

## Useful websites:

**Press for Change**  
[www.pfc.org.uk](http://www.pfc.org.uk)

**The international journal of transgenderism**  
[www.symposion.com](http://www.symposion.com)

**Transsexual, transgender, and intersex history**  
[www.transhistory.org](http://www.transhistory.org)

**Site about gender dysphoria, and all of the complexities surrounding it**  
[www.transsexual.org.uk](http://www.transsexual.org.uk)

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[www.cwu.org](http://www.cwu.org)

Any member who needs confidential contact with the union, and is not able to speak with their branch, call CWU HQ on:

**020 8971 7356**

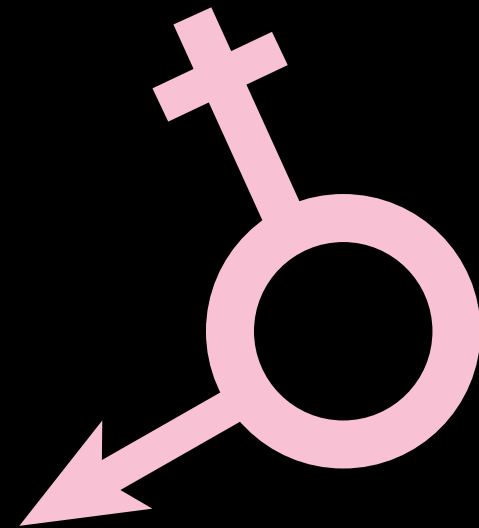
*Any conversations will be treated in the strictest confidence.*

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# A guide to Transsexualism



## Transsexual:

**A transsexual person feels that their gender identity is opposite to their actual physical sex, which leads to a deep sense of unease and unhappiness. A male to female transsexual person is someone who feels female despite being physically male. A female to male transsexual is someone who feels male despite being physically female.**



## Is transsexualism an illness?

No, there is considerable medical and sociological evidence to show that transsexual people are born, not made, possibly because of a genetic or foetal disorder. Most transsexual people are well-balanced individuals.

## Can they be cured?

Gender identity can't be changed by any known therapy. However, physical treatment, which alters the body to fit the mind, is usually helpful, enabling the transsexual person to lead a full and contented life as a member of their 'true sex'. Such treatment is called a sex change or gender reassignment.

## What is a sex change?

Both male to female, and female to male transsexual people can take artificial hormones which alter secondary sexual characteristics such as body shape. Male to females also undergo electrolysis to remove facial hair. Surgery can then be performed. Male to females can have their genitals amputated and an artificial vagina created. Female to males are less fortunate, they can have their breasts, and if desirable, their wombs removed, but the operation to create a penis is much more difficult and many people prefer not to take the risk.



## Transsexual or transvestite?

A transvestite man temporarily adopts a female role including women's clothing and often a female name, but still knows himself to be a man. However, a male to female TRANSSEXUAL person knows him(her)self to be a woman. The reverse is the case for female to male transvestites/transsexuals.

## Is it medically recognised?

Yes, transsexualism is a medically recognised disorder known as GENDER DYSPHORIA.

## Why can't transsexual people just be gay or lesbian?

In most people, physical sex, gender identity and sexuality all match up so that a person who is physically male feels himself to be a man and is attracted to women. People who have never had to question this sometimes assume that gender identity and sexuality are two sides of the same coin, this is NOT SO!

A gay man, although sexually attracted to men rather than women, still feels himself to be male. But a male to female transsexual person feels him(her)self to be female, and would wish his (her) partner to treat them as a woman. A female to male transsexual person would wish his (her) partner to treat them as a man.

## CURRENT UK LEGAL SITUATION

- Marriage is unlawful.
- Originally recorded gender remains on all National Insurance records and death certificates.
- Adoption and fostering are effectively barred by statute and case law.
- Detainment and imprisonment rights are not assured.
- Rape of female transsexual people is not chargeable as such.
- Open to prosecution for using public toilets.
- The British government is currently under pressure to change these laws to bring them more in line with other European countries.
- The European Court of Justice has ruled recently that it is unlawful to discriminate against a person for having had, or considered having gender reassignment.
- The CWU is actively opposed to all forms of discrimination and harassment based on race, creed, age, sex or sexual orientation.

