

TRANS*
FAMILIES
EVALUATION
2019



“Gender dysphoria can cause anxiety, depression and other serious mental health problems. These arise more from the social reception of the condition rather than from the condition itself.”

(p6. JSNA-July 2015 PHAST-SCC)

41% of trans men and trans women responding to a Stonewall survey said they had experienced a hate crime or incident because of their gender identity in the last 12 months.

67% of trans respondents said they had avoided being open about their gender identity for fear of a negative reaction from others.

25% of trans people had experienced homelessness at some point in their lives.

Stonewall survey 2018

“We think the Trans* Families project is so valuable in Suffolk because it offers peer support in a safe space for parents and young people who feel isolated and alone for most of the time.”

Andy Yacob, Chief Executive
Health watch Suffolk

“Trans* Families provides a really important space and opportunity for the whole family to receive up-to-date information, advice, and support. It has enabled parents and young people to meet others in similar circumstances and these peer groups help with wellbeing and meaningful connections.”

Tibbs Pinter, Chief Executive
Suffolk Young People’s Health Project

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Chair's Welcome

I am very proud to present this evaluation report of our highly valued Trans* Family Project.

In applying Youth Work practice and principles, we have seen a highly progressive and successful area of our work develop; Trans* Families continues to be well attended and as you will read further in this report, the evaluation process has been very effective.

The statistics for Trans* and Non-Binary individuals remain a significant concern with higher suicide and self-harm rates than any other minority group in the UK. This stands as the rationale behind our work within Trans* Families, meaning young people and their families are empowered to move forward confidently into the future.

Thanks for taking the time to read this report and for supporting our work more widely at Outreach youth.

There is always much more to be done.



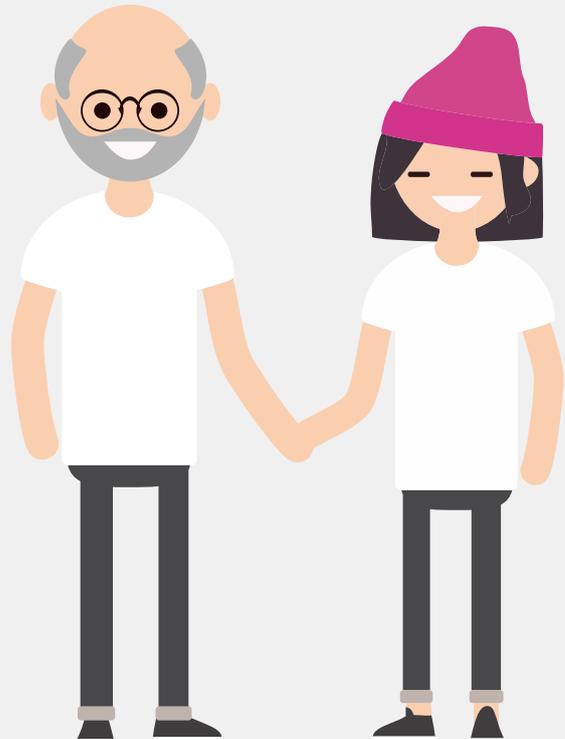
Pauline Henry, Chair
Outreach Youth

Executive Summary

Outreach youth's Trans* Families Project is a much needed service in Suffolk, the service delivered is highly valuable and the quality of delivery is excellent. This evaluation report supports the notion that services are in high demand for Trans* young people and their families at a local level in Suffolk.

Gender identity is a highly complex issue where knowledge and support are both equally required to support children, young people and their families. This report evidences that the youth work and peer led parents work approach are highly successful in providing this support.

The young people's case studies are highly valuable and the fact that the young people are willing to use their real names is an enormous testament of the quality of the work being delivered through Trans* Families.



About Outreach Youth

Outreach youth are an established charity working in Suffolk. Outreach youth's work began in 2006. Outreach youth is committed to enabling Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans*, Queer and Questioning (LGBT*Q+) young people and their peers realise their unique potential and to take a positive role in society. They are supported in achieving this aim through their involvement and participation in social and informal education youth work opportunities.

All Outreach youth projects and work with young people is underpinned by youth work principles and practice, which include:

1. Young people choosing whether and how to become involved with Outreach youth.
2. The work starting from the needs and wishes of young people and all funding bids will reflect this.
3. Involving young people in taking action to improve their own lives and the lives of their communities.
4. Promoting equality and challenge oppressive structures in society, institutions, groups and individuals, including in our own organisation.
5. Promoting co-operative decision-making in our own work, in our youth groups and in the communities where we work.
6. Encouraging, nurturing and respecting LGBT*Q+ young people's individual and collective aspirations, as well as their sense of responsibility.
7. Commitment to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The principles inform the nature and approach of Outreach youth's work with young people and their families; youth work is widely regarded as an effective methodology for improving the lives of marginalised and in many cases, vulnerable young people. The principles of Empowerment, Equality, Education and Participation are highly valued in the tangible work delivered by Outreach youth with LGBT*Q+ young people.

Outreach youth have the following values at the core of their work:

Positive Relationships – we like young LGBT*Q+ people and we work to build positive, respectful, appropriate and empowering relationships with young people, their families, colleagues and other professionals.

