

Changing a patient's name and gender marker

A trans person can change their name and gender marker at their GP practice just by requesting it. They do not need to have been to a Gender Identity Clinic, taken any hormones, undergone any surgery, or have a Gender Recognition Certificate.

The law in the UK regarding names is actually very unusual, stating that anyone can call themselves by any first name without any documentation at all – as long as they are known by it, it is a legal name! Despite this, Primary Care Support England (PCSE) recommend that healthcare services see a deed poll before changing a patient's name on their medical record. For this reason, almost all GP practices will ask for a deed poll when amending patient's names/details. Patients can obtain a free Deed Poll online at freedeedpoll.org.uk.

Changing a patient's name will not change the gender marker on their medical records. If patients wish to change their gender marker, they must request this. The practice will have to notify PCSE and *should* make the patient aware of the possible time scales and implications of changing their gender marker (e.g. changes to recalls for cancer screening services).

According to [PCSE](#), when a patient changes gender, they are given a new NHS number and must be registered as a new patient at your practice. All previous medical information relating to the patient needs to be transferred into a newly created medical record.

When the patient informs the practice that they wish to change gender, the practice must inform the patient that this will involve a new NHS number being issued for the them, which is not reversible. If the patient wanted to change their gender marker back to the gender they were assigned at birth, patients would receive a third NHS number. The practice should confirm this has been discussed with the patient when notifying PCSE.

The process ([outlined by PCSE](#)) for changing a patient's gender marker is as follows:

- **The practice** notifies **PCSE** via the [enquiries form](#) that a patient wishes to change their gender. The practice should include the patient's name and NHS number in the notification to PCSE, plus confirmation that they have discussed with the patient that this will involve the creation of a new NHS number
- **PCSE** sends the practice a deduction notification for the patient and emails the main contact for the practice (if available) the new details for the patient
- **The practice** accepts the deduction and registers the patient using the new details provided by PCSE. Important: Do not update the patient's original record with their new NHS number. If this happens they will not be registered and will miss out on continuity of care

- **PCSE** sends a new patient medical record envelope with the patient's updated details to the practice
- **The practice** creates a new patient record using the new details, and transfers all previous medical information from the original medical record
- Any information relating to the patient's previous gender identity should not be included in the new record. Practices can use gender neutral language and anonymise patient details to retain important information. For example, using phrases such as 'the patient had a smear on....' rather than 'she had a smear on...'. This is to protect confidential information and ensure the practice is in line with the Gender Recognition Act 2004 which makes disclosing an individual's trans history unlawful in many instances

It is important that practices complete the new registration for the patient **within five working days** to ensure no interruption to patient care. Practices must follow these steps to ensure continued patient care and ensure that there isn't an impact on practice's payments.

NB for GP Practices - If the patient's gender is being re-assigned from male to female, the screening team will contact the practice for no cervix confirmation.

If the patient's gender is being re-assigned from female to male, screening will become the responsibility of the practice.

When registering new patients, usually you will select either 'M' for Male or 'F' for Female. Some non-binary patients may wish to be registered as 'I' (Indeterminate). For all patients registering as 'I', screening will become the responsibility of the practice.

For more information on cancer screening for trans patients, please see this resource from [Public Health England](#).

It is important to explain the process to the patient, to manage expectations as address any concerns. Many patients may be anxious about changing their details and if they are not informed of the process, it could cause avoidable anxiety, distress about their gender identity is not being recognised or respected. These situations, if not explained to the patient, can cause a lack of trust in the practice and in health professionals as they are often perceived as discrimination when no alternative explanation is offered.

Some GP Practices have told us that the PCSE sometimes asks to see a copy of a deed poll or similar identification when these steps are taken.

If this happens, the easiest resolution is to support the patient to print off and sign a free [Deed Poll](#), which can be done in the practice or remotely by the patient. A Deed Poll is accepted nationally as a legal change of name document for identification purposes, including for passports and driving licences. Further information about deed polls and name-change documents that trans people can use is available [here](#).

If you have any questions, please call the ***Pride in Practice*** team at LGBT Foundation on 0345 3 30 30 30 or email us at pip@lgbt.foundation