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The Experiences and Inclusion of Trans People in Community Justice Services

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Evidence-led solutions to build better futures and wellbeing

This research was conducted by the Practice Research Unit.

Lead Researcher

Jess Lawrence (Practice Researcher) – jess.lawrence@interventionsalliance.com

With support from

Dr Kerry Ellis Devitt (Head of Research)

Holly Dono (Practice Researcher)

About the Practice Research Unit

The Practice Research Unit (PRU) is part of Seetec's vision to provide evidence-led operations and services. Through innovative research and robust evaluations, the PRU supports the wider organisation by examining how we deliver services, where we might need to develop our services, and what the important issues are affecting those who receive our services – all with the goal of improving participants' future outcomes and wellbeing. The PRU also undertakes externally commissioned research, and is active in the research community, as part of our commitment to further knowledge in these sectors.

Acknowledgements

The PRU would like to thank the staff and trans participants who shared their experiences and gave their valuable time to this research. Thanks also to the other Hub staff and management for their help in arranging visits and providing additional information throughout the project. Your contributions have been invaluable in developing understanding of how trans people experience the justice system in the community, and will hopefully inform future improvements to services.

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A note on language

'Participants' is used throughout this research to refer to individuals engaging with CFO Activity Hubs, as this is the term preferred by CFO. Individuals who took part in this research are identified in other ways (e.g. 'staff' or 'trans participants').

'Trans' is used in this report as a colloquial abbreviation of 'transgender.'

Due to the personal and unique content of interviews, quotes in this report are attributed to 'staff members' or 'trans participants,' rather than by individual. This was so the experiences of participants could be represented authentically but without adding to the risk of identification.

Glossary

Activity Hub/Hub - CFO funded services providing holistic support to people on probation

AP – Approved Premise; accommodation with supervision for people on probation

Cisgender – referring to someone whose gender identity matches their sex assigned at birth

Cis-het – cisgender and heterosexual

CFO – Creating Future Opportunities

Deadnamed – referred to by birth or pre-transition name

Gender identity – a person's innate sense of their gender

HMPPS – His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service

LGBT(Q+) – Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (Queer or Questioning, and other related identities)

Non-binary – someone who identifies as neither male nor female; an umbrella term for other gender identities outside of binary genders

Participant – an individual engaging with CFO Activity Hubs

Pass/passing – when someone is perceived as the gender they identify as

Priority groups – CFO define five priority groups: people from minority ethnic communities, people with disabilities and health conditions (including those linked to drug or alcohol addiction), over 50s, ex-service personnel and women

Sex assigned at birth – the sex initially assigned to an infant and recorded on the birth certificate, usually based on external genitalia

Trans/transgender – referring to someone whose gender identity does not match their sex assigned at birth. This is used as an umbrella term in this report to include all trans identities. Where experiences are specific to a particular identity (e.g. trans man or non-binary), the specific term will be used

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Trans people and the justice system

LGBTQ+ people have a long and complex history with the justice system and the policing of sexual orientation and gender expression. 'Homosexual acts' were only partially decriminalised in England and Wales in 1967 (1981 in Scotland, 1982 in Northern Ireland). The lives of LGBTQ+ people (particularly gay men) were still heavily policed in the following decades, and this legislation was finally replaced in 2004 (Sexual Offences Act, 1967).

The sentiment of anti-gay laws and the related association between (and fear of) sexual deviance and gender diversity (Redburn, 2022) can be seen in laws and attitudes across the globe (Miles-Johnson, 2015). In the US, there were city ordinances against 'cross-dressing' as recently as 1980, and the legality of using public restrooms aligned to one's gender identity (as opposed to sex assigned at birth) is still under threat (Dwyer & Valcore, 2023). While there have not been explicitly anti-trans laws in the UK in the last few decades, trans people still fear interacting with police due to the 'historic baggage' (Pickles, 2019) and experiencing discrimination and mistreatment from police (Bachmann & Gooch, 2018a).

Although LGBTQ+ people now have legal protections from discrimination in the form of the Equality Act 2010, they still have significantly different experiences of the justice system than their cisgender counterparts. Many trans people still express fear and distrust of the police, either due to experiences of victimisation or transphobia by police officers, or due to negative interactions when reporting abuse (Hord & Medcalf, 2020).

There is a growing body of research on the experiences of LGBTQ+ people in the justice system, however only a minority of this work has focussed on the experiences of trans people. HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) policy and operational guidance for working with transgender people is heavily focussed on those preparing for, or in prison, or latterly, Approved Premises (Ministry of Justice, 2023a; 2023b). This focus is reflected in the extant research on trans people in the justice system, which also tends to focus on their experiences in prison (such as Maycock, 2022) or other justice related residential facilities (such as Ellis & Opsal, 2023). Meanwhile, research on trans people in the community predominantly considers their experiences of victimisation, discrimination and abuse (Hord & Medcalf, 2020). A summary of this knowledge is outlined below, though it remains that little to no research has been published on the experiences of trans people on probation orders or prison licence.

1.2 Evidence review

Trans stats – population, prison, probation

Population

The 2021 census asked the UK population about their gender identity (rather than birth sex) for the first time (Office for National Statistics, 2021). 262,000 people said that the gender they identify with was not the same as their sex assigned at birth, equating to 0.5% of census respondents.

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"Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?"
118,000 (0.24%) answered "No" but did not provide a write-in response
48,000 (0.10%) identified as a trans man
48,000 (0.10%) identified as a trans woman
30,000 (0.06%) identified as non-binary
18,000 (0.04%) wrote in a different gender identity

<div align="right">Office for National Statistics, 2021</div>

While this is still not a definitive or exact number, it is the largest collection of data in the UK on gender identity to date, and therefore the best estimate of how many trans people there are in the UK. However, the true number is likely to be higher, as there are a number of reasons some trans people may not have shared their gender identity (e.g. not being out to others in their household, or not wanting an 'official' record of their status).

Probation

Statistics for the number of transgender people on probation are not routinely published by HMPPS, so as part of this research a Freedom of Information request was made to the Ministry of Justice to ascertain this information. They reported that there were 670 transgender people under probation supervision in England and Wales, as of 30th June 2023 (Ministry of Justice, 2023c). The total number of people on probation in England and Wales at this time was 238,264 (Ministry of Justice, 2023d), meaning trans people were 0.28% of the probation caseload. These numbers include people subject to Community Orders, Suspended Sentence Orders, Pre-release Supervision and Post-release Supervision (including licence and Post Sentence Supervision).

However, the number of trans people is not exact as the data relies on self-disclosure, doesn't account for non-responses within the administrative system, and some data was exempt from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act. No information was disclosed on the gender identity of trans people on probation, nor the number of people on probation with Gender Recognition Certificates.

Prison

The number of trans prisoners is reported annually in the HMPPS Offender Equalities Annual Report. The 2022/2023 report (Ministry of Justice, 2023e) states there were 268 transgender prisoners in the 2023 data collection. This number reflects the number of prisoners living or presenting in a different gender to their legal gender, who have had a local case board (LCB) – meaning that it counts only prisoners who are known to the prison diversity and inclusion team. There were an additional 13 prisoners who hold a Gender Recognition Certificate.

203 identified as transgender females, 41 as transgender males, 14 as non-binary and 10 self-identified in a different way or did not provide a response. 48 were in female prisons (5 transgender females, 41 transgender males, 2 non-binary/other/no response) and 220 were in male prisons (198 transgender females, 22 as non-binary/other/no response).

Non-binary people are almost certainly being undercounted as these numbers only represent those who have had an LCB. The true number of trans people in prison is likely to be higher than these counts. Stonewall Scotland found that over half of LGBT+ adults said they wouldn't feel comfortable disclosing their gender identity and/or sexual orientation (Aldridge & Somerville, 2015). The same lack of comfort in disclosure is likely to be present within English and Welsh prisons.

Experiences in prison

While a full account of the issues trans people encounter within prisons is beyond the scope of this summary, an overview of some relevant points is provided in this section. This gives some context to the experiences trans people are bringing with them upon their release back into the community.

Prisons are highly gendered environments due to the separation of the male and female estates. Sexual and gender diversity are scarcely recognised in criminology (Dwyer, Ball & Crofts, 2016), making prisons very heteronormative, binary, and hyper-masculinised environments (even in women's prisons), with pressure to conform which can be traumatising and dangerous for LGBT+ people (Fernandes, Kaufmann & Kaufmann, 2020). Trans people experience misgendering, mistreatment and segregation by prison staff, and this experience is particularly bad for trans people of colour (Hord & Medcalf, 2020).

The HMPPS policy outlining decisions on which estate trans prisoners are placed in has been updated several times in recent years, with an increased focus on anatomy and risk (Ministry of Justice, 2023a). Presently, trans people are initially assigned to the estate aligning with the gender on their birth certificate or GRC, from which point a Local or Complex Case Board will be convened to consider whether a move to the opposite estate would be appropriate.

There is a specialist wing in HMP Downview, for trans women with a GRC who are viewed as too high risk to be housed with the general women's population, however there is scarce information on how this wing is used. There are no specific wings or facilities for non-binary prisoners, meaning they are usually housed with members of their birth sex, though many choose not to disclose their gender identity during their time in prison (Fernandes, Kaufmann & Kaufmann, 2020).

Trans people have particular difficulty accessing support relating to their transition in prison, reporting that staff do not have enough knowledge, policies are not understood and are subject to both conscious and unconscious bias (Fernandes, Kaufmann & Kaufmann, 2020).

Experiences as victims

Much of the existing justice literature about trans people outside of prisons focusses on trans people as the victims of crimes. Indeed, the number of recorded hate crimes against trans people has continued to rise in recent years, despite the number of hate crimes against other minority groups beginning to fall (Home Office, 2023). Hate crimes against trans people are also very underreported, with 79% of trans people saying they don't report it to the police (Bachmann & Gooch, 2018a). Trans people feared they would not be believed or supported if they did, with Black trans people and trans people of colour fearing racism on top of transphobia (Hord & Medcalf, 2020). Many trans people (particularly non-binary people) are uncertain about whether experiences amounted to hate crime, or even if they were legally protected from hate crime (Hord & Medcalf, 2020).

More than a quarter of trans people in a relationship experience domestic abuse (Bachmann & Gooch, 2018a). Many trans people experiencing domestic abuse do not seek support, due to concerns about being mistreated by services or that they won't understand their identity (Galop, 2023). Those identifying outside of the gender binary may not access such services due to fear of their gender being miscategorised (Rogers, 2016). Trans people also cited problems accessing support, as many non-LGBT-specific domestic abuse services focussed on their gender identity in place of their experience of abuse (Hord & Medcalf, 2020).

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Access to other community services

Trans people face discrimination from family, healthcare providers, employers, society (James et al., 2016; Transactual, 2021), faith communities and within the LGBT community (Bachmann & Gooch, 2018b). 25% of trans people have experienced homelessness at some point in their lives (Bachmann & Gooch, 2018b) and 40% of trans people report experiencing transphobia when seeking housing (Transactual, 2021). 63% of trans people experience transphobia when seeking employment, with this number rising for Black and trans people of colour (Transactual, 2021). 70% of trans people report being affected by transphobia when accessing general healthcare services (Transactual, 2021).

Reduced access to these basic services and support systems increases risk of poor mental health, as well as risk of criminal prosecution. Once within the justice system, the issues outlined in previous sections exacerbate these problems, making it harder to move towards a happy and crime-free life.

1.3 Present research

As noted, there is a dearth of research investigating the experiences of trans people accessing community rehabilitation services. This is an important area of omission and one the present research seeks to address.

HMPPS Creating Future Opportunities (CFO) delivers projects aimed at improving employability, changing lives and reducing reoffending. CFO funds Activity Hubs, which provide tailored and holistic support to people on community sentences, licence or Post Sentence Supervision. Six of the CFO Activity Hubs in England are run by Interventions Alliance (IA).

Participants at Activity Hubs experience a range of services and interaction with positive role models. Embedded into the fabric of the Hubs is an ethos which seeks to make all people accessing them feel welcome, seen and included. However, different people have different needs and experiences, and what may be inclusive and accessible for one may not be for another.

