

Health and Well-being of the Transgender Population in Lewisham

July 2023

Background

A variety of health inequalities are experienced by the Transgender (trans) population. These range from physical to mental health and can also encompass ability to access health services and experience within healthcare. This is despite gender reassignment being included as a protected characteristic within the [2010 Equality Act](#), thus giving the trans population explicit protection in their own right¹.

Stonewall² report that hate crime and discrimination against trans people, in public spaces, in healthcare settings, workplaces and places of learning, is widespread. Furthermore, two in five trans people had to deal with a hate crime or incident in the past 12 months. Their research found that many trans people are forced to hide who they are, change how they dress or drop out of university because of fear of discrimination. Within the workplace, half of trans and non-binary people have hidden or disguised that they are LGBT for this reason, and one in eight have been physically attacked by a colleague or customer.

The LGBT Foundation also report on national research which found that 73% of trans people report experiencing harassment in public spaces, with 10% reporting being victims of threatening behaviour³.

Stonewall also reported on wider issues which would impact health and wellbeing including much higher rates of domestic violence and homelessness in the trans population, than the population overall.

Lewisham Transgender Population

In the 2021 Census, a question on gender identity was asked for the first time for those aged 16 or over. Whilst response to the question was voluntary, nationally 94% respondents did state their gender identity.

The question was added to the most recent Census, to provide the first official data on the size of the transgender population in England and Wales. The inclusion and outputs aimed to:

- provide better quality information for monitoring purposes
- support anti-discrimination duties under the Equality Act 2010
- aid allocation for resources and policy development

¹ The Equality Act protects individuals from discrimination and harassment on the basis of a protected characteristic. Protected characteristics include sex (being a man or a woman) and gender reassignment (being an individual who is 'proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process or part of a process to reassign their sex'). There is no requirement for a trans person to have any kind of medical supervision or intervention in order to be protected from gender reassignment discrimination.

² https://www.stonewall.org.uk/system/files/lgbt_in_britain_-_trans_report_final.pdf

³ [LGBT Foundation](#)

Nationally 262,000 people answered that their gender identity was different from their sex registered at birth.

- 118,000 (0.24%) answered that their gender identity was different to the sex they were registered at birth but did not provide a write-in response
- 48,000 (0.10%) identified as a trans man
- 48,000 (0.10%) identified as a trans woman
- 30,000 (0.06%) identified as non-binary
- 18,000 (0.04%) wrote in a different gender identity

For Lewisham, proportions of the population are detailed in Table 1 (below), with comparisons for London and England.

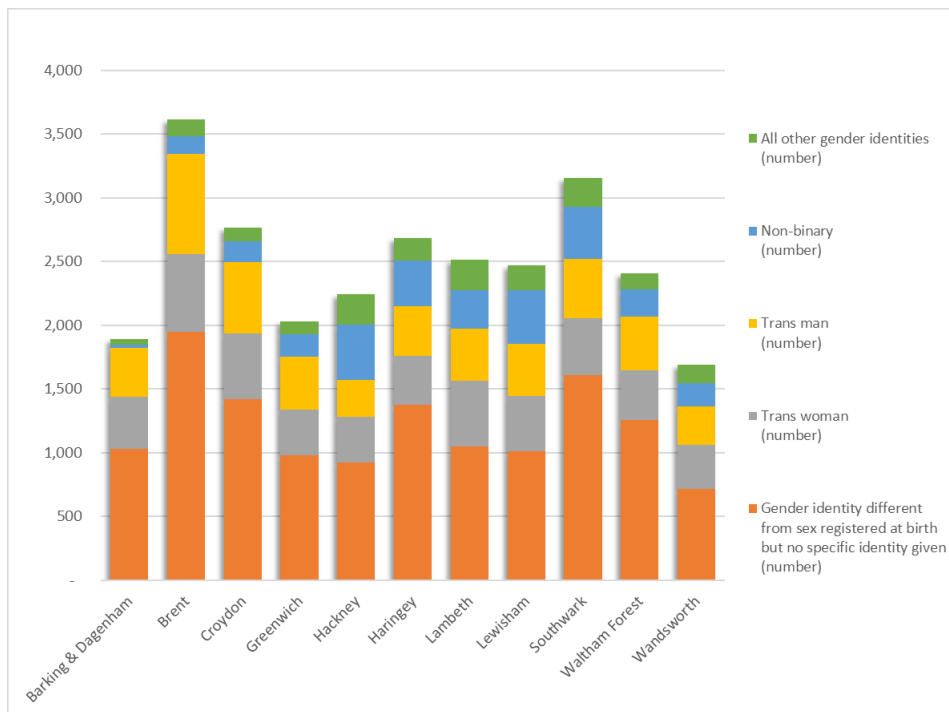
Table 1: 2021 Census Responses to Gender Identity Question (%) - age 16+⁴

