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# Children's Health Queensland Gender Clinic

Initiative Type

Model of Care

Status

Deliver

Added

08 May 2018

Last updated

01 January 2024

URL

<https://clinicaexcellence.qld.gov.au/improvement-exchange/childrens-health-queensland-gender-clinic>

## Summary

All societies and cultures have expectations and rules about gender expression and roles. Young people who have a different understanding of their own gender can really struggle with not meeting these expectations and rules. Gender dysphoria is the distress associated with a mismatch between a person's internal gender identity and the gender they were assigned at birth. The Lady Cilento

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Children's Hospital Gender Clinic and Statewide Service aims to help young people and their families reduce any distress they are experiencing and strengthen coping mechanisms. [Stephen Stathis | 2018 Clinical Excellence Showcase](#) from [Clinical Excellence Division](#) on [Vimeo](#).

## Key dates

Jul 2016

Jan 2018

## Implementation sites

Children's Health Queensland

## Key Contacts

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## Aim

Provide specialist healthcare services for young people seeking gender affirming psychological and

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medical treatment.

## Benefits

Creates a care pathway to a small but highly vulnerable population and will contribute to a physical and mental health trajectory that they would otherwise have been unable to access.

## Background

Increasing visibility and social acceptance of gender diversity in Australia means more children and adolescents are presenting to specialist healthcare services seeking gender affirming psychological and medical treatment. A 2017 study of the mental health of young trans people living in Australia found alarming rates of mental health symptoms with 79.7 per cent of youth reporting having self-harmed and 48.1 per cent reported having ever attempted suicide (Strauss et al, 2017). Increasing evidence demonstrates that with supportive, gender affirming care (Hidalgo et al, 2013) during childhood and adolescence, harms can be ameliorated and mental health and wellbeing outcomes can be significantly improved, including equalling the mental health outcomes of the general population (de Vries et al, 2014; Simons et al 2013; Olson et al, 2016).

## Solutions Implemented

The team consists of:

- Mental health professionals specialising in gender assessment and support, including child and adolescent psychiatrists, psychologists, clinical nurses, social workers and occupational therapists.
- Paediatric endocrinologists (specialists in hormones)
- Speech pathologists (with expertise in language, communication and voice).

## Evaluation and Results

A 3 month community consultation process with children, parents and stakeholders informed the establishment of the service and this input continued with former patients sitting on interview panels during recruitment of the team and collaboration with parents to support a parent group. Over 200 young people and their families were seen in 2017 through the newly established clinic and hospital waiting time parameters are being met by the new service.

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## Lessons Learnt

Misunderstanding and confusion about being gender diverse or transgender remains one of the biggest challenges facing affected children and their families. It can prevent them from receiving the help, understanding and support they need as they grapple with complex issues of identity.

## Further Reading

[Gender dysphoria in children and adolescents is not a phase](#)

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