

Terms of Service

Introduction

Gender Identity South West (referred to as 'we' in this document) is based in Exeter and offers gender identity healthcare services to adults (aged 18 and over) in the region and across the UK. This document outlines our terms of service. It is important that you read and understand the information in this document prior to engaging with the service. If there is anything you do not understand or if you have any questions regarding this document, please get in touch using enquiries@genderidentitysouthwest.co.uk or speak to your clinician.

General terms

We will:

1. Respect you as an individual, with individual beliefs, concerns and needs.
2. Respect the diversity of gender identity, role and expression, i.e. be willing to work with trans, non-binary and gender diverse (TNBGD) people with different experiences of gender, or who do not consider gender to be part of their experience.
3. Respect differences in sexual identity, including asexuality (an absence of sexual attraction), amongst TNBGD people.
4. Acknowledge that differences in gender identity development are not the consequence of mental health problems, and that, whilst TNBGD people may at times be distressed in relation to gender incongruence; they are not mentally unwell.
5. Acknowledge the stigma that is often experienced by the TNBGD community, its impact on the individual, and provide support/signpost to other providers to help reduce it and/or address its consequences.
6. Provide care that is consistent with contemporary, authoritative, clinical practice guidelines.
7. Provide opportunities for you to give feedback or to make a complaint to the service in order that this can be used to improve the service.

We will expect you to:

1. Respect clinicians working in the service and acknowledge that they are working as best they can to meet your needs.
2. Be as honest and open as you can be about your experiences in order that we can ensure that we understand your needs well and that any plan for treatment can be tailored to those individual needs.
3. Let us know if there is anything you need us to help you with in order for you to be able to access our service, e.g. if you have dyslexia or any difficulty with reading, if you have any sensory impairment or if any other condition or life situation means that extra support may be helpful.
4. Let us know about any changes in your life that might affect your work with us. For example, changes in your health or changes in your feelings about your gender and what you want us to help you with.

Specific Terms

Communication

We use email to communicate with patients. Emails are generated and sent directly from our online patient management system provided by Cliniko or from our Protonmail email account. Please see our privacy policy for more details. Communications include links to online forms and bookings, appointment invitations, confirmations and reminders and copies of clinical letters and reports.

The email account is checked intermittently. We endeavour to respond to email communication within 2 weeks.

We are unable to respond to people in need of general support outside of scheduled appointments. We are also unable to respond to crisis or emergency situations. **Please take a look at the 'Information and Support' page on our website and/or contact your GP, call 111, 999 or go to your local emergency department if you feel that you and/or others require immediate assistance or are in an unsafe situation.**

We will communicate with you by phone either when there is a need to do so urgently, e.g., when there is a need to cancel or rearrange an appointment at short notice or when technical difficulties with online appointments are encountered. **Please ensure that you provide a telephone number that you would be happy for us to call you on at these times.**

Please let us know if:

- you change your name
- you move house
- you change your telephone number or email address
- you change your GP
- your NHS number changes
- the person you have told us is your emergency contact changes, or if their contact details change

Arranging & attending appointments

Following receipt of your enquiry we may ask you to register with the service, which includes completing an online form. This information will help us determine whether we are able to help and ensure that we offer the right type of appointment. Following your registration, we will be in touch by email to arrange an appointment. We are unable to offer appointments to people who do not provide the information required through registration. Further information is collected just prior to first appointments, and this includes the use of some clinical questionnaires (provided by Finger-Ink). These must be completed prior to your upcoming appointment. Please see our privacy policy for more details.

Where possible appointments are offered via secure video. We provide a link by email which invites you to book and pay for appointments up to 6 months in advance. This facility is provided by Cliniko, a patient management system and Stripe, a secure online payment platform.

A booking confirmation is then sent with a link to clinical forms and direct access to the online appointment. We do not use Zoom, Microsoft or Google platforms and do not require patients to create accounts or passwords to deliver clinical services.

To access your online appointment, you will need a laptop, tablet or smartphone with a camera and microphone and access to the internet. You will also need a quiet, comfortable and private place to sit for the duration of your appointment. **Please have a telephone available and ensure we have the number for back up in case of any technical difficulties.**

Should your circumstances mean that you are unable to use this facility and that you require an in-person appointment at our Exeter base at **The Consulting Rooms, 34 Denmark Road, Exeter, EX1 1SE** then please email enquiries@genderidentitysouthwest.co.uk to let us know. We may also at times offer this type of appointment, rather than an online appointment, when we believe there is a clinical need to do so.

The Consulting rooms are within 5 minutes' walk from on street parking and two large car parks. Exeter Coach/Bus Station is 15 minutes' walk and Exeter Central Train Station is 20 minutes' walk away. Exeter St David's Train Station is around 30 minutes' walk, but it is possible to take a taxi from the rank outside.

