

A guide to transitioning... in St Andrews:

A Guide to this Guide

I'm sure that before reading this guide, you've read a thousand how-to resources for trans people. Doctors say we're the most informed patients they ever see, after all. But transitioning in different places can be very different, and often, people who provide various services don't know where to direct trans people looking for help. We in Saints LGBT+ and Student Services here in St Andrews wanted to put all our resources in one place to help you navigate transition. It starts out with what to do before you arrive at uni, as that is the most frequent question we get. After that, we go over procedures for various topics- medical transition, name changes, counseling and support, etc.

Name changes:

Pre-uni

If you have changed your name legally before beginning the application process, and applied in your new name, you should be all set.

Legally, between application and matriculation

If you're working on changing your name/gender while you're working on the application process, it's important to keep the Uni updated. First, make sure they have your preferred name in their system, by emailing the Registrar Marie-Noël (registrar@st-andrews.ac.uk) saying that you are trans and would like to have your preferred name updated. In the University's decision for you to email Marie-Noël directly they've taken into account concerns of efficiency, confidentiality, and understanding.

Options for Name Change in the University's System:

Known-As Name:

You can set your known-as name at any point, which is the name that will appear on your accounts, on rosters, and on email contacts. This can be changed by emailing the Registrar Marie-Noël (registrar@) with your outdated name, current name, and matriculation number.

Official Name:

This is the name that will appear on all official documentation (such as a diploma), in addition to accounts, rosters, and email contacts. This can be changed by emailing the Registrar (registrar@)The University does not require any legal or official documentation for trans/non-binary students to change their official names as they are aware that not all trans/non-binary students will have access to documents supporting their name change (particularly international students). However, there may be instances in which not having official documentation results in a student having, for example, highschool exam scripts under one name and their diploma under another without an official gender recognition certificate. For this reason the process may be extended by relevant discussions of potential issues and the student's wishes.

Changing matric cards

Once you notify the uni of a change in name, wait until MySaint displays your correct name, and then fill out [this form](#), and you will be issued a new card free of charge. Use your new name in the name field. If you'd like to update your card with a new photo, there is a 20 pound charge.

Note on email addresses and uni accounts

Your st andrews email and all uni accounts and will be in the form of: your initials#, like ab123. This ID is created when you confirm your offer for Uni, and cannot be changed. One solution to this would be to contact the Uni *just after applying/in your application*, so that they can create an email address that has your preferred initials. The other solution is much more long term: it is likely that beginning next year (email addresses will be randomised, so people will no longer assume that it represents your name.)

Changing Your Name Legally

In Scotland, there are two ways to legally change your name- deed poll and statutory declaration.

Deed Poll

For foreign nationals- some countries allow you to change your name via deed poll in Scotland, and then send it on to your home country, and others do not. For example, the

US embassy can change your US passport- but the Mexican Embassy cannot change your Mexican passport- you'd have to go to Mexico for that. For other countries, it is technically possible, but nearly impossible to get an appointment to do such a thing.

Changing Your Gender Legally

To change your gender legally with the Scottish government, you'll need a gender recognition certificate. These need to be obtained through the GIC's/private equivalent, unfortunately. Otherwise, if you're a foreign national, they can be obtained by presenting documents of gender change from your home country.

Medical Transition:

Here in Scotland, there are two options for pursuing medical transition- on the NHS, or privately. You can of course also use the gender services from your home.

NHS

There are two gender clinics in Scotland at the moment. One is in Glasgow, and the other in Edinburgh. We in Fife fall into the Edinburgh section, and are referred to the Chalmers Street sexual health clinic's GIC. Wait times for an initial appointment are around a year and a half. Chalmers street does not have self referral. This means you'll have to go through your St Andrews GP to get referred.

This is a simple process, and all of our GP's should be able to handle it just fine. Make an appointment with a GP, and say when booking that you would like to be referred to the Gender Identity Clinic. There, they will ask you a few questions, and then refer you on to the GIC. However, current wait times for an initial appointment are around 16 months. GIC's are able to direct your GP to prescribe hormones, and to refer you on to surgery, speech therapy, or hair removal.

