

**Manchester City Council  
Report for Information**

**Report to:** Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee – 1 March 2017  
**Subject:** Knowing Manchester Better: Trans Report  
**Report of:** Deputy Chief Executive (People, Policy and Reform)

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**Summary**

This report introduces the findings from an external review of the experiences faced by trans\* people across the City and planned programme of activities to take forward the key findings.

Transgender (Trans\*) is a broad term that includes all gender variant people, including cross-dressers, people who wear a mix of clothing, people with dual or no gender identity, and transsexual people.

**Recommendation**

The Committee is invited to note the contents of this report.

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**Wards Affected: All**

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**Background documents (available for public inspection):**

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents

are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy please contact one of the contact officers above.

1. Manchester Hate Crime Strategy 2016-19 *Communities Scrutiny Committee, 16 May 2016*
2. Communities of Interest Report, *Communities Scrutiny Committee, 24 February 2016*

## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of a recently-commissioned external review of the experiences of trans\* people across the City. This review was commissioned in response to the outcomes of ongoing engagement and consultation with the local trans community. Trans is an umbrella and inclusive term describing people whose gender identity differs in some way from the one they were assigned at birth, including transgender individuals, non-binary people, cross-dressers and those who partially or incompletely identify with their sex assigned at birth. The \* is used to emphasise the broad nature of this term in the first instance of its use.
- 1.2 This report describes the approach that the Council has taken to further its knowledge and understanding of the issues facing the trans community and the methodology to the research study. The report also outlines the plan for taking forward the recommendations and actions resulting from the study, which is included with this report for Scrutiny Committee.

## **2.0 Background and Methodology**

- 2.1 Approximately 5,000 Manchester residents identify as trans, and the Council recognises that the needs of Manchester's trans population, in particular, are distinct and that there is a wide range of unique issues and challenges which impact upon how they live their day-to-day lives.
- 2.2 National research shows that trans people experience significant inequalities compared both to the wider population and to the lesbian, gay and bisexual communities.
- 2.3 The Council prides itself on the diversity of the city's population and on its continuing commitment to improving the lives of its LGBT communities. As part of this ongoing commitment, the Council sought to increase its knowledge and understanding of the challenges affecting the city's trans population.
- 2.4 In August 2015, the Council looked to advance its progress in this area by commissioning a Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisation to undertake targeted research into the needs, aspirations, priorities and challenges of trans people in Manchester around four prominent themes. The themes were identified through ongoing engagement and consultation events (i.e. LGBT Question Time) and were:
- Young People and Education
  - Health
  - Housing
  - Domestic Violence.
- 2.5 Another prevailing topic, Hate Crime, was also identified through the consultation; however two distinct pieces of work were already underway to address this topic: Research into Transphobic Hate Crime by Greater Manchester Police and, the refresh of the Manchester's Hate Crime Strategy, including detail on monitoring trans as a characteristic for hate crime. The

focus of the Council's study report, therefore, focussed on the four remaining topics.

- 2.6 The LGBT Foundation was successful in the tender process and was commissioned to conduct this research in September 2015.
- 2.7 The research comprised of three elements: initial desk-based research on the current national evidence base around the trans population, an online questionnaire targeted at trans people with a connection to Manchester, and a series of four topic-specific focus groups for members of the local trans community. These elements were complemented by interviews with public sector organisations in Manchester to explore their trans inclusion policies and practice.
- 2.8 The questionnaire and focus groups were designed with input from both the LGBT Foundation's Trans Advisory Panel and the Council's Equalities Team. Local specialist trans groups, The Proud Trust and Action for Trans Health, were contracted to deliver the focus group sessions along with the LGBT Foundation.
- 2.9 Contributions to the questionnaire and focus groups came from a diverse cross-section of the trans community in Manchester, comprising of other protected characteristics, and economic backgrounds. The report also benefitted from the participation of prominent equality law expert and trans campaigner Professor Stephen Whittle, who provided a foreword for the report, along with an academic review of the study's findings.

### **3.0 Report Findings and Recommendations**

- 3.1 The report recognises the positive steps the Council continues to take to further its knowledge about the largely hidden trans community and the ongoing commitment to use the data to improve the lives of Manchester's trans citizens.
- 3.2 The study's findings suggest that trans people in Manchester are experiencing particular inequalities in relation to discrimination in education, accessible housing and homelessness services, poor mental health and general wellbeing, and experiencing domestic abuse.
- 3.3 In line with the Council's existing knowledge around trans issues, the report also indicates that, though there are examples of trans-inclusive policies and practices across services, this information is not always visible to the public and access to services by trans individuals is not consistently monitored. Recommended actions within the four thematic areas where the report suggests trans people in Manchester continue to experience particular challenges are also detailed.