The following research will explore the views and experiences of trans people accessing IA managed CFO Activity Hubs. The research aims to review the overall experience, not necessarily specific services within the Hubs.

This research will begin to fill a gap in the knowledge base around developing the way the justice system works with trans people on probation and in the community.

Additionally, it will look to unpack the ways in which IA as an organisation promotes a trans inclusive culture amongst its participants and staff, and seeks to offer a solid evidence base with which IA might develop its service delivery in the Hubs.

1.4 Aims of the research

The aims of this project are:

- To explore trans people's views and experiences of IA CFO Activity Hubs as a person identifying as trans.
- To explore organisational culture and practice relating to trans awareness and inclusion within IA CFO Activity Hubs.

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1.5 Research questions

- How do trans people accessing IA CFO Activity Hubs view and experience them as a person identifying as trans?
- How is a trans inclusive approach understood and operationalised within IA CFO Activity Hubs?
- What still needs to be done in promoting awareness, visibility and inclusiveness of trans communities in IA CFO Activity Hubs?

2.0 Methodology

This research employed an explorative, mixed methods design. It utilised questionnaires and interviews with members of staff at the Activity Hubs, and trans participants engaging with the Hubs.

2.1 Sample

Frontline staff working at IA CFO Activity Hubs: There were between 5-10 members of staff in each Hub at the time of the research, comprising administrators, co-ordinators, support workers, learning facilitators, quality development officers, senior support workers and managers. All staff members were invited to participate.

Trans people accessing IA CFO Activity Hubs: Information on the exact numbers of trans participants engaging at each Hub was not readily available, so it was difficult to predict sample size prior to launching the project. However, this study sought to engage as many trans participants as possible, using a multifaceted approach.

Following extensive reading (Guyan, 2022; LGBT Foundation, 2021) and discussion with members of the research steering group, the criteria for inclusion were defined as follows:

By using the term trans we are including anyone who does not identify with the gender they were assigned at birth. This includes those who identify as being under the trans umbrella, non-binary people, agender people and people who have a trans history but no longer identify as trans.

2.2 Recruitment and materials

Hub participants

Recruitment

A multifaceted approach to recruiting trans participants was employed. Staff were asked to promote the research within their Hubs, and particularly to participants they knew were trans. The lead researcher also visited most Hubs, particularly on days where trans participants were likely to attend. Posters were put up in Hubs with a description of the research, researcher contact details, QR codes for the online questionnaire and participant information sheet, and directions on how to acquire paper versions of these documents. Posters were displayed in common areas, one-to-one rooms, and participant toilets.

It was indicated by staff during the recruitment phase of this research that there were approximately 5 trans participants engaging across the six Hubs during the research period, as some had recently finished their probation orders, or disengaged for other reasons. However, this number was anecdotal and did not include participants who had not disclosed their gender identity to staff members.

Questionnaire

This was hosted on Microsoft Forms and accessed via QR code on the recruitment poster. Paper versions of the questionnaire were also made available at each Hub (to mitigate digital exclusion), with an assigned locked deposit box for completed returns. Adaptations such as alternative written formats or assistance with reading/writing were available upon request to the researcher, however no such requests were received. The questionnaire was open for four months in order to reach as many participants as possible (June – September 2023).

Topics included the Activity Hub (atmosphere, building and facilities), activities at the Hub (including services and events), people at the Hub (staff and other participants), negative experiences (experiencing or witnessing discrimination at the Hub or other services), and overall views of IA's culture and practice around trans people. Demographic information was collected via open text responses, and there was an option to sign up for interviews. Signposting to appropriate help and support was also provided.

There were two responses to the online questionnaire and no paper returns. The responses were from participants at two Hubs. One went on to also take part in an interview.

Interviews

Three trans participants took part in interviews, from two Hubs. Participants included trans men and trans women, with diverse experiences in the justice system including within prisons and the community. Participants were at different stages of their transition journey, however all had begun transitioning prior to their engagement with the Hubs. Information on length of engagement at the Hub, approximate length of involvement with the justice system and current type of probation order was also collected. Due to the small sample size no further demographic details can be reported, to protect the anonymity of the interviewees.

One participant was recruited via the questionnaire. Two participants were introduced to the researcher during Hub visits, and agreed to arranging an interview. The scheduling of these two interviews was facilitated by Hub staff. Participants were given the option of in-person interviews at their local Hub, Microsoft Teams or telephone interviews. All interviews took place at the participants' local Hub, in August 2023. Interviews lasted between 30-80 minutes.

Staff

Recruitment

Emails were sent to all staff employed at the Hubs. The lead researcher also visited five Hubs in person, attending team meetings to promote and discuss the research. For one Hub the researcher attended a team meeting virtually.

Online questionnaire

This was hosted on Microsoft Forms and distributed to all Hub staff via email. The questionnaire was open for seven weeks in June and July 2023.

Topics mirrored the participant questionnaire, with the addition of questions on caseloads and any training undertaken, requested or outstanding. Questions on witnessing or experiencing discrimination were limited to instances at the Hub. Demographic information collection, interview sign up and support signposting were also mirrored.

There were 21 completed responses to the questionnaire, equating to roughly 40% of staff (staff numbers fluctuated over the course of the questionnaire being open). Responses were received from staff across all six Hubs.

Interviews

Five staff members participated in interviews. Three Hubs and three roles were represented in this sample. Due to the small number of interviewees, no further demographic details can be reported, to protect the anonymity of the interviewees.

Four interviewees were recruited from the questionnaire, one interviewee was recruited via an in-person visit to their Hub. Four interviews took place on Microsoft Teams and one in-person at their Hub, in August 2023. Interviews lasted between 50-80 minutes.

2.3 Ethics

This research was approved by the National Research Council within HMPPS. A steering group was also gathered, comprising of professionals external to IA, with expert knowledge in relevant areas. The steering group was involved at key stages of the research development and execution, providing invaluable independent feedback and guidance.

The research was led by a member of the Practice Research Unit (PRU), therefore this research adhered to the PRU Code of Ethics, in terms of responsibilities to participants, researcher safety and integrity of research. While employed by IA, the PRU researchers are independent and impartial. Further details on 'insider research' are provided in the PRU Ethics Guide (Interventions Alliance, 2022).

In addition to these measures, several project-specific ethical considerations were put in place due to the topic of the research.

Confidentiality and anonymity

As with all research, confidentiality and anonymity were offered to all respondents in this study and reasserted for both staff and participants during all engagement. Due to the sensitivity of the topic, it was particularly important to create safe spaces for staff to speak freely on the topic and not feel judged for their personal opinions, experiences or knowledge.

Working with transgender people brings an additional level of responsibility, as there may be trans people attending the Hubs that are not out, either completely or to various degrees. For this reason, extra care was taken in developing a methodology that allowed these participants to engage more covertly, and to reassure them that both their participation and their identity would be treated in confidence.

Recruitment posters in Hubs were intentionally displayed in places participants could read them in private, as well as in communal areas. However, limitations to anonymity were still apparent. For example, those wishing to fill out a paper form would need to locate and return printed copies at the Hub. In-person interviews were only available at Hubs, so participants may be

'outed' by being seen speaking to the researcher. A route for sharing safeguarding information without outing participants to people they knew was developed with the safeguarding lead, however this may not have been satisfactory for some participants and precluded them from engaging (particularly with interviews).

Power dynamics and identities

The research team work remotely so had limited to no contact with Hub staff or participants before the research, which served to reduce any potential power dynamics and increase ability to provide honest answers. Researchers are trained in Trauma Informed approaches, and the Lead Researcher is experienced with LGBTQ+ and Trans issues in a professional capacity.

The power dynamics between interviewer and interviewee are generally more pronounced when working with people involved in the justice system. Participants in this research were subject to either community supervision or prison licence, and while the researcher made it clear they are independent from the Hub staff and the wider justice system, interviewees were necessarily reminded about the limitations of confidentiality not extending to disclosures of previously unknown criminal activity.

The researcher on this project identifies as queer and their pronouns (she/they) were displayed on the recruitment poster. Their photo and research bio was also included in participant information sheets so that participants could know more about them and familiarise themselves with them before deciding to take part. This information may have assisted in building rapport with trans participants, given a shared experience of identifying outside of a cis-normativity (Rogers & Rogers, 2023).

However, it is also possible that the researcher's identity may have influenced non-LGBT staff members to moderate their responses or shield less favourable personal opinions.

2.4 Analysis

Questionnaire – responses were used to inform the interview questions and to provide a broad insight from all six Hubs.

Interviews – all interviews were audio recorded with permission, and transcribed verbatim. Transcripts were analysed using thematic analysis. This process involved transcripts being read through and themes identified. Themes were then refined following further analysis and discussion between the research team. These were then reorganised and aligned to the research questions for the purposes of this report.

2.5 Limitations

The majority of interviewees (staff and participants) were white. Further research on the experiences of trans people of colour in the justice system is necessary, to explore issues of intersectionality.

Only trans participants who were out to staff at the Hubs chose to participate in interviews. The experiences of participants who are not out remain largely unexplored.

Trans participants who took part in interviews identified as binary genders (trans man or trans woman). The experiences of other trans identities (e.g. non-binary) require further exploration.

3.0 Trans participants' views and experiences of the Hubs

3.1 Hub experience

All three interviewed participants responded positively when asked how they felt when attending their Hub, saying they felt both safe and accepted at the Hubs. This notion was also reflected by the questionnaire responses.

This is the safest space I've got to come to. (Trans participant)

They accepted me for who I was. And didn't judge. At all. (Trans participant)

Participant*: Any space is a safe space, because I can handle myself as such. But, yeah, in the sense of 'do I feel comfortable?' Yes, 100%. […]*
Interviewer*: Can you put your finger on what it is that makes you feel comfortable here?*
Participant*: I think everything. Acceptance is the most important one, I think. The acceptance of staff. The acceptance of people in the group that I'm in when I'm here.*

Participants described several factors as contributing to these feelings of safety and acceptance. These included positive relationships with staff, the opportunity to spend time with peers in a constructive environment, and having choice and autonomy in how they spend their time.

I think I am the only trans person that comes here. I get welcomed when I come here. And all the staff talk to me. All the staff use my first name. I don't know many of their names, I will admit. (Laughter) […] I'm sure that other people would say the same, that it's a nice place to be. Else you wouldn't come back. You know what I mean? (Trans participant)

Staff also described the diverse activities trans participants were engaging with. The sense of community at the Hubs was seen as particularly positive for participants who struggled to find this elsewhere.

So we have one trans person who is attending at the moment. […] She does at times feel very isolated. She's from [a religious] community, so she found it very difficult to integrate within her own community because of her trans status, and finds the Hub fills that gap. (Staff member)

[X] said that she feels really comfortable here, and it feels like she's not being forced to associate with people that she would have to where she lives. And where she lives is a male only space. So I don't know if that has ramifications for her in terms of how she feels, but she said clearly that she feels comfortable. (Staff member)

One participant said their ability to form and maintain relationships with professionals had improved drastically over their time at the Hub. Their life was considerably more stable and they were proud of the huge amount of personal progress they had made.

They've been brilliant down here with me, probation-wise and here. It's probably the longest place, that I've actually lived the longest, and actually worked with the people the longest. (Trans participant)

Trans participants reported feeling comfortable at the Hubs, which allowed them to engage with activities they may not have otherwise engaged with, leading to significant progress. The sense

of safety and acceptance was paramount to these successes.

3.2 Interactions with staff

Being out to staff

Staff were aware of interviewed participants' gender identity, however the process of 'coming out' varied between them. Information on gender identity often came from referral documents as it was related to their risk, and therefore staff were made aware of this in an appropriate manner (see also: Section 5.1).

For one participant where this wasn't the case, they had shared their trans status with their support worker during their induction. This information remained between the participant and their support worker for some time, then later shared with others at a relevant moment.

