

Referral and access to specialist gender identity clinics in the South West.

Issues around access to support and treatment for people who identify as Transgender has been an issue that has been increasing in recent months. Nationally the number of people identifying as Transgender has increased and in the South West this number has also increased.

Devon has one of several specialist clinics, 'The West of England Specialist Gender Clinic' for adults based at the Laurel's in Exeter. This service is commissioned by NHS England specialised commissioning and provides services for clients across the wider South West. The service provides psychological support, peer support, practical advice and access to specialist consultants to prepare clients for and support them on their journey towards full gender reassignment surgery, which is provided at two centres' one in London and one in Brighton.

For clients aged under 18 a specialist paediatric service, the 'Gender Identity Development Service' (GIDS) is provided by the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust who provide a satellite clinic at the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital for the wider south west. This service is again commissioned by NHS England specialised commissioning. Patients aged 17 should be given the option to access the adult service should they wish.

The attached flow chart outlines how to make a referral to these services, it is not necessary to make a referral to mental health services either before or along side a referral to the specialist gender services unless you have concerns about issues such as self-harm or suicide. The specialist gender services provide access to mental health services for their clients. Referrals go direct to the providers of the specialist services and not via any referral management service, clients will be offered the choice of where to receive treatment AFTER the referral to the local service has been made.

Client's who experience any problems or need advice and support in terms of what is commissioned should be encouraged to contact the NHS England national contact centre on 0300 311 22 33 or by email to: england.contactus@nhs.net