### 3.4 **Young People and Education**

The research on this theme covers the areas of: transphobic discrimination in educational settings, the impact of such harassment on academic performance, and the trans awareness of staff and other students.

- 3.4.1 The research found that a significant proportion of respondents had experienced transphobic bullying or discrimination, particularly in schools. This was reported as not always dealt with effectively by teachers or other staff, and young people often did not feel confident to challenge it themselves. Respondents indicated that their experiences as students were more positive when teachers and staff had a better understanding of trans issues, and actively challenged offensive language and behaviour. This was more prevalent in colleges and universities, while trans issues were not widely discussed in schools (ages 11-16).
- 3.4.2 Participants also suggested that gendered facilities, such as toilets, and gendered uniform policies added to a less trans-inclusive environment, as being mandated to wear clothes and use facilities of their gender of birth, rather than that of their gender identity was seen as discriminatory.
- 3.4.3 The focus group also highlighted the quality of support for trans people outside of education, particularly in healthcare as an area of concern. Poor healthcare experiences were seen to have impacted negatively on educational attainment and attendance. Of those who had largely negative experiences, almost two thirds had dropped out of school early.
- 3.4.4 The results suggest that trans status is not a barrier to having a positive experience in education or fulfilling educational potential, but rather a lack of trans awareness and support both inside and outside of school provided significant barriers. The report recommends that education on trans issues and training for all staff and students would help to mitigate transphobia in education, whilst clear procedures on identifying and challenging discriminatory behaviour are essential. A review of policies on gendered uniforms and facilities is also recommended.

### 3.5 **Health**

The findings in relation to Health supported the findings from the Council's previous engagement and consultation in this area. Significant issues were highlighted in relation to the general health and wellbeing of trans people, whilst barriers to appropriate and trans-inclusive services were identified.

- 3.5.1 Levels of self-reported health among the respondents were much lower than the general population, with a prevalence of mental health issues amongst trans people often compounding other acute conditions. The research indicates that self confidence was greater amongst trans people who have completed medical transition, and that those individuals felt more in control of their mental wellbeing and general health.
- 3.5.2 Participants also noted inconsistencies in service delivery, as individuals' experiences varied widely depending on their own circumstances, the service

being accessed, and the professionals being engaged with. Individuals in the focus group also expressed a low expectation of health services meeting their needs as a trans person, with a significant number reporting to have been given inappropriate screening appointments and communications in relation to their trans status. It was reported that failures of health professionals to change gender and/or name on trans people's records had led to stressful and embarrassing experiences. One respondent reported to have been outed to their housemates by post from their GP that included their original name, which indicated their previous gender.

- 3.5.3 Few respondents felt able to challenge discrimination they had experienced in health care services, with one person stating "I don't feel like I'll be taken seriously. Or it could make things worse for me." Positive engagement with services was noted in instances when the services were visibly trans-inclusive and the trans individual had good knowledge of related policy and legislation.
- 3.5.4 Recommendations for Health included healthcare services working with LGBT voluntary and community sector organisations and patient groups to improve complaints processes, and to make it easier for trans users to raise issues and see resolution. It was also recommended that services address inconsistencies in delivery, with examples of good practice being shared across healthcare services.

### 3.6 **Housing**

The key areas of focus for Housing were homelessness and access to appropriate and inclusive services.

- 3.6.1 The research highlighted good examples of community-led initiatives to support trans people in accessing appropriate housing. And, while trans-inclusive housing services exist in Manchester, the report suggests that many trans people feel they are not aware of these services, leading them to seek support from trans groups in the voluntary sector, or in some cases, leading them to homelessness. Of the participants who had become homeless by being forced out of their home, the vast majority stated their gender identity or trans status was a contributing factor.
- 3.6.2 Commonly reported impacts of homelessness amongst trans people were negative impacts upon their mental health and wellbeing and confidence as a trans person. It was also reported that a large percentage of those respondents who had experienced homelessness had not accessed any services. The report suggests that when services are not visibly trans inclusive, there may be a perception by trans people that their needs will not be met, and they could be faced with transphobia.
- 3.6.3 The report recommends that housing and accommodation services visibly demonstrate trans inclusion, backed by full training for staff in equality and diversity issues, whilst promoting trans awareness among other tenants or residents. The report also recommends that the housing sector in Manchester should recognise the prevalence of 'hidden' homelessness among trans communities, ie, those who are not engaging with services when in need.

### **3.7 Domestic Abuse**

Within the area of Domestic Abuse, participants indicated that whilst abuse was prevalent, it may not always be recognised as abuse and therefore remain unreported and unaddressed.

