

## Welcome to Porterbrook Gender Identity Clinic

Now that you have reached the top of the Porterbrook Clinic waiting list please read the following information to learn more about what you can expect ahead of your initial appointment.



The Porterbrook Gender Identity Clinic is based in Sheffield and is one of seven Gender Identity Clinics providing healthcare for adults who are experiencing Gender Dysphoria in England. We are commissioned by NHS England.

We are proud to provide assessment for the diagnosis and treatment of gender dysphoria to transgender and non-binary people. We are passionate about providing culturally competent, developmentally appropriate, and trans-affirmative professional care and management to the people that seek our services. Our team is made up of medical

and nursing staff and a range of other healthcare professionals, such as Psychologists, Peer Support Workers, Speech and Language Therapists and administration staff.

People who attend our service may be seeking a range of treatment options. We provide support for social transitioning and medical treatment. The clinic is open for booked appointments from Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm. We also run a late clinic on a Thursday evening that runs until 7.30pm for Lead clinician appointments.

We aim to offer a number of different types of appointment including face to face and online. We use an online system called Attend Anywhere for our virtual appointments. The purpose of Attend Anywhere is to reduce the need for long journeys to the clinic and reduce the impact on other commitments that our patients may have.

(Initial medical appointment, initial hormone appointments, medical reviews to discuss a change in hormone plan and lower surgery appointments must be in-person)

## Your initial appointment

### Aims

- Introduce you to the clinic.
- We want to get to know you as a person, your wishes, and your expectations.

### Duration

- Approximately 60 to 90 minutes.

### Content

- Discussion around your gender experience.
- Talking about your physical and mental health.

**Please be aware that during this initial appointment you will not be starting any form of hormonal or surgical treatment. The appointment pathway guide below explains in more detail what to expect from your treatment with Porterbrook clinic.**

## **Additional information**

- Appointments can be in-person or online.
- Please feel free to bring someone with you for support.
- You may take a break at any point.
- As the content of the appointment is highly personal and sensitive we only ask that you share what you are comfortable with.
- All information shared will be confidential. However, if you do disclose any information that may indicate that you are a risk of harm to yourself or someone else, we may need to share this information in order to keep you and others safe. If this was necessary, we would usually ask your permission, and you would be made aware of the actions taken.
- We send all communications of appointment via post (Therefore it is important to keep us informed of current address if this changes during your treatment)
- Every appointment letter will also be sent as a copy to your email. (Please check your junk folders)

## **Online consultations**

- If you wish for an online video consultation appointment, please ensure your appointment takes place in a safe and confidential location.

- Please be able to provide details of any prescribed medications, any current and past physical health/mental health conditions and your current height and weight.
- Please ensure that you arrive for your appointment on time. Unfortunately, if you attend your appointment more than 15 minutes late without notifying the clinic, we may be unable to see you for your appointment as our clinicians have many other appointments throughout the day.
- If you can't make your appointment or wish to rearrange, please notify the clinic by telephone or email as soon as possible so that a further appointment can be arranged for you and your appointment slot can be offered to another patient.

## In-person consultations

- If you are attending your first appointment in person, please attend at the following address:

Porterbrook Gender Identity Clinic  
Michael Carlisle Centre  
75 Osborne Road  
Sheffield  
S11 9BF

**Please note:** There is a GP practice with a similar name in the area called “Porterbrook Medical Centre” – this is not the address of our service.

Many patients attend this GP practice for their appointment by mistake. If you are using a sat nav or google maps, please ensure you enter the correct postcode for our service to avoid any added stress or anxiety for yourself on the day.

## 'My personal story' document

Before attending your initial appointment with the Porterbrook Gender Identity Clinic you will be asked to complete and return the 'my personal story' document as soon as you are able.

Please aim to have this completed at least seven days prior to your upcoming appointment with Porterbrook clinic.

You can download a copy using the following link:

<https://www.shsc.nhs.uk/services/gender-identity-clinic/appointments>

If you wish for a paper copy to be posted to you to complete and return, please contact us to request this.

When you have completed this document, please email it to [sct-ctr.porterbrookclinic@nhs.net](mailto:sct-ctr.porterbrookclinic@nhs.net) with the subject:

**'My Personal Story Document' and detailing your name, date of birth, and the date of your appointment.**

You can alternatively send this document back via post using the address detailed at the bottom of this form.

If you require support completing this document, you can access the Porterbrook Clinic's Peer Support Team. Please see the link below for details on how to access Peer Support:

<https://www.shsc.nhs.uk/gender-services-peer-support-team>

You can also contact them using the following email address:

[Porterbrooksupport@shsc.nhs.uk](mailto:Porterbrooksupport@shsc.nhs.uk)

## Smoking and nicotine use

If you are wishing to access hormone treatment or gender affirming

surgeries in the future it is important to consider your nicotine use, whether you are a cigarette smoker, or a nicotine vape user.

