

{{ name |possessive }}

healthcare guide

{% if pronouns %}Pronouns: {{ pronouns }}{% endif %}

# My Gender Journey

## Why I’ve made this document

I have made this guide as my gender identity is different from what I was assigned at birth and I'm seeking gender affirming care to align with this. I hope that this document provides sufficient insight into my healthcare needs and the relevant guidance, allowing for the best care to be provided.

## {% if formal\_diagnosis %}Formal Diagnosis

I have received a formal diagnosis from a gender specialist, this affirms that I meet the criteria for gender dysphoria.

{% endif %}{% if self\_med %}Medication Status

I am currently self-medicating with hormones, whilst this carries several risks, I've determined that these risks are outweighed by the risks to my mental health and physical wellbeing as a result of not being able to affirm my gender through the use of HRT.{% elif self\_med\_likely %}Medication Status

I am strongly considering self-medicating with hormones, whilst this carries several risks, I've determined that these risks are outweighed by the risks to my mental health and physical wellbeing as a result of not being able to affirm my gender through the use of HRT.{% endif %}{% if hrt\_recommendation %}

Letter of recommendation for HRT

I have recieved a recommendation for HRT by a gender specialist, this outlines their expert advice on the best course of treatment for my gender dysphoria. I'm seeking a prescription based on this letter.{% endif %}{% if shared\_care and “Non-UK” not in chosen\_private\_care and chosen\_private\_care != “I haven't chosen a provider yet” and chosen\_private\_care != “GenderGP” %}

Working with{% if “Other” not in chosen\_private\_care %} {{ chosen\_private\_care }},{% endif %} my private gender specialist

I am working with a private service in my gender related care. Their specialists are UK based and GMC registered. {% endif %}

## {% if private\_prescription or foreign\_prescription %} Previous prescription for HRT

I already have a prescription for HRT, and I'm seeking to continue that under your care. {%endif%}

# My healthcare needs

## {% if bridging\_desired %}A bridging prescription

## I am seeking a bridging prescription as a harm reduction strategy, this is recommended by the Royal College of Psychiatrists who state “…the GP or other medical practitioner involved in the patient’s care may prescribe ‘bridging’ endocrine treatments as part of a holding and harm reduction strategy” (Good practice guidelines for the assessment and treatment of adults with gender dysphoria, 2013)

## The GMC also provide guidance who state “Our advice should reassure doctors who wish to prescribe for their trans patients that it wouldn’t be against GMC guidance to do so” (Trans healthcare - Mental health and bridging prescriptions, 2022)

## The NHS service specification also states "Endocrine and other pharmacological interventions may be recommended by a registered medical practitioner in the specialist multi-disciplinary team where they are essential for the purpose of harm reduction, and where they are in the individual’s best interest for reducing gender dysphoria" (Service specification: Gender Identity Services for Adults (Non-Surgical Interventions), 2019){% endif %}{% if gic\_referral %}Referral to a Gender Identity Clinic

I'm seeking a referral to an NHS Gender Identity Clinic so I can gain access to the full range of gender related care supported by the NHS. {% if chosen\_gic != “0” and chosen\_gic != “1” %} I want to be referred to the following GIC: {{ chosen\_gic |format\_gic }} {% endif %}

{% endif %}{% if shared\_care %}Working with a private healthcare provider

I wish to enter a shared care agreement with yourself and a private gender specialist, in which you would work together to provide prescriptions, blood testing, and the administration of any injections I might need.

The gender specialist I have chosen to work with will provide guidance in terms of what medication is needed, the dosage and strength, as well as any blood tests required, and any revisions that may come resulting from those tests. I am requesting that you carry out these tests and prescribe under their guidance, utilizing their expertise.

The NHS released a [Specialised Services Circular, SSC 1826](https://www.dpt.nhs.uk/download/VjSSV5TQVv) specifically for working with online providers. This guidance (Specialised Services Circular 1826, 2018) states:

“A GP may decline to accept responsibility for prescribing, monitoring and testing if the GP is not assured that the provider offers a safe service, or is not assured that the request has been made by an appropriate gender specialist **as long as the GP is also satisfied that declining responsibility would not pose a significant clinical risk to the individual**.”

Additionally, the GMC (Trans healthcare - Prescribing, 2022) state the following on prescribing in trans healthcare:

“It would not, however, be acceptable to simply refuse to treat the patient. Discuss your concerns with your patient, carefully assess their needs, seek to understand their concerns and preferences; consult more experienced colleagues and provide care in line with the guidance in Good medical practice.”