> *All of the staff have been great around my gender identity - most of them didn't even know until I told them, which I quite liked.* (Trans Participant – Questionnaire)

One questionnaire respondent indicated they were not out to staff, however no reason was given as to why. They selected 'don't know' to questions on whether they would like to share or discuss their gender identity with their support worker. This respondent was unavailable for interview for this research.

Relationships with staff

Participants spoke positively about their relationships with their support workers. They felt they could share what they wanted to and ask for support where needed.

> *Me and [my support worker] get on really well. […] We sat in that room over there, and we had an hour and a half of talking about me and my life. So she knows quite a lot about me now which she didn't before. I mean I think I've got quite a good rapport with her.*
> (Trans participant)

Participants were happy working with several support workers, and felt able to talk to them just as well as their assigned support worker.

> *When I first came it was like a lot of the other support staff would do a bit. Because they got to know me as well as [my support worker] did.* (Trans participant)

This was also reflected in staff responses, who had made a concerted effort to build trusting relationships with participants outside of their own caseloads, to be able to support any participant when needed. This allowed trans participants to feel more comfortable sharing their stories and support needs.

> *People are people and you know, some people open up really quickly and are quick to tell you everything about them, and then there's others that take them a little while. […] I think what we've found with our trans participants is that they've been very open at the beginning about what their needs are.* (Staff member)

Participants noted the value in being seen and treated as a whole person, rather than solely as a trans person or someone with a conviction.

They know your background and everything before you come here. […] Yes they had to read my risks and everything else, but they took me for a person, and not what was written. Because a lot of people go for what is written, and not what the actual person's like. Because I'm different to what's on paper. (Trans participant)

This was something staff also reported actively cultivating; being aware of someone's experiences but not pigeon-holing them based on particular parts of their identity or experience.

It just depends on that individual, I think, who you've got in front of you. And it is just that making them feel welcome, like make them feel that they're just as important as anyone else who walks through the door. But at the same time, don't stereotype and put them in a box of 'transgender – what do we have to do to treat them differently?' (Staff member)

Some participants described incidents where they had required medical assistance at the Hub, and appreciated the manner in which staff had appropriately disclosed relevant information about their gender and medical background to the emergency services. Similarly, staff described being comfortable in knowing when, how much, and in what manner information needed to be shared with emergency services.

I'm very careful when [the ambulance crew] come in, […] I usually pull them aside and give them a bit of an update in the staff room. But that's more about common sense and respecting that individual. […] Not all staff would know that individual's original name, because all our referrals on the system are under his current name. (Staff member)

Though participants were aware that staff generally knew about their background, they appreciated that this information was not at the forefront of interactions. Trans participants felt able to speak to staff freely, building relationships with several people at the Hub and trusting that personal information was stored and shared appropriately.

3.3 Interactions with participants

Being out to participants

Participants spoke about being out to other participants to varying degrees. One trans man initially began attending the Hub during female-only sessions, but eventually began attending men-only sessions, and described there being a process of "*making people aware*" that they would be moving to the new gendered group. This adjustment was described positively by the participant, as everyone "*just accepted it*".

One participant didn't discuss whether they were out to other participants during the interview, however reported getting on well with the people they met there. Their support worker also said,

[X] is treated fairly, I would say in my opinion by participants. […] [X] comes in, everyone treats [X] as [X], and that's the end of it. (Staff member)

One participant was not out to many people at the Hub, indicating that it wasn't a prominent part of their identity and they "*pass a hundred percent of the time*", therefore "*it just doesn't come up.*" However, they also went on to express concerns that other participants may not be accepting, stating that for trans participants who didn't pass, "*it's a lot more difficult for them. And I see that happen, so I don't want that to happen to me*." This was corroborated by staff, who appreciated this participant's decision to keep their trans status private.

This is gonna sound bad, but some participants, I would say are transphobic and homophobic. Like I said, we shut them down in conversation. But yeah, they're 'buddy buddy' with [X]. So in those instances, I imagine he's not out to them. (Staff member)

One participant described trying to read other participants' attitudes, and having to manage their own reaction to ambiguous 'looks'.

I have seen other people look at me a bit different and things, but if they don't say nothing I can't say anything back to them. […] And the people outside of my normal group, […] it's a little bit more difficult because I don't know them. But I don't assume anything. But when they're looking at me I start thinking, 'What are you looking at?' It starts me off. But I'm learning to control that quite well. (Trans participant)

Participant attitudes

The impact of other participants' age and life experience was cited by the majority of interviewees (both participants and staff) as something that influenced attitudes and acceptance of diversity. In many cases, lack of acceptance was attributed to older participants being "*stuck in their ways*".

The extent to which these factors were viewed to excuse negative attitudes was mixed. Trans participants tended to acknowledge these differences with resignation that negative perceptions were steadfast and largely caused (and justified) by alternative life experiences. One participant described several instances of transphobia and misgendering, and then absolved the perpetrators on the basis that they probably didn't know better.

It is really the older generation of participants, it's none of the young people. It is mostly the old boys that just see what they see, and say what they see. (Trans participant)

However, staff generally noted the difference in mindset between age groups, but added that attitudes were still challenged.

You've got to change people's thinking, but then their perception of the world and their experience of the world is very different to someone in their 30s now – if you're in your 70s [or] 80s. So it's really difficult. (Staff member)

Where issues with inclusion by other participants had occurred, or may potentially occur in future, staff were generally confident that this would be raised with them and dealt with accordingly.

Coming here, she likes the group that she's gotten to know […] and it tends to be the same group of individuals. […] [But] if she doesn't feel comfortable, she said that she feels like she can come and say it to me. Or she can say it to another support worker, or she can just leave if she doesn't want to be here. And that gives her that sense of comfort. (Staff member)

Although some Hub participants were seen to hold less inclusive beliefs, staff were conscious of and responsive to where problems may arise. While there was an inherent impact of negative attitudes on the overall Hub environment, generally this was outweighed by other positive influences, and trans participants were able to continue to engage safely.

3.4 Experiences of different genders

The way trans people were spoken about or viewed by staff and participants correlated predominantly with stereotypes of different trans identities. Generally, trans women were considered with higher levels of caution, non-binary people were met with confusion, and trans men were misgendered more frequently.

Staff spoke more about differences in offences and risk (see also: Section 4.3), however this was done 'in the background' and did not appear to result in trans participants feeling they were being treated differently. Trans participants in this research felt differences in acceptance by other participants was based predominantly on how well they passed.

Passing

One participant noted that trans women were "*much more looked down on*" by other participants, compared to trans men. This was also linked to differences in other participants' age and life experiences. When asked why they thought other participants "*would struggle with a trans female here,*" the participant suggested it was more to do with participants being confused by trans women, rather than overtly negative attitudes towards them.

> *Trans females are a lot harder to pass than trans men. And that, yeah I think that just confuses people, and it's – once you're confused, the world doesn't make sense anymore.*
> (Trans participant)

The three interviewed participants appeared to have quite different experiences with passing. These differences resulted in rather different interactions at the Hub, and indeed within the justice system more broadly. One participant was clear that the fact he passed so well had meant he had an "*easy ride through the system*" in the system compared to those who didn't pass as easily.

> *Well [what] usually happens in my case, is someone finds out I'm trans, and then makes the assumption that I'm going from male to female. […] Because I pass so well. They're like 'oh, you want to be a woman' – no, no. Been there, done that.* (Trans participant)

Staff corroborated the different treatment of those who didn't pass as well, as they were subject to more frequent misgendering from other participants at the Hub.

> *Because he's not as far along on his journey, that has had more of an impact I think, here. Because there are some participants who would refer to him as a 'she'. Because he's kind of – I would say I look at him and I see a man. But you know, like it's hard to – it's hard to judge.*
> (Staff member)

One staff member described how a trans woman wore makeup the first few times she attended the Hub, and then didn't wear it again. The support worker believed this was an indication of the participant feeling comfortable in the space and that she no longer felt the need to assert her gender identity.

Non-binary identities

Non-binary identities were seen to disrupt the status quo and cause additional levels of confusion amongst participants who were already struggling to understand or accept binary trans identities. One trans participant also described not personally understanding non-binary

people, due to their neurodiversity meaning that they see everything in the binary.

The way everyone in the Hub would struggle, is if someone came here who was non-binary. Because I'm autistic, [X]'s autistic, and everyone else is discriminatory. […] So we – everyone would struggle with that. (Trans participant)

However they also clarified that personally they "*would never out anyone or do anything disrespectful*" and would still use someone's correct pronouns.

One of the few mentions from staff of a participant who "*didn't identify as male or female*" described the relationship between physical appearance and the acceptance from other participants, particularly in men-only groups (see also: Section 4.3).

We had another case come in who […] didn't identify as male or female, but they wanted to go to the female only sessions, and then the men's breakfast. So, that case clearly, even though they didn't identify as male or female, was clearly, like physically still a female. So to put that individual in to a male breakfast would have caused a lot of issues as well with the men, because they wouldn't have accepted 'I don't identify as a male or female'.
(Staff member)

It is of note that one questionnaire respondent identified as non-binary. They reported not being out to staff or participants at their Hub, but did not provide reasons as to why. However from the brief information gathered about the experiences of non-binary people in the Hubs, it is evident that further work is needed to develop understanding of non-binary identities and facilitate safe integration in to Hub communities.

3.5 Hub activities

This section describes the provision of Hub activities focussed specifically on LGBT and trans events, from the perspectives of the trans participants. Discussion on the inclusivity of other activities is provided in Section 4.2.

One questionnaire respondent said that "*running sessions about LGBT and Trans rights*" was something positive their Hub does for trans people. Most trans participants in the research reported that their Hubs had some LGBT focussed activities. These consisted predominantly of activities aimed at raising awareness and educating participants, rather than providing spaces exclusively for LGBT people.

Trans participants suggested that learning activities for participants would be beneficial. These sessions could be exclusively for trans participants, or events for all participants to attend. One participant said they would appreciate hearing from a trans speaker about their journey.

I think it would be nice to have people coming in and see about their story. […] So say if there's a load of us that are going through the same transition or whatever, get someone in who's been through that transition, and tell us like their story, or their difficulties that they've had. (Trans participant)

Of note, the research interviews were conducted close to pride month, so pride events were particularly recent for many Hubs. One participant also said that their Hub was consistent with LGBT events throughout the year.

I think we're pretty good at like educating on LGBT stuff, especially when pride season comes along. But in general, like half the staff are gay, like it's – and loads of the participants are gay, so, it's [town], like we're kind of, pretty gay. (Trans participant)

Staff also reported that trans participants engaged in recent pride events, providing positive feedback and feeling included in the activities.

I think people actually really appreciated that, specifically the trans participants, and we had some people that are from minority sexualities, which was really good, they said they really appreciated it and it was loads of fun, and they felt really accepted and it was just a really nice day I think, for them. (Staff member)

Despite the frequent discussions of LGBT activities in interviews, there was a distinct lack of trans specific activities. Feelings around this from trans participants varied. On one hand, it was seen as disappointing and "*quite standard*" that events focussed on 'LGB, rather than T' people. Some staff members also felt there were missed opportunities to run activities for trans people. However, it was also noted that having events specifically for trans participants would run the risk of outing them to their peers, or lead them to feeling labelled or singled out. One participant suggested as an alternative, they could "*have an event or a little column in the newsletter*" for Trans Awareness Week.

3.6 Transition related tasks

Trans participants reported being able to discuss transition related issues with Hub staff, if they wanted to. Both questionnaire respondents 'strongly agreed' that staff were suitably aware of trans issues. However, the majority of participants said that they didn't want or need any assistance from the Hub with transition-related issues.

One participant stated they only spoke about their transition when it was pertinent, which for them was fairly infrequent. They only tended to speak to staff about these topics either to help educate people or to assist other trans participants.

It's usually if something comes up for [X], then I'll mention something, but yeah, no, it doesn't really make a difference to anything. I have – like, it has been talked about, and with some of the other staff, especially when they were finding out, but otherwise no, I don't have any specific needs in that area. (Trans participant)

Another participant said they only shared transition related information with their support worker when they wanted to. They said they are "*not pressured*" to talk about their transition, and only did so when they wanted to share that part of their life with their support worker.