Respect – we respect young LGBT*Q+ people, their families, colleagues and the professionals we work with.

Innovation – we are proud that we provide innovative and high-quality youth work to young LGBT*Q+ people, with a track record of providing creative solutions and looking for new ways to solving problems.

Integrity – as a youth work charity, we aim to be accountable and transparent to the young LGBT*Q+ people we work with, our supporters and funders.

Aspirational – we see youth work as being able to inspire young LGBT*Q+ people and assist them to fulfil their potential – through positive and supportive youth work experiences – we aim to empower young LGBT*Q+ people to build brighter futures.

About the Trans* Families Project

The Trans* Families project is a group for parents and carers of children and young people who identify as Trans* or Non-Binary, or who are questioning their gender identity. The parents and carers, accompanied by their children and young people, meet on a monthly basis, facilitating peer support for both parents, carers and their children.

The project provides parents and carers with a unique opportunity to meet other parents of Trans* children in a safe, supportive space. As part of the group parents and carers access support; share their experiences and knowledge and participate together in activities in the absence of fear, discrimination and rejection.

The Trans* Families project seeks to provide a peer-led parents/carers' group through providing: an essential physical space for sharing experiences and obtaining support; offering emotional wellbeing; reducing isolation and providing vital support to parents/carers who are supporting young people who identify as Trans* Gender Variant or Non-Binary.

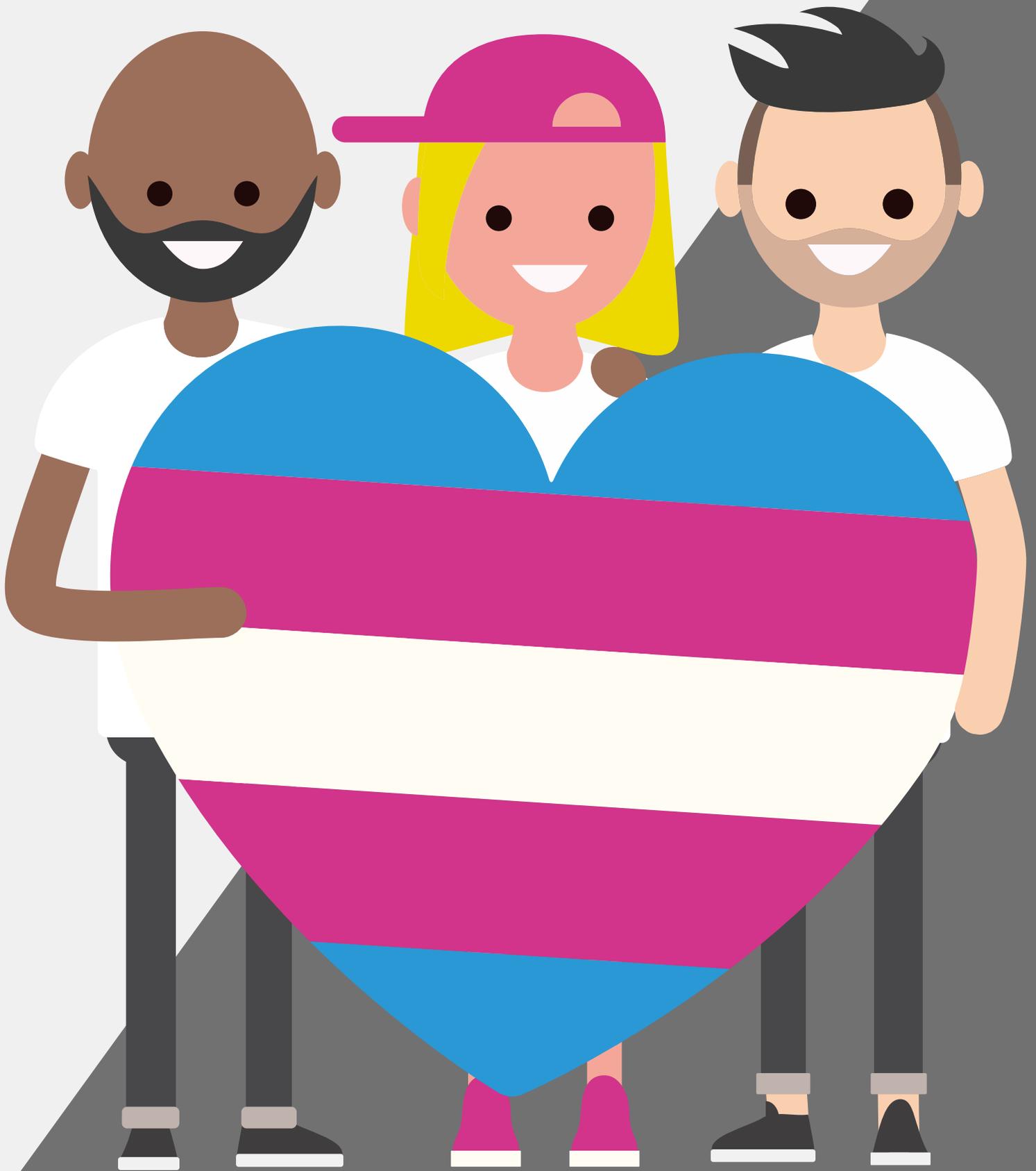
When exploring gender identity, issues such as societal stigma and body dysmorphia mean that the prevalence of certain mental health problems are particularly high among young Trans* people - while they also experience significant inequalities relating to health, wellbeing and broader social and economic circumstances.