With some GIC waiting times of over 5 years (Waiting times, 2022) the NHS should provide these alternative provisions as outlined.{%if formal\_diagnosis and hrt\_recommendation %}

I do not need to be seen by a GIC before you’re able to prescribe as I hold both a formal diagnosis and a letter of recommendation for HRT, these are the same things that I would receive from the GIC, I have chosen to obtain these privately, in Services Circular 1826 (Specialised Services Circular 1826, 2018) it is stated: “The NHS should not withdraw NHS care because a patient chooses to buy private care, nor should patients who access private care be placed at an advantage or disadvantage in relation to the NHS care they receive”{% endif %}{% endif %}

{% if immigration\_care %} Continuing HRT since immigrating to the UK

I am seeking to access HRT in the UK as I previously did before immigrating, I have already been assessed by a specialist in my previous country, and as such I do not need to be seen by a GIC to renew my HRT prescription.{% if immigration\_letter %}

I have a letter from my previous HRT provider, this confirms that I have been undergoing hormone replacement therapy, and recommends that I continue to receive this medication as part of my care.{% endif %}{% endif %}

## {% if blood\_testing %}Monitoring my health

I require blood tests at least every 3 months to ensure my hormones are within the expected levels and to ensure that no other health complications are arising as a result of my medication.

The blood tests I need should include:

* Diabetes Check (HbA1C/Serum Glucose)
* Full Blood Count
* Lipid profile
* Liver Function Tests
* Serum Oestrogen
* Serum Testosterone
* Urea and Electrolytes + Potassium{% endif %}

# Summary of requirements

This is a list of actionable requests as per the information I have provided throughout this document:{% if shared\_care %}

{% if chosen\_private\_care != “I haven't chosen a provider yet”%}

* Form a shared care agreement {% if “Other” not in chosen\_private\_care %}with {{ chosen\_private\_care }}{% endif %}

{%endif%}

* Provide a prescription

{% if not blood\_testing %}

* Provide blood testing as necessary

{% endif %}

* Administer Injections if required

{% endif %}{% if bridging\_desired %}

* Provide a bridging prescription

{% endif %}{% if chosen\_gic != “0” and chosen\_gic != “1” %}

* Refer me to the following Gender Identity Clinic: {{ chosen\_gic |format\_gic }}{% elif gic\_referral %}
* Refer me to a Gender Identity Clinic{% endif %}{% if immigration\_care%}
* Renew my prescription for HRT{% endif %}

{% if blood\_testing%}

* Provide blood testing as necessary

{% endif %}

# Common concerns addressed

## Prescribing medicines outside of approved indications

The NHS provides clarity on prescribing hormones that aren’t licensed in the treatment of gender dysphoria in SSC 1620 (Specialised Services Circular 1620, 2016) “Apart from Sustanon®, there are no licensed products with an approved indication for the treatment of gender dysphoria. There is, however, extensive clinical experience of the use of these products in the treatment of gender dysphoria over decades, which provides evidence of tolerability and safety comparable with their use for approved indications. The prescription of licensed products outside their approved indications, often but not always at the recommendation of a specialist provider, is not uncommon in general practice”

## Having the necessary expertise to prescribe

The provision of care for transgender people doesn’t require any specific expertise, this was echoed in a letter by Susan Goldsmith, who at the time was chief executive of the GMC. She stated: “we don’t believe that providing care for patients with gender dysphoria is a highly specialist treatment area requiring specific expertise” (Susan Goldsmith, 2016)

If you would like to expand your expertise, you could talk to a gender specialist within your Clinical Commissioning Group.

Another useful resource is the following book by Dr Vincent, BMA Medical Book Awards Finalist - Transgender Health: A Practitioner's Guide to Binary and Non-Binary Trans Patient Care. (Vincent, 2018) This book is highly recommended by gender specialists across the UK.

## Referring a neurodivergent patient for gender services

If a patient is either diagnosed or suspected to be neurodiverse, the GMC state this is not a valid reason to deny referrals to gender services and there is no requirement for a patient to be seen by a mental health professional before receiving a referral to any gender related health services (Trans healthcare, 2023)

# References

www.gmc-uk.org. 2023. Trans healthcare. [online] Available at: < https://www.gmc-uk.org/ethical-guidance/ethical-hub/trans-healthcare> [Accessed 29 January 2023].

www.gmc-uk.org. 2022. Trans healthcare Prescribing. [online] Available at: < https://www.gmc-uk.org/ethical-guidance/ethical-hub/trans-healthcare#Prescribing> [Accessed 3 June 2022].

Susan Goldsmith, 2016. Letter. [online] Available at: < https://www.transinformed.co.uk/static/files/gmc-ce-letter.pdf>.

Dpt.nhs.uk. 2016. Specialised Services Circular 1620. [online] Available at: < https://www.transinformed.co.uk/static/files/SSC-1620.pdf> .

Vincent, B., 2018. Transgender health. Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

{% if bridging\_desired %}Royal College of Psychiatrists, 2013. Good practice guidelines for the assessment and treatment of adults with gender dysphoria. p.25. Available at: < https://www.transinformed.co.uk/static/files/rcp-cr181.pdf>.

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NHS England., 2022. NHS England » Referral to treatment. [online] England.nhs.uk. Available at: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/rtt/> [Accessed 6 June 2022].

Gender Identity Clinic – GIC. 2022. Waiting times. [online] Available at: <https://gic.nhs.uk/appointments/waiting-times/> [Accessed 6 June 2022].{% endif %}