Nicotine use can cause increased health risks associated with hormone therapy or gender-affirming surgeries. Nicotine use can negatively impact the effectiveness of hormone therapy and increase the risk of complications during and after surgery.

Nicotine use can interfere with the effectiveness of both oestrogen and testosterone therapies, potentially slowing down or diminishing desired physical changes. Smoking can also increase the risk of blood clots and other cardiovascular issues, especially in those taking oestrogen.

Currently, surgery teams require at least six months of nicotine abstinence prior to gender affirming surgeries due to the negative impact of nicotine use on wound healing, infection, and post-operative functional and cosmetic results.

If you are wishing to quit smoking/ reduce your nicotine intake you can be referred by your GP, pharmacist, or health visitor to your local stop smoking service to make an appointment with an adviser.

Please see the links below on how you can access support in reducing your nicotine intake:

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/quit-smoking/nhs-stop-smoking-services-help-you-quit/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/other-health-services/stop-smoking-support-services>

## Weight requirements

Due to the strict body mass index (BMI) criteria set by NHS surgical teams, some patients may need to access support around their weight to ensure their physical safety and ability to safely access gender affirming surgeries.



Some health concerns associated with underweight or overweight BMIs can cause an increased risk of physical health concerns such as polycythaemia, thromboembolic disease and liver dysfunction to patients who are taking hormone treatment.

BMI thresholds are strict and non-negotiable, so it is important that you work towards the required BMI as soon as possible if you wish to access gender affirming surgeries through the NHS.

The BMI criteria is in place to optimise patient safety, maximise current surgical capacity, and ensure those referred for surgery are likely to progress.

Specific guidelines on BMI criteria for surgery can be discussed during your appointments with the clinic. For example, for most gender affirming lower surgeries the requirement is a BMI below 30.

We understand that reaching the required BMIs can be challenging. If you need support, please request a referral from your GP. Please see the following link for more information on accessing weight loss support on the NHS: <https://www.nhs.uk/better-health/lose-weight/>

## Fertility preservation treatment

Many patients wish to access fertility preservation treatment prior to starting hormone treatment.

- **Please be aware:** your ability to engage in fertility preservation treatment may have been impacted if you have already started hormone treatment.
- If you wish to engage in fertility preservation treatment this must be done prior to engaging with any lower surgery that would eliminate your ability to engage in this treatment.
- Fertility preservation treatment will involve a period of time where you will need to remain off your prescribed hormone treatment.

- Unfortunately, Porterbrook Clinic cannot refer you for this treatment and you will need to book an appointment with your GP surgery for your GP to refer you for fertility preservation treatment.
- Fertility preservation treatment is not always funded by the NHS and is dependent on your area of residence.
- Please see the links below to find out more on whether fertility preservation treatment would be funded in your area.
- If it is not funded by the NHS in your area of residence you may need to fund this treatment yourself.

The link below has some useful information on this service and how to access support regarding fertility preservation treatment:

<https://www.hfea.gov.uk/treatments/fertility-preservation/information-for-trans-and-non-binary-people-seeking-fertility-treatment/>

We recommend that anyone thinking about having fertility treatment, for whatever reason, gets plenty of support, whether from family and friends, social networks, organisations or a professional. Treatment can be a very emotional experience so it's important you're getting the right support before, during and after treatment.

- [British Infertility Counselling Association \(BICA\)](https://www.bica.net/) (<https://www.bica.net/>) provides counselling to people of all ages who are considering fertility treatment and preservation.
- [Fertility Network UK](http://fertilitynetworkuk.org/) (<http://fertilitynetworkuk.org/>) campaign for equitable access to NHS funded fertility treatment.
- [Gendered Intelligence](https://genderedintelligence.co.uk/) (<https://genderedintelligence.co.uk/>) works with trans people and those who impact on the lives of trans people, specialising in working with young trans people.
- [GIRES](http://www.gires.org.uk/) (<http://www.gires.org.uk/>) is a charity that hears, helps, empowers and gives a voice to trans and gender non-conforming individuals.



## Deed Poll Certificate and updating your details

Some patients wish to change their names legally via deed poll certificate. The links below have some useful information about changing your name by deed poll, and the steps you need to take afterwards:

<http://www.freedeedpoll.org/>

<https://genderkit.org.uk/category/id-documents/>

**If you decide to change your NHS number, please let us know so that we can update your records on our system.**

## Porterbrook Clinic appointment pathway

The information below provides a brief explanation of the treatment pathway and additional services offered by the Porterbrook Clinic.