Bridging treatment

You may already be on hormones from somewhere other than your GP when you arrive at uni or at any point during, either prescribed elsewhere, or be self-medicating. In either case, GP's are highly encouraged to prescribe bridging hormones, until you can be evaluated by Chalmers Street. While this is not considered *medically necessary* or required by the NHS, it is considered to be best practice by the current WPATH standards of care, which the GIC's recognize. This means that some GP's may refuse to provide bridging treatment,

while others will be perfectly happy doing so. I have not heard of any of our GP's refusing to provide bridging treatment.

If you would like to get a bridging prescription, bring along: the physical hormones you are taking, any medical documentation of dysphoria, and if possible, a signed letter from your previous prescribing doctor which says why you need hormones, what exact forms they would recommend for you, your diagnosis, any relevant other conditions, something about how you will be on the hormones for the rest of your life, and your doctors official license number. Be very firm about how bad it would be for your health if you were to go off hormones, and show them guidelines from [NGICNS](#) if necessary. The GP will then speak with the GIC and get a treatment plan. This process generally takes 1-3 months, so make sure that you bring as much medication with you when you come to the UK.

Changing GP's (within UK)

This should not be an issue. However if you change catchements for GIC, you will have to either remain with the previous clinic, or restart the waiting list.

Repeat Prescriptions

If you're prescribed hormones, it can be frustrating to go to the GP over and over again. Ask your GP to put you on a repeat if you have gel or pills. As testosterone is restricted, it may be a bit of a fight to get it, but persistence generally works.

Private Treatment

Private transition in Scotland can be done through Your GP in Edinburgh, and costs 250 pounds per session. They have much shorter waiting lists, and can provide all the same services as the NHS clinics. Some doctors work at both clinics.

Self-Medicating/Self Injecting

Some people choose to self medicate because of the difficulties of transitioning through traditional means. Others choose to self-inject prescribed hormones. If you choose to self-medicate: remember to get regular blood tests, tell your GP what you are doing (they can't stop you), obtain them from a safe source if at all possible (from someone you trust, someone's leftover hormones, from someone with a good reputation) and remember NOT to reuse or share needles if you use them. If you need it, the Boots on

market street has a needle exchange service, which can provide you with clean needles and a receptacle for used ones, and can dispose of sharps.

Sexual health

Fertility

Trans people in the UK are entitled to fertility treatment: freezing/extraction of eggs and sperm. The GIC/gender specialist is able to refer you to a specialist for this if this is something that you want.

STD/STI Testing & HIV Precautions:

Everyone should get tested regularly. Additionally, all trans people of any gender who: are currently with a HIV+ detectable sexual partner and/or have tested positive for a bacterial rectal STI in the last year and/or have had condomless penetrative anal sex with two or more partners in the last year are eligible for PrEP (Pre Exposure Prophylaxis) . PrEP consists of taking tenofovir and emtricitabine, and getting tested every 3 months. This, too can be obtained from any large sexual health clinic. We recommend using Ninewells in Dundee for PrEP, as they are generally very respectful of all patients, and the closest clinic which provides this service currently.

Birth control

You're also entitled to birth control if you need it, even if it says you're male on your records. *Testosterone/estrogen alone is not guaranteed to prevent pregnancy/fertility.* Current research suggests that taking testosterone does not alter the efficacy of any birth control methods, so any forms will work. These can all be obtained from your GP or from a sexual health clinic- the closest is Ninewells, and the second closest is in Kirkcaldy, and condoms can be obtained from a number of places around the Uni free of charge. Ninewells has discontinued walkin services, so you will need to make an appointment by phoning 01382 425542 between 0900-12:00. (Ninewells) or 01592 64 79 79 (Kirkcaldy or Glenrothes) during working hours.