You are welcome to attend in-person or online with a supportive other(s) if you feel this may be helpful. There may also be times when we feel it is necessary to speak with you alone and we will let you know if this is the case.

Covid-19

We will follow government guidance in relation to offering healthcare during any Covid 19 outbreak.

Cancellation & non-attendance of appointments

We expect you to make every effort to attend your scheduled appointments on time. There is high demand for the service, and it is difficult to rearrange appointments or fill cancelled appointments at short notice. A reminder is sent 9 days prior to your appointment by email.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you arrive at in-person appointments on time. This includes allowing sufficient time and funds, and ensuring you have made appropriate arrangements, for travel to and from appointments.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the right equipment and appropriate environment to access your online appointments.

If you are unable to attend your appointment, then please let us know as soon as possible by email at enquiries@genderidentitysouthwest.co.uk so that we can attempt to rearrange and/or fill your original booking. We require 72 hours' notice of cancellation for a refund to be issued. If you cancel within 72 hours of your scheduled appointment or do not attend your appointment, you will be charged the full fee for your appointment.

If you experience unexpected technical difficulties on the day of your online appointment, we will conduct the appointment over the telephone. Please note however, that we may need to schedule a further online video appointment if we are unable to complete the work via this method.

If you are late for your appointment, we will meet for the remaining time available, and the full fee will be charged. Please note that this might result in a follow-up appointment being required, which comes with additional cost, if we are not able to complete the work in the time remaining.

Fees

The following fees apply to the services offered:

- Psychological Support: £150
- Specialist Gender Assessment £600
- Specialist Gender Assessment Follow-up: £200
- Existing Patients Intervention/Treatment Consultation: £200
- New Patients Intervention/Treatment Consultation: £400

In most circumstances (around 95% of the time) we complete the specialist gender assessment in two hours at a cost of £600. Please allow additional time in case the appointment(s) need to be extended slightly. We usually include an intervention/treatment consultation, e.g., hormone therapy or surgery, within the assessment time in order for a referral to be made once the assessment is complete.

Occasionally, for example, where there are complex physical and/or mental health difficulties, significant obstacles to transition, the need to communicate with supporters or other professionals, or communication difficulties that impact the assessment, it may be necessary to extend the assessment through follow-up appointments. If this is pertinent to your situation then please make arrangements for this in advance of your assessment.

Payment is required at the point of booking and is made through our secure online booking and payment system provided by Cliniko and Stripe. You will receive a receipt from Stripe following payment. Please let us know if you require an invoice.

We do not currently work with any private health insurance companies and so services are offered on a 'self-funded' basis.

Confidentiality

Gender Identity South West has a professional and legal responsibility to respect your confidentiality at all times.

There are some limits to confidentiality where information about you may be shared and confidentiality breached, for example for reasons of safeguarding, requirements of the law, and public protection. In most instances we will ask for your consent to share this information.

There are a number of circumstances, however, where confidentiality may be breached without your consent, for example, where your, or someone else's health, safety, security or welfare may otherwise be put at risk; and if there are legal or safeguarding responsibilities. If confidentiality is broken without consent, you will be told what has been said and to whom, unless such disclosure may expose you or others to serious harm or is contrary to legal or safeguarding obligations.

Data Protection

Dr Debby Jackson is the data controller and is responsible for the lawful processing of your personal data. She is registered with the Information Commissioners Office (ICO). Please see our privacy policy for more details.

Information sharing as part of the delivery of care

In order to provide a safe and effective service we may share information about you and your care with other professionals involved in your care, e.g. your GP or other gender specialist or healthcare provider. We will ask for your consent to do so at the point of registration with the service, in the case of your GP, and at specific points in your care, e.g. when we refer you to an endocrinologist or surgeon. These professionals are bound by their own professional and legal regulations to ensure patient confidentiality.

We use Cliniko and Protonmail to communicate with professionals about you and your care. Please see our privacy policy for details.

Information sharing with other interested parties

We acknowledge that a significant proportion of our patients receive support from others including family and friends or representatives from support organisations. It is therefore not uncommon for these contacts to be interested in the care that you are receiving. We will not share information about you or your care with others unless you have given expressed consent for us to do so. This includes basic information like the timings of appointments or details of fees as well as information related to the nature of the care you are receiving. **We encourage you to discuss this with those who may be interested and let them know that information will not be shared without your consent.**

In relation to this, we are aware that at times other interested parties may wish to share information about you with us. In most instances you will be told what has been said and to whom unless such disclosure may expose you or others to serious harm or is contrary to legal or safeguarding obligations. **We encourage you to discuss this with those who may be interested and let them know that any information they wish to share with us will likely be shared with you unless there is an imminent concern regarding safety.** You are welcome to bring along supportive others to your appointments should you feel that this would be helpful. In our experience this provides a more constructive forum to discuss any issues or concerns that you or they may have.

