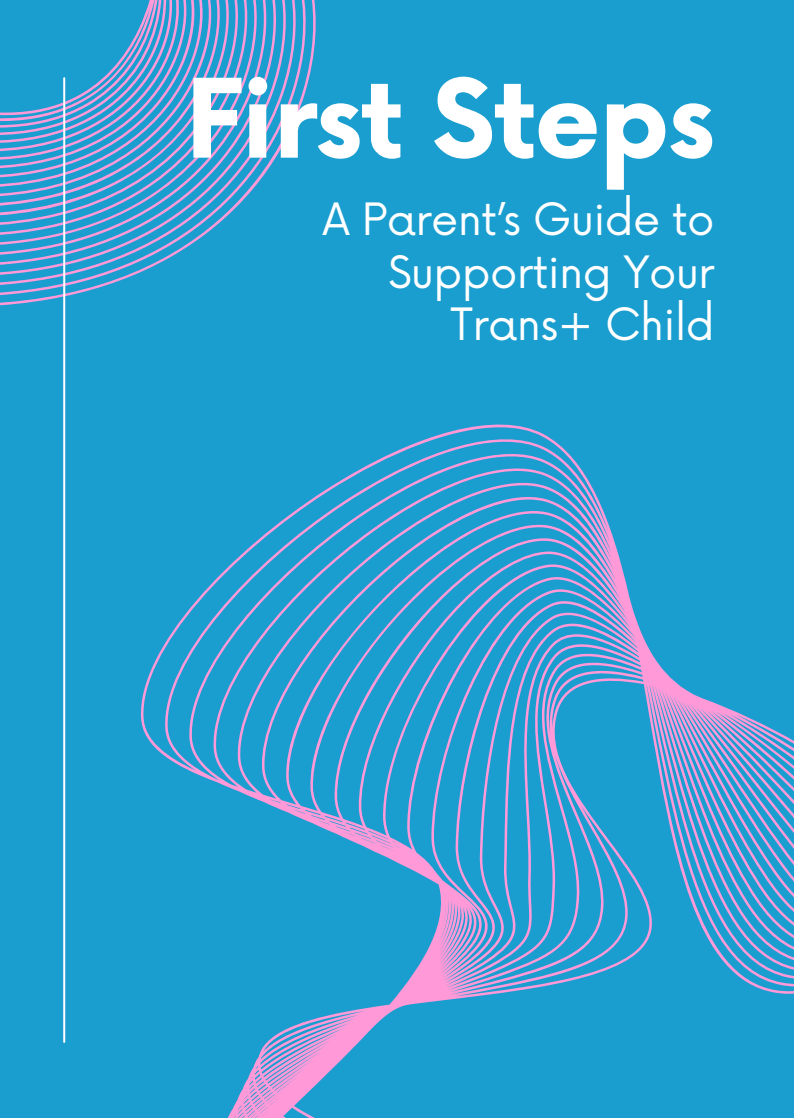


The background is a solid blue color. It features several abstract, flowing pink lines that create a sense of movement and depth. These lines are most prominent in the top left and bottom right corners, where they form large, wavy, ribbon-like shapes. A thin, vertical white line runs down the left side of the page, starting from the top and extending almost to the bottom.

First Steps

A Parent's Guide to
Supporting Your
Trans+ Child

Introduction

This booklet is aimed at supporting parents of newly out transgender, non-binary, or gender questioning children and teens. Our goal is to provide practical insights and advice for tackling the unique challenges faced by parents of trans+ youth.

Research has shown that parental support is vital for trans and non-binary children, as well as adults. Those who receive strong support with their identities are **far less likely** to struggle with mental health issues, and are more likely to develop healthy self-esteem, strong social relationships, and a positive sense of belonging within their communities.

Throughout this booklet you will find advice on understanding terminology, navigating social challenges, legal considerations, and resources for finding further support and information. For further support from **The OutHouse**, please see our website to learn about our range of LGBTQ+ social & support services, including our **Trans+ Parent's support group**.

Special thanks to The OutHouse community for their contributions in co-producing this booklet.

