

What is gender identity?

Gender Identity is the sense of knowing that "I am male" or "I am female", or "I don't feel like either".

A child becomes aware of its gender identity before or around the age of five years. In most people their gender identity is the same as their sex, a woman or girl feels she is female and a man or boy feels he is male. However, for a few people their gender identity and their sex do not match. This is called gender dysphoria. Sometimes in young children this may pass, other times it remains permanently.



What do Mermaids do?

We offer a helpline and email service for support and advice. We also have a safe, moderated online forum for young people with gender variance, a separate forum for their parents and/or carers.

The aim of each group is to:

- Put people in touch with others experiencing the same feelings to share experiences, receive support and learn from each other
- Relieve feelings of loneliness and isolation and to make new friends
- Share advice

Mermaids also arranges local and national meet-ups throughout the year to enable face to face meetings for young people and their families.

What our members say about us...

"My son now has friends, other people he can speak to and who understand. I feared he would kill himself. Now we talk so brightly about his future. Mermaids made that possible."

- Parent of a trans boy, member of parents group

"Meeting other trans people has been invaluable for me. Being able to talk about things in the email support group that I couldn't discuss with anyone else, and receiving positive messages, advice and feedback has been invaluable."

- Teenager, member of teens group

Common advice offered by Mermaids

- How to tell other people
- Getting medical help
- Changing names by deed poll
- Obtaining a new passport in your true gender
- Advice regarding the Equalities Act
- Advice involving clubs and societies
- Advice regarding issues at school/college. This may involve changing names, use of toilets and changing facilities, sports, uniform etc.



Artwork by Lu, child of Mermaids parent



Email Support

Email us at: info@mermaidsuk.org.uk

Telephone Support

If you would like to speak to someone in person about any problems you are having relating to gender, please contact us on **0844 334 0550** from a landline, or **0344 334 0550** from a mobile.

Face to face

Mermaids holds national and local meetings throughout the year. This is an opportunity for young people and families to feel safe in the company of others who really understand you.