

More information:

The [Addressing Inclusion: Effectively challenging homophobia, biphobia and transphobia guidance](#) provides information and guidance to school staff on addressing homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying in Scottish schools and complements [Respect for All: The National Approach to Anti-Bullying for Scotland's Children and Young People](#).

respectme,<sup>26</sup> Scotland's national anti-bullying service, can also provide advice and guidance about anti-bullying policy and practice and information for parents and carers.

## Coming out

“Coming out in high school was reasonably easy and I faced minimal negativity which was a very good thing of course. It undeniably improved my mental health and esteem significantly.”

– Trans young person

When someone discloses their gender identity or sexual orientation<sup>27</sup> this is called 'coming out'. Because there is a general assumption that people are heterosexual and not transgender, those who fall into this category don't usually feel that they have to disclose this. Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people often need to 'come out' to let others know that they identify, and live their lives differently, from the general assumption. Transgender young people often have to choose between hiding how they feel or telling someone. If they don't know that their family, friends or teachers are 'trans-friendly', they may assume that, if they come out, people will reject them. This, along with negative media messages, means that many transgender young people delay 'coming out' or speaking to someone about how they feel.

Transgender people may come out at any age and to varying degrees: some people want to live fully as themselves in all aspects of life; others may want to come out to just a few trusted people. It is important to understand that:

- Coming out can be a lifelong process
- Only an individual can decide when and who to tell
- Coming out is a personal choice; and people should not feel forced to 'come out' to others if they don't feel ready to do so.

See more information on confidentiality, capacity to make decisions, and recognition and development of gender identity on pages 35, 60, and 13 respectively.

Some transgender young people who have socially transitioned may want to be open with others about their gender history. Others treat their gender history as private, and do not disclose this to others.

If a young person transitions at school, other learners and staff will most likely be aware of their gender history. Similarly, if a young person has a non-binary<sup>28</sup> gender identity, being open about this will mean other young people and staff know that that young person is

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<sup>26</sup> [www.respectme.org.uk](http://www.respectme.org.uk)

<sup>27</sup> Please see paragraph 5.127 of the of Technical Guidance for Schools in Scotland for a definition of sexual orientation <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/technical-guidance-schools-scotland>

<sup>28</sup> See definition of non-binary on page 51.