Trans* young people represent one of the most vulnerable groups within our society as regards the prevalence of self-harm and non-suicidal self-injurious behaviour (Reisner et al, 2015).

The purpose of the external evaluation is to provide insight for Suffolk Public Health and other potential funders to gain an understanding of the complexities and value of the work delivered by Outreach youth with Trans* young people and their families. In addition, the evaluation will support Outreach youth internally to shape their services moving forward.

The external evaluation will consider to what degree the project has achieved the originally intended outcomes, which were as follows:

- To reduce the isolation of parents/carers of Trans* young people;
- To increase the capacity for parents/carers to support their Trans* young people;
- To improve the physical and emotional health of Trans* families;
- To reduce the isolation of young Trans* people aged 11 – 17 years;
- To increase Trans* and Non-Binary young people's self-esteem, confidence and wellbeing;
- To increase awareness of, and access to, health care services in Suffolk.



Key Definitions

Sex

The classification of people as male or female. At birth infants are assigned a sex, usually based on the appearance of their external anatomy. (This is what is written on the birth certificate.) However, a person's sex is actually a combination of bodily characteristics including: chromosomes, hormones, internal and external reproductive organs, and secondary sex characteristics.

Gender Identity

One's internal, deeply held sense of one's gender. For transgender people, their own internal gender identity does not match the sex they were assigned at birth. Most people have a gender identity of man or woman (or boy or girl). For some people, their gender identity does not fit neatly into one of those two choices. Unlike gender expression (see below) gender identity is not visible to others.

Gender Expression

External manifestations of gender, expressed through one's name, pronouns, clothing, haircut, behaviour, voice, or body characteristics. Society identifies these cues as masculine and feminine, although what is considered masculine and feminine changes over time and varies by culture. Typically, transgender people seek to make their gender expression align with their gender identity, rather than the sex they were assigned at birth.

Sexual Orientation

Describes an individual's enduring physical, romantic and/or emotional attraction to another person. Gender identity and sexual orientation are not the same. Transgender people may be straight, lesbian, gay, or bisexual. For example, a person who transitions from male to female and is attracted solely to men would identify as a straight woman.

Transgender (adj.)

An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from what is typically associated with the sex they were assigned at birth. People under the transgender umbrella may describe themselves using one or more of a wide variety of terms - including transgender. Some of those terms are defined below. Use the descriptive term preferred by the individual. Many transgender people are prescribed hormones by their doctors to change their bodies. Some undergo surgery as well. But not all transgender people can or will take those steps, and a transgender identity is not dependent upon medical procedures.

Transsexual (adj.)

An older term that originated in the medical and psychological communities. Still preferred by some people who have permanently changed - or seek to change - their bodies through medical interventions (including but not limited to hormones and/or surgeries). Unlike transgender, transsexual is not an umbrella term. Many transgender people do not identify as transsexual and prefer the word transgender. It is best to ask which term an individual prefers. If preferred, use as an adjective: transsexual woman or transsexual man.

Trans

Used as shorthand to mean transgender or transsexual - or sometimes to be inclusive of a wide variety of identities under the transgender umbrella. Because its meaning is not precise or widely understood, be careful when using it with audiences who may not understand what it means. Avoid unless used in a direct quote or in cases where you can clearly explain the term's meaning in the context of your story.

Transgender Man

People who were assigned male at birth but identify and live as a woman may use this term to describe themselves. They may shorten to trans woman. (Note: trans woman, not “transwoman.”) Some may also use MTF, an abbreviation for male-to-female. Some may prefer to simply be called women, without any modifier. It is always best to ask which term an individual prefers. Non-Binary:

People who are non-binary do not have a gender identity which is either male or female. There are many sub-groups who identify within the non-binary classification. These might be (some of these terms overlap or might be the same but some people prefer one over the other):

- Agender (not having a gender)
- Bigender (having two genders)
- Trigender
- Neutrois
- Genderqueer
- Gender fluid
- Demi boy
- Demi girl
- Androgyne