	<i>Gender identity the same as sex registered at birth</i>	<i>Gender identity different from sex registered at birth but no specific identity given</i>	<i>Trans woman</i>	<i>Trans man</i>	<i>Non-binary</i>	<i>All other gender identities</i>	<i>Not answered</i>
Lewisham	91.36	0.42	0.18	0.17	0.17	0.08	7.62
London	91.21	0.46	0.16	0.16	0.08	0.05	7.88
England	93.47	0.25	0.10	0.10	0.06	0.04	5.98

The proportions in Table 1, equate to 2,471 Lewisham residents stating that their Gender Identity was other than the sex they were registered at birth (1.02% of the local population). This Census output agrees with previous estimates of 1% for gender variance from government and other sources. Figure 1 (below), details Lewisham's population compared to its most similar London boroughs in relation to gender identity. (Please note Figure 1 is detailing number of people and boroughs have varying population sizes).

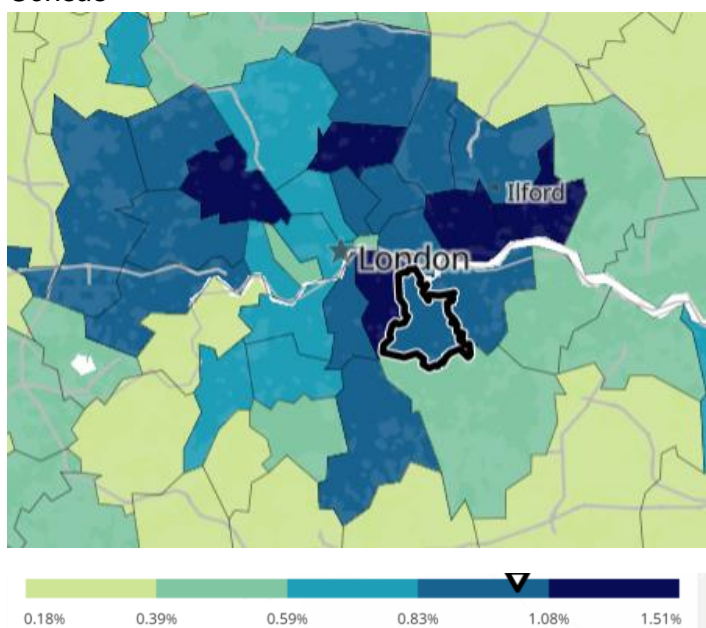
⁴ Question 27 on the England 2021 Census form 'Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?'

Figure 1: Count of people who stated their Gender Identity was different to the sex they were assigned at birth, Lewisham compared to its most similar London boroughs - 2021 Census



Across London and in Lewisham the proportion of the population stating their gender identity was different from the gender identity they were assigned at birth, was higher than the national figure. Map 1 below shows % for all London boroughs. The darker the shading the higher the proportion of the population with a gender identity different to that assigned at birth.

Map 1: % of the population whose gender identity is different to that assigned at birth (%) - 2021 Census



Gender Identity by Age

[Ipsos's LGBT+ Pride 2021 Global Survey](#) points to a wide generation gap around gender identity (and sexual attraction). On average, across the 27 countries surveyed, those who identify as transgender, non-binary, non-conforming, gender-fluid, or other than male or female make up 4% of Gen Z (born since 1997) compared to 1% among all adults.

This trend was also seen in Lewisham. Analysis of the 2021 Census results, for the total population aged 16+, who answered the question on Gender Identity found 1.02% stated their gender identity was different to the sex registered at birth. However, for those aged 16-24, this rose to 1.49%. There was then a direct correlation between age and gender identity, as the older a person was, the % identifying as other than the sex they were registered at birth decreased, with the lowest % in the 65+ age group (at 0.54%). This older age group were also the most likely to choose not to answer this question (8.7% of the population). Of note though, was those aged 16-24, had almost as high a non-response rate (8.4%) to this question.

