

The Girls' Brigade in Scotland

Supporting GB Members and Adult Leaders: Gender Identity

Any trans individual has the right to be treated as the gender that they identify with, regardless of what (if any) medical or legal steps they may have taken or their age.

Gender reassignment is a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010, placing the same obligations on organisations as is required for any other protected characteristic, whether or not the person is undergoing medical treatment. Discrimination, victimisation, and harassment are against the law, and we want to be a welcoming organisation to all our current and future members.

How can we support a volunteer who is transgender?

- Respect the rights and privacy of the person.
- Reassure the person and ask how you can best support them.
- Be sensitive and sympathetic to the person's situation, recognising the challenges, both physical and emotional, of transitioning and the impact this may have.
- Respect a person's gender identity, name and pronouns.
- Avoid making assumptions about a person's gender, for example, based on appearance. We recommend asking how a person wishes to be addressed if you are unsure.
- Do not share information about the person's gender identity history or trans status, unless at the specific request and agreement of the person. Remember, it is a criminal offence for anyone acquiring information about a person's gender recognition history in an 'official capacity', to disclose this to another person, without consent of the person (Gender Recognition Act, 2004).
- If required, you can seek support or guidance without revealing the person's name/identity.
- Be prepared for questions or comments from other volunteers or young people, which should be respectful.

What should I do if I witness or experience discrimination, harassment, or victimisation?

We encourage you to speak up if you are subject to or witness conduct prohibited by this policy so that we can deal with this appropriately.

We hope that in many cases you can raise your concerns with your Company

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Captain/Leader-in-Charge. However, where the matter is more serious, or you feel that the Company Captain/Leader-in-Charge has not addressed your concern, or you prefer not to raise it with them for any reason, you should contact your Divisional Commissioner or the Chief Executive.

What facilities should be used?

Where we provide separate facilities for men and women, we encourage volunteers and members to use the facilities appropriate to their gender identity.

What needs to be considered when planning trips or holidays?

If on a company holiday or residential event where members are sharing residential accommodation, such as dormitories or other shared sleeping accommodation, it may be that separate sleeping accommodation is required, and this should be considered for each trip on a case-by-case basis.

It will only be lawful to exclude a person who is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or who has undergone gender reassignment from communal accommodation where the exclusion is proportionate in the circumstances. If you are unsure, you should contact the Chief Executive to discuss.

If you are travelling abroad for a company holiday or nominating an individual who is trans for a GB event, then you should consider that some countries have laws against the LGBTQ+ Community. Check the laws for the country before you visit, and plan ahead. [One of the most reliable sources of this information can be found at the Foreign & Commonwealth Office of the UK Government - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/lesbian-gay-bisexual-and-transgender-foreign-travel-advice>]

How can we support someone undergoing gender reassignment or transitioning during their role?

A current adult volunteer or member under 18 years of age or their parent/carer may inform you that they will be changing their physical appearance, from their gender assigned at birth to their gender identity.

It is important to remember that information the person's gender identity history or trans status should not be shared, unless at the specific request and agreement of the person. Remember, it is a criminal offence for anyone acquiring information about a person's gender recognition history in an 'official capacity', to disclose this to another person, without consent of the person (Gender Recognition Act, 2004).

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Ensure that all communications and records are updated as soon as possible to show the individual's correct pronouns and name. You should not ask for proof for their records to be altered (e.g. to show their Gender Recognition Certificate or a change of name by Deed Poll).

Adult volunteers

We support volunteers who transition at GB. We recognise the challenges, both physical and emotional, of transitioning and the impact this may have. We also appreciate that no two situations are identical. We therefore encourage volunteers to discuss support that they require with their Company Captain/Leader-in-Charge or Divisional Commissioner.

It is important to prepare and plan carefully in order to support the individual. Take time to have an informal and confidential discussion with the person so that you can find out what they want, how they would like to proceed and how you can support them.

The individual may wish to limit the number of persons who know about their transition or any medical treatment that they receive as part of their transition. Related issues should be dealt with sensitively and confidentiality should be maintained.

If the individual would like to tell members and their parents/carers, then we recommend that the news be conveyed in a face-to-face meeting rather than in a written format and information provided is kept simple and factual, advising that everyone should use their new name and pronouns from that time.

Members under 18 years of age

Members may discuss their gender identity with you on a confidential basis to seek support or because they see you as someone they can trust. Unless you are concerned for the member's safety or another person's safety (or there is some other compelling reason), then you should honour the member's wishes. You should have an informal and confidential discussion with the member and, if appropriate and the member consents, their parent/carer. It may be that the member has not yet discussed their gender identity with their parent/carer and, as such, care should be taken not to disclose sensitive information about the young person. A confidential chat can help you to find out what the member wants, how they would like to proceed and how you can support them.

If you are concerned about the welfare of a child or young person then you have a duty to pass that information on, guided by what is justified, necessary and proportionate as a course of action.

How to respond to those who are not inclusive of trans members or volunteers?

Volunteers should be reminded of their commitment to The Girls' Brigade in Scotland Equal Opportunities Policy. Training can be provided to raise awareness and educate volunteers and members which can be arranged through contacting GB Headquarters.

We recognise that some people hold beliefs which may conflict with this policy. This policy is not intended to stifle those beliefs. However, there are baseline behaviours, as set out in this policy, with which everyone is required to comply. In Girls' Brigade Scotland it is the responsibility of all adult volunteers to be good role models for everyone by being inclusive and to create an environment where all members are valued and safe to enjoy their GB membership.

If you still continue to have difficulties with individual volunteers please speak with your Commissioner and/or contact the Chief Executive at Girls' Brigade Scotland – caroline.goodfellow@girls-brigade-scotland.org.uk.

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