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Glossary

Transgender

Someone whose gender identity does not match with the one registered for them at birth.

A trans person may be pre-transition, in the process of transitioning, or have already reached their goals. All would still be considered to be transgender.

A transgender woman is someone who was assigned male at birth and has transitioned to female. A transgender man is someone who was assigned female at birth and has transitioned to male.

The term "transgender" is an adjective, for example: transgender man, transgender woman, trans people. Referring to someone as "a trans" or "the transgenders" etc is incorrect usage and could be considered disrespectful.

Non-Binary

Someone who does not consider themselves to be either male or female. They could feel they are somewhere in between, closer towards one than the other, or even that they have no gender at all.

A non-binary person may consider themselves to be transgender as well, or may not, and might still choose to transition to bring their gender expression in line with their gender identity. It's an umbrella term that encompasses a range of gender identities that don't strictly fall under male or female.

Gender Dysphoria

The feeling of extreme anxiety and unhappiness that some people experience when their body or other people's treatment towards them does not match their gender identity.

In essence, it's the uncomfortable feeling that a trans or non-binary person experiences that leads them to the desire to change their gender expression and potentially transition.

For more information on exactly what gender dysphoria is and how it feels, The OutHouse booklet "My Body Doesn't Feel Like Me: Gender Dysphoria Explained" takes a deeper dive into the topic!

Glossary

Gender Identity

One's innate internal sense of their own gender. Everyone has a gender identity (even you!) which may or may not match with their assigned gender at birth.

Gender Expression

The external presentation of one's gender. This may or may not match with the traditional societal expectations of what you might expect to correspond with a person's stated gender identity.

For example: A tomboy is a girl who may choose to wear clothing and present themselves in a way more often associated with boys.

Whilst this is a well known example, people can express their gender in many different ways and this is not always necessarily fully linked to their gender identity.

Pronouns

Words used to refer to people in conversation in place of someone's name. He/Him, She/Her, and They/Them are the most common. A person who is transitioning will usually change their preferred pronouns as part of their transition.

People may choose to use a mix of pronouns such as She/They (while it's written as She/They, this usually includes She/Her/They/Them). To use mixed pronouns, it's best to alternate or switch the usage of each in roughly equal amounts.

If you're not sure of someone's pronouns or how to use them, it's best to ask the person what they prefer!

Neo-pronouns

Derived from 'neo' meaning 'new', these are pronouns used by some people as alternatives to or alongside more traditional pronouns. The most common examples are Xe/Xym, Fae/Faer, and It/Its.

They are most often used by people who feel disconnected from traditional gender binaries as a form of self-expression and reclamation. If you're unsure how to use them in a sentence, it is best just to ask!

Glossary

Sexual Orientation

A person's sexual attraction to other people.

You've probably heard of Straight, Gay, and Bisexual, but there is also Pansexual (attracted to people regardless of gender), Asexual (does not experience sexual attraction), and others.

Romantic Orientation

A person's romantic attraction to other people.

This is usually linked to sexual attraction, but not always! It's possible to find people of a certain gender sexually attractive but not romantically attractive.

Deadname

A person's previously used name after they have changed it.

For trans people, hearing their deadname or being referred to as such (deadnaming or being deadnamed) can be upsetting, especially if it was done intentionally. Making an effort to use someone's new name is an important sign of support and respect.

Misgendering

Referring to somebody with incorrect pronoun usage.

For trans and non-binary people this can be especially upsetting as it shows a lack of support and recognition of their transition.

Whilst it's understandable to need some time to get used to a change of pronouns, showing support means making an active effort. Use correct pronouns even when you think about them or when you speak about them and they aren't present. Eventually, it will become second nature.

Is It Just a Phase?

You may have wondered “is it just a phase?” at some point, and that’s a fairly common concern!

The thing to remember is that whilst you may be hearing about this for the first time very recently, coming out to your parents or carers is a huge, daunting step, and it’s unlikely to be something that was decided overnight.

Trust your child to know who they are and how they feel, and they’re likely to trust you more as a confidant throughout their journey.

