

Annex 6 – Gender Identity

This paper provides a brief response to each of the key issues identified during the NHS Citizens Assembly transgender discussion. The issues identified were:

- Equity of access
- Communication and Information
- Issues with access and capacity
- Resources and Capacity
- Workforce and skill

Inequity of access to the gender dysphoria care pathway

From the outset of NHS England taking on its responsibilities in April 2013, we have worked hard to develop a greater understanding of the needs and experiences of the transgender population, so that we are in a better position to offer a fairer, more caring and comprehensive approach to support and treatment. Historical inequalities, rooted in the spontaneous and unplanned manner in which service providers have emerged and evolved, have led to variations in service user experience and ability to make treatment choices at all stages of the care pathway, from its beginning with GPs and throughout its course with specialised service providers and others. This variation has, to some extent, been exacerbated by poor communication and, all too frequently, has resulted in poor experience of services.

Communication and information

We have started to address the issues raised by trans and other gender-diverse people, and, in doing so, we have developed a dialogue with these communities to support and inform us in the development of a draft specification and policy that has been submitted into the NHS England prioritisation process. We intend to develop a continuous process to improve our understanding of their needs, as we further improve the commissioning and provision of these services.

We want to continue this productive and influential engagement with trans and other gender-diverse people and, in doing so, improve participation and access to information through successful engagement events and on-line information, and enable people to access accurate and up-to-date information on the full range of services available to them.

We are committed to continuing to facilitate and grow the trans gender network which will host its third national workshop in November. The digital and online aspect of the network will offer additional ways for people to participate and contribute, ensuring trans peoples voice and experiences can influence all health and care policy and development.

Issues with access and capacity

We have established a Taskforce that has already started working to bring together all the issues identified by service users, commissioners and service providers, into a

coherent and comprehensive action plan, to address problems with accessing help with gender incongruence-related healthcare needs and develop the necessary service provider capacity to deliver this in a timely and effective manner. The task force, led by Ann Sutton, Director of Commissioning Operations, includes participants with key responsibilities for service planning and delivery, including those responsible for commissioning GP and primary care services, as well as those who commission specialised services at national and area team level.

Resources and capacity

The Taskforce will identify and evaluate resources currently available, make recommendations both on how existing service might change to increase their effectiveness and what service developments will be needed to match capacity with need. A focus on equitable access and delivery of services will be at the heart of this process.

Workforce and skills

We are working with NHS England commissioners of primary care and GP services to agree the roles and responsibilities of their providers (including GPs) in the delivery of the gender dysphoria care pathway and lifelong healthcare for trans and other gender-diverse people. We have begun a collaboration with medical Royal Colleges and Health Education England on career development and accreditation necessary to underpin workforce planning, so that we will have properly-trained and appropriately-skilled health professionals that understand and respect this community, and who are able to provide for their healthcare needs.