

More time

Spend more time on some issues – group

A little more structural guidance

More time needed

Tighter control of group and clearer instructions in what to do in exercises

Is there anything in particular you would like to see going forward from the strand? Whole days on these issues

Sexual health providers to realise that trans bodies are different and that general advice from non trans men/women may not be appropriate.

Education of service providers

Links between people for projects

A trans map covering all areas

More meetings to discuss the issues and to make plan for those changes to occur

Education of health professionals about trans and genderqueer issues & experience

Trans being included in equal opportunity policies in all services including health and education.



**This strand aimed to identify the needs of young trans people as well as the families, friends and partners of trans people.**

**Our key questions were: what will enable young trans people to be taken seriously by those around them? And what support and resources do families, friends and partners of trans people need? Finn, Rachel, Jacob and Jennifer ran the session, in association with No Outsiders.**

### Finn Greig

I am a 24 year old man from London. I have recently been appointed the manager of Hackney's LGBT Youth Project after having worked there as a youth worker since October.

I have been working with Gendered Intelligence for about 2 years now and hope to continue partnership projects throughout LGBT communities in London and beyond.



### Jacob Smith

Raising awareness and providing support for LGBT people is important to me.

This is why I like to get involved with the management of support groups, and to work with organisations such as the LGBT consortium.

I frequently volunteer for Gendered Intelligence projects and hope to continue being involved in more projects like this conference.



### Rachel Gale

I am a qualified nurse and have a great interest in transgendered issues.

Both my brother and partner are trans and I hope to be able to make a difference to the way society sees the issue.

I hope to continue to study my masters in the field of trans issues and research areas that need more attention.



### Jennifer Murray

I am a 19 year old trans woman.

I volunteer with different LGBT youth groups and do peer counselling with mermaids, supporting other young trans people like myself.



The No Outsiders project is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council and is a collaboration between the University of Sunderland, the University of Exeter and the Institute of Education, University of London.

It involves primary school teachers in North East England, North West England, London and the Midlands to come together in order to develop ideas and resources to address lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender equality in their own primary schools and their communities

The workshop started by establishing a working contract between delegates. Initially two 'rules' suggested were:

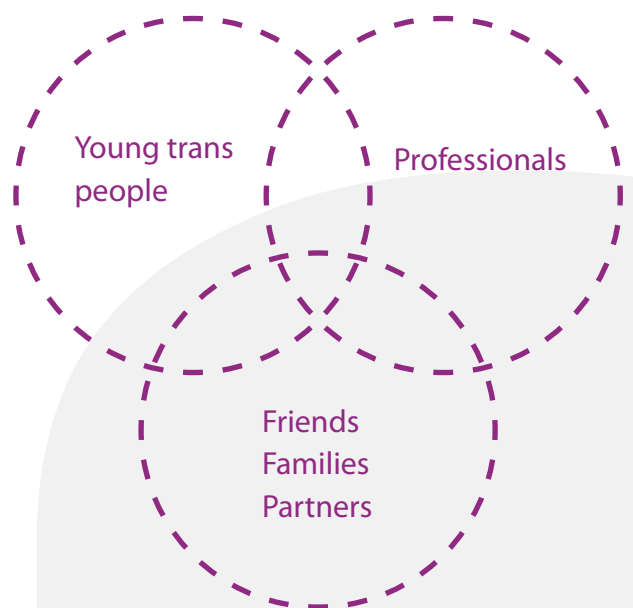
- To discuss the subject as opposed to the person. This works to ensure confidentiality of personal issues and stories are maintained, whilst lessons can still be learnt.
- To meet everybody's need for respect. That is to respect people coming from different backgrounds and having different opinions and also acknowledging that people's understandings are at various levels.

In order to develop a more effective discussion and to understand delegates' reasons for attending the conference, the participants were encouraged to locate themselves into three subgroups: 'young trans people', 'professionals and friends', 'family members and partners'.

A Venn diagram was pre-drawn on the conference room floor and people were directed to position themselves in an area to which they thought they belonged.

During the process of sub-grouping, many members overlapped, as many trans young people work as professionals and/or are members of trans-related organisations. Likewise many professionals are family members or partners of trans people.

In general, the workshop consisted of small group discussions which were then summarised and fed back to the whole group. Each group developed the discussion based on a problem-solving structure: firstly, to define 'bad feelings and barriers'; secondly, to set up 'ideal solutions' that would be the long-term goals to solve those bad feelings and barriers and finally to suggest 'next steps' for practical initiatives to reach those ideal solutions.



In the first half of the workshop, the delegates were divided into seven small groups and established the various critical issues related to young trans people and their families, as well as the various professional and voluntary organisations relevant to young people and families' lives (for example school, GPs). The following table sums up the result of the discussion.

Issues for young trans people	Bad Feelings / Barriers	Ideal Solutions	Next Steps
Medical care:	Gender clinics are reluctant to treat young people	General gender politeness within institutions	For the trans community to liaise with health professionals in a productive way
	There is a lack of specialist staff in mainstream services	More and better gender identity clinics	Gender diversity training for NHS staff, GPs and other health care providers
	There is a lack of knowledge in terms of gender diversity for GPs and counsellors	For GPs to treat young people and older people equally	Find websites where people can get links and printable information that they can take to their GP to educate them
		To have a health care provider in each local area to be trained extensively in gender issues	
Androgen blockers to delay puberty	Feelings of terror, horror shame in that the body developing in the 'opposite' or 'wrong' way	Making androgen blockers available on the NHS.	Produce research, data and information on these drugs
	Feeling excluded, isolated; not wanting to be touched; envy and jealousy of people whose sex is developing in an easy way.		Looking at places like Holland for knowledge with regards to how administering blockers have impacted on young people there
			To lobby government to lower the age of treating trans people
	Being seen by the medical profession as having a psychological problem not a medical one.		Get involved in peer education
Coming Out	There is a genuine feeling of nervousness, fear of anger and misunderstanding when coming out as trans whilst being a young person.	Seeing the person not the stereotype.	Raise awareness of gender diversity starting from a young age.
	There is a possible lack of acceptance by others, within a need of emotional and/or financial support	Recognition that young trans people do exist and the need to provide them with a safe space and the time to work out for who they are.	Tackle stereotyping in schools such as: boys are strong and girls are delicate.
	There is a lack of understanding of being gender variant. There is an assumption that coming out as trans means that there is an expectation that the young person will want surgery	Acceptance from friends, family, partners, society and professionals,	
		Ensuring the term 'trans' covers all gender identities,	