Transition

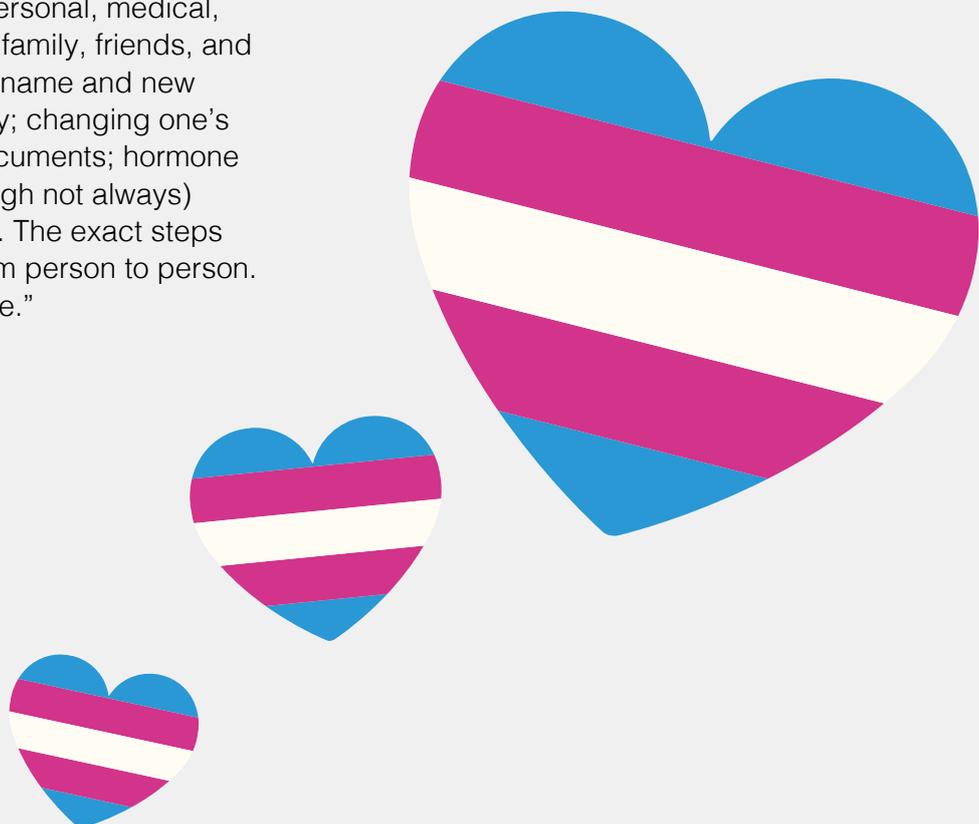
Altering one’s birth sex is not a one-step procedure; it is a complex process that occurs over a long period of time. Transition includes some or all of the following personal, medical, and legal steps: telling one’s family, friends, and co-workers; using a different name and new pronouns; dressing differently; changing one’s name and/or sex on legal documents; hormone therapy; and possibly (although not always) one or more types of surgery. The exact steps involved in transition vary from person to person. Avoid the phrase “sex change.”

Gender Dysphoria

In 2013, the American Psychiatric Association released the fifth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-V) which replaced the outdated entry “Gender Identity Disorder” with Gender Dysphoria and changed the criteria for diagnosis. The necessity of a psychiatric diagnosis remains controversial, as both psychiatric and medical authorities recommend individualised medical treatment through hormones and/or surgeries to treat gender dysphoria. Some transgender advocates believe the inclusion of Gender Dysphoria in the DSM is necessary in order to advocate for health insurance that covers the medically necessary treatment recommended for transgender people.

Tavistock and Portman Clinic

Tavistock and Portman Clinic is the UK’s only specialist clinic delivering the Gender Identity Development Service (GID) a highly specialised clinic for young people presenting with difficulties with their gender identity. Established in 1989.



About Dot to Dot Training & Consulting

Dot to Dot Training and Consultancy were commissioned to deliver a robust and detailed evaluation report of Outreach youth's Trans* Families Project in March 2019.

Simon Pickering leads the company. Simon has a long track record working within the Youth and Homeless Sectors. The company provides a bespoke and diverse range of services to Charities and Social Enterprises in the UK.

Evaluation Methodology

As part of this evaluation, a wide range of evidence has been gathered to provide the content for the evaluation report.

A mixture of qualitative and quantitative evidence has been collected through a range of engagements. Due to the relatively low numbers of families impacted by Trans* and Non-binary based challenges. The evaluation has focused more closely on qualitative evidence collecting; this has included stories of change.

Over the period of a number of months, the following evidence has been collected using a range of approaches including:

- One stakeholder feedback session with parents
- A combined focus group with young people, parents/carers, staff and volunteers
- Online feedback questionnaires completed by families
- Phone interviews with families
- Two stakeholder feedback sessions with young people
- Online feedback questionnaires completed by young people
- Semi-structured interviews with four young people
- Phone interviews with professionals who have referred young people and families to the group

- Semi-structured interviews with staff and volunteers at Outreach youth
- Completion of desk-based research to establish ethnographic and demographic information

Throughout the evaluation process, 18 young people have contributed and 20 parents/carers. Not all of the young people and parents/carer(s) are still attending the group, but in order to gain evidence and insight, former attendees were contacted. The evaluation process has looked closely at the project's effectiveness and tangible outcomes for the beneficiaries.

The external evaluation has examined the evidence collated and has outlined a number of key achievements. The evaluation has a particular focus on capturing young people and their families' experiences and journeys; as we found in many cases, the Trans* Families Project has made a real difference in the lives of the young people and families involved.

The results and recommendations of this external evaluation will provide Outreach youth with strong evidence to further support the importance of providing support services to Trans* young people and their families in Suffolk.

