

Gender Reassignment

The Population of Interest

The number of gender reassignment surgeries carried yearly on the NHS has tripled since 2000, figures show. In 2000, 54 surgeries were carried out, compared with 143 in 2009, the Daily Telegraph reports. Since 2000, a total of 853 trans women and 12 trans men had state-funded surgery to change sex. However, the true number of transgender people is estimated to be far higher, as many do not wish to undergo painful or complex surgery, or are unable to access it. The average age for trans women to undergo surgery is 42 and only one NHS operation has been carried out on a person under 21 in the last nine years. Gender reassignment surgery costs around £10,000 on the NHS. It became a right on the NHS in 1999 but trans campaigners argue that trans people are still subject to a postcode lottery, as health trusts vary in what they deem to be essential treatment.

Current prevalence may now be 20 in 100,000, i.e. 10,000 people, of whom 6,000 have undergone transition. 80% were assigned as boys at birth (now trans women) and 20% as girls (now trans men). However, there is good reason to anticipate that the gender balance may eventually become more equal.

Adding these two groups together (235,000 + 59,000) gives an estimate of about 300,000 transgender people, defined as those who cross-dress. Their prevalence is 600 per 100,000 aged over 15. Out of that number, 56,000 might potentially be transsexual people (45,000 + 11,000). All who cross dress are at risk of bullying and hate crime, especially if they venture outside the home in clothing of the opposite gender.

Health and Longevity

Transgender people present for treatment at any age. The median age is 42.

Regarding health-care, surgery and life-long hormone therapy will be required for many of the rapidly increasing number of people, currently 1,200 per annum, who undertake transition to a new gender role, that is who are transsexual. The present annual requirement is 480 genital and gonadal for transwomen (male to female) and 240 chest reconstruction for transmen (female to male), in addition to other gender confirming surgical procedures.

Physical and Legal Security

The Gender Recognition Panel has stated that, at the date of the survey, 2,004 people had received Gender Recognition Certificates. According to unpublished data gathered in the Transgender EuroStudy, only 34% of the respondents who had transitioned had received a new birth certificate. Scaling up by that ratio produces an estimate of some 5,894 people who had undergone transition.

Education

Only 84 children and adolescents are referred annually to the UK's sole specialised gender identity service, compared to 1,500 referred to the adult clinics. Nonetheless, medical services and schools should know that incidence among youngsters is also doubling every 5 years and has the potential to grow much more rapidly if gender variant people start presenting for treatment and undertaking transition while still young.

The Engendered Penalties report contains data on the transphobic bullying experienced at school by the adults who participated in the survey. That research endeavoured to be as inclusive as possible of all categories of transgender people. About 40% of them had experienced verbal abuse, 30% threatening behaviour, 25% physical abuse and 4% sexual abuse. About 25% had been bullied by their teachers.

Standard of Living

The gender identity clinics in London, Newton Abbott, Sheffield and Glasgow received a total of 952 referrals in the year to mid 2008, an increase of 49% above the previous year's figure. The London clinic, at Charing Cross Hospital accounted for 775 of that total. Three years earlier, it received about 300 referrals.

Productive and Valued Activities

Employers in both the public and the private sector need to be aware not only how frequently they will encounter the transsexual people in the workplace and among their customers, all of whom are protected by the law, but also how many other transgender people may be fearing discovery and perhaps needing support.

Individual, Family and Social Life

Participation, Influence and Voice

Identity, Expression and Self Respect

In puberty (aged 12 and over), they are at a substantially increased risk of self-harm and overdose (23%), compared to younger children (under 12 years old) experiencing gender dysphoria, among whom self-harm is rare. In the general British population, the proportion of children aged 11-15 who are reported to have tried to harm, hurt or kill themselves is substantially lower (only 6.7 %), although it is somewhat higher (1.3%) among those aged 5 to 10.

