

National Gender Identity Clinical Network for  
Scotland [nss.ngicns@nhs.scot](mailto:nss.ngicns@nhs.scot)

Copied to: NHS Chief Executives

08 July 2021

Dear Colleague,

## **GENDER REASSIGNMENT PROTOCOL: UPDATE**

### **Background**

1. When first published in July 2012 Scotland's [Gender Reassignment Protocol](#) (GRP) CEL 26 (2012) was amongst the first clinical protocols of its kind in the world, providing patients in Scotland requiring specialist healthcare for gender reassignment with a clear clinical pathway for accessing these treatment options within NHS Scotland.
2. The Scottish Government is clear that it is committed to advancing equality for all LGBTI people and promoting, protecting and realising the rights of every trans and non-binary person in Scotland.
3. In recognition of this, a comprehensive review and update of the GRP is now required.

### **Scope**

4. It is expected that an updated GRP will take into account best practice from across and outwith NHS Scotland and be informed by advances in evidence, models of care and changes in terminology since 2012.
5. The updated GRP should also take into account relevant international guidance including the World Professional Association of Transgender Health (WPATH) guidelines. It should also recognise relevant updates in the World Health Organisation's most recent International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Health Problems (ICD-11).
6. We acknowledge that with the development of Young People's Gender Service at Sandyford the existing section of the 2012 GRP relating to services for children and young people will need to be revised as part of this work.

## Action

7. The National Gender Identity Clinical Network for Scotland (NGICNS) coordinates and represents the work of all four Gender Identity Clinics (GICs) within NHS Scotland and its agencies and aims to bring together primary care, patient and third sector representation to improve gender identity services.
8. In recognition of the expertise within NGICNS, the Scottish Government requests that NGICNS coordinate a full review and prepare an updated GRP. Considerations to assist NGICNS scope and shape this programme of work are provided in the Annex to this letter.

## Delivery

9. The Scottish Government recognises work to update the GRP will be substantive and require detailed engagement across NHS Scotland. It will also require extensive engagement with those with lived experience of accessing gender identity services.
10. Therefore, an updated GRP should be provided to Scottish Government for summer 2022. A written update on the progress of work to update the GRP should be provided to Scottish Government for October 2021.
11. Scottish Government will remain the document's publishing authority. Upon completion of NGICNS' work the updated GRP should be submitted to the Scottish Government by a date to be agreed in summer 2022.
12. The Scottish Government remains committed to and on hand in supporting you in this important work.

Yours sincerely



Dr Gregor Smith  
Chief Medical Officer

## WORK PROGRAMME

The NGICNS may wish to consider the following when establishing a programme of work to undertake a review and complete an update of the GRP:

- Establishing a dedicated working group;
- Agreeing a Terms of Reference to set the parameters of the review and action updating the GRP;
- Any working group membership to include:
  - representation from clinical specialisms involved in providing specialist gender identity care including endocrinology;
  - individuals and their families with lived experience of accessing gender identity services in Scotland;
  - organisations representing trans and non-binary people;
  - representatives of the Primary Care sector;
  - NHS National Services Scotland.
- Updating the GRP in line with recommendations set out in the [Scottish Public Health Network Healthcare Needs Assessment of Gender Identity Services](#), where appropriate;
- Embedding a Human Rights based, person-centred approach. This will include ensuring the experience of people using gender identity services is at the heart of the review and update. Relevant national documentation includes [Planning with People](#) and the [National Health and Wellbeing Outcomes Framework](#).
- Take into account the role of primary and community care in supporting gender identity services, recognising aspects of ongoing care of trans and non-binary individuals who have accessed specialist services that will be managed in such a setting;
- Considering if the GRP requires an updated name to more accurately reflect the breadth of health experiences and outcomes present when accessing gender identity services, recognising that gender reassignment is not the sole health or treatment outcome of gender identity services;
- Ensuring an updated GRP is consistent with relevant WPATH guidelines and WHO ICD-11;
- An updated GRP being accompanied by a 'patient facing' explanation document. This could help improve accessibility of an updated protocol and potentially assist service users understand what to expect from the NHS when accessing gender identity care;
- Putting in place processes to proactively publish documentation relevant to the work of updating the GRP in an accessible manner.