A large part of transitioning, especially for children and teenagers, is **fully reversible**.

If you change your mind on name, pronouns, clothing, or any other form of social gender expression, you can simply change back!



Creating a Supportive Environment

As a parent, your love, support and patience is crucial for your trans+ child's wellbeing as they explore their identity. Creating a nurturing home environment is essential to show and provide support in a place where they feel most safe.

With that in mind, here are some **key pointers** to consider:

Embrace Open Communication

Transitioning is unique to the individual and everyone will have different goals. For some, they may be happy solely with social transition, whereas others will eventually want to medically transition with hormones and/or surgery.

It's vitally important to allow your child to explore their identity at their own pace. All children and young adults should be allowed space to explore who they are, and trans+ ones are no different.

- When your child shares their thoughts and feelings, **listen**.
- Show **empathy**, even if you can't personally relate. Try to understand and accept why they feel as they do.
- Demonstrate a willingness to **learn** by asking questions and showing a genuine interest, however, be careful not to pry and instead allow them to share what they feel comfortable to.

Make an effort to use their correct pronouns and name:

This is the easiest way to show your child that you support them and are on their side. Ask them which pronouns they prefer for you to use, and make an effort to use them.

Adjusting to the change may take time and at first will require an active effort before it becomes natural. If you make a mistake, apologise, correct yourself, and move on. Prolonging the apology is likely to cause more discomfort. The best way to get used to the change is to not only refer to them with their new pronouns or name out loud, but also think of them with those pronouns and name and use them even when they aren't themselves present.

Remember, their new name IS their real name.



Creating a Supportive Environment

If you aren't sure how to use a certain set of pronouns, use this booklet as a guide, research online, or ask your child themselves to explain for you.

Be aware that your child's gender identity may not be known to everyone and they may ask for you to only use their new pronouns in private, and their old ones in front of other people whom they are not yet out to. This will require additional effort but is **crucially** important to avoid outing them before they are ready.

Advocate for your child

This means standing up for your child's rights and ensuring that they and their trans peers are treated with dignity and respect. Educate family members and friends on the importance of showing support and respecting your child's identity.

Always refer to your child by their name and pronouns even when they aren't present (as long as they are out to who you're speaking to) and defend them even when they aren't present to hear what's being said.

Once your child is ready, communicate with their school and ensure that their correct name and pronouns are being used by staff, in record systems, and by classmates. Check what the policy is for misgendering and how staff are trained. Make sure the school has clear and confidential routes for your child to report concerns or issues of bullying. This could be a **named staff member** whom your child trusts to be a point of contact for raising concerns and issues.

Currently, due to the April 2025 Supreme Court ruling on the definition of "sex" under the Equality Act, transgender pupils may not be allowed to use the toilets or changing rooms of their preferred gender. They should however have access to a private gender-neutral facility upon request. The school should have a **written policy** on toilet access for trans pupils which will set out what the "alternative provision" is, and this should ideally not require the child to request a key to access (therefore being forced to out themselves every time).

Creating a Supportive Environment

Stay informed with changes to school, local, and national policies involving transgender rights. Having a good awareness will allow you to better advocate for your child, and it shows that you are on their side and ready to fight their corner. Feeling supported is vital for youth, trans+ or not, and this is your opportunity to show that you are their **source of support**.

The OutHouse offers a peer support group for parents and carers of trans+ people of any age. For those interested but not nearby, check with your local LGBTQ+ charity for support groups, or seek out similar communities online.

Your rights when it comes to school policy

Knowing what schools should be doing gives you a strong ground when advocating.

These are some of the relevant policies you should be aware of:

- **Equality Act 2010**
 - Includes “gender reassignment” as a protected characteristic.
 - Even following the Equality Act changes from April 2025, gender reassignment remains one of the nine protected characteristics. Schools must not discriminate against, harass, or victimise pupils who are trans.
- **Safeguarding practice**
 - Recent versions emphasise that schools must ensure children are safe and supported - LGBTQ+, transgender, or gender-questioning pupils are recognised as groups that may need **additional** protection.
 - Whilst not every school guidance is “statutory”, safeguarding is a **non-negotiable** legal duty.