Some participants said that their support worker had helped (or attempted to help) them with elements of their transition journey. This ranged from practical assistance with finding information or filling out forms, to more holistic support in working through emotions relating to changing personal circumstances.

One of our staff members […] started doing work with him to look at, more around his identity really, how he felt, how he felt he was treated, and like what he had to do around kind of changing names, and starting the ball properly rolling. (Staff member)

One participant described seeking help with transition related tasks from other services, who were unsure of how to assist. Although Hub staff were also unsure of the best route forwards in

this case, they researched and shared information with the participant (see also: Section 4.1). Most staff were also clear on their boundaries in helping participants with transition-related issues.

> *I would just try and do my own research. […] And if there was something specific that [she] needed, for example, I would kind of say to her that 'this is what I found out. You can then kind of make your own decisions from that.' I would never confidently say 'this is what you need to do.' Because I don't feel like I would say that about any individual.* (Staff member)

Staff members who had more experience working with trans people described the parts of trans participants' lives that they could confidently help with, and the variables they could adapt in the Hub to assist their integration into the Hub community.

Regardless of whether participants required specific transition related help, staff recognised it was still important to understand the participants' journeys, and how this interacted with other areas of their lives or previous experiences.

> *Seeing how we could support them, cause it's different to someone that's cis-het you know, you need to understand that as well. I think that's important.* (Staff member)

Trans participants felt able to use their time with support workers to discuss relevant parts of their transition journey, and ask for assistance where they felt it necessary. Though staff were not always able to immediately provide detailed responses, they were open to jointly investigating where needed. Discussions of this nature were predicated by a trusting working relationship between trans participants and Hub staff.

3.7 Gendered spaces

Gendered facilities

Most participants reported preferring using disabled (i.e., gender neutral) toilets in public spaces. Participants who attended Hubs with gender neutral facilities for everyone valued this provision highly.

> *I think the best thing about this place is non gender specific toilets. You can use either one, and everybody uses either one, and nobody's made claim to any of them. Yeah, because gendered toilets is hard work*. (Trans participant)

One participant also stated they had to be escorted by a member of staff when they had to use gendered toilets in the premises of another key service they attended. When asked if having gender neutral toilets contributed to them feeling more comfortable at the Hub, they responded "*yeah, because I didn't have to ask. I didn't have to ask if they had a toilet for me to go in.*" P3

In Hubs that share toilet facilities with other businesses in their building, staff said they "*don't really have a say*" in the fact those are gendered. However they were not aware of any problems with access for trans people in the past, and expressed confidence that they would be able to "*swiftly challenge*" any potential future issues effectively, "*because that would impact on the experience that our participant would have*".

No issues were reported by trans participants in being able to use toilets at their Hub. The fact that most Hubs had gender neutral facilities was the prevailing reason for this.

Gendered groups

This section discusses the experiences and views of trans participants of single-gender groups at the Hubs. The feedback from staff on this topic is detailed in Section 4.3.

Most interviewed participants and questionnaire respondents said that they attended single-gender groups at their Hub. A non-binary questionnaire respondent reported that they attended single-gender groups, but no more detail was given. However this participant was not out to staff at their Hub, so it's likely that they were attending groups for their birth gender.

Flexibility was offered at one Hub for a trans man who began attending with residents of the female Approved Premises (AP) they were living in. In this case, the women-only group was pivoted to be a space for residents of that particular AP.

> *When I first came, I came as part of where I used to live, which was an approved probation hostel. […] So that's all females. So it was a bit – odd [one] out. But they still accepted me, to come down here on [that day], when it's females only, to be part of that group, because that was my house, even though I was the only male attending, they still accepted me to come along with them, and didn't judge by anything.* (Trans participant)

Though the boundaries of the group were later blurred when other women began attending too, the open invitation was appreciated by the participant, and he stated he still felt accepted within the group. Allowing him to initially attend with people he knew enabled him to build confidence at the Hub, and he then began attending mixed-gender activities and the men-only session at the Hub.

One participant said another trans participant was misgendered often at the Hub, which they found "*really awkward*." These feelings were further exacerbated when the misgendered person attended a single-gender group.

> *He gets misgendered a lot. […] That's complicated. Especially when [he] shows up for [the] men's group, and everyone's just like – and nobody's really talking about it and, I don't know, it's just a bit awkward.* (Trans participant)

3.8 Misgendering and transphobia

There were some instances of misgendering and transphobia at the Hubs, which are discussed in the following sections. However it is also important to understand the wider experiences of trans people outside of their time at their Hub, as this influences how any incidents within the Hub would be experienced.

External experiences of misgendering and transphobia

Due to prior experiences with other services or being in prison and AP estates of their birth sex, some participants expressed apprehension during the early stages of attending their Hub, as they presumed they would experience negative reactions and misgendering.

> *Here have been brilliant with it from day one. Can't fault them here. But I've had a bad history with probation so I always had that doubt, in my head.* (Trans participant)

One participant described their experience in prison, where they had to develop resilience to being misgendered by staff when in a group, and needing the confidence to correct officers who continued to use their deadname.

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I'd gone back [to prison] as my new name. They couldn't get their head around it and kept calling me the wrong name. And I was like 'no it's not that, it's this now.' […] That's one thing I have noticed, that as soon as you go to a prison, they automatically go to that gender, and [don't] think about it. (Trans participant)

Another participant had experienced several moves between prisons, and subsequent changes to how they accessed gender affirming items. They also described dealing with sexual harassment from other prisoners.

I mean I got so much grief when I was in prison about my chest size and stuff. I got shouted out of the window when I went to one jail, and I just turned round and went, 'Fuck off.' […] A bunch of pervs, mate, looking out of the window. (Trans participant)

A staff member spoke about attending court with a trans participant and witnessing a solicitor asking questions that the staff member felt to be intrusive. However the participant "*seemed to be fine with it,*" was "*handling himself perfectly fine,*" and dealt with these questions appropriately without needing any assistance from the support worker.

One participant also described several examples of being misgendered at other services in the community, such as the job centre and the bank. This participant was also able to manage these situations themselves.

They keep calling me 'he' all the time. […] And I do get cheesed off with that when they're talking amongst themselves and I'm hearing it. […] They're going, 'He,' 'He,' 'He.' […] But I've still got the same things to say to them as well as anyone else. If somebody says, 'He,' I go, 'Don't you mean 'she'?' And I will say that loud. […] I don't care how many people hear it. (Trans participant)

These experiences of misgendering, transphobic language and behaviour are important to understand, as they are likely to contribute to trans participants' experiences within the Hub and how they respond to any future incidents.

Impact of misgendering and transphobia

A staff member described the impact of some participants making transphobic remarks around a participant who was trans, but only out to staff. The staff member said that such remarks were challenged.

He's been made to feel [un]comfortable in the past when people have made like, transphobic jokes. But he's sort of stayed under the cover, not said anything. He's brought [it] up to us, which is really good of him to do. So we've made sure you know, if anything's said, that we need to challenge that. (Staff member)

However, one participant described seeing another trans person being misgendered often at their Hub. In these instances, staff were not seen to be intervening, though the participant did acknowledge that a challenge to the misgendering may have happened privately and away from others present.

He gets misgendered a lot. And I find that really awkward. And everyone else does as well, like you can see all the staff recoil away and be like 'oh shit, what do I do?' and I feel like [X] pretends to let it go over his head, but it does hurt, because I've been there and I know. And all the time I want to say something, but, like that's not my place, that's [X]'s place, and

unless [X] asks me to, I can't. (Trans participant)

When asked how they felt seeing this happen to another person, they said:

Oh it hurts, like it physically hurts me, like it's – yeah, I really feel for him. Because I have been there, like – yeah. And I want to do something, but I can't. And I do sometimes look to staff to jump on this and do something. Because it might look like it's not hurting [X] but it fucking is. […] Yeah, I hate it. (Trans participant)

These examples demonstrate the impact of transphobia and misgendering on the person, and also on witnesses to incidents. The importance of a visible challenge is discussed in the following section.

Challenging misgendering and transphobia

Participants' descriptions of reactions to incidents of misgendering and transphobia at their Hub were varied. In some situations, some participants felt capable of dealing with incidents involving themselves with limited or no input from staff. In other scenarios, they looked to staff for intervention, but reported mixed results.

One questionnaire respondent said a positive thing that the Hub did for trans people was that they are "*strong allies, [and] always challenge discriminatory or negative talk or actions from other participants.*" Another participant described staff intervening in misgendering scenarios "*straight away.*"

One participant was confident in being able to handle incidents concerning themselves. Though this hadn't been necessary within the Hub, they used examples of how they had dealt with such scenarios in other environments.

Some people have a forgetfulness when they're talking to me. They say 'he.' And I go, 'don't you mean 'she'?' I'm not horrible about it. (Trans participant)

Their support worker concurred that this participant was capable of dealing with issues themselves, and was confident that the participant would come to them for any related support needs, should they arise.

She would have challenged it on the spot, in that moment, and then she would have spoken to me about it, yeah. […] She hasn't had to do it in the Hub, in terms of sort of gender or anything to do with trans rights or anything like that. […] But I know that [she] would challenge it. (Staff member)

When participants witnessed incidents involving another trans person, they expressed apprehension about whether it was their place to intervene or not. This uncertainness was also reported by staff (see Section 4.4). Following a discussion of what happened when someone was misgendered, one participant said that they didn't feel comfortable speaking up for someone without them requesting assistance. They acknowledged that staff not intervening in misgendering incidents may have been at the prior request of that person, however they felt that staff should still be prepared and confident in advocating for others, should they need to.

Trans people are very vulnerable, generally, and aren't – don't have a voice of their own. Especially when it's not the right voice. So, yeah. Kind of need someone to be that voice, really. […] I think this is the thought that always runs through my mind when it's happening –

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like, if that was me, I would also shut down, and not say anything. But I would be expecting someone to have my back there. And I don't see anyone having his back. (Trans participant)

One participant reflected that it was their preference for others to challenge on their behalf, "*because otherwise I just won't say anything*". They said that this was their experience at several services and locations, though they had never explicitly had this conversation with any staff, as "*wherever I've been it's been done automatically. I didn't have to say anything.*"

However, one participant made a distinction between how staff reacted to transphobic language versus incidents of misgendering. The former was tackled immediately, whereas the latter was not seen to be dealt with in the same way.

When I first started coming here, […] there were some transphobic remarks made and that was very quickly stamped out. […] They are quick to stamp on anything discriminatory, anything that's being said that's out of order in any way. Apart from the whole misgendering thing. (Trans participant)

This participant also made a distinction between unintentional misgendering and outright transphobic behaviour – particularly where people were not aware they were misgendering someone, and then subsequently not corrected.

It's not really transphobic, because if you – the people that I know that have done it and do do it, genuinely don't know that [X] is trans. They just see a masculine looking female. […] They see what they see. And unless they're told, and then they continue to do it, it's not transphobic. (Trans participant)

Another example of unintentional misgendering was described by a staff member, where a participant had said "*thanks, lads*" and "*wasn't aware that actually it might have landed slightly differently with [a trans woman]*" within the group.

This section demonstrates why trans participants who experienced incidents of transphobia and misgendering in other services in the community, were apprehensive about this also occurring in the Hubs. While instances of intentional transphobic language and behaviour were rare, they were usually dealt with swiftly by staff. Most staff and participants were less sure about how and when to intervene in occurrences of misgendering (see also: Section 4.3).

3.9 Summary

Trans participants talked about feeling safe and accepted at their Hubs. They felt able to talk to their support workers and other staff about their gender identity when appropriate, though the need for direct assistance with transition related tasks was infrequent. Participants appreciated staff seeing and treating them as an individual, rather than being characterised solely as 'a trans person' or 'a person with a conviction.'

Trans participants noted that other participants at their Hub with particular demographics struggled with some elements of trans inclusivity. This correlated with some trans participants choosing not to share their gender identity with other participants at the Hub, and looking to staff to intervene when discriminatory language was used. Experiences of acceptance in the justice system appeared to differ for trans men, trans women and non-binary people.