Doctor Issues

Most of the time, medical professionals here are good about treating trans people. However, if you have issues, you have a number of options

1. If you'd like to request a GP who's had trans training, it is within your rights to do so. Doctor Burgess at Pipeland received trans training at her previous placement, and additional GP's are set to receive training during september 2019
2. Education. Often your nurse or GP will simply not understand proper protocol. Send them the rules for patient treatment and nondiscrimination. They should respond.
3. Saints LGBT and Student services. We know how to report any issues. We can also find someone with experience to accompany you to an appointment. Just email our Queer Peers support service at queerpeers@st-andrews.ac.uk
4. The Equality Network, based in Edinburgh, can provide support and contact the practice for you.
5. Switch GP's within your practice, and if that does not work, switch practices.

Trans Community:

Saints LGBT+ also runs trans/non-binary meet-ups every now and then, (and other trans events) which are great places to meet other trans students. We also run regular LGBT events for people of all LGBT identities. A schedule of events can be found [here](#). We even have a whole week devoted to trans events in semester 1 called Transfest. Due to social-distancing measures, Transfest will take place online this year in semester 1 with the goal of having an in-person version of the event week 10 of semester 2.

Clothes

There are places to go shopping here (H&M, charity shops). The only charity shop we have had a complaint about is one complaint regarding Save The Children. We also have a Trans Clothing Drive, which Saints LGBT generally operates out of the Union where we have specific days set-up throughout the semester, appointments can be arranged to view or try-on items, and donations can be made. However, while social-distancing measures are in place, you can access the Trans Clothing Drive by emailing Saints LGBT directly ([saintslgbt@](mailto:saintslgbt@st-andrews.ac.uk)) and you'll be put into contact with the Trans/non-Binary Officer to set up appointments to view or try-on items. Additionally, if you need any trans-specific items and can't afford them/need them to be shipped to a safe place, we are happy to order them for you. In the past, we've gotten binders, packers, breast forms, and tucking underwear for people. Currently we are working on obtaining brand-new trans-specific items to have on-hand in the Trans Clothing Drive.

Sports

Our sports policies are currently changing. However, we follow BUCS guidelines. We are also currently awaiting confirmation of the creation of gender-neutral changing rooms.

Accommodation (in Halls):

Single sex vs mixed halls

Some halls have single-gender halls and flats, and other sections are mixed. You have the ability to specify which of these you would prefer, and the Uni currently “does its best” to put you in the correct place. However, I know they have not been perfect about this in the past. This winter, they’re planning on redesigning the accommodation application process, and we’ve asked them to 1. Make a place where someone can select their gender for these purposes as male/female/non-binary, and then 2. select whether they’d prefer single-gender halls/flats or mixed ones (meaning there would be non-binary flats!). This should be in place for students entering sept 2020.

During accommodation application

If you’ve not yet arrived at uni and want to change your offer, make sure you email the Registrar Marie-Noël (registrar@), with all of this information.

Changing during academic year

If you’ve already moved into halls and would like to be moved because of gender, we know that often, the halls are not very cooperative. We’d recommend that you email your warden with your request, and CC saintslgbt, so that we can chase them up if they’re not listening. Due to social-distancing measures and the larger entrant population, we are aware that there may be further hassle or complications with changing accommodation this year. We are currently working on outlining a detailed plan with the Registrar and Director of Business and Accommodation to make sure you are all as safe, happy, and healthy as can be.

Changing year-to-year if returning to accommodation in two successive years

If you’re returning to halls, check your personal details on MySaint to ensure you’ve got the correct gender on the system. If it is incorrect, email the Registrar Marie-Noël (registrar@) to request it is changed. (This is likely to change soon though)

Queer housing

We've heard requests from students that we have LGBT-only flats. And there have been very many successful ones over the US, and some now in the UK. We've been in communication with RBS about this, and they're very reluctant to even begin this conversation, as they see this as "ghettoizing" all of the queer kids into one flat- even though that is not at all the intention- it would only be offered to those who specifically request it, and they would be scattered around various halls/buildings. So. This might be offered next year, and might not be.

Any other questions?

Email us at saintslgbt@st-andrews.ac.uk, or come along to our next event.