Acceptable Behaviour

We acknowledge and understand that accessing gender identity healthcare can be anxiety provoking and possibly stressful at times. We also acknowledge that a lot of people have experienced long waits, delays and uncertainty regarding their access to healthcare and may be disappointed at times with the service response. However, we will not tolerate intimidating, aggressive, insulting or threatening behaviour towards our staff. Should we encounter this then we reserve the right to terminate our contact with you and, if necessary, report such behaviour to the appropriate authorities.

Specialist Assessments

We provide specialist assessments relating to your gender concern. On completion you may receive a diagnosis of gender incongruence and/or dysphoria, and/or alternative diagnoses or no diagnoses. We are aware that most people who wish to access gender affirming healthcare are keen to receive a relevant gender related diagnosis. Whilst it is our experience that most patients do receive this type of diagnosis, there may be times when it is not appropriate to provide this and suggestions and/or support may be offered to address your concerns in a different way.

Specialist opinions relating to suitability and readiness for gender affirming medical interventions

We provide specialist opinions relating to potential access to gender affirming medical interventions. This follows an assessment and exploration of the likely costs, benefits and risks of such interventions. On completion you may receive a supportive opinion relating to your suitability and readiness for these interventions. Whilst it is our experience that most patients are deemed eligible for these interventions, often at the time of assessment, or if not then shortly thereafter, there may be times when a supportive opinion may not be provided, and suggestions and/or support may be offered to address your concerns in a different way.

Potential Regret, Retransition or Detransition

We provide clinical diagnoses and specialist opinions based on our assessments and consultations with you. We consider the information you provide carefully and refer to the evidence base in the clinical field and to international guidance before assigning diagnoses or providing specialist opinions regarding your suitability for treatment. We ask that you are as open and honest as you can be when sharing information and that you check and agree that the clinical letters and reports that we provide accurately represent our discussions about your experiences, situation, needs and goals.

Obtaining gender related diagnoses and supportive specialist opinions enables patients to access medical interventions with many significant and irreversible effects.

We know that for most patients, clinical outcomes are good. However, a very small proportion of people come to regret undergoing either one or all aspects of treatment, and/or their broader transition. We will discuss this with you and ensure that you are aware of the circumstances that have been associated with regret, retransition and detransition so that you can consider how this might apply to you and weigh up the potential risk.

Unfortunately, it is not possible to predict unequivocally how things will work out for you in the future and so we aim to support you to make the best decision for you based on all the available information at the time.

Professional Registration & Memberships

Dr Debby Jackson is registered or is a member of the following bodies or organisations:

- Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC): Practitioner Psychologist – Clinical, registration number PYL16728.
- The British Psychological Society: Chartered Member, Gender Diversity Specialist Member, Division of Clinical Psychology Member – South West branch, Psychology of Sexualities Section Member, number 409013.
- British Association of Gender Identity Specialists: Full member.
- World Professional Association of Transgender Health: Full member.
- Her Majesties Court and Tribunals Service. Included in the list of Gender Dysphoria Specialists.

Dr Sarah James is registered or is a member of the following bodies or organisations:

- Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC): Practitioner Psychologist – Clinical, registration number PYL27233.
- The British Psychological Society: Chartered Member, Gender Diversity Specialist Member, Division of Clinical Psychology Member – South West branch number 98777.
- British Association of Gender Identity Specialists: Full member.
- Her Majesties Court and Tribunals Service. Included in the list of Gender Dysphoria Specialists.

Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS)/Criminal Records Certificate

Dr Debby Jackson has an enhanced certificate (Number: 001783147680). The certificate states that Dr Jackson has no criminal convictions.

Dr Sarah James has an enhanced certificate (Number: 001656546452). The certificate states that Dr James has no criminal convictions.

Professional Indemnity & Liability Insurance

Dr Debby Jackson holds professional indemnity and liability insurance with Oxygen Insurance underwritten by Hiscox Underwriting Ltd. Policy number: OXY8267470.

Dr Sarah James holds professional indemnity and liability insurance with Oxygen Insurance underwritten by Hiscox Underwriting Ltd. Policy number: OXY8489269.

Feedback & Complaints

We will routinely ask for feedback about the service that you receive and will use this to develop our practice and improve the service. If you think that we have done something well or if you have any concerns, please let us know by email at enquiries@genderidentitysouthwest.co.uk. We will work to resolve any issues that are raised. If you are not satisfied with our response and wish to report a clinical concern or make a complaint about Dr Debby Jackson or Dr Sarah James, you can contact the HCPC via their website <https://www.hcpc-uk.org/>. If your concern relates to how we process your personal data, then you can contact the ICO via their website <https://ico.org.uk/>.