LGBT awareness events were appreciated by trans participants, but whether there is a need for trans specific spaces remains unclear. Most trans participants had attended single-gender

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spaces at their Hub. Trans participants said that gender neutral toilet facilities in the Hubs made their Hub experience easier.

Participants had experienced varying levels of transphobia and misgendering at other services or in the community, which generally meant they had been nervous this would happen in the Hubs too. However, participants reported that infrequent incidents of transphobic language at the Hub were tackled swiftly by staff. One participant had been misgendered repeatedly, which had also impacted another trans participant who witnessed this. This was not seen to be dealt with as robustly as incidents of transphobic language, evidencing a potential difference in the way transphobia and misgendering are seen and addressed.

4.0   Person based trans inclusive approaches at the Hubs

4.1 Staff knowledge

All staff members that participated in interviews had trans participants engaging at their Hub, however the extent of their experience of working with trans people varied. Although all staff were skilled in working with people and treating them as individuals, there was a mix of confidence levels when it came to meeting the specific needs of trans people in the justice system. Some staff utilised knowledge and skills from previous roles in other organisations, and some leant on experiences from their personal lives.

Individual learning

Although most staff expressed that they would like more training in working with trans people, they also said that they felt able to research things they needed to learn about, when required. This was reflected by participant feedback too.

> *They just accept you, take you in, and just accept you for who you are. No matter what kind of background the staff have come from, they kinda still know bits. […] And if they didn't know, they would like research it for me, and see what answers they could get.*
> (Trans participant)

Staff with experiences or knowledge from their personal life tended to use this as a baseline, and then worked with trans participants to build relevant knowledge in the areas the participants wanted support in. One staff member described looking for information in their own time, outlining the importance of allocated time for this type of work, especially when balancing personal interest with professional remit.

> *I'd be 100% open to researching with them. I think that's quite important. But yeah, probably as my own interest, I would probably end up researching on my own as well, just to see if I could do anything. So yeah, a bit of both. But I'd like to use some of my work time to do that as well. I think I should be doing that, because I would have for other participants for other things.* (Staff member)

While it was noted that time should be allotted for this type of task, due to the busy nature of front facing roles, it was "*hard to find time*" for this on an individual basis. As such, staff often looked to people seen to have existing knowledge, including both colleagues and participants.

Learning from colleagues

In some Hubs, staff with existing knowledge or experience were relied upon by colleagues, meaning that if that person left the organisation, the collective knowledge was reduced to almost zero.

> *We only learnt because of that support worker who had a friend who was [trans]. That's the only reason we knew. And they had so much knowledge, but that knowledge is now gone, but no one in the team has that knowledge.* (Staff member)

Some Hubs had Single Points of Contact (SPOCs) for certain characteristics such as neurodiversity or LGBT identities, which were outside of the 'priority groups' defined by CFO, but still deemed to be of particular need in the Hubs. This role involved researching and sharing relevant information on a monthly basis, outreach to specialist organisations, identifying improvements to practice and organising special events. However, participants were not necessarily allocated to support workers with relevant leads, which was felt to be a missed opportunity by some staff.

The majority of Hubs also had Quality Development Officers (QDOs). QDOs often ran sessions for support workers to help "*develop the work we do with people,*" generally focusing on particular areas. These sessions were collectively described by support workers as helpful, and it was suggested that it would be helpful for QDOs to run specialist sessions on working with trans participants.

LGBT staff

There was a notable difference in how confident staff who identified as a member of the LGBT community felt in working with trans people, compared to those who didn't identify this way.

> *Personally, yeah, I'd be very OK with [working with trans people], probably a bit more confident than you know, cis-het people within my team probably, I'd say.* (Staff member)

The personal experiences of LGBT staff generally meant they were more familiar with pertinent context for participants' experiences, had existing awareness of (and connections with) relevant specialist organisations in the local community, and were generally in a better starting position for building relationships with trans participants.

> *We don't have any trans people [working] here, but we have LGBT staff members, we have had people who kind of know a lot about this topic and working with these people and have done a lot of research on it.* (Staff member)

This was noticed by participants too, who assumed LGBT staff to be driving activities on LGBT awareness at the Hubs.

> *We've been quite lucky here, that there is some people that are under the LGBT groups. So they know straight away, and they will like kinda let [the manager] know when it's going to be LGBT month, or when it's like the week or whatever. And they'll do all stuff around it, so it is quite good that way.* (Trans participant)

LGBT staff were generally happy to lead on these events and share information with colleagues. However, some LGBT staff also reported feeling under pressure to be responsible for these particular topics. Although other staff were supportive with specific events, some LGBT staff

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also felt responsible for challenging problematic behaviour, describing this as "*draining*" and "*unfair.*"

Many non-LGBT staff members were aware of this imbalance and the additional effort required by them to improve their knowledge. One staff member explained that their "*growing up was very kind of white, cis, straight*" and that they only had brief experiences of meeting or working with trans people. They had made a concerted effort to learn and practice allyship, which was appreciated by their LGBT colleagues.

Learning from participants

Several staff members expressed that they would be "*open to learning and researching with my own participant*". Some relayed that they learnt by listening to the person on their caseload, discussing relevant issues with them, learning about their individual experiences and tailoring support appropriately.

> *I think I just use my own ability to just listen really, a lot of the time. […] If she's talking to me about something that I'm not sure of, then I'll say […] 'well, actually I don't know anything about that [X], tell me what that was like for you.' So we would have conversations like that, because actually, in my head, that's the only way that I'm gonna learn, is to be able to kind of have those conversations.* (Staff member)

When some participants were talking about coming out to staff and participants at the Hub, they referenced answering questions from others. In most cases participants were happy to answer questions "*if it pops up,*" and no reference was made during interviews to inappropriate questions being asked.

Some staff-participant relationships appeared to be more of a casual sharing of information, rather than asking specific questions to gain understanding of personal experiences.

> *Yeah, it's all very interesting, the conversations that we have. [She]'s got so much knowledge, obviously, it sounds like a naive thing to say, but in terms of her experience, she's willing to share that, about her prison experience, stuff like that. So we have conversations about that, and for me to get an understanding of what that looked like for [her].* (Staff member)

Training needs
Useful topics were identified by all staff, either from prior training undertaken or from situations they had experienced and wanted support with previously.

> *I think that, with everything it's about kind of having knowledge, because actually the more knowledge you have, the more you can support people and also be open to supporting people as well.* (Staff member)

Staff requested training focussed on increasing knowledge and developing confidence in both working with trans people and making decisions which balance inclusion and diversity matters. Requested training topics included basic trans awareness, trans people's needs and experiences, the specific challenges for trans people in the justice system, and how to address transphobia and misgendering. Staff also wanted to know more about the practical elements of working with trans people in the justice system. This predominantly concerned learning about the experiences of trans people in custody, how estate gender allocations are made, and how to support those coming out of or potentially entering custody.

Participants also suggested areas staff could improve in, primarily around confidence in advocating for trans people and having difficult conversations. These areas were described as supporting staff to act more instinctively and contributing to the safe and inclusive environment at the Hub.

The timing of training was proposed to be early on when staff joined the Hub, with regular refreshers. It was clear that staff and managers believed that it shouldn't be a "*knee-jerk*" reaction to commission training only when a trans participant began engaging. All staff should be prepared and inclusive practices embedded prior to the 'need' being presented. It was suggested that some refresher training could potentially be done within teams, utilising a designated learning space such as reflective practice, QDO led sessions or with the LGBT lead.

Training was requested to be delivered by someone with lived experience, or at the very least, someone with experience of working with trans people in the justice system. Staff said sessions should be interactive, with time to talk through information and the way it impacts staff and the people they work with.

This section shows that although training for staff would be beneficial to improve the baseline knowledge across the workforce, the approaches employed by many staff were effective. Their methods allowed them to learn from and tailor support for each trans participant, reflecting participants' unique experiences and requirements. However, it was recognised that an existing good working relationship was a prerequisite for trans participants to identify and share their individual support needs.

4.2 Creating an inclusive space

Hub experience

Creating a place where participants feel safe was a theme that staff felt very strongly about. This applied to those with minority identities, but also extended to helping all participants feel physically and mentally safe, enabling them to engage more freely with activities and services.

> *My priority with [my participant] was his mental health, because it was it was not good, so that was, that was more the focus [than his gender identity] – well, which I guess comes hand in hand with feeling like safe in who you are, and I was just trying to make him feel like physically safe.* (Staff member)

Staff took care to ensure their actions contributed to an inclusive environment, but also encouraged participants to engage with inclusive behaviours and enabled them to lead on inclusion too.

> *We assure those participants who are coming from the LGBT community, or the Black and ethnic minority community as well, and others, that [discrimination] is something that we don't tolerate in the Hub, to try and reassure them that this is an inclusive environment, and that the staff will challenge. And where appropriate, that we want the participants to feel empowered to challenge that as well. You know, this is their space, and they should feel safe and welcomed in it.* (Staff member)

Staff viewed the inclusive environment within the Hub to be a collaborative effort between colleagues and all Hub participants. The overall feeling of safety was cultivated by combining multiple approaches, which are discussed in the following sections.

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Hub ethos

The ethos and design of the Hubs were cited frequently as a contributing factor in creating a space by and for participants. The importance of inclusion, community and choice were at the forefront of decisions and interactions with participants.

> *Our activities are designed for everybody to get involved, regardless of their sexuality, their gender, their offences, where they've come from, their ethnicity, their religion. That's not what we're about here. We're about people getting on and moving on and, you know, trying to better themselves and understand themselves. And I think that message is loud, in lots of different touch points in someone's journey.* (Staff member)

Whilst the Hubs operate alongside probation, some staff were clear in distinguishing the difference between themselves and other justice authorities. Staff noted that trans participants had often had difficult experiences with prison and probation, and they were keen to explain that engagement with the Hub would not replicate these issues.

> *I think the way that the Hub is designed, that it's a very sort of welcoming, it's an inclusive environment. I think the staffs' approach as well, assists that initial conversation that, you know, people feel relaxed enough to open up. And I think that's what we've found with our trans participants that you know, they've been opening up from the very beginning about their previous experiences with other services.* (Staff member)

Developing and maintaining the Hub community was also a key way that inclusivity was promoted. Trans participants, particularly those who had had poor experiences with other services or had fewer spaces to connect with peers in the wider community, valued being invited to participate in and contribute to the Hub community at a level that felt comfortable to them. Participants appreciated that their voices, opinions and suggestions were continually asked for, listened to, and acted upon by staff. Staff were upfront about addressing problems, particularly regarding diversity issues.

Inclusive activities

The majority of staff referenced the importance of not only celebrating specific diversity events, but also that all "*activities that we offer have to show trans people that their needs are included and can be met.*" They described the importance "*that the questions are asked*" to ensure the needs of minoritised groups are met.

As previously noted, most Hubs had recently hosted pride related activities, which were reported to be well attended by LGBT and non-LGBT participants alike. Events were described as being "*really positive*" and resulting in participants who were not LGBT attending, learning and challenging their own beliefs. However, some staff described some protective measures which had been put in place to keep LGBT focussed activities supportive and safe, such as advertising the theme and content of sessions more overtly than for other activities, or intentionally not inviting particular participants.

One staff member credited the inclusive Hub environment with enabling conversations outside of dedicated pride activities, and broader increases in understanding of the LGBT community. They described the growth of one participant who had initially held negative views of LGBT people.

He said 'my views have really changed from being exposed to that in a positive way, and engaging in activities' […] And it was just, it was amazing. And that was just from a structured conversation, in a safe environment, staff were there, people disclosed appropriately, and it was just – it was great. […] All whilst making scrambled egg on toast. (Staff member)

It was abundantly clear that staff were aware of the importance of not only specific awareness events but the inclusion of diversity needs in all Hub activities. This was also an ongoing process of working towards improved access for all.