Table 2: Lewisham Trans Population by Age Group (2021 Census)

<i>Age</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Gender identity the same as sex registered at birth</i>	<i>Gender identity different from sex registered at birth but no specific identity given</i>	<i>Trans woman</i>	<i>Trans man</i>	<i>All other gender identities</i>	<i>Not answered</i>
Aged 16-24	31,217	28,135	148	52	72	192	2,618
Aged 25-34	58,431	53,665	245	86	74	290	4,071
Aged 35-49	72,036	65,959	345	137	119	110	5,366
Aged 50-64	52,082	47,703	207	106	108	25	3,933
Aged 65+	28,644	26,000	67	50	35	2	2,490

Transgender Mental Health

[Stonewall's LGBT in Britain Health Report](#) analysed a 2017 survey conducted by YouGov on their behalf⁵. Of trans respondents to the survey, 67% had experienced depression in the previous year, whilst over seven in ten (71%) had experienced anxiety. Six in ten stated that they have felt life is not worth living in the last year.

The same research also found more than a third of trans people (35%) have self-harmed in the last year, compared to 14% of LGB people who are not trans. Furthermore, 46% of trans people surveyed had thought of ending their life in the previous 12 months, with 12% having made an attempt to do so. All the proportions quoted were higher for trans respondents than those who identify as LGB and are not trans. One in five trans respondents (20%) stated experiencing an eating disorder in the last year.

Other studies have also found that transgender adolescents are at greater risk for depressive symptoms and suicidal ideation compared with other adolescents⁶.

⁵ 5,375 people responded to the survey, 14% of whom identified as trans, so approximately 750 trans respondents

⁶ Almeida J, Johnson RM, Corliss HL, Molnar BE, Azrael D. Emotional distress among LGBT youth: the

Connected to mental health, within a large-scale study, 41% of transgender people reported attempting suicide, compared to 1.6% of the general population⁷. Furthermore, a long-term study conducted in Sweden found that mortality rates for transsexual people were about three times higher compared to controls, and transsexual women have around 10 times greater risk for suicide attempts compared to cisgender controls⁸.

Research studies show that described health inequalities are compounded by issues within and in receiving healthcare. The [Human Rights Campaign Foundation](#) who quote largescale studies, have found transgender people face increased anxiety and bias in healthcare, with up to 70% of this population facing discrimination.

Access to Health Services

All health and social care organisations have a legal duty to provide equal treatment and tackle discrimination. However, research finds that the trans population experience issues accessing appropriate services and discrimination when in contact with services.

[Stonewall's LGBT in Britain Health Report](#) found that 20% of Transgender respondents had witnessed discriminatory or negative remarks against LGBT people by healthcare staff. The report also detailed how trans people (even more so than other LGBTQ+ people), continue to be 'outed' without their consent, treated with inappropriate curiosity and subjected to unequal treatment because of who they are. More than a third of trans people had avoided treatment due to fear of prejudice. Almost a third of trans people (32%) have experienced unequal treatment by healthcare staff, including 16% who say this happened in the last year alone.

The same report details that one in five trans people (20%) have been pressured to access services to suppress their gender identity when accessing healthcare services. More than six in ten (62%) of trans respondents said they have experienced a lack of understanding of specific trans health needs by healthcare staff; 41% had experienced this in the last year.

One in six (16%) trans respondents have been refused care by a healthcare service because of being LGBT.

Local Services

CliniQ

The CliniQ at Kings service is a unique service delivered in partnership between Kings College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust and CliniQ. It provides sexual and reproductive healthcare to trans and non-binary people. The service also provides support, advice and blood test monitoring for people who are self-sourcing hormone therapy or accessing private gender identity care, peer support, mental health and well-being support and counselling services

influence of perceived discrimination based on sexual orientation. Journal of Youth Adolescence. 2009; 38:1001-14.

⁷ <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/27380151/>

⁸ Dhejne C, Lichtenstein P, Boman M, Johansson ALV, Långström N, Landén M. Long-term follow-up of transsexual persons undergoing sex reassignment surgery: cohort study in Sweden. PLoS One 2011; 6(2):e16885.

(delivered by cliniQ). The clinic runs on an 'appointment only' basis on a Tuesday evening from 4pm – 7pm.

CliniQ have provided data on service use from April 2022 - January 2023. Overall, within this time-period they saw service use increase 60% compared to the previous 10 months. Within this time-period they saw 79 Lewisham residents.

