

## **Primary Care Responsibilities in Prescribing and Monitoring Hormone Therapy for Patients under the Specialist Gender Identity Service for Adults**

NHS England is the responsible commissioner for the specialised element of the gender dysphoria pathway, which in England is delivered through specialist Gender Identity Clinics, including the Nottingham Centre for Transgender Health. There is a detailed service specification for [Gender Identity Services for Adults \(Non-Surgical \)](#) and [Gender Identity Services for Adults \(Interventions\)](#), Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) have a supporting role to play, but are not directly involved in the commissioning of this pathway.

### **NHS England Service Specification**

The NHS England service specification for adults (Appendix J: Current arrangements for prescribing endocrine treatment p30-31) states that the service

- Will obtain written consent to the interventions under consideration from the individual, and provide a copy of the consent to the individual and their GP.
- Provide the GP with patient-specific 'prescribing guidance', which will consist of a written treatment recommendation, and adequately-detailed information about necessary pre-treatment assessments, recommended preparations of medications, and advice on dosages, administration, initiation, duration of treatment, physical and laboratory monitoring, interpretation of laboratory results and likely treatment effects.
- Will give GPs advice on dose titration and the introduction of additional pharmacological interventions by the provider.
- Respond promptly to requests by GPs for advice regarding the interpretation of laboratory results and medication use.
- Individuals receiving endocrine and other pharmacological interventions recommended by the Provider will have these reviewed by a medical practitioner from the specialist multi-disciplinary team at least once in twelve months. More frequent review should be provided according to clinical need, particularly after treatment initiation or following significant changes in regimen. The purpose of clinical monitoring during hormone use is to assess the degree of feminisation / masculinisation and the possible presence of adverse effects of medication.
- The Lead Clinician will provide the GP with written advice when the individual is discharged. They will give advice on the individual's future need for endocrine and other pharmacological interventions, the anticipated duration of treatment (which may be life-long), the regimen recommended for on-going use, its intended effects and possible side-effects, long-term monitoring recommendations, and how they might access further information in the future.

The services specification notes that

Most recommendations will be for medications to be used outside the indications approved by the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency. The General Medical Council advises GPs that they may prescribe 'unlicensed medicines' where this is necessary to meet the specific needs of the patient and where there is no suitably licensed medicine that will meet the patient's need.

### **General Medical Council Guidance (GMC)**

The GMC has a collection of resources available within its ethical hub on Trans healthcare. This includes a section on [prescribing](#) and [mental health and bridging prescriptions](#).

GMC guidance states that GPs should collaborate with a Gender Identity Clinic (GIC) and/or an experienced gender specialist to provide effective and timely treatment for trans patients. This may include:

- prescribing medicines on the recommendation of an experienced gender specialist for the treatment of gender dysphoria, and
- following recommendations for safety and treatment monitoring.

It also advises that once the patient has been discharged by a GIC or experienced gender specialist, the prescribing and monitoring of hormone therapy can be carried out in primary care without further specialist input. However it is reasonable for a GP to expect the GIC or specialist to remain available to provide timely support and advice where necessary.

### **Medication**

The previous NHS England specialised services circular [Primary Care Responsibilities in Prescribing and Monitoring Hormone Therapy for Transgender and Non-Binary Adults](#) contained links to the Royal College of Psychiatrists [Good Practice Guidelines for the Assessment and Treatment of Adults with Gender Dysphoria](#) which provides further information and has guidance on medication in appendices 4 and 5, as a suggested collaborative care protocol.

### **Royal College of General Practitioners**

In June 2019 RCGP published a position statement on [The role of the GP in caring for gender-questioning and transgender patients](#) this contains useful information and links for general practice.

### **Further Information and Advice for GP practices**

Contact your primary care Medicines Optimisation Team for further information and guidance, including advice on situations that fall outside of the specialised commissioned service such as recommendations from private clinics or regarding the NHSE children and adolescents [service specification](#) and [prescribing policy](#) documents.