Physical indicators

Physical components such as the design and decoration of the Hubs were also seen to contribute to feelings of safety and inclusion for participants. Design elements cited by both staff and participants included open-plan spaces, colourful displays, art and decorations made by participants.

It just runs throughout the whole Hub. And because we've got the open space here, people don't – unless it's sort of a group activity that can be quite sensitive or a one to one, we really encourage that open inclusiveness. […] So, it sort of flows in that way. It doesn't work in isolation. So I think that the environment gives that message of inclusivity as well. (Staff member)

Visual indications of inclusivity such as flags and posters were also noted by both staff and participants as key tools to promote inclusivity. As noted previously, this research took place around the same time as pride month, so many Hubs had rainbow flags or bunting up. This was seen as a positive and easy thing for Hubs to do to make people feel their identities were represented. The need for these visual indicators outside of pride month was also noted, particularly by LGBT staff. Some participants also expressed confusion as to why flags had been taken down after pride events.

One staff member added that inclusive language and imagery within "*promotional material or information that we provide*" was important in making trans participants feel included. Another staff member also suggested more LGBT inclusive resources such as leaflets or posters should be made available, in the same way resources are made available for help with housing or addiction.

LGBT staff

Staff sensed that the presence of LGBT colleagues contributed to making LGBT participants feel welcome. The circumstances and extent to which LGBT staff shared their own identities with participants fluctuated depending on the situation.

In some cases, LGBT staff shared their identities with participants as a way of "*finding stuff to relate to with them.*" Some staff described using this shared community as a way of helping participants feel more comfortable in opening up, "*which has given us an opportunity to really put some support in place for them, to really understand where they're at in their life, to try and help them move on, and explore that in a really safe way*." Some staff members used their personal experience of being LGBT to empathise with the experiences of trans participants, understanding the importance of and routes towards feeling included in their communities.

I know for a fact that we have had participants in the Hub that have opened up about their sort of sexuality, or their feelings about their sexuality, and stated that 'I've never ever

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disclosed my sexuality in any sort of an induction or an enrolment to a service, but I felt comfortable to do so, because I felt that maybe you were part of that community.'
(Staff member)

Some staff belonging to the LGBT community chose not to share their identity with participants. They explained that sharing this information wouldn't change their relationship with trans participants and there was no difference between how they worked with participants compared to their non-LGBT colleagues.

It has never come up, in terms of me being part of the LGBTQ community, so it hasn't formed how we work, if that makes sense. So actually, I'm just open and empathetic and we have conversations and dialogue, without it being restricted to this box. So I don't see why other support workers couldn't do that as well. (Staff member)

Clearly, the reasons for staff sharing or not sharing their identities with participants are all valid, however the visibility of diverse staff was seen as important by staff and participants alike in establishing an inclusive environment. To this end, one staff member expressed their desire to recruit further diverse colleagues to their team.

I'd love to have a transgender member of staff. It would be amazing. […] I think you know, to have that sort of visual. […] I think if you come into a service and you see people that you can identify with, then you're more likely to feel included. (Staff member)

Although visibility of diverse staff members was valued, it is the responsibility of all employees to develop and promote an inclusive environment. This is something all staff were more than capable of creating.

Managing interactions

Although staff were committed to creating an environment that was inclusive and safe for everyone, some participants required careful supervision in order to maintain appropriate boundaries. Staff recounted various ways this was achieved.

Hub inductions

Before staff were able to build relationships with new participants, they relied on information from referral documents (from the referring agency, such as probation) and induction paperwork (completed with a support worker at the Hub). Staff utilised information provided within referral documents to guide when participants with potentially problematic views and behaviours were invited to attend the Hub, to protect vulnerable or minoritised participants from potential harm.

Staff said that the responses given to equality and diversity questions in inductions also helped them gauge overall attitudes and address these early on. This also informed whether they needed to keep a closer eye on future comments or "*safeguard other trans members or LGBT members a bit more.*"

When I do the enrolment stuff for people and induct them, we have to do sort of an equality and diversity questionnaire with everyone. And you get the laughs and the, you know, 'I'm the normal one' and I'm like, 'well, what's normal?' […] It's just like, there's a lot of challenging of participants, to be honest. (Staff member)

However it was also acknowledged that "*because you don't know them as well at that point, it's*

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hard to know how to challenge them." Early challenges could potentially exacerbate problems, or indeed put individuals (both staff and participants) at risk, so a balance needed to be struck.

Most staff made reference to the emphasis laid on treatment of others during the induction process, and a "*benchmark [being] set at the very beginning in regards to those conversations we have with other participants, around the sort of expectation around their engagement, their behaviour.*" The signing of 'Participant Agreements' were hailed as a key tool in enforcing this expectation, and when inappropriate comments or behaviour were identified, participants were reminded of having signed this.

Introductions to others

The importance of introducing people using their name and referring to them by their correct pronouns early in conversations was raised by staff members, and also noted by participants. This was felt to be a simple but effective way of ensuring that trans participants were not misgendered, particularly those who didn't pass as consistently.

> *I did introductions on everyone's behalf, in terms of the group, and as I was going round, I was like, 'this is [X], this is whoever, this is that person'. And so actually, in my head, it's to make [X] feel more comfortable, so that actually you don't have to explain, you don't have to worry about anyone's unconscious bias.* (Staff member)

However, neither staff nor participants mentioned finding it useful to make introductions in person by stating their name and pronouns (e.g. 'my name is X and my pronouns are she/her.'). One participant suggested it may be useful for staff members to wear pronoun badges to help normalise the concept, but acknowledged they personally tended to assume peoples' pronouns based on visual presentation.

Working with other organisations

Referrals to other organisations were discussed with two key themes. Firstly, to direct participants to relevant organisations, as more specific needs were better met by specialist organisations. Secondly, referrals were made to encourage longer term support and connecting participants to their communities.

> *It's important to let individuals know that there is a specific network in the wider community that you can link into, to talk to likeminded people that have got shared experiences, they've got lived experiences and they can give you that support, that will give you the confidence to explore that safely, in the right way.* (Staff member)

Both themes are within the remit of Hub action. However there appeared to be some subtext that this was also because some Hub staff felt in need of direction too. Some staff were also adamant that referrals should involve the participant's probation practitioner in order to underwrite any risk elements.

This section demonstrates staff's commitment to creating an inclusive and welcoming space for trans participants. Hubs have been able to cultivate a dynamic service with input from both colleagues and participants, leading to greater engagement from participants who may feel they have less of a voice in other parts of their communities.

4.3 Gendered spaces

There were a wide range of factors raised by staff when discussing gendered spaces. Discussions included access to toilet facilities, but largely focussed on sessions exclusively for men or women, and the associated balancing of risk and inclusivity.

Gendered facilities

The majority of Hubs have gender neutral toilets, which was seen as a positive by both staff and trans participants. Consequently, the issue of access to gendered facilities for trans participants was not something the majority of staff had needed to consider.

One staff member expressed concerns that if there weren't gender neutral facilities in their Hub, some colleagues' personal views may have negatively impacted trans participants' access to gendered toilets. This is discussed further in the next section.

> *We've had a lot of discussions about, you know, gender neutral bathrooms and if someone's male to female, them going into a female bathroom, and there's been like, disagreements there. So I think that would be harder in our interactions and, I would advocate for them to use whatever name they wanted, pronouns, etc.* (Staff member)

Where Hub toilets were gendered, this was due to being shared with other organisations in the building and outside of Hub control. However, staff reported no issues regarding trans people accessing them, and were confident in how to deal with any potential issues.

Gendered groups

Case study

This section provides further details around the experience of a trans man described in section 3.7. It should be noted that there were some discrepancies in the way different parties described some stages of the following scenario happening, perhaps due to key events occurring a long time ago, or not being aware of some decision making conversations. However an overview of events follows.

A trans man was living in a female Approved Premises (AP) at the time of their enrolment at the Hub. This Hub invited AP residents to the female-only sessions at the Hub, to help facilitate enrolments. However due to the fact this AP cohort included a trans man, the session was altered to be described as one for residents of the AP, so that the trans participant could initially begin attending the Hub with people he already knew and was comfortable with. This introduction seemed to work well as the participant eventually began engaging with other activities at the Hub, attending mixed sessions and the male-only sessions.

Although there was also some confusion from staff members about the new composition of the group, they were generally positive about the adaptation. One staff member described the adaptation as a trans man being 'allowed' to come to the women's group, but that it was positive that "*[the participant] felt capable and like they were able to cope with that.*" Another staff member was "*confused*" about the participant's inclusion in "*women's afternoons;*" extrapolating this to contemplating the views of cisgender women joining the group at a later point, or trans participants who were not offered the same choice of attending one or both of the single-gender sessions.

I was like 'what works best for him?' Like is it – does he want to come to these women's afternoons? And because people like [another trans person] were seeing him being invited to both [men's and women's groups]. And then there were new women coming who weren't anything to do with [the AP] and were seeing [X] who was calling himself '[X]' and 'he', and 'a boy'. But they were made to believe it was women's only. So it was just quite a tricky thing to navigate. (Staff member)

However, this flexibility was only detailed in reference to one trans man and a particular female AP. It's unclear whether this option was offered to any other trans people, or at any other Hubs.

Balancing risk

The position of the Hub as a safe and inclusive place for people with convictions and for very vulnerable people was seen as relatively unique. Factors affecting the risk to and from trans participants attending single-gender sessions were discussed several times during staff interviews. While flexibility was offered in some circumstances, some staff felt they had limited guidance or examples of how to make defensible decisions when trying to strike a balance between inclusion and risk.

Juggling that risk, I think in a lot of other jobs, when you're talking about trans [people], that's not even a thing you have to think about. […] Because we want to make sure everyone's safe, and everyone feels like both safe physically and in terms of their risk and the offences, but also safe in how they present themselves, who they are. (Staff member)

Positively, it was evident that for existing or past participants, decisions had been made on a case by case and activity by activity basis, considering "*what they need, who they are, how they feel.*" However there still appeared to be apprehension from some staff about how to make decisions on future cases, often illustrated with extreme hypothetical examples. The impact of the personal and professional experiences of staff was evident in these scenarios. Those with more experience interacting with LGBT people were more confident and intuitive when managing inclusion. Those with less experience with LGBT people tended to lean on alternative professional experiences such as risk management procedures, and call for support and accountability for decisions from other sources.

This concern about how to include trans participants fairly sometimes resulted in a large focus on dealing with risk, which some staff felt detracted from supporting trans participants in their journey.

It's never a conversation like 'how could we start support[ing] that person to transition more if they wanted to' or 'have they done a deed poll?' It's more with like, their concerns or their personal issues. (Staff member)

Staff took a broad range of approaches in balancing risk and inclusion, with consideration to each of the components outlined in the following sections.

Risk to participant

Part of the decision on whether trans participants were included in single-gender sessions was based on potential interactions with other participants. As some participants were described as not accepting or understanding of trans people, in some cases the risk posed by other participants outweighed the benefits of a trans participant being involved in an activity. These risks included the mental distress of being misgendered or having to assert their gender.

I think even with [X] in the Hub originally, people would, other participants would call [him] 'she' or 'a girl,' and you needed to kind of address that – 'actually, it's 'he''. And at the beginning we didn't say for him to come to the male breakfast because that wasn't suitable at that time. [It might] put him at risk. (Staff member)

An example was also given of a decision around whether a trans woman could safely participate in a sporting event. There appeared to be tension between needing to be inclusive and managing multiple other perceived risk factors relating to that participant. The decision to prioritise risk mitigation over inclusivity in this instance was challenged by other staff members.

But [the other support workers] just, was like 'you're not being diverse, you're not being equal, you aren't giving them an equal opportunity' and I had to say 'sometimes it's not just about equal opportunities, I've got a duty of care, and if something happened to her, that's me held accountable because I haven't risk assessed it properly.' (Staff member)

This disagreement left the responsible staff member feeling that they had to defend their decision, and looking for external procedural validation.