Issues for young trans people	Bad Feelings / Barriers	Ideal Solutions	Next Steps
Schools, colleges and universities	Understandings of gender throughout education are strictly binaried. This sets out to exclude gender variant and trans people.	De-gendered School uniforms	Make information available within schools and more general public places;
	There is a lack of specialist staff in mainstream services	Eliminating same sex schools	Ensure that one person within schools have had trans training.
Education	There is a real fear or reluctance to engage with trans issues. This can come from parents, governors, some staff members and also heads of schools	Raise awareness of gender diversity from reception age so that the children have an understanding to express themselves.	Advocate staff training around gender diversity
	There maybe an idea that numbers count and there aren't enough trans people to warrant the spend on training.	Proper funding to think about shaping policies and guidelines for the Department of Children, Families and Schools to local authorities	Get involved in policy which looks at equalites, including gender expressions.
	There are limited funds	To raise awareness in all professional areas of young people's lives	Look at how policies can protect LGBT staff members in schools
	People aren't talking about gender issues generally within the curriculum. In order to talk about trans issues you have to start unpacking gender more broadly in order to have the language.		To also raise awareness in other settings such as social services, pupil referral units etc.
			Improving PSHE lessons and making them compulsory.
	There is a lack of understanding as well as an ability to grapple with appropriate language in order to talk about these issues.		Have relationship education for primary schools
	There is an idea that trans is quite complicated.		Reduce the stigma around LGBT communities in sex education class across schools
			Funding for groups on a grassroots level



Lack of support for the friends, family and partners of trans people

Family members' may feel that they are in a crisis. There is a feeling out of place; a quandary about where to go.

Gain more positive representation and information in the mass media for families to know more that other trans people exist.

Make information available within schools and more general public places;

Training for doctors, youth groups, family centres to be made aware of family issues regarding trans

To value the experiences and input of families, friends or partners of trans people within the trans community

To build on other organisations that are already there supporting familymembers of trans people

Here are some of the comments delegates made:

*"I'm a partner ... the main issue I had initially was not understanding what trans is. Trans and the concept of gender identity needs to come into awareness. The concept of sexual orientation has now become a common idea but gender identity isn't yet."* (Delegate)

*"We need better awareness training for GPs and health care providers, as well as gender queer awareness and people who aren't binary but still wanting a medical transition. You shouldn't have to lie to your GP about how you identify just to get some treatment."* (Delegate)

*"The bad feeling arise from having to jump through hoops when you're a young person, the competitive aspect of gender clinics when they're trying to keep their reputation making them less likely to treat young people."* (Delegate)

*"In my school we do have a transgender policy and I'm very proud that I wrote it."* (Delegate)

*"The No Outsiders project, which my school is involved with, we're very good on the L and G issues, B issues slightly less and the T issues just not at all so looking at what kind of resources, mainly books but it just takes somebody to write them."* (Delegate)

*"Young people need to know it's okay to feel what they're feeling and to know their rights and treatment needs to be more fair and equal."* (Jacob, facilitator)

After the discussion from each of the seven groups were shared, a task was given in order to create some more concrete suggestions and possible actions that could be taken.

### Ideas for the issues related to NHS

- Distribute information about trans issues to your own GP
- Make a database of trans-friendly GPs and make the information easily available to everyone. (One delegate mentioned T-Vox, the online wiki space for all things trans and suggested using this space for listing good GPs.)
- More clinics and equal funding & provision for everyone over the UK.

### Gender diversity awareness

- Produce guidelines for professionals who work with young people and ensure the involvement of young people at this stage.
- Bringing trans and gender identity awareness into the public eye by using the media to reach the general public.

- Bring up trans issues within the PSHE curriculum
- Create resources for primary schools to help children understand gender diversity.
- Educating other professionals such as authors and scientists to acknowledge gender and sexuality differences
- Training teachers to have better understanding of gender and to understand the repercussions of gender stereotyping
- Writing a book that includes a trans character
- Educating one member of pastoral care staff in every school about trans
- Produce posters to get people thinking about the issue, bringing up discussion



### Other suggestions

- Get one organisation to take the lead and put all the information into one place
- Make sure spam filters are sorted out when you type 'trans' into a search engine.
- Networking within various organisations (LGBT switchboards, local authorities, stonewall, Albert Kennedy, Terrance Higgins Trust, pride festivals, radio stations) and do a big press release to get the information out there.

### Evaluation

22 of the 39 delegates attending this strand completed our evaluation forms.  
Here is a summary of what they said:

In what way do you think attending this strand might be useful to you now/in the future?
Useful to contribute as young person and to communicate with professionals
It has given me more information about what other organisations are doing and its relevance to what I do
It has helped me to support young trans people in Nottingham
Pointed me towards resources and organisations
It has given me ideas for new media projects
It has informed my work in school.
As a youth worker it has enabled me to talk about trans issues
The information about getting good sexual healthcare
I am youth and want to make a difference. This helped me learn.
My organisation works with children and young people and is interested in doing work on LGBT issues
Making contacts with regards to getting information from youth to professionals.
I hope to work extensively with LGBT youth groups and have clear understanding and inclusion of the 'T' of transgender.

