

In the United Kingdom, there is a lot of debate and misleading information about young transgender people's access to health care. Transgender young people face many challenges including being treated unfairly in healthcare services. They face long waits for specialist services and, as a result, often turn to online spaces for information and support. However, finding good-quality information can be difficult. When young people do not get the support they need, it can impact their well-being and mental health. Through interviews, we listened to young trans people talk about their experiences of health care and how they thought this had affected them. We also talked to parents/carers of young trans people and people who work in health care to better understand their experiences.

Doctors and people who work in health care also spoke about not feeling supported. They felt they needed better information and training. Young people wanted to reach a shared agreement with doctors, rather than doctors deciding if and when treatment should happen. They wanted doctors to know more about supportive care for transgender young people, and to appreciate that there are many ways to be transgender. Parents experienced difficulties too. They felt they did not get much support when their child was on the waiting list, and thought the assessment process was unclear. Many participants talked about negative attitudes and unfair treatment of trans people in health care. This means there is a need for improvement in health care for transgender young people and families. This includes changing the way that decisions are made to improve young people's experiences. Better training for doctors is needed, that is more supportive of young people, making sure they are listened to, respected and believed. Finally, the National Health Service needs to positively influence current debates and challenge false and misleading information about transgender people.

From the categories and themes in the research data, a series of 'topic summaries' on the issues were written to produce the Healthtalk resources:

<https://healthtalk.org/introduction/experiences-trans-and-gender-diverse-young-people/>

<https://healthtalk.org/introduction/experiences-parents-and-carers-young-trans-and-gender-diverse-people/>

Over 30 summaries for each data set (parents/carers and young people) were written based on the research. The resources go through a rigorous process of editing and checking. For each section, there are 200–300 audio/video clips of young people and parents talking about their experiences. Both sites are written with a non-academic audience in mind, and have a wide reach appealing to trans and gender-diverse young people and their families, the wider public, media, teachers, researchers and policy-makers.

Further publications:

Full report here:

Stepney M, Martin S, Mikulak M, Ryan S, Stewart J, Ma R, Barnett A. Improving the experience of health services for trans and gender-diverse young people and their families: an exploratory qualitative study. *Health Soc Care Deliv Res* 2025;13(XX). <https://doi.org/10.3310/XCYT6530>

Martin S. 'Where does [my] anxiety come from? The world!' Trans and gender diverse mental health. *Pharmacology Matters* 15 December 2022. URL:

www.bps.ac.uk/publishing/pharmacology-matters/december-2022/%e2%80%98where-does-my-anxiety-come-from-the-world!%e2%80%99-tr

Mikulak M, Ryan S, Ma R, Martin S, Stewart J, Davidson S, Stepney M. Health professionals' identified barriers to trans health care: a qualitative interview study. *Br J Gen Pract* 2021;71:e941–7. <https://doi.org/10.3399/BJGP.2021.0179>

Mikulak M. For whom is ignorance bliss? Ignorance, its functions and transformative potential in trans health. *J Gend Stud* 2021;30:819–29.

Mikulak M. 'It Sort of Like Gets Squared': Health Professionals' Understanding of the Intersection of Autism and Gender Diversity in Young People. In Milton D, Ryan S, editors. *Routledge Handbook of Critical Autism Studies*. London: Routledge; 2021.

Mikulak M. *Parenting Trans and Non-binary Children – Exploring Practices of Love, Support and Everyday Advocacy*. London: Palgrave Macmillan; 2022