Parent's Stories



Sarah's Story

Sarah was signposted to Trans* Families by the counsellor at her son's school. Sarah and her partner wanted to support their son as well as possible and they were looking for somewhere to find wider help and support. The Trans* Families Project provided the much-needed support they were looking for.

In the short term it really helped Sarah and her partner to not feel alone in supporting their child in the transition process. They wanted to demonstrate their support to their son and the group really helped to send this signal to him.

In the longer term the Trans* Families Project has continued to provide a valuable network of support and answers for the whole family, alongside giving back to other families. The opportunity to raise the profile of Trans* based issues and the impact on families has been really important to Sarah.

Sarah said: "It was a really important way to show that we were supportive of him and happy to be open and proud of who he was. It provided instant answers to questions that we had and somewhere to just vent and feel listened to and supported."

"We have watched our son grow in confidence within the group and start to get involved with the other young people rather than stick to my side as he did in the early days. It is also a joy to see the other young people blossom and grow and they progress on their own journeys and this gives encouragement to us when it all feels impossible."



Nicole's Story

Nicole started coming to the group towards the end of 2018, when her child identified as being Trans*. She was told about Outreach youth and the Trans* Families Group by the school her young person attended.

In the short term it was a real relief for Nicole to find the group and be joined by other parents coming to term and managing the gender identity-based issues they were supporting their young people through. In the longer-term Nicole stated that the group had really help her to build new skills and strategies for supporting her young person and she is keen to share the skills and learning with other parents earlier in their child's transition.

Nicole said: "It was a relief to find the group - Andy was 100% brilliant; he was respectful, confident and clearly valued the issues and concerns I had. Knowing there are other parents and young people going through similar issues really helps you to come to grips with it and complete the journeys together. The landscape for Trans* Young people and their families is very difficult and Trans* Families provides a rare opportunity to find support and families experiencing the same demands and challenges."



Chris' Story

Chris' family journey began with a letter from their 14-year-old child telling them that they identified as non-binary. They began looking for support and a space to explore the issues associated. Referred by Suffolk Young People's Health Project (4YP) to Outreach youth.

Chris was very clear that the support provided by Trans* Families was invaluable for them as family unit, it gave them knowledge and skills to support each other. Chris commented that the peer led element for parents was such an important space for the sharing of problems and experiences, which in turn helped them all to move forward and collectively support one another. The parents were clear that the group's existence enabled them to better support their child throughout their transitional journey.

Chris said: "The journey with GPs is so difficult, with many barriers in the system. Having a parent's group to share our frustrations and difficulties was immensely valuable to our family. Charlie finds the group a comfortable space, without anxiety, which is encountered with so many other spheres we attend. We found the lack of information out there for families really concerning and we are grateful to the team at Outreach youth for doing such a good job to support young people alongside us parents."

Young People's Stories

*** The young people in this report asked to share their names. This is testimony to their growing confidence and the acceptance they have found.**



Luca's Story, 16

Luca began attending Trans* Families six months ago. Having coming out as Trans* two years previously, Luca had had a very difficult and isolated existence in these two years before joining the project. Luca's mum was supportive but really struggled to understand and come to terms with Luca's changing identity.

Luca said: "[The project] made me feel much more comfortable and open about being trans*; the group provided me with a safe space to be honest. The group are so good at listening to each other. Being part of this group and meeting others has greatly increased my confidence, which has enabled me to move on from the group and enter the world of work as a confident and assured person. The more I went, the more confident I felt."

"I found it incredibly difficult to find information that was helpful online and there is lots of misleading information out there. Without Trans* Families and my friendship group here, the education I received would have been lacking and I would have been far more defensive on Trans* issues. The youth work approach at Outreach youth has enabled me to feel welcomed and safe to learn more about myself."

"It's given me the confidence to share who I am; I feel empowered to be me and use my voice. It's a really difficult issue and now I feel I can explain Trans* related issues to anyone and the team at Outreach youth have taught me how to be confident and assured [in doing] this," stated Luca.

"The families element of the project is essential; my mum didn't understand it at first. She was open and coming to the group meeting other parents with the same struggles was very valuable to her and she now understands the importance of pronouns which is so helpful."



Aiden's Story, 18

Aiden began coming to Outreach youth in October 2015, solidly attending Trans* Families for two years without missing a session. He no longer attends, as he no longer needs the support offered by the group.

Aiden said: "Attending Trans* Families definitely helped my mental health to be surrounded by other young people going through the same experiences; the group really helped me to accept that I am Trans*. It has impacted my mental health so positively."

"In a community, you learn a lot from being around each other. Helped me with terminology and the social side of things, provided me with education - that has really helped me."

"My parents still attend the group and they really benefitted from the extra support offered by other parents. Initially, I tried making connections with other Trans* people online, which proved quite difficult to meaningfully join [that community] and it wouldn't have given me the support I needed, certainly not as good as Outreach youth."



Jae's Story, 19

Jae started coming to Outreach youth and more latterly, Trans* Families, when he was 14; he stopped attending last year at age 19.

Jae said: "Trans* Families helped me move into adulthood; it was really useful growing up, helping me to know more about myself. I didn't know any other Trans* people before which made me feel so isolated."