In what way do you think attending this strand might be useful to you now/in the future?
I learned a lot about the education system.
Speaking to a variety of people
Meeting and networking with young people
Fun, interactive, friendly. Great facilitators.
Discussions and feedbacks
Getting perspectives of youth for my own professional practice.
Interaction
It was good opportunity to hear many peoples' views & experience
Discussion with different people throughout the workshop
Nice people, good topics, well facilitated, fun groups
Chatting with young people and professionals.
I thought it was well articulated.

Is there anything that you would recommend the strand team do differently next time?

Mix up groups from the start

Come to Nottingham!

Another icebreaker at the beginning to get people talking

Facilitators will be more confident next time

'Mix up' the groups earlier

Not split into professional/friends/young trans

More time

Is there anything in particular you would like to see going forward from the strand?

Information widely available in GP surgeries

A website which pulls together everything in one place

More resources available online for group work with young people, or LGBT issues

Access further findings and training for professionals to establish further supports in schools

Looking for support... what young people need to support their lives.

Progress in policies and the law.

I will be suggesting that staff in my organisation should be provided with training on these issues.

General comments:

Fantastic day

Great conference. Would love to come again. Well done – a lot of hard work went into it. Great speakers and our facilitators were fab!

Thank you for an excellent conference. I came with very little experience of trans issues and the trans community, but felt quickly at ease, learnt a lot and am taking away lots of useful ideas

Excellent day. Glad I came!

Very good! Will be back

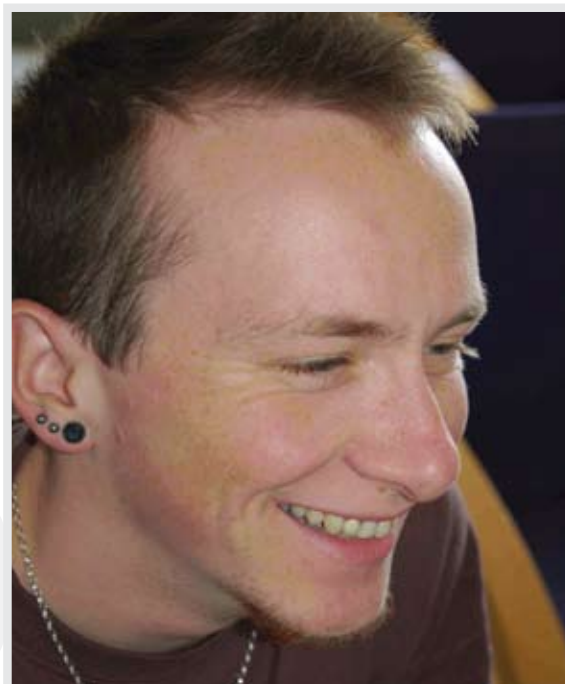


**This strand engaged with the various emotional and psychological aspects of being trans which often do not get raised. We considered how we manage our own transitions, in whatever form they may take, and how we situate ourselves in relation to other people, including trans people. Jay and Claudia ran the session, in association with Pace**

### J McNeil

I am a 27 year old trans man from Essex. My background is in psychology, and I provide training and consultancy concerning transgender issues.

I am especially interested in trans mental health, sexual health and body image, and how we as a community can empower each other.



### Claudia Anderson

I am a 20 year old trans woman, currently studying Japanese and Korean. At the moment I am on a gap year working for a Japanese oil company.

I have had intensive counselling during my Mental Health and Emotional Well Being transition, and hold a great interest in the identity dynamics of gender identity, an area I wanted to focus on in this year's conference.

PACE is London's leading charity promoting the mental health and emotional wellbeing of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community.

PACE provides support to 1200 people every year offering a range of services including counselling, youth work (for under 25's), workshops and groups, family support including a national helpline, mental health advocacy, employment services, online drug & alcohol support through Gaydar, and training to schools & statutory organisations.

All our services are either free or low-cost.

pace

promoting lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender health & well being



### Key questions for this strand were:

- How do we accept ourselves (and who we become) perhaps in relation to our “new” sex or gender or “new” bodies?
- How do we integrate our pasts and our futures within our lives?
- How do we manage our gender queer identities and feelings of being between or beyond gender binaries, in a dominant gender binaried world?
- What are the emotional consequences of administering hormones or having surgery?

When we transition we go through a lot of emotional ups and downs.

There are a lot of negative experiences as well as the positives.

Often, we focus on the positive aspects to try and project a really positive image of our transition, when often there is a lot more that we do not share.

This strand offered an opportunity for the trans community to talk a little more honestly about transitioning.

*“Let’s bring the positives in as well but, let’s talk about the real experience.”*

*(Jay, facilitator)*

### The group was split into four subgroups:

- Transitioning, including the sense of loss and what we gain
- Hormones, the psychological and physical affects.
- Surgery and the emotional effects of surgery to create a body that fits in with your sense of self
- The psychological effects of being trans, whether you’re transexual, transgendered, gender queer or whatever

Each group was asked specific questions. After some discussion they fed back to the larger group.

### Question:

What are the negative and positive effects of being trans on a person's mental health?