- 3.7.1 The majority of respondents who reported having experienced some form of domestic abuse also indicated that though they acknowledged that the abuse was wrong, they did not see it as a crime. The report suggests that these findings indicate a need for more education among the trans community about what constitutes domestic abuse and how to report it.
- 3.7.2 Respondents who had experienced domestic abuse were also likely to have either accessed informal support (such as a friend or relative) or not accessed any support. Seeking support from trans or trans-friendly professionals was also reported as favourable to engaging with existing mainstream services. The focus group reported that the lack of engagement with domestic abuse services is due to these services not being seen as accessible to trans people.
- 3.7.3 Work has been ongoing amongst partners to address accessibility concerns. For example, in June 2016 Greater Manchester Police began officially recording LGBT domestic abuse, whilst also working with local LGBT organisations in improving reporting mechanisms.
- 3.7.4 The report recommends that services promote themselves as trans-inclusive to counter any perception that they are not accessible to trans people. It also recommended that domestic abuse services in Manchester should explore ways to be more trans inclusive by considering trans specific measures, such as addressing single-sex and women only shelters.

### **3.8 Additional Recommendations**

In addition, there were some general recommendations within the report, including trans awareness training for staff across public services in Manchester, improved gender identity and trans status monitoring in services, and partnership working with the LGBT voluntary sector organisations to promote the accessibility and inclusivity of public services to the trans community.

## **4.0 Communicating the Findings**

- 4.1 The report's initial findings and recommendations have been shared with Service leads within the identified areas including partners in the NHS and Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs). Each lead helped shape the recommendations relevant to their service, has made a commitment to take them forward and to take steps to address the specific areas where limited access and barriers to trans inclusivity were highlighted.
- 4.2 The Equality Team were invited to present the report's health-specific findings at the CCGs' Joint Commissioning Executive meeting in November. The executive team widely acknowledged the implications that the report's findings had on health commissioning services, and subsequent action-planning

meetings have been held with leads in North, Central and South CCGs. Initial actions agreed in response to the findings include a review of patient services procedures for complaints, a resource pack for practices explaining trans health issues, and a poster campaign for practices to promote visibility and accessibility for trans people.

- 4.3 The Safeguarding in Education teams were also keen to have an opportunity to discuss the findings for young people and education. The Equality Team were invited to attend the Designated Safeguarding Leads Networks events across the City to facilitate group conversations about the report. Participants reflected on the findings and shared relevant experiences of young trans people in their schools. The Safeguarding Leads were particularly responsive to the report's recommendations that trans awareness be increased in schools, with many of them committing to commission trans inclusivity training from the Proud Trust, who facilitated the group sessions with young people for the report.
- 4.4 The report's recommendations for Young People and Education have also been used to inform the work of the city's Trans Transformation Taskforce, a group established to develop a Manchester-wide Trans Action Plan to improve the lives of trans young people.
- 4.5 To celebrate the Research Study into the Trans Population of Manchester, the report was officially launched at an event on 12 October at the Town Hall. The launch was attended by Councillors, the Police and Crime Commissioner's Office, GMP, and a range of other partner organisations from the services which were the focus of the study along with members of the Trans community, including those who contributed to the report.

## **5.0 Next Steps**

### **5.1 Trans Pledge**

The study report also supports a Trans Pledge for the City which is currently in development. Designed through consultation with the trans community, this would publically declare the Council's commitment to lead the way in ensuring better inclusion and access to services for trans people across Greater Manchester. Bringing together all partners across the city, the pledge would also ask that public services and community leaders sign up make the same commitment to trans inclusion.

### **5.2 Equalities Monitoring**

The findings of the report also align with an ongoing commitment to improve equalities monitoring and data capture across Council services, a report on which features elsewhere on today's agenda. Whilst addressing some of the recommendations within the report, this work will also support services to ensure a consistent approach to capturing data on gender identity, and, ultimately, help develop an improved understanding of our customer base, and truly responsive services.



- 5.3 Where partners and services have committed to taking forward the report's recommendations, the Council will review progress made within the next 12 months.

## **6.0 Conclusion**

- 6.1 The Council recognises that this research and subsequent report has provided an opportunity to build the Council's awareness and understanding of the trans community in the city. The findings of the research study indicate that trans people in Manchester are experiencing particular inequalities within the four focus areas of the report.
- 6.2 The report reinforces the Council's commitment to work with its partners and the local trans community to tackle inequalities, improve access to services and to ensure consistent service delivery whilst ensuring that trans people can experience the safety, wellbeing and opportunities as every other citizen in the city.