"Over time I realised I was Trans* and came through the group. I have recently given a couple of the talks nationally at the rainbow conference. I have shared my Trans* experience at these groups. I would never have dreamt of doing this prior to being part of Outreach youth."

"It's helped hugely with my confidence and identity. I feel like a real person now. The suicide rates are really high in the Trans* community as many feel they can't reach out- that's why the group is so important. The group is so helpful for young people who are searching for support. Some young people need their parents to attend; some parents won't go but they should."

Jae continued: "It has made me much more confident and able to be myself. I still struggle with my mental health, which has been impacted by my Trans* journey but Outreach youth has given me a support group of people that understand."

"The skills I learnt I use outside the group. I feel more equipped for the adult part of my life. When you are younger, it is scary to be Trans* and the future feels too challenging."



Marcus' Story, 19

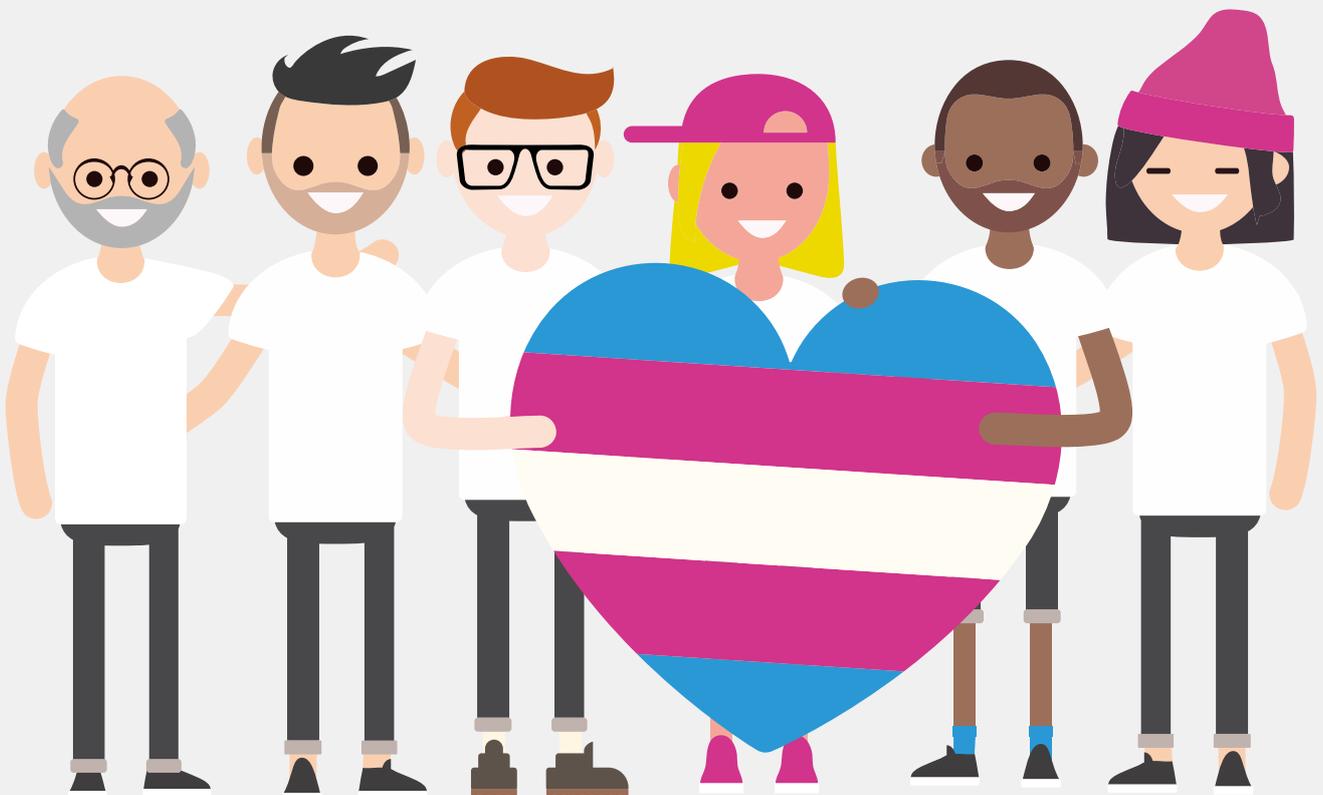
Marcus began attending the group aged 16; he is now 19 and living independently. His Mum wouldn't talk about Trans* based issues making his home life difficult, at times preventing him from attending the group.

Marcus said: "If my mum could have come to this group when I first came out as Trans* it would have transformed our relationship, but sadly the damage has already been done and our relationship feels irreparable."

"The project has given [me] confidence to educate others and [be]able to speak and talk confidently in what I say. I never felt confident to use my own voice prior to coming to Trans* Families."

Marcus stated: "The group is so valuable for parents; some have their own issues to deal with, but they need somewhere to talk, learn and deal with the issues connected to having a Trans* son or daughter. It's a big deal for them to have people outside of their own situation who they can relate to. The project gives an environment for parents to have space - however attending the group side by side their son or daughter is symbolic in some way."