### Answer:

*"Positives: transitioning offers a sense of wellbeing, a way of explaining something you've always felt and a feeling of community and belonging you may not have felt before. Also it gives us the power of being enabled, discovering identity, self awareness, feeling liberated, being honest with yourself*

*Negatives: having to deal with questioning from those around you and even those you don't know. Also, feeling it personally as a long journey; feeling self-conscious and confusion in how to deal with things.*

*There is also discrimination, loss of family and friends, job insecurity, stress, victimisation, increasing misunderstanding and possible ostracism from the lesbian and gay community."* (Delegate)

### Question:

How does the decision of whether or not to talk openly about a person's trans status affect them?

### Answer:

*"We spoke about the catch 22 situation of whether to talk or not. If you don't tell people you may feel you're moving too slowly where as if you do, you may fear you're moving too fast and you may get negative reactions.*

*There's also the fear of losing people close to you because you can never guess what someone's reaction will be. It's a gamble."* (Delegate)

*"There's also the positive aspect that if you get a good reaction then you'll feel belief. Hiding it means you may constantly wonder about future reactions rather than facing it.*

*"The worry may be worse than choosing to speak up but you won't know until you choose to."*

*This can make you go into yourself and get mental health problems and perhaps abuse alcohol, cigarettes and drugs."* ( Delegate)

### The effects of surgery

It was found that there was a need for more information about the realistic results of surgery, whether that is from a trans man or trans woman experience.

Also trans people will benefit from knowing in advance what kind of postoperative care they will receive. It may be that a trans person will simply desire the company of another trans person, who has had a similar experience.

*"I found that when I came out of hospital... they just said "have a nice day". I felt cut off and detached."* (Delegate)

*"You have the gender nurses phone number but only want to phone them in an absolute emergency when there's something physically wrong with you."* (Delegate)

In the group discussion some people thought surgery was important and some people did not. It was made clear that there is no right or wrong answer.

However, there was some concern that some people might end up on the treadmill of surgery and feel like they have to go 'all the way'.

Also it was acknowledged that some people can make themselves vulnerable through things like sex work in order to get the money for surgery.

### The effects of hormones

This group were asked to look at the negative and positive effects of hormones.

It was acknowledged that hormone therapy can be exciting, but people can feel impatient about the desired effects taking time to appear.

*"You feel like you're moving forward and getting somewhere with transition. [But] It's a slow process, it takes years."*  
(Delegate)

There is real recognition or affirmation in the physical changes brought on by hormone administering.

*"Once you've started hormones, you're more likely to pass. There's also excitement. You feel like you're making progress."* (Delegate)

*"You feel better about yourself and how you look. Trans men for instance become a lot more masculine looking which gives you a confidence boost and trans women get more feminine looking"*  
(Delegate)

The shift in hormones can have emotional effects and it can feel like you are going through a second puberty, together with the emotional highs and lows that that offers.

*"On the negative side one thing people on testosterone and oestrogen have reported were mood swings, especially when you first start or if you stop for a while and go back on."* (Delegate)

*"There's the impact of hormones too in relation to sex and sexuality leading on to relationships and how that might affect more intimate, sexual relationships".*(Delegate)

However, over time, it was noted that administering hormones soon becomes rather mundane and something of an inconvenience.

*"You have to have an injection, or remember to take the pills. Sometimes you've got other things on your mind and just forget."* (Delegate)

There is also a fear of being reliant on medication and the medical system. What's more there are real concerns around long term side effects.

*"There is a fear of the unknown. There's not that much information about what hormones are going to do to you besides the obvious. So really you don't know where your mind is going to be at."*  
(Delegate)



### The effects of transitioning

As trans people transition, it was discussed that there are things lost as well as gained. For instance, if you are becoming female then you may feel a loss for the male side of your life.

*"Even though you're excited because you're becoming who you want to become, you may feel like that person is never going to exist again... and maybe the hormones will affect who you become to an extent."* (Delegate)

*"You may also lose family and friends and grieve that. A lot of people only realise they're going to miss that part of themselves when they start transitioning."* (Delegate)

There were some questions raised about whether someone thinks they even finish transitioning at all. Also there was some discussion about the various pressures to conform to gender norms now that you are living in your preferred gender role.

*"Do you reach a point where you've had surgery and then decide that you are now female/male? Do you ever completely transition?"* (Delegate)

*"The journey never ends."* (Delegate)

*"Even though you feel you've always wanted to be the other gender you may feel you have to watch your mannerisms, which people may agree or disagree with."* (Delegate)

There was also some concern around looking back into your past, in your previous gender.

*"Some people... don't want to look back too much on their childhood because they know they were a different gender physically."* (Delegate)

The groups discussed the complications in life when integrating how one is, what one wants to become and what a person 'actually' becomes.

Everyone's life experience is vast and we might sometimes veer off in a different direction.

Transitioning is a continual process of evolving, discovering what you want, where you are and how to get where you want to get to. It may not stay the same and it's different for everyone. There is no one answer.

*"In order for people to integrate who they are and who they want to be and who they become, you need to have some sort of knowledge of who you want to be. But not everyone knows or understands who they want to be."* (Delegate)

It was noted how the differences between social and physical transition can interrelate and differ depending on the steps you can take.

The group turned its attention to gender queer, which introduces a lot more issues to consider - in particularly the fear of a society which focuses on a gender binary, even in the LGBT community.

Another group considered how people might feel depressed, perhaps due to them feeling quite isolated and alone, maybe even having a fear of not being able to go out.

There may be a sense of people also feeling burdened as they undergo change that happens right across your whole life.

*"Somebody mentioned whether the dysphoria ever actually goes away – perhaps coming to the next step is that maybe it doesn't go away and is something you need to keep living with for the rest of your life and manage in some way."* (Delegate)

There are also practical things like financial issues.

These become quite significant, for example in terms of not being able to have a job or losing a job and maybe having to pay for aspects of surgery or hormones which are extremely expensive if you do not go on the NHS.

This might result in people going into debt which can add to depression and anxiety.