Almost half of those attending received a STI test, with oral contraception, LARC and cervical cancer screening also commonly taking place. A first PrEP prescription was also given to several individuals.

Feedback from service users was almost universally positive with 99% agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statements that they were “pleased with the service” and would “recommend the service to a friend”.

Support Services

[Young trans people](#) can access support through the wider LGBTQ+ support offered by the charity METRO and its youth service METRO Youth. As well as a weekly session held in Lewisham, there are also various additional sessions taking place across South-east London.

For support with mental health, trans people who are aged 18+ and registered with a Lewisham GP can access support through the wider LGBTQ+ offer from [Lewisham NHS Talking Therapies](#).

Signposting

Whilst there is some older information about wider LGBTQ+ events on the Lewisham Council website, which have been promoted for Pride Month in previous years. There is currently no health service information.

Community Views

Lewisham specific consultation with trans community members is not yet available, however, Bristol Healthwatch published a Trans Health Report in 2018. This followed work undertaken during 2017-18 with the Diversity Trust and other partners to identify health inequalities, and discrimination, experienced by Trans and Non-Binary people and communities across the Southwest of England.

The project worked with over 200 Trans and Non-Binary people, aged from 16 to 80. Headline figures / findings included:

- 1 in 5 participants said they felt unsafe
- 71% of participants had thought about suicide
- 71% of participants had sought help for anxiety or depression
- 60% of participants have felt discriminated against because of their gender identity
- 30% of participants felt discriminated against in the health care system

In January 2019 in response to the report, University Hospitals Bristol NHS Foundation Trust wrote to Healthwatch acknowledging the work undertaken and highlighting their ongoing commitment to reviewing current equality and training policies to incorporate Trans Awareness.

Similarly, Healthwatch Sheffield, in partnership with local groups SAYiT and Transactive, carried out research into the experiences of trans people using health and care services in the city.

Two focus groups were held, which were organised in conjunction with two local groups who support the trans population. Healthwatch Sheffield described how the most powerful theme throughout their engagement was fear of accessing services - a fear of discrimination and of unfair treatment from providers. In some cases, the fear was based on previous experiences in health and/or social care settings and in others due to prejudice experienced in other contexts.

A recurrent theme was a perceived lack of awareness of trans and non-binary identities among health and care workers. This included LGBTQ issues in general, rights and entitlements, awareness of what services exist and the referral process. This lack of understanding was considered to be a barrier that can prevent or delay access to appropriate care. This was experienced within Sheffield inpatient and outpatient hospital settings and in primary care.

A key recommendation was better training for awareness of trans and non-binary identities.

Implications for Lewisham

- *Data Collection* - a common theme throughout relevant research is how key collecting robust local level data is. This applies to services to understand if people's experience of a service is impacted by their gender identity. It should also be standard practice to collect this information in equalities monitoring during consultation exercises.
- *Training* - whilst we await outcomes from local consultation exercises, research in other localities and national work has repeatedly identified that improvement training and awareness for healthcare and other support staff is imperative.

Glossary

<i>Term</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
Binary or trans binary	This refers to the gender binary of men and women. Trans binary refers to someone who identifies with a binary gender that differs or does not align to their sex assigned at birth.
Cisgender/cis	A person whose gender identity matches their sex assigned at birth, someone who is not transgender
Cisnormative assumption	The assumption that all individuals are cisgender (i.e., a person whose gender identity matches their sex assigned at birth)
Gender identity	A person's innate sense of their own gender, whether that be man, woman, non-binary or another gender identity. This may or may not align with the sex a person was assigned at birth. This is different to biological sex and different to sexual orientation.
Gender variant	A term to describe where a person's gender identity or expression does not align to societal binary gender roles (i.e., outside the binary of man and woman).
Misgendering	Misgendering occurs when you intentionally or unintentionally refer to a person, relate to a person, or use language to describe a person that doesn't align with their gender identity.
Non-binary	An umbrella term used to describe gender identities that fall outside the binary of man/woman. Often but not always included under the trans umbrella, people may or may not transition or consider themselves transgender.
Transgender/trans	An umbrella term for people whose gender differs and/or does not fully align with the sex assigned at birth
Transition	The steps that a trans person may take to live in the gender with which they identify. The steps taken will vary by individual but may include hormone medication, surgery, dressing differently and telling family or friends.
Transphobia	The dislike or fear of a person because they are, or are perceived to be, trans.