Standards for gender identity healthcare services for adults and young people

Draft scope

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1. Background

Title
Standards for gender identity healthcare services for adults and young people.

Healthcare Improvement Scotland standards and indicators
Healthcare Improvement Scotland is the national health and social care improvement organisation for Scotland and part of NHSScotland. It provides the expertise and resources to co-produce health and social care standards which are developed, informed and shaped by people who commission, deliver and use services. It uses well established and robust methodology to underpin standards development.

Standards are informed by:

- people with lived/living experience
- formally collected person-reported outcomes, and
- evidence relating to effective clinical practice, feasibility and service provision.

The role of standards is to:

- reflect current national policy
- state the expected level of service required to demonstrate the delivery of person-centred, safe and effective care
- address inequalities of access and outcomes
- promote understanding, comparison and improvement of care, and
- support national consistency and/or local improvement.

Policy context
The Scottish Government recognises the need to improve the access to, and delivery of, gender identity services in Scotland. This commitment is set out in the Scottish Government Programme for Government 2022-23 and 2021-22, and the Bute House Agreement.

Current waiting times to access specialist gender identity clinics is lengthy, contributing to further distress for individuals seeking access. Recent surveys including Health needs assessment of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and non-binary people have identified a number of areas of inconsistency in provision, access and communication.

The Scottish Government NHS gender identity services: strategic action framework 2022-2024 outlines the commitments and actions to improve gender identity services in Scotland. This builds on the work of the Scottish Public Health Network, which in 2018, recommended that the NHS “develop national standards for what is required to be established as a Gender Identity Clinic”.

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As part of the framework, a commitment was made to commission Healthcare Improvement Scotland to develop national standards for adult and young people’s gender healthcare identity services. The commission to develop these standards was accepted onto Healthcare Improvement Scotland’s work programme in September 2022.

The standards will emphasise the importance of a multidisciplinary, person-centered and trauma-informed approach to gender identity healthcare services. This will reflect the appropriate co-ordinated treatment, and further support, care and referral pathways for people accessing gender identity services, as well as the experience of care across a person’s lifespan, including continuity of care across services.

The standards will be shaped by the experiences of people who have accessed or are waiting to access gender identity services, and where appropriate, their family, carers and other support networks. The standards project team will work closely with the national gender identity healthcare reference group, Scottish Government, third sector organisations and other key stakeholders.

2. The scope of the standards

2.1 Population that will be covered

All young people and adults accessing gender identity healthcare services in Scotland. Within this scoping report, ‘young person’ can be defined in a number of ways and the intention is to align with established policy and practice and existing relevant referral and care pathways.

2.2 Setting

Services that provide gender identity healthcare and support including, but not limited to, gender identity clinics, primary care, NHS and independent surgical services, NHS services and independent healthcare services in Scotland.

Gender identity healthcare does not start and end at a gender identity clinic. In addition, a person seeking gender identity healthcare may wish to access and be referred for treatment, support and review across their lifespan.

2.3 Areas for standards development

\textit{a. Areas that will be covered:}

The standards will cover the following themes:

- Leadership and governance
- Staff education and training
- Person-centred and trauma-informed care, and continuity of care along pathway
- Initial referral pathway
• The role of primary care
• Services for young people
• Transition between young people and adult services
• Services for adults

The importance of audit, internal quality assurance within services and addressing health inequalities will be woven throughout the standards.

b. Areas that will not be covered:
In line with existing Healthcare Improvement Scotland standards, these standards will not cover the following areas:

• Specific treatment or therapy options and clinical pathways
• The development of HIS quality indicators or key performance indicators
• Implementation, which is for local determination by local services or partnerships

3. Related development sources: key publications

3.1 Key sources:
This work will be informed by evidence, pathways and practice and build on and align with a range of Scottish Government policies and priorities.

• Leven T. Health needs assessment LGBT+ people: Transgender and non-binary supplementary report. 2022.
• Leven T. Health needs assessment of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and non-binary people. 2022.
• Scottish Government. Health and social care standards: my support, my life. 2017
• Cass, H. Independent review of gender identity services for children and young people: Interim report. 2022
• Scottish Government. National health and wellbeing outcomes framework. 2015
• Scottish Government. NHS gender identity services: strategic action framework 2022-2024
3.2 Related Healthcare Improvement Scotland standards or indicators:


4. Timelines

Work on the national gender identity healthcare standards will begin in early 2023, with expected publication of the final standards in winter 2023.

5. Proposed development group membership

The membership of the standards development group will reflect service provision from across NHSScotland and where appropriate, the independent healthcare sector in Scotland. The proposed specialist representation for developing the gender identity services standards is:

- Clinical lead for gender identity service
- Consultant clinical psychologist
- Consultant in paediatric endocrinology
- Consultant in paediatrics
- General practitioner
- Healthcare Improvement Scotland quality assurance and inspection representative
- Medical director
- NHS Education for Scotland representative to link with national reference group
- National Services Scotland representative to link with national reference group
- People with living/lived experience
- Public Health Scotland (PHS) representative to link with national reference group
- Service planning manager for gender identity service
- Scottish Government representative
- Third sector representatives

The Healthcare Improvement Scotland standards and indicators project team will include:
6. What happens next

The process used by Healthcare Improvement Scotland to develop standards is outlined in appendix 1.

The project is in the scoping phase. During this phase, we are inviting stakeholders to comment on the proposed scope of the standards. The consultation runs between 23 January and 13 February and feedback should be submitted using our online survey.

During the scoping phase, the project team will also undertake an evidence and policy review which will underpin the development of the standards. The project team will also begin recruitment of the standards development group chair and representatives.

The next phase of the project is developing the standards which will begin in spring 2023. If you would like to find out more about the process, please contact the project team: his.genderidentitystandards@nhs.scot.
Appendix: Standards development methodology

The standards and indicators team have a well-established and internationally recognised methodology in the development of standards. The phasing of all Healthcare Improvement Scotland standards development is illustrated in the figure below. For further information on our methodology see https://www.healthcareimprovementscotland.org/our_work/standards_and_guidelines/standards_and_indicators.aspx or contact the standards team.
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