There are also restrictions on your career and working life and the effects that might have on a person in terms of how they feel about themselves and their focus in life.

The positive aspects discussed by this group were acknowledging new beginnings.

*"There are potential new opportunities to be had. Opening up new things, doing new things... can be a positive experience. Some people felt that their support network meant they met new people and developed friendships, perhaps richer ones that they had before*

*because of feeling like yourself. There's a sense of honesty and trust that becomes less stressful."* (Delegate)

*"A very poignant point was made about seeing a future that perhaps wasn't there before – so there's a sense of hope."* (Delegate)

Another group considered how people might feel depressed, perhaps due to them feeling quite isolated and alone, maybe even having a fear of not being able to go out.

### Solutions

After discussing the various issues some solutions were put forward after small group discussion.

### Question

What do trans people need in terms of support from each other?

### Answer

- Recognised support groups that offer non-biased information
- Make accurate knowledge available and deal with misleading information.
- Recognise diversity
- Look for a multi agency approach to support trans people with mental health issues or other issues, for example alcoholism or drug addiction
- Encourage trans people to share their life experiences
- Present positive images that represent the trans community

- More support for young trans people or people starting on their journey
- Cultural awareness and sensitivity because people experience multiple oppression
- Faith based support
- Friends
- One to one counselling outside of a medical framework
- Education in schools, at a younger age
- To write our own stories

### Question

What do trans people need in terms of support from outside agencies, eg. NHS?

### Answer

- More detailed information on hormones and surgery made available
- More information for everyone regarding trans identities
- Better engagement and communication between the trans community and the NHS and other agencies.
- Employers need better information about best practice as far as trans employees are concerned
- Training for HR staff
- National guidelines for PCTs so that everyone is treated equally

- Enabling the voluntary sector to access information, provide support for trans people and to educate the voluntary sector in appropriate language and behaviour.

### Question

How do trans people get the support that they need?

### Answer

- Through two way dialogues, such as this conference here.
- Through creating a vocabulary so that we can share and understand each other.

### Question

How do trans people address their own mental health issues?

### Answer

- Through trans social networks
- Through LGBT groups
- Through utilising resources from our employers, HR advisers, unions
- Through our families and friends
- Through professional mental health providers
- Through our own GPs, psychiatrists, psychologists, Gender Identity Clinics

- By taking hormones
- By dressing and socializing
- By learning new skills
- By gaining confidence
- By finding safe spaces for socializing.
- By developing interests in other hobbies or sports

Many thanks to Cat from Pace and all delegates who contributed to such a rich discussion.

*"I envisaged something that looks a little like a London underground map - all the exits and different strands. Trans seems to be a motorway with hundreds of entries, exits, roundabouts, dead ends. For trans men there's a case employed where some want to keep the right to have children, an example being in the news recently." (Delegate)*



### Evaluation

27 of the 39 delegates attending this strand completed our evaluation forms. Here is a summary of what they said:

In what way do you think attending this strand might be useful to you now/in the future?
Acknowledging and understanding myself, perspective, gender analysis and identity, commitment to bigger pictures – beyond binaries and identity politics
It filled me in on various aspects of the transitioning process that was different to my own experience. Strengthening my ability to further understand other people and their personal journeys/experience.
Telling/spreading the word regarding the differences & difficulties in the trans world.
Gave me opportunity to express/compare experiences. Also allowed me to express ways to improve services.
It will be generally useful for empathising with people, understanding other people's experiences or feelings.
Gave me something to think about – i.e. How to deal with lack of knowledge by professionals supporting trans people.
To allow me to help better provide for the trans community in LGBTQ organisation I have just taken over chairing.
Just brings a whole lot of views together.
Greater understanding of my role within my organisation
Given me some practical ideas to help improve my well-being.
Makes me realise how much work there is still to do.
Hearing the experiences/ knowledge of others gives me confidence to continue on my journey.
Greater ability to empathise with trans students.
Working with trans clients (I'm a physiotherapist)
Opened my eyes to others solutions to Gender Identity Disorder



Is there anything that you would recommend the strand team do differently next time?

Feedback per group could be shorter (say 5 main points – positions headlines) which are then collected at the front for all to see.

Ask people to state preferred pronouns – stop people being addressed incorrectly.

Encouraging diversity of speakers presenting back to whole group. Maybe the session could have been explained a little better.

Needs to emphasize people's right to have input. Session tended to be dominated by one or two individuals.

Maybe mix up the groups more often to speak with different people.

Shortage of time was an issue so perhaps that needs to be rethought.

Have whole day instead of half.

More tightly facilitate the small groups. Different activities perhaps pairs – other creative ways of sharing info/discussion etc.

Perhaps structure the day so more time is spent on the workshops.

Perhaps structure the day so more time is spent on the workshops. Longer sessions More in other issues eg – “Politics of trans”, race, class, sexism. – Let's deal with these!

It was very well done. Sometimes difficult to hear.

Project work with trans community show cased.

No – it was great, thank you!

Is there anything in particular you would like to see going forward from the strand?

We discussed support for trans people. I would like to see more action taken to educate schools and students within schools regarding trans issues and our awareness. More education in the medical sector is relevant too.

A conference/meeting of as many different help groups in order to make umbrella group

More conferences! More communication! One point I think is really important – raising awareness that people can have “gender counselling” unrelated to anything medical that won’t have a negative effect if they choose to transition. This needs to be done by the community generally, not just the counsellors as this concern may put people off even approaching counselling.

There were so many constructive things, so it’s all ... good!

Increased networking on health issues

Maybe a conference in Scotland

Exchange of delegate contact info for those willing/ able to share.

There was so much to take in – it will be excellent to read the report.