Every patient's care is individual and will look different for everyone. The appointments offered aim to be catered to each patient's individual needs and wishes, to provide you with the most appropriate care.

**Waiting  
List**

**Assessment  
& Diagnosis**

**Treatment**

**Surgical  
Referral**

**Surgery &  
Discharge**

### 1. Waiting List

After being referred from your GP, you will be added to the Porterbrook waiting list. During this time you are able to access Porterbrook Clinic's Peer Support team for support in preparing for your initial assessment and support around any anxiety and/or distress around waiting times.

## **2. Assessment and Diagnosis**

During the assessment phase of the pathway, you will be assessed to see if you meet the diagnostic criteria for gender dysphoria and/or gender incongruence which are a requirement for accessing certain gender affirming treatments, such as hormone treatment and gender affirming surgeries.

## **3. Treatment**

During the treatment phase patients can access support based on your wishes and individual needs, including support around the commencement of hormone treatment, access to voice and communication therapy, and psychology or occupational therapy if appropriate.

## **4. Surgical Referral**

You will progress through the pathway with support from your named professional and lead clinician during review appointments. These will aid you in safely accessing the treatments and surgical interventions you wish for. Lower surgeries require two different independent opinions one opinion will be with completed by your lead clinician and the second opinion will be completed by a clinician that is not involved in your care.

## **5. Surgery and Discharge**

Once you have completed the treatments and/or surgeries you wish to access, you will be discharged back to the care of your GP. Your GP will continue to be able to access advice from Porterbrook Clinic around your hormone treatment following your discharge from the service. If you wish to be re-referred into the service, your GP can re-refer you at any time as a patient already known to the service, meaning we will aim to see you within 6 months of re-referral.

## What support can Porterbrook Clinic offer you?

Porterbrook Clinic is made up of different specialisms that come together to support you at each step of your treatment journey. Each specialism works collaboratively as part of a multidisciplinary team to support our patients to access the best possible treatment based on their individual needs.

### **Named Professionals**

The Named Professional team is made up of a range of professionals including Mental Health Nurses, Occupational Therapists, and General Nurses. Each patient is assigned a Named Professional to support them through their treatment at the Porterbrook Clinic. The Named Professionals support patients from their first assessment with the clinic through to their discharge. Named Professionals support patients' wellbeing and aim to support them in achieving their individual care needs and goals. The Named Professional team support and advise patients through the care pathway and the different treatment options available to them.

### **Lead Clinicians**

The Lead Clinician team support patients with providing a diagnosis of gender dysphoria where appropriate, making recommendations for GPs to prescribe and monitor hormone treatment, and referring patients for surgical interventions such as top surgery, vaginoplasty, labiaplasty, phalloplasty, and metoidioplasty. Lead clinicians also support GPs by providing guidance around the management of any gender dysphoria related physical and mental health issues

Each Porterbrook Clinic patient is assigned a Lead Clinician to support them through their treatment journey and oversee their treatment.

### **Peer Support**

Peer Support offer person-centred and emotional support for people waiting to enter the service, as well as those already on the clinical pathway. They use their lived experience to offer practical advice on

social transitioning, hormone treatments and surgical interventions, as well as practical things like gender recognition certificates and legally changing your name.

The peer support team currently offer 1:1 support: online via video call consultation, over the phone, and via e-mail.

Please see information on Porterbrook clinics peer support team by following the information sited on the link below:

<https://www.shsc.nhs.uk/services/gender-identity-clinic/gender-services-peer-support-team>

You can access support from our peer support team by completing the self-referral form on the link below:

[PSEQ - Peer Support Engagement Questionnaire](#) (click link to access)

Alternatively, please can this QR code with your smartphone camera to access the peer support engagement questionnaire:



## **Speech and Language Therapy**

Speech and Language Therapy specialise in providing voice and communication therapy for patients accessing the service. Patients can access Speech and Language Therapy at any time following their initial assessment by requesting a referral from their Named Professional. Speech and Language aims to provide person-centred voice and communication therapy to help patients achieve their individual goals and needs.

## **Gender Psychology**

The Psychology team support patients with an identified need for psychological support in relation to their gender. They aim to provide gender affirming, trauma informed care and offer a range of psychological therapies focused around supporting patients struggling with symptoms of gender dysphoria. Support is typically offered in relation to difficulties that are gender relevant, such as; social anxiety around gender presentation, issues of loss and regret (e.g. transitioning late in life, not being accepted by family), Obsessive Compulsive Disorder relating to gender presentation, internalised transphobia, issues relating to de-transition and re-transition, anger issues relating to perception of masculinity, self-criticism and perfectionism impacting on expectations of transition, and anxiety management for surgery. However, this is not an exhaustive list.