Navigating Social Challenges

Your child may ask for your help with letting extended family members know about their identity. This may feel daunting at first, but is a sign of trust between you and your child.

Here are a few pieces of advice for tackling this challenge:

Follow your child's lead

Your child should guide you on how and when their identity is shared.

Respect whether they want to tell certain relatives themselves, or would prefer for you to do it on their behalf. Avoid outing them without permission, **even to well-meaning family members**.

Respect their pace

Some children or young adults may want everyone to know right away, whilst others will prefer to move at a gradual pace. Let them decide how much information to share at any given stage.

Understand that coming out is an extended process, nobody comes out just once.

Prepare for how family members might react

Think ahead about who may be supportive, uncertain, or resistant. Discuss with your child how to handle possible negative reactions, including whether to limit contact with unsupportive relatives.

Reassure your child that their safety and wellbeing comes **first**.

Teach family members how to be good allies

Encourage them to use correct names and pronouns, explain the importance of listening without judgement, and share this booklet and other resources with them so that they can learn more as you have.

Accessing Professional Support

You may be interested in pursuing further professional support for either your child or yourself. Below are a few different options for accessing support.

The OutHouse

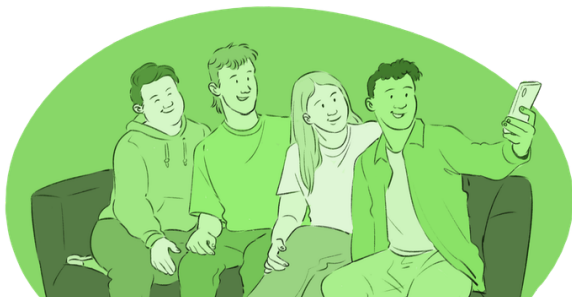
At The OutHouse we offer specialised LGBTQ+ counselling, wellbeing support, and over 45 different peer support and social groups for LGBTQ+ individuals from ages 13 and up, including adults. For more information on OutHouse services including the Trans+ Parent's Support group & our range of youth services, please see our website at theouthouse.org.uk.

Mermaids

Mermaids have been supporting trans, non-binary, and gender diverse children and young people since 1995. Their website offers online forum spaces for parents and young trans+ people to connect with each other.

Pink Therapy

Pink Therapy is the UK's largest independant therapy organisation working with gender and sexually diverse clients. Their website offers an extensive directory of therapists and counsellors which can be searched for based on preferred criteria. Pink Therapists are self-employed and offer a range of specialities, locations (online or in-person), and price ranges.



Legal and Medical Considerations

Naturally, you may have started to consider the official side of things such as medical support or legal document changes. This next section will aim to cover some of these topics.

Medical considerations

It's important to remember that gender-affirming care is not all medical in nature. For young people the focus is largely on social transition, things like name, pronouns and presentation - with that said, there are some medical options for young people that your child may wish to consider.

In the UK, access to **puberty blockers** has been heavily restricted for the treatment of gender dysphoria, even though the same medication is still available to cisgender children for certain medical conditions.

Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) refers to the use of oestrogen or testosterone to bring about the physical changes of puberty to match a person's identity. Everybody has both of these hormones in their body, women generally have higher levels of oestrogen, whilst men will usually have higher testosterone.

Testosterone can deepen the voice and encourage facial hair growth, whereas **oestrogen** can encourage breast growth and soften body fat distribution (amongst other changes).

In the UK, young people must usually be referred by their GP to the **Gender Identity Development Service** for assessment. The waiting lists are extremely long (often several years).

HRT is not normally prescribed to under-16s on the NHS. For those over this age it may be considered but this would be only after multiple assessments and significant waiting periods. As of March 2026, new prescriptions for 16-18 year olds are currently paused and awaiting NHS review.

You may opt instead to go with a private healthcare provider for gender-affirming care for your child. This will usually mean a vastly reduced waiting time, but costs will be out of pocket. It's important you look for a reputable provider if you choose to go this route.