Risk from participant

Some staff were very clear on process and boundaries for when trans people wanted to attend single-gender spaces, operating a 'it's a yes until it's a no' approach. In all cases, trans participant's convictions were considered within decisions on their attendance at single-gender sessions. Even where there were clear and resolute restrictions in place, these staff members were optimistic that alternative options could be provided.

I'd be very clear that 'although you do want to engage in this activity, due to these elements of your restriction, unfortunately you won't be able to engage in that, however there are other activities that you can get involved in.' […] There are lots of other activities that are mixed that they could engage in, but they would not feel – what's the word I'm looking for – uncomfortable, I guess. (Staff member)

As previously noted, some staff seemed unsure about where the boundary was between inclusion and risk to others. Examples used to demonstrate this conundrum usually centred around trans women with sexual offences against women, who wanted to attend female-only groups. Indeed, no alternative circumstances were offered where trans participants would cause a risk to other members of a gendered group.

We had a trans woman, the one that I mentioned that I never met, who wanted to come to women's afternoon, identified as a woman, but her offences and her risk was like sexual assault of women. So it was difficult, because we want that to be a protected space for women. She is a woman, but she has sexually assaulted and kind of manipulated and stalked a lot of women, so that was – I know [the manager] had a lot of sort of – I don't wanna say like – a lot of difficulties managing that, because we obviously need to make sure everyone's protected, but everyone feels included. (Staff member)

These examples generally appeared to be based on stereotypes that trans women primarily had convictions of a sexual nature, and that there were more trans women than trans men in the justice system. Despite assumptions about the prevalence of trans women versus trans men in the justice system, one Hub reported having more trans men engaging than trans women over the course of the Hub being open. While this staff member acknowledges the types of convictions their trans participants have align with stereotypes, they do not conclude that this is

determinate of the entire demographic.

I think that's the other thing, your offences, what we're seeing is the, I guess, your transgender guys, they – the ones we've managed in here, are kind of violence, substance misuse. Whereas your transgender females, the ones that we have supervised in here, are sexual offences. So, I don't know if there's a difference in types of offending for the cohort. I don't know. For us then, does that mean the way they're managed is different, or the way they're perceived is different? (Staff member)

Responses to risk from trans participants appeared to correlate with staff members' experience of working with trans people, and more specifically with trans women. Staff who were less experienced were able to describe perceived risks from trans women in detail, however their example scenarios didn't appear to have a decision outcome. It could be that these scenarios were hypothetical but being spoken about with a current and urgent sense of responsibility. Most staff who were more experienced working with trans people had not needed to make such decisions about trans women thus far, however they were confident they could arrive at an outcome they were comfortable with, should the situation arise.

I went and asked for advice, because I've got my priority group is females, I've got [participants] who identify as females, but are coming out of the male prison, who are a risk to females, so where do I stand, like? Because if I say 'you're not allowed to the female group' then I'm not taking their diversity needs into consideration. However I could be putting someone on a female only group who poses a risk to those females, who are vulnerable. (Staff member)

In instances where trans women with sexual offences were attending the Hub, but only signed up for mixed gender sessions, staff were aware of the potential for future conversations about whether they would be allowed to attend single-gender spaces. Although the outcome of these potential decisions was unknown, these members of staff were clear in the steps they would need to take to arrive at an appropriate decision. In most cases staff were clear that to make sound decisions on risk, at a minimum, the Hub manager and probation practitioner would also need to be involved. Future scenarios not specifically involving trans women with offences against women were not discussed by staff in interviews.

Gender factors

Decision making for trans men accessing men-only spaces was consistently explained in less complex terms than for trans women accessing women-only spaces. This is likely linked to the contrasting salience of risk for trans people in the justice system – trans women being perceived as high risk to cisgender women, but trans men being seen to pose negligible risk to cisgender men.

I think it was something as simple as 'okay, come in for men's breakfast'. You know, like there is no doubt in my mind that that would be appropriate. Like, there was no 'Ohh, is it [appropriate]?'. No, it is. (Staff member)

The fact that Hubs work so closely with the highly gendered justice system also felt a pertinent influence in decisions on risk. The gender of the prison estate or AP that participants had been in was mentioned frequently when describing example cases (particularly trans women coming from the male estate), though not specifically described as part of the decision informing criteria.

In some cases where it was deemed unsuitable for a trans person to attend one gendered space, consideration had been given to them attending sessions for their birth gender instead. While it was acknowledged that accessing spaces reserved for members of their birth sex came with its own set of considerations and elements of risk, it was evident that access to male spaces was usually less complex to arrange. This was particularly true where female members of staff were necessarily present at men-only groups (due to staffing limitations), as these groups were then seen by staff as technically mixed gender groups.

> *The [men's group], I think it's an easier conversation to have, because actually I would say to [her], 'this is a male space. I'm not saying that you can't attend, because biologically you are born male,' and she is currently in a male only approved premise, so you could attend that space and then it would be about, in my mind, as [her] support worker, supporting her around those conversations, but equally addressing any challenges that may come up for the other participants who deem it as a male only space.* (Staff member)

The physical appearance of trans participants was mentioned briefly when discussing both men's and women's spaces. Specifically, the risk of misgendering by other participants was higher for trans men earlier on in their transition. Also, considerations were needed for how other participants may perceive a trans woman within a women's group.

> *We have a women's only space [...]. So then the question is, would [she] want to come to the women's only space, and the ramifications of that for other women in those activities as well, because of [her] stature and physical appearance. So those have to be kind of wider conversations, if that makes sense.* (Staff member)

There were also several factors influencing decisions on non-binary people wanting to attend single-gender groups. There was an interaction between a non-binary person's appearance and how accepted they would be by other participants, particularly in men-only groups. The general lack of understanding of non-binary identities by participants was the most salient factor in managing integration in to gendered groups. Staff also expressed confusion about whether non-binary people should attend one, both or neither single-gender spaces.

Staff perceptions

Several staff members expressed confusion about who would be allowed into gendered spaces, and lack of guidance on "*where the line is.*" One theme that came up in various guises suggested a perceived linear sequence of processes involved in a person's transition 'from one gender to another,' and at times an unawareness of how unique each person's transition journey is.

This idea of linearity is illustrated in the following quote, as one staff member alludes to a particular point where the Hub would accept a trans participant as their lived gender and allow them access to relevant gendered spaces.

> *If someone was transitioning, I wouldn't know what we would accept as a Hub. I don't know how far you'd have to be transitioned to attend a male or female activity, which I think is bad. You know, that line has blurred. I wouldn't know what to say to someone.* (Staff member)

Though all staff were outwardly inclusive towards trans participants, some staff also alluded to being unsure whether trans participants' access to gendered spaces could be affected by the personal views of some colleagues.

With staff, I think as a whole we're very accepting. You know, we're gonna respect your pronouns. For the majority, yeah. I think if it came to a more difficult case where they haven't medically transitioned or they hadn't changed their names, I do know a few certain staff probably would feel more uncomfortable when they have, you know, preconceived views. (Staff member)

One staff member recounted a conversation between staff members where a colleague expressed they would feel "*uncomfortable*" with a trans woman using particular public bathrooms. Due to this exchange the interviewee had concerns that there would be "*quite a lot of difficulty*" around these views, which could affect the experiences of trans participants at the Hub.

Previous research shows that professionals can exhibit unconscious biases based on stereotypes about minoritised individuals, which influence professional decisions being made around risk (Saunders & Midgette, 2023). One staff member acknowledged the increased risk of discrimination for trans participants, particularly those who didn't pass as well.

I think there would be difficulty around that if they're not stereotypically transitioned. So yeah, I understand the safety issue, but to also make someone comfortable, I think – we could work around it. […] I think there's a possibility that some people might discriminate, to be honest, based on that, those feelings, which is unfortunate. But yeah, I do think there's some held back views unfortunately. (Staff member)

There was no evidence of direct discrimination based on staff perceptions of trans people. Decisions were predominantly described as being based on probation risk information and discussion between colleagues.

Support with decision making

Support for staff needing to balance these factors came in several forms. Most staff said that in the first instance they would talk things through with their immediate colleagues and managers. For some, that was sufficient for them to feel confident in their decisions.

Most staff said that training would be beneficial (see also: Section 4.1). This training would allow them to be better informed and therefore feel more able to reach fair assessments.

One staff member made several references to having requested guidance and not received concrete responses from 'above', resulting in mixed opinions on the outcome within the team. Situations requiring input from 'above' were said to have been escalated in the correct manner, however adequate guidance was not reportedly received. This left some staff members feeling anxious and having to make decisions they did not feel were entirely defensible or inclusive.

There's some really really tricky situations, where I don't know if I've done the right thing. But at the end of the day I was told, when I did raise it, 'you need to manage the risk,' and that needs to be kind of, I guess your priority. And if you think you've – I guess you've got to be accountable for your decisions that you're making. But the team didn't agree with some of the decisions I made. […] So it's really hard, without any guidance at all, to know what you're doing, and if it's right. (Staff member)

At times, some staff were unsure about who was ultimately responsible for decisions, and were unclear about where they could seek appropriate or expert advice. Specialist training was requested to alleviate some of these concerns.

Alternative spaces

Single-gender spaces are undoubtedly positive for those that attend. However it was noted that a separate safe space could also be useful for people (trans or not) who either didn't feel comfortable in such highly gendered spaces, or for those unable to attend due to personal circumstances. Generally this was posited as an LGBTQ+ space, and this idea was raised by several staff members. Some staff were actively working towards setting up such a space, where a need had been identified.

> *I want to carve out another space that is inclusive for everyone […] in terms of the LGBTQ community. So whether it's trans, whether it's non-binary, whether it's asexual, pansexual, you know, any other group that would fit – or struggles to fit or feel comfortable in either a male defined space – because we have participants that are gay, who wouldn't come to [the men's group], for example, they just wouldn't feel comfortable to do that. And then it's about 'okay, so why can't we have a space that is then inclusive for that group?' […] But I don't know if that's the right thing, the wrong thing.* (Staff member)

It is of note that this staff member clearly identifies the need for an LGBTQ+ space, however still feels unsure about whether this is the ideal course of action. This may be because this space could feel 'othering' for participants unable or uncomfortable in attending male or female spaces, however it may also prove to be a very important and meaningful space for them.

> *It's not about isolating people, it's about giving them that opportunity to look at those specific individual needs, that will ultimately link them better into the wider community.* (Staff member)

Relatedly, some staff members were also conscious of the potential need for separate groups for other protected characteristics or 'priority groups'. For the majority of these groups, staff reported that there had been no appetite or need for such groups, however they were open to and confident in their capacity to set one up, should this change.

Staff saw the value in creating specialist spaces for minority groups, to encourage feelings of safety and community. However due to the small number of trans participants, trans-specific spaces had not been necessitated yet.

This section discusses a reported pattern of trans women having sexual convictions and trans men having convictions resulting from poor mental health or substance use. The basis for these generalisations was ambiguous, however it was reflected by the participant sample within this research. Generally, it appeared there was more concern about risk *to* trans men and women in male centred activities, and more concern about risk *from* trans women attending women's groups.

4.4 Challenging misgendering and transphobia

There were some incidents of misgendering and transphobic language used by other participants at the Hubs. This section discusses how staff reported incidents were addressed and factors that influenced these responses.

Approaches to challenging

There was conflicting evidence of unacceptable comments being challenged and dealt with. Most staff seemed confident that this was done consistently, but tended to use examples of behaviour relating to other characteristics (such as sexism or homophobia, rather than

transphobia) when evidencing these challenges.

As noted previously, staff with more experience in working with trans people were much more confident in dealing with potential issues and having difficult conversations.

> *If it did happen, then I would absolutely know what I was going to do about it. […] I've worked with a lot more trans participants in my previous role, which I think has equipped me to respond, but also to support the staff and the team, to sort of draw the line and let them know what the expectation is.* (Staff member)

One Hub had delivered various iterations of an activity aimed at recognising prejudices and hate crime. However, these were not well attended, and staff had struggled to market the sessions successfully.

Staff described primarily using 'in the moment' opportunities to educate participants. Staff often utilised facets of their own identity as a foundation for challenges, such as "*I'm a woman and that upsets me*" to address sexist comments. However this approach had not been utilised for comments about LGBT people.