"At first I tried finding information online but I have built a support network through Outreach youth that I would never have had otherwise. I don't think I would be confident and in a happy place. I would not be independent or mentally in the position I am now without Outreach and their team."



Summary & Findings

Demand for the service has increased since the Trans* Families Project started, referral numbers are up in the third year compared to the first year of Trans* Families.

Parents'/Carers' Feedback

Parents commented that there is a huge variation in GP surgery quality and reception staff. Some parents reported that their GPs didn't know the referral process and couldn't answer parents' questions. Furthermore, some reported that they had to support the GP to complete the correct paperwork.

Some parents reported that finding the right level of support at different parts of the journey was difficult. Similar to the themes communicated by young people, parents/carers reported that experiences with schools, school nurses, GP surgeries and NHS teams such as CAMHS varied greatly in terms of quality and approach.

Parents all commented that the Trans* Families Project had made a big impact on reducing their sense of isolation and reduced their anxiety that was connected to supporting their child through transitioning. The parents made it clear that a physical meeting is one of the most valuable elements of the project.

In summary, the feedback from parents/carers has some key themes around a lack of support, a lack of access to proper information and mixed experiences of the NHS and GP surgeries. Shared experience was a continual theme communicated by parents/carers with a number commenting that they would like more support to deal with the "loss" of their child as they go through transition.

Parents shared that journey issues were a constant and that the transitioning process varies in length and complications; therefore, having an unlimited time allowance to attend Trans* Families is hugely important, especially as other support is very short term.

All of the parents interviewed or participating in stakeholder groups communicated what a positive experience coming to the group had been, in addition to sharing how the group was an excellent source of information and learning.

100% said the Trans* Families Project is the only local and physically based group for information and support.

100% stated that their child is less isolated as a result of them participating in the Trans* Families Project.

64% rated the Trans* Families Project as Excellent, with 36% rating it as good.

55% stated they felt very isolated prior to attending the group.

82% of parents/carers stated they felt less isolated as a result of attending the group.

87% stated that their wellbeing had improved significantly as a result of attending the group.

100% stated there is not enough support available outside of the Trans* Project.

Young People's Feedback

Young people talked about their experience with counsellors who demonstrated a lack of understanding of Trans* issues. Young people reported how difficult it was to deal with counsellors who didn't understand or engage with Trans* related issues.

A high number of young people said that peer-led contact in schools eventually introduced them to the group; however, all of the young people reported that school understanding and knowledge about Trans* based issues was highly variable and that Outreach could do more to help in this area.

Young people's experience of school support is very mixed, with some young people reporting that the support received from school staff and lead teachers was really good; for others they reported that their school didn't deal at all well with them coming out and asking for support. Some described school as not being a "safe environment" for them. Some schools encourage Trans* young people to peer support others.

Some young people said that access due to lack of public transport was a real barrier to attending the group, either financially or due to a lack of public transport.

The young people were quite clear that the role of the youth worker was so important to their overall experience of the Trans* Families project; this youth worker role they reported had a large impact on the young people feeling more confident.

The learning aspect of the project is highly valued by the group, helping them to understand what it means to be Trans* and how to overcome the associated challenges.

As with all young people looking for strong friendships, coupled with a sense of meaningful belonging was highlighted as a vital element of the Trans* Families project.

A number of young people stated that more awareness for non-binary young people and a space to talk about these issues including further support for male to female transitioning young people was important.

A number of the group members said that education for Trans* based issues within the wider LGBT*Q+ community would be a really good addition to the work delivered by Outreach youth, with Trans* young people being trained to deliver training sessions.

Key Feedback Statistics

70% of young people have attended the group for 12 months or more.

83% rated the project as excellent, with 17% rating it as good.

80% reported that their personal confidence had increasing having participated in the project.

100% reported that they felt less isolated after attending the project.

76% of the young people stated their self-esteem had significantly improved.

Comments from Parent/Carers

"You feel so welcome as soon as you walk through the door! The whole transgender issue is alienating for the child and parents, so to feel welcome and supported is such a relief! This project is all there is, and it is so important and needed as Trans* issues are on the increase and people need help. It can feel really desperate at times and this place provides so much."

"The friendliness and support I have received recently has been amazing and the need for this project is massive in supporting young Trans* kids in the correct way when there is no other help available."

"Trans* Families has been our only source of support since being referred by a school nurse who had worked with our son with regard to his gender identity. There is nothing else available for us locally. The group has been a great support and has always been run in a professional, yet warm and welcoming way."

"There's light at the end of the tunnel! We are now all finally talking about issues together and no longer feel helpless and alone."

"It is vital that more projects are available throughout all the counties. We had to travel an hour to attend this particular group as our local project was for older children. The waiting list to be seen by a NHS professional is a staggering 24 months, which shows the lack of resources for Trans* children."

"My husband and I found this helped us so much as a family to accept, understand and to get through some of the most difficult journeys our children have to endure as a result of transitioning and be happy with who they really are, for acceptance within our family and friends. It can be very lonely when your child first comes out to you and you feel you're the only family until you attend amazing groups like this. We listen, support and help one another in any way we can."