Importance of spiritual dimension in trans journey (SIBYLS – organisation for Transgendered Christians and SOFFAS.)

Joint working.

More opportunities to talk and exchange thoughts and ideas.

General comments:

Thanks for organising; I can see many people found it useful. Good work.  
I think the facilitator/ capacity building component is excellent.

I would like to see more action in all forms of education (schools, business, medicine etc.) but I am very aware of the time it takes. Nice conference, thank you!

It has been a privilege to be here. Thank you.

Well organised conference. Great location. Too short though. Good to see both transmen and transwomen as well as non-trans people.

Will definitely attend next year!

Good venue

Good + useful overall

Thank you. The conference was well planed and executed.

Thoroughly enjoyed the conference. Wish it was once every three months. Very pleased that I attended.

Quieter rooms would have been nice – sometimes hard to hear speakers.

Thank you for a very helpful and enjoyable day, I will be back next year!

Great day

An excellently facilitated event that was extremely informative and really enjoyable. Thank you!!

**At the end of the afternoon we heard back from our ‘Strand Hoppers’, Michelle and Rory, as well as receiving some final thoughts from Catherine McNamara, co-founder of Gendered Intelligence**



Michelle offered a summary of her's and Rory's thoughts that came out throughout the strands.

"What came across clearly was that people don't want to be stuck in a binary place, whether that's regarding gender, or other.

The attitudes and responses with clinics came up as a big thing.

How can we get clinicians and clinics to understand a bit more about bodies, our diverse bodies - not just those of us who transition, but just more about bodies themselves.

There was also a big emphasis on visibility and invisibility with regards to bodies.

One important thing that also came up was the fact that one thing that made some people feel good about their bodies, might make someone else feel bad.

With regard to Asylum there is a whole new layer of discrimination and transphobia.

You think you've seen it all and then you get people who are encountering something else.

In Mental Health and Emotional Well Being, what struck me was that there were so many different views about what people wanted and how that could be catered for.

People do not want a standard pathway.

People have different needs. There is also a concern around how transitioning can add another layer of depression in someone who is already depressed.

In families and young people, people seemed to be searching for information and wondering what was already out there. It's interesting how people don't want to be pigeon holed or want more time to decide.

Even if they do decide to transition how can they be given space to explore that rather than feeling on day one when you see a psychiatrist, having to know exactly where you are.

With regard to Asylum there is a whole new layer of discrimination and transphobia.

Finding a voice was a concern that ran throughout the strands. How can trans people feel that they have a voice? It's a challenge for the whole community, to find ways to communicate more effectively and to do more joined up work.

People said there should be more information with booklets. Yet, there is so much information out there that people just haven't heard about. GIRES, for example, have just written a range of comprehensive guides for the NHS. There's a communication issue that's not really being addressed.

I think all the groups such as Gendered Intelligence, GIRES and the Gender Trust should communicate more. I think that's the biggest thing that's come out of today."

Catherine offered some reflections and thanked people for coming.

"Last year, I co convened the conference with Jay but this year I've been less involved, in fact just turning up today to help out.

What's brilliant is that this event is as well attended as last year.

The 2007 conference was the first one, in terms of Gendered Intelligence working with quite a large group from the community. Last year went really well.

This year it's really encouraging to know that 150 people want to meet again. There are also some new people which is great and some people who were here last year.

You never know when you're organising an event that has 150 attendees that many people want to come again the second year round. And now we know that yes, they do!

I heard a lot of people saying they'd like to do more of this as well, and that sort of feedback is really useful. There are a few people who turned up having not registered, and we even managed to fit them in!



Thank you to Dee and Amanda. They are the driving force within the London Metropolitan Police for those working with and for the trans community.

I think without people like them, events like this, in a place like this would not be able to take place. So, whilst some of us may have been surprised at the idea of coming to a Metropolitan Police building today I think it's been a really positive experience.

Thank you all for attending this year's conference. We'll see you again next year."



## Evaluation

Out of 137 delegates we received a total of 92 forms [Mental Health (27); Body Positivity (20); Youth & Family (22); Asylum (8) & Unknown Strand (15)]

When asked to circle up to five words that describe delegates' overall opinion of the open day, the most popular were 'involving', 'interesting', 'hands-on', 'enlightening', 'valuable', and 'made me think'.

How do you rate the overall conference?			
Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Poor
43 (47%)	42 (46%)	7 (7%)	

Did the event meet your expectations?		
Yes	No	Not Sure
64 (70 %)	7 (8%)	11 (12%)

If no, why was that?
How do we get from a full day the first year to half a day the second year? Felt like I was not heard and the workshop was so short, no time for discussion.
I'd have liked more communication with everyone, so not the whole time spent in the strands.
Tighter timing
It was mainly an issue of time because given more time we could have got more realistic plans.
I might have preferred less workshop and more information, focused symposia, etc.
I would have liked to hear some speakers on specific areas – just for some information or updates.
Good + useful overall
Some of the structure didn't facilitate the kind of conversations I wanted/expected.