Legal and Medical Considerations

In the past, some GP surgeries have agreed to what is known as a **"Shared Care Agreement"** with a private provider. This means that your private provider will work with your GP and suggest which medications should be prescribed. Your GP will then handle the prescribing and any necessary monitoring blood tests. The benefit of this is the ability to receive medication through the NHS (rather than paying out of pocket).

Following recent NHS guidance, it is no longer recommended for GPs to agree to Shared Care Agreements for patients under the age of 18. For those over 18, GPs may still agree, though it can be difficult to find one who will. They may however be able to offer monitoring blood tests, testing for **oestrogen, testosterone, lipids**, and **liver function** regularly (ideally every three months).

Gender Recognition Certificate (GRC)

A Gender Recognition Certificate is a legal document used to change legal sex for someone age 18 or over. This can then be used to change the legal sex recorded on a birth, death, or marriage certificate.

A GRC is **not needed** to change sex or names on passports, NHS records, bank records, or most day-to-day documents. To be issued a GRC, someone must be over 18 and provide evidence of living in their affirmed gender for two years as well as medical reports from two different doctors.

Deed Polls

A deed poll is a legal document used to change a person's name. For under 16s, all parents with parental responsibility must normally agree. Young people aged 16-17 are able to complete a deed poll with only one parent's consent. Once you have a deed poll, you can use it to update most official records.

There are two options for deed polls: enrolled or unenrolled. For most situations, unenrolled will be sufficient and you can print off a free online template to complete this. If you choose to have it enrolled, be aware both old and new names will become a matter of public record which may be a privacy concern.

Legal and Medical Considerations

NHS records

For NHS records, you can ask your GP surgery to update name and gender marker. They must change this upon request. They may need to issue a new NHS number and transfer over medical records.

Passports

Passports can be updated using a deed poll but be aware that currently in the UK, the only options are M or F. Using an X gender marker or other letter indicating a non-binary identity is not possible

Driver's Licences

To update a driver's licence you must fill in a D1 Driver's Licence form which you can ask for from the Post Office. Updating names and titles are free, but a new photo requires a payment of £17 paid via postal order or cheque. Remember to include your deed poll when you send your form.

Driver's licences in the UK do have a gender marker, although it is hidden within your licence number. To update this you should request the change by including a letter with your returned form, stating which gender marker (male or female only) you would like.



Educational Resources

If you're looking for further reading on the topic of being trans, transitioning, or what gender euphoria feels like, here are some of our recommendations.

Gender Construction Kit – Genderkit.org.uk

Gender construction kit is a volunteer led project that provides community advice for people looking to begin their transition. The site offers advice for a wide range of topics including changing your name, pronouns, voice, hair, legal documents, and many more.

Trans Teen Survival Guide – Owl and Fox Fisher

Written by trans youth activists Fox and Owl, Trans Teen Survival guide aims to inform trans teens about topics such as how to come out to family and friends, what it's like to start HRT, and how to put on a packer. With a focus on self-care, it offers invaluable advice to teens growing up trans.

Gender Euphoria – Laura Kate Dale

In this anthology of trans-positive stories collected by Laura Kate Dale, trans, non-binary, genderfluid and intersex writers recount their real-life stories of gender euphoria as they begin their transitions and discover more about who they are.

My Body Doesn't Feel Like Me: Gender Dysphoria Explained

A booklet designed and written by The OutHouse and co-produced alongside members of our local Trans+ community. The booklet examines what the term gender dysphoria means, how it feels, and why it might lead somebody to want to transition. My Body Doesn't Feel Like Me is available for free on our website or as a printed version from The OutHouse itself.



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theouthouse.org.uk

**SCAN THE QR FOR MORE RESOURCES - INCLUDING
A SIGNPOSTING LIST FOR FURTHER SUPPORT**

About The OutHouse:

The OutHouse is an LGBTQ+ focused charity, offering support, services and social groups to the LGBTQ+ community of Colchester and beyond. Our services are open to anyone within Essex who can get to our groups. For more information on specific social and support groups, please visit our website or social media.



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