Psychology can also offer an extended assessment (up to six sessions) to provide a space for therapeutic exploration. This is sometimes needed when a patient's stability of their gender identity may be in question, or they need support relating to their readiness to progress on the care pathway. Extended assessments can also be useful to help differentiate gender dysphoria from other potential complicating factors (e.g. sexual abuse history, body dysmorphia, eating disorders, and/or diagnostic overshadowing). If you would like a referral to Psychology and have already had your first appointment, please speak to your Named Professional.

## **Appointment times**

Whilst you wait for further appointments in the clinic there will be varying waiting times depending on which appointment or service you are waiting to access.

We are unfortunately unable to provide exact waiting times. Please be aware that there will be longer waiting times for appointments with a medic at the clinic. Appointment waiting times are varied due to the clinical activity in the clinic at the time.

**We understand that waiting for your next appointment can be difficult.**

**Please see information below on services you can access for support whilst you wait for your next appointment.**

## **External support resources**

### **Gendered intelligence**

Gendered Intelligence can offer free confidential advice and support to anyone waiting to access gender affirming care. You can find out more about the support they offer here:

**Website:** <https://genderedintelligence.co.uk/>

### **Switchboard**

Switchboard is the national LGBTQIA+ support line. For anyone, anywhere in the country, at any point in their journey. They can discuss anything related to sexuality and gender identity. Whether it's sexual health, relationships or just the way you're feeling. This is your space – to explore, talk and be truly heard.

**Contact Number:** 0800 0119 100 (Open 10am -10pm every day)

**Email:** [hello@switchboard.lgbt](mailto:hello@switchboard.lgbt)

**Website:** <https://switchboard.lgbt/>

### **LGBT Foundation**

National charity supporting LGBTQ+ health and wellbeing.

**Help line:** 0345 3303030

9am until 9pm on a weekday and between 10am and 6pm on Saturday and Sunday (excluding bank holidays and religious festivals).



**Website:** <https://lgbt.foundation/>

Please see the link below for information on the LGBT Foundation talking therapies programme:

<https://lgbt.foundation/help/talking-therapies-programme/>

### **MindLine Trans+**

Free, confidential listening service for people identifying as trans or non-binary, and their friends and families.

**Contact number:** [0300 330 5468](tel:03003305468)

**Website:** <https://www.mindinsomerset.org.uk/our-services/adult-one-to-one-support/mindline-trans/>

### **Mental health support services**

If you are experiencing something that makes you feel unsafe, distressed, or worried about your mental health, you can contact your local crisis service by calling NHS 111 and selecting the mental health option. You can call for yourself or for someone else.

### **NHS 111**

**Call 111 and select option 2**

Available 24/7, 365 days a year

<https://111.nhs.uk/>

### **Samaritans**

**Call 116 123**

Free to call from any phone, available 24/7, 365 days a year

<https://www.samaritans.org/>

## **Shout 85258**

Text SHOUT to 85258

Available 24/7, 365 days a year

<https://giveusashout.org/>

## **Papyrus**

Call 0800 068 4141

Text 88247

Suicide helpline for people under 35 available 24/7, 365 days a year

<https://www.papyrus-uk.org/>

## **Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM)**

Call 0800 58 58 58

available 5pm to midnight every day

CALM also has a free live webchat and WhatsApp service

<https://www.thecalmzone.net/>

## **National Suicide Prevention Helpline**

Call 0800 587 0800

Available 6pm to midnight every day

<https://spuk.org.uk/>

## **Local Talking Therapies services**

Please see the following website links to see how you can access talking therapies in your local area who may be able to provide you with support regarding your mental health.

<https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/mental-health-services/find-nhs-talking-therapies-for-anxiety-and-depression/>

**Self-help guides** provide information on specific difficulties and offer exercises and techniques to help with what you are experiencing. Find more information here:

<https://web.nth.nhs.uk/selfhelp/>

**The Sheffield Mental Health Guide** offers a wealth of information on different services both local to Sheffield and nationally. It has a section on LGBTQIA+ support as well as information on financial difficulties, housing and domestic abuse. Find more information here:

<https://www.sheffieldmentalhealth.co.uk/>

## Thank you

We hope this information has been useful to you and we look forward to seeing you soon for your first appointment!

If you have any questions about your upcoming appointment or for more information while you wait, please visit:

<https://www.shsc.nhs.uk/services/gender-identity-clinic>

Or contact us using the information below:

**Email:** [porterbrook@shsc.nhs.uk](mailto:porterbrook@shsc.nhs.uk)

**Telephone:** 0114 2716671

Our phone lines are open Monday to Friday 10am to 12pm and 2pm to 4pm.

**Please be aware as we are not a mental health service we are unable to offer support in a crisis situation.**

Kind regards,

Porterbrook Clinic Team  
Sheffield Gender Identity Service