What did you most enjoy or find most useful across the whole day and why?
Barristers input on asylum issues
Openness & Honesty of delegates.
Hearing individual views, experience.
Positive communication
Meeting so many people with like interests
The interest and enthusiasm
Meeting others and discussing activism
Enjoyed meeting so much...
Sharing information and networking. (More knowledge, more power)
Challenging voices and questions
Networking – renewing contacts and sharing knowledge.
I learnt a great deal about the experiences of asylum seekers. Thank you.
Hearing from people who have more in depth knowledge of asylum process, giving me the tools to improve the training/ presentation that I give.
Good variety of topics
Talking with others about the wide range of issues for trans people sexual health
Longer period for workshops, rather than the usual half hour
The open structure
The workshop – hearing both undivided – to collective experiences, deepening an understanding of the issues of transgender
The workshops around sexual health

The chance to meet and talk candidly with other trans people and also with workers in the appropriate fields e.g. sexual health
Inclusiveness
A safe place for discussion
Facilitated active participation
Listening & learning
Families workshop
Talking to people from different places – professionals, families, partners / Finding out what other people are wrestling with.
Speaking with young trans people
Opportunity for conversation in the youth/family strand
Discussions with people within trans community including non-trans people to come up with new ideas
Meeting young trans people and hearing their concerns and suggestions
Meeting other trans people & being able to ask questions
The opportunity to talk to young trans people about what they want and need
Gaining information and different perspectives
Having the opportunity to hear from such a wide range of people
Spending the day with trans/gender-queer/gender-non-conforming people.
It made me think about aspects of transgenderism I had never really thought about before.
1. Chance to give professional/representatives & the voluntary sector some useful 'info' to take away. 2. The view over London!
Listening to the real life experiences and becoming more aware of the community.
I am from a student group and it was good to learn from the experience of older trans people.
Group work – being able to ask questions

What did you find least enjoyable or useful across the whole day and why?

I would have liked some professional input on mental health issues.

Couldn't hear very well, and missed a lot. Probably too much crammed into a short space of time.

I wanted to attend all strands (at least covering two subjects) – Good final report can cover this problem, I guess.

Not enough time!

Not enough time to fully explore stories/ ideas.

Lots of people in a small space – late start, long registration

Too short

The day felt very rushed.

Lack of time

Time's not enough for some issues areas and issues explored

Little rushed, more time perhaps.

Not moving between strands is frustrating as you cant get informed everywhere or talk about all the things you want to see.

The lack of time available for discussions.

Not knowing which pronouns to use for people in my workshop

Volume of speakers (only fault)

A lot to cover in one day... would have liked to explore different strands.

All very enjoyable.

None of it – it was great! Can we make it longer next year?



### Central School of Speech and Drama School of Professional and Community Development

The School of Professional and Community Development (SPCD) is an outward-facing department of The Central School of Speech and Drama, University of London, committed to high quality enhancement and application of knowledge about theatre and performance techniques within local, national and international communities.

[www.cssd.ac.uk](http://www.cssd.ac.uk)

Tel: +44 (0) 20 7722 8183

Email: [enquiries@cssd.ac.uk](mailto:enquiries@cssd.ac.uk)

### Gendered Intelligence

Gendered Intelligence is a company that delivers:

- Arts programmes and creative workshops to trans youth from across the UK.
- Facilitated workshops to all young people within schools, colleges and other settings.
- Professional development and trans awareness training across a range of professions.

[www.genderedintelligence.co.uk](http://www.genderedintelligence.co.uk)

[jay.stewart@genderedintelligence.co.uk](mailto:jay.stewart@genderedintelligence.co.uk)

### Gendered Trust

There are a number of services that the Gender Trust can supply:

- Information about trained counsellors, psychologists and psychotherapists, and if required we can advise on initiating the proper referral procedure to a choice of psychiatrists.
- Help for those who are Intersex, and try to provide care for partners and families of all these individuals
- Guidance and information for those who may encounter gender issues in the course of their work, including employers, social workers, welfare workers, the media and the medical profession
- Training for employers and other organisations on the legal, medical and social aspects of the lives of transsexual and transgender people

PO Box 3192,

Brighton BN1 3WR,

Tel: +44 (0)1273 234024

(Mon-Fri 9am- 5pm)

Email: [info@gendertrust.org.uk](mailto:info@gendertrust.org.uk)

### Metropolitan Police Service, LGBT Strand Diversity & Citizen Focus Directorate

11th Floor Empress State Building Lillie  
Road London SW6 1TR

Tel: 020 7161 2751

Email: [amanda.cooper@met.police.uk](mailto:amanda.cooper@met.police.uk)

### No Outsiders

The No Outsiders project is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council and is a collaboration between the University of Sunderland, the University of Exeter and the Institute of Education, University of London.

It involves primary school teachers in North East England, North West England, London and the Midlands to come together in order to develop ideas and resources to address lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender equality in their own primary schools and their communities

[www.nooutsiders.sunderland.ac.uk](http://www.nooutsiders.sunderland.ac.uk)

### PACE

PACE is London's leading charity promoting the mental health and emotional wellbeing of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community

34, Hartham Road  
London N7 9JL

Tel: 020 7700 1323

Email: [info@pace.dircon.co.uk](mailto:info@pace.dircon.co.uk)

### SW5, Terence Higgins Trust

SW5 aims to provide advice and support to male and transgender people working in the sex industry. We support those who wish to continue selling sex (seeing it as choice) and those who want to exit the profession.

[www.sw5.info](http://www.sw5.info)

### UK Lesbian and Gay Immigration Group

The UK Lesbian & Gay Immigration Group, formerly the Stonewall Immigration Group, is a charity providing information and advice on immigration rights for same sex couples and support for lesbian & gay asylum seekers.

PO Box 51524,  
London SE1 7ZW  
[www.uklgig.org.uk](http://www.uklgig.org.uk)

at.association for the study and  
defence of the right to gender identity

at.associação para o estudo e defesa do  
direito à identidade de género

### Apartado 30293

EC Bom Sucesso

1401-991 Lisboa – Portugal

[atrans.pt@gmail.com](mailto:atrans.pt@gmail.com)

<http://a-trans.planetaclix.pt>

<http://atranspt.blogspot.com>

### FTM London

FTM London is a social support and  
information group for all female to male  
transgender and transsexual (trans)  
people and those who think they might  
be. Meetings are held at:

The Trinity Reform Church, Buck St,  
Camden, London. NW1 (on the corner of  
Buck St & Kentish Town rd) every 1st  
Saturday of the month starting at 6pm.  
Significant others, friends, families and  
allies (Soffas) are welcome from 8.15pm.