Comments from Young People

“It is the one place [where] we can speak freely about ourselves and about what we are going through without being judged or misunderstood.”

“We all feel we understand each other and what we are experiencing.”

“It gives me a support system - people who go through the same things as me.”

“The teamwork and listening are amazing in our group.”

“The group works really well because lots of people have similar experiences; everyone is caring, kind and funny, especially volunteers Andy and Pauline.”

“I love the support and I have made new friends. When I’m at home, I have no one to talk to who is like me, so coming to this group has changed me and being able to talk to people with the same issues as me is so valuable.”

Professional’s Feedback

“As a large high school (1500 students) we work to support Trans* youngsters that are part of our school community, and their families. The ability to signpost to the Trans* Families Project is invaluable for us and the individuals who access the support, safe space and understanding that is provided.”

Kris Austin, Student Support Officer, Kesgrave High School

Other professionals interviewed were explicitly clear that the Trans* Families Project and the wider work of Outreach youth is vital for supporting young people and parents/carers.

All of the professionals interviewed were clear that there are significant gaps in service for young people and their families that identify as Trans*. Outreach youth’s Trans* Families project meets the need to some extent, but the professionals were all very supportive of the notion that the project should develop and increase the service offer where funding enabled this to be possible.

Outputs Achieved

Trans* Families is not a high-volume project and the anticipated numbers expected to engage in the project were relatively small. In the UK, the percentage of people who related to being Trans* and Non-Binary is 200,000 to 500,000 as estimated by the UK Government.

Trans* Families on initiation aimed to work 25 young people and 30 parents a year; 75 young people and 90 parents were to be supported over the three years of the project.

The evaluation was completed at the end of the second year; during this time, it has worked with 68 young people and 104 parents/carers.

Trans* Families has developed partnership-working relationships with over 20 other organisations in Suffolk meaning that awareness and understanding of Trans* based issues for young people is becoming more widely identified with Outreach youth, providing a vital service to young people and their families.

Outcomes Achieved

- A reduction in levels of isolation experienced by young Trans* people aged 11 – 17 years in Suffolk.
- Increased Trans* and Non-Binary young people's self-esteem, confidence and wellbeing
- A reduction in levels of isolation of parents/ carers of Trans* young people
- Increased capacity in skills for parents/ carers to support their Trans* young people
- A notable improvement in the physical and emotional health of Trans* families
- An increased awareness of, and access to, health care services in Suffolk

The outcomes for Trans* Families are being effectively achieved through the work of the Trans* Families projects. The quotes, statistics and comments by Young People and their families are clear evidence that the project and the approach taken to the area of work are proving to be highly successful.

Recommendations

1. Outreach youth should continue to deliver the excellent work of Trans* Families Project.
2. Secure ongoing funding short and long term is essential for the positive work to continue. The longer term the better to enable the continued growth and building on the success achieved already.
3. The need to appoint a counsellor with relevant experience and expertise of counselling Trans* and non-binary young people and their parents is an essential development of the project.
4. Continue to provide training and opportunities to promote the project to the right audience, including school pastoral teams, safeguarding leads, GP surgeries and staff and health workers.
5. Share good practice with other LGBT*Q+ groups regionally and nationally where opportunities are presented.
6. Explore opportunities to offer the project in other localities.
7. Explore opportunities to enable parents/ carers to run the parents/carers element of the project.
8. Devise a training course to support the pairing of parents together to act as peer supporters, with a parent at the beginning of the process and one much further on into supporting their child through transition.
9. Continue to train older Trans* young people to deliver Trans* based issues training for other LGBT*Q+ groups and professional audiences supported by youth workers from Outreach youth.
10. Track the impact and difference the project makes over a longer timescale to improve the lives of young people into adulthood; this could be delivered through an academic study.
11. To develop an information pack for parents/ carers writing and developed by parents/ carers.

Conclusion

The Trans* Families project is an excellent example of a youth-work approach making a significant impact in the lives of Trans* and Non-binary children and young people and their families.

It was very clear that all participants have developed trust in the Trans* Families Project, enabling them to reduce their sense of isolation while greatly increasing their confidence and level of self-esteem.

There is evidently a significant need for services around Trans* and Non-Binary young people and their families to be improved; this development can only be achieved by organisations like Outreach youth who work alongside young people and families with a collaborative approach. Strongly evidenced by the increasing number of referral that the project is currently receiving.

Young People and families reported that they found the CAHMS service very inconsistent – which heightens the need for the nature of this group to be continually supported. Furthermore,

the Tavistock and Portman clinic has a very long waiting list - young people and families find this period exceptionally difficult; it is during this time that young people and families most need the support offered locally by Trans* Families.

Parents and Carers are an integral part of supporting the journey of Trans* and Non-binary children and young people, the value of the parent and carer's role in the Trans* Families Project is vital to the success of supporting young people meaningfully.

The relationship between other parents and carers is hugely valuable to engender an approach of peer led support. The Trans* Families project's symbiotic approach has proven to be very valuable in supporting Trans* and Non-Binary young people and their families to progress positively.

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