### FTM London

BCM FTM London

London WC1N 3XX

[info@ftmlondon.org.uk](mailto:info@ftmlondon.org.uk)

[www.ftmlondon.org.uk](http://www.ftmlondon.org.uk)

### Galop

Galop is London's Lesbian, Gay,  
Bisexual and Transgender  
(LGBT) community safety charity.

We are a driving force in changing the way  
the police work with our communities and  
give advice and support to those affected  
by homophobic and transphobic violence or  
hate crime.

Our main services are:

- Helpline and advocacy
- Consultation and development of policy
- Training
- Research

### Galop

PO Box 32810, London, N1 3ZD

Tel: 020 7704 2040 (shout line)

020 7704 6767 (admin)

[www.galop.org.uk](http://www.galop.org.uk)

### GIRES

The focus of the Gender Identity  
Research and Education  
Society (GIRES) is on people who  
experience atypical gender  
identity development, especially trans  
people, whether or not they are also  
affected by lesbian, gay, bisexual or  
intersex issues.

Melverly, The Warren, Ashted,

Surrey KT21 2SP

Tel: 01372 801554

[www.gires.org.uk](http://www.gires.org.uk)

### Mermaids

Mermaids is a support group for gender variant children and teenagers.

Mermaids, whose members consist of young trans people and their families, also offers support to parents, families, carers and others.

Helpline: 07020 935066 (12 noon - 9pm

UK time, when staffed)

[www.mermaids.freeuk.com](http://www.mermaids.freeuk.com)

### Press for Change

Press for Change is a political lobbying and educational organisation, which campaigns to achieve equal civil rights and liberties for all trans people in the United Kingdom, through legislation and social change.

[www.pfc.org.uk](http://www.pfc.org.uk)

### Transfabulous

Transfabulous is a London based arts organisation championing transgender arts, raising a broader trans awareness and promoting and encouraging transgender artists and work exploring transgender culture.

[www.transfabulous.co.uk](http://www.transfabulous.co.uk)

In order to facilitate learning and understanding, a list of terms have been listed to ensure readers have a good grasp about the communities and issues raised in this report.

### Sex

Sex is assigned at birth as being male or female or Intersex. Sex is the classification of an organism into male or female and refers to the physical anatomy, the congenital state of the male and female, mainly genitalia, ovaries and testes denoting the reproductive function of the individual.

### Gender

The concepts, roles or attributes that are associated with sex. Gender refers to the social shaping of an individual as being a girl or a boy, man or woman and is represented through behaviour. For example, the behaviour of being aggressive or passive.

### Gender Identity

Gender identity describes the gender with which a person identifies (i.e. whether one perceives oneself to be a man, a woman or describes oneself in some less conventional way), but can also be used to refer to the gender that other people attribute to the individual on the basis of what they know from gender role indications (social behaviour, clothing, hair style, etc.) Gender identity may be affected by a variety of social structures, including the person's ethnic group, employment status, religion or irreligion and family.

### Trans

Trans is an umbrella term used to include all people whose sex which they were assigned at birth does not sit comfortably with their sense of self. It is derived from the terms 'transsexual' and 'transgender'. The term transgender is often used with the same meaning, but it is not always preferred by those who identify as trans. Some trans people may refer to themselves as FTM (female to male) or MTF (male to female) or gender queer.

### Gender Normative

Expressing one's gender through cultural codes and signifiers that fits within the binaries of man and woman, boy and girl. For example, for a girl to wear nail varnish is gender normative or a boy who likes playing football is gender normative.



### Gender Variant

Expressing one's gender through cultural codes and signifiers that does not fit within the binaries of man and woman, boy and girl. For example, for a boy to wear nail varnish is gender variant behaviour or a girl who likes to play football is gender variant behaviour. Gender variant can be someone who does not fit into neat categories of boy or girl. This category of trans also allows for a person to identify as outside of, or other to, the identities of male or female. Gender variant can also be known as Gender Queer.

### Sexual Orientation

Sexual orientation refers to the direction of an individual's sexuality, usually classifiable according to the sex or gender of the persons that the individual finds sexually attractive. Often LGBT identities and communities are brought together, particularly when it comes to service delivery, as there are some similar experiences faced from a predominantly heterosexual society.

### LGBT

Lesbian: A lesbian is a person who defines as woman and is romantically and/or sexually attracted to other women.

Gay: Gay is a generic term for homosexuality (a word which is no longer used due to its diagnostic connotations) and usually refers to men. A gay man is someone who is romantically and/or sexually attracted to other men.

Bisexual: Bisexuality is a sexual orientation which refers to the romantic and/or sexual attraction of individuals to other individuals of both their own and the 'opposite' sex. Bisexuals are not necessarily equally attracted to men and women, and may shift between states of finding men and women exclusively attractive over the course of time.

Trans: (see above)

### Coming Out

Coming out refers to a time in your life when you first tell other people about your trans identity. Being 'outed' refers to people disclosing to another of your trans status.

### Stealth

Stealth means to pass as non-trans without revealing your trans status.

### Transphobia

Transphobia is the fear or dislike of someone who identifies as transgendered or transsexual.

### Hetrosexism

Privileging heterosexual lifestyle implicitly or explicitly whilst simultaneously excluding, undermining and/or deleting non-heterosexual and non-normative gendered identities.

### Volunteer

A person who performs or offers to perform a service voluntarily and without payment.



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This report was collated by Jay Stewart, from Gendered Intelligence.