The majority of misgendering from participants appeared to be based in genuine ignorance of someone's correct pronouns. Some staff members described correcting comments perceived to be of this nature swiftly and concisely. However, this approach was not always felt to be appropriate due to reasons discussed in the following section.

For participants making more persistent comments or discriminating more blatantly, staff took a more comprehensive approach. This included taking the participant aside to discuss the comments, explaining why they were inappropriate and perhaps referring to their signed agreement to treat others with respect at the Hub. In some cases, staff had also put participants through online equality and diversity training.

Influence of circumstances

Different components of the environment were described by staff as influencing the way they reacted to incidents of misgendering or transphobia. The composition of people present was considered, as busier times made it harder to have a private and tactful conversation, and difficult conversations risked disrupting the wider group's activities. Challenging particular participants was said to take more time, and incidents were sometimes not tackled due to staff feeling that on balance it was better to let comments slide, as they lacked the time and resources to address it appropriately in the moment. However, staff were conscious that this was not the optimum response, as it may impact other participants' sense of safety and inclusion.

One staff member described not registering misgendering at times, and needing to be more vigilant for future instances of this. This initial oversight was grounded in their personal recognition of a trans participant's gender, meaning they were less alert to the potential for them to be misgendered by others.

> *I think sometimes, especially at the beginning when it – the first time it happened around me, I almost didn't register it because in my mind when they say 'she' or 'young lady', I'm like, 'well, they're obviously talking about someone else.' There's no – in my head there's no connection to [X]. So it's almost like a delay from me of 'oh no wait, that's incorrect, they're misgendering [him].'* (Staff member)

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Finally, if the person being misgendered or affected by transphobia was present, staff needed to consider whether it would draw unwanted additional attention to them or the situation, and whether it was their place to speak on behalf of them.

Speaking on behalf of others

Similarly to feedback from some trans participants, staff expressed apprehension about when and to what extent it was appropriate to speak on behalf of a person who has been misgendered. One staff member also expressed this in terms of an operational query.

It's hard to judge, and [...] that's led to more progress from me, kind of recognising and questioning with my managers, kind of around whose response – is it my, would it be right or wrong of me to correct people who misgender him? Would he want that? Is that something he'd want to do? Should I have a talk with him about whether he wants us to do that?
(Staff member)

Staff who had witnessed misgendering noted that often trans participants did not correct others, but staff were unsure whether to intervene as it wasn't clear whether they had spoken to their support worker about their preferences for people stepping in.

Some staff said they found it easier to challenge language used about a trans person who wasn't present at the time of the incident.

I think I find it quite easy when the person isn't there, because like you said, they're not there to stand up for themselves, whereas if they are there, I don't want to speak on their behalf, but I don't want to – in case they don't want me to, I don't want to condescend. I don't want to potentially – I know it's not the case with [some people], but in other ways it might be outing them. So that's where the difficulty is, when they're actually present. (Staff member)

These elements interacted dynamically with other considerations described in the previous section, depending on who was being misgendered or targeted by transphobic language, whether they were out, and whether they had discussed their preferences for intervention.

LGBT staff

Again, LGBT staff were more proficient in challenging misgendering and transphobia. Staff from Hubs with higher numbers of LGBT staff were most confident in dealing with issues.

I think the team would absolutely [feel comfortable challenging], because it has happened. And I think – I don't know whether that is because – let me think, I'd say a good 40% of our staff team are part of the LGBT community. And I think that that is a factor, 100%. That would give the rest of the team confidence, I think, to do that. (Staff member)

Conversely, LGBT staff who were in a minority amongst colleagues felt they intervened more consistently than others in their team. One staff member says that corrections were not always made by staff, which led them to feel personally responsible for speaking up on participants' behalf.

Yeah, it's hard, and I don't know how much other people would challenge in that moment either. I think I'm more susceptible to challenging because of my own personal experience. But at the same time it's exhausting being the only one challenging, it needs to be like common ground, everyone should be doing it. So yeah, it's difficult. (Staff member)

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This was particularly pertinent for LGBT staff working with colleagues they felt had personal views about trans people which were at odds with their professional duties (see also: Section 4.3). Some LGBT staff attempted to offset these issues when describing events, combining other factors to mitigate overall outcomes.

I think we, all staff do try and challenge, but obviously there's the personal views behind it as well. So sometimes we disagree on that. But overall I would say interactions are positive. Yeah, I think, yeah, very positive, I'd say, yeah. (Staff member)

However, there were also strong displays of allyship from non-LGBT colleagues, which were evident in staff relationships as well as the maintenance of an inclusive Hub environment.

Correcting mistakes

In addition to the ability to challenge others, several staff members described the importance of having the ability to recognise, admit and rectify when they'd made a mistake.

I think it's so easy to do as well, that you need to make sure that staff are confident that actually people do make mistakes, as long as you're not malicious and you recognise that mistake, and kind of, you say 'I'm sorry I misgendered you' or kind of, I think that's better than completely ignoring it, going again and doing the same mistake. (Staff member)

Staff were conscious of their own and others' unconscious biases, and were generally confident in how and when to correct themselves and apologise.

In summary, staff discussed the various components of a situation which determined how incidents of misgendering and transphobia were challenged (or not) – the people involved; the people around; whether it was malicious or an ill-informed quip; or whether the person needed extra help to understand their actions. These factors also interacted with the confidence and experience of staff, and the preferences of the trans people involved.

4.5 Summary

Most staff reported they needed to, or would like to learn more about, working with trans people. Some staff had prior experience of working with LGBT people, or were LGBT themselves, and these tended to be the people that led on finding and sharing knowledge with their colleagues. Most staff said they would be able to research relevant information when needed, either independently or with trans participants.

The overall ethos of the Hub and associated support from commissioners were key in being able to prioritise inclusion, community and choice at the Hub. Staff were dedicated to creating a safe space for all participants and employed various strategies to contribute to this. These included physical indicators such as flags, involving participants in decorating the Hub and ensuring that inclusivity measures were embedded within all activities and not just specific diversity events. Staff spoke about the importance of working with specialist organisations to provide wrap-around care for trans participants, however some expressed they would struggle to know where to find such organisations.

Staff were also keenly aware of managing interactions between trans participants and other participants who may hold discriminatory views. Several approaches to preventing and challenging incidents of misgendering or transphobia were described. However, individual factors such as confidence and personal identity influenced how these were implemented.

There was good evidence of inclusivity of trans people in gendered spaces, although staff described a multitude of factors that needed to be balanced behind the scenes to ensure the safety of trans and other participants. These included the risk to participants, risk from participants, the gender of the trans participant and of the group they wanted to attend.

5.0   Organisational trans inclusive approaches at the Hubs

In addition to person based factors, staff discussed elements of Hub practice that were related to wider organisational inputs and procedures. These matters often contained influences or requirements from several disparate organisations, due to the co-funded nature of the Hubs.

5.1 Information management

Obtaining information

Information about participants' transgender status was predominantly shared in the referral information, usually from probation. In some cases this information was included in risk assessments, in others it was included when talking about protected characteristics or diversity. However this information wasn't always guaranteed to be shared during the referral stage.

> *Sometimes it says in their risk assessment, sometimes it doesn't. So sometimes you don't have any background info until you meet them in person and then you find out they might be transitioning or gay, lesbian, whatever. So there's not a lot before we enrol them.*
> (Staff member)

Participants are routinely asked during inductions about their gender identity. For some support workers this was the point they were made aware a participant was trans.

> *The only reason I know that he is trans is because it's one of our equality questions, and I said 'what gender do you identify as?' 'Male.' And the next question is like 'are there any plans to change this?' And he said 'already have.' So I was like 'okay,' and that was kind of it.*
> (Staff member)

The information from inductions is then stored centrally (with permission). However, from this point the written information isn't generally accessed by support workers again, with one support worker saying "*it's hard to find the time*" to check information from this source. It was acknowledged that managers may use this information for reporting on priority groups.

A minority of staff members raised that there may be people attending the Hub that aren't out as trans. Indeed, one questionnaire respondent was not out to anyone at the Hub.

Storing information

Trans participants' gender and trans status was recorded inconsistently, as there did not seem to be a specific place in the case management system for this information. One staff member also said that they didn't feel the need to record or share information relating to the fact one of their participants is transgender.

This was further complicated by the fact some information was automatically updated by probation, who were presumed to depend on legal gender over self-declared gender. A similar

issue was described relating to participants' names, with uncertainty on whether Hub records could be updated before a name had been changed legally.

> *We've had a massive battle with like, if they haven't legally changed their name, we've got to sign them up as […] their legal names.* (Staff member)

One participant said that when they began engaging with the Hub, they hadn't legally changed their name yet, but believed both names had been used on their files. Positively, they described having no issues with being misgendered or deadnamed by staff.

This inconsistency in information storing meant that Hubs were not able to accurately record how many trans participants were engaging. Information had to be shared informally between staff, leaving potential gaps in knowledge that may be of importance.

Sharing information

Information about participants tended to be shared verbally between colleagues during staff meetings, when deemed necessary by support workers.

> *In the morning meeting, if there's some risk or diversity needs, we would discuss that so the team are aware. Because I think the team need to – not just that individual who's managing them, the team need to be aware of that need, might have to be kind of sensitive on an issue, or make sure that other participants they're managing are challenged for like language or the way they're treating someone.* (Staff member)

For participants whose trans identity was not relevant to their risk to or from others, this information tended to stay private between the participant and their support worker until it came up organically elsewhere.

Relevant information about trans participants' gender was reliably shared at appropriate points, though the timing and source of this information varied depending on its relevance to participants' risk. However, clearer processes would be beneficial to enable Hub staff to use this information more effectively.

5.2 Support for staff

Staff spoke about the different places they sought support for working with trans participants and dealing with transphobia and misgendering. These included local support from within their teams, seeking guidance from 'above,' and requesting external training. However, there were varied levels of success in accessing these resources, and how useful they transpired to be.

Team support

The most accessible source of support was from immediate colleagues. Several staff members said that they felt comfortable talking through any concerns with their team on an ad-hoc basis, and this usually provided sufficient assistance for any issues they had experienced.

> *It would be, yeah, just, I guess going to [managers], and kind of coming together as a team, and figuring out what's the safest for everyone involved. […] There's no kind of set guidance that I've ever been aware of to use. Other than just talking to the people.* (Staff member)

The importance of diversity within teams was highlighted at several points during staff interviews. Due to the particular sensitivity of the topic of gender diversity, some staff members

felt less comfortable discussing these issues with colleagues who did not share a minority identity.

Management support

Some staff had requested support from other parts of the organisation, internal senior leadership or service commissioners, reporting mixed outcomes. Some staff were clear on who they could ask for assistance within the organisation, and said they would be sure to share learning with other Hubs.

Involving higher levels in decision making was used to balance the fair treatment of participants with staff feeling their decisions were defensible, and that accountability for this was shared.

> *If there's stuff that's uncomfortable or they get a gut instinct then they need to, we need to, manage that. And we need to report it, and be aware, revisit that risk, what are the things we need to be looking out for, relationships or concerns or that side of it, and then that goes back [up].* (Staff member)

One staff member described asking for help at a national level and not receiving guidance. They felt uncomfortable taking the responsibility of making certain decisions without clear guidance, as they felt if anything bad happened they would be personally responsible for that decision.

> *I brought it up in a national meeting, […] and they looked at me, everyone else, like I was an alien, […] CFO said 'oh we've never had this problem in any other Hub' and I'm like 'how? how hasn't this even been like, just escalated?' […] I needed a bit of a steer and guidance on my priority groups over that individual.* (Staff member)

Although some staff said that they wanted clearer direction, there were mixed ideas on how to take this forward productively, and it was unclear which organisation would be responsible for creating guidance.

Reflective practice

Some teams had regular development team meetings, where any recent challenges or queries could be shared and discussed. These sessions were often run by QDOs, and staff found it productive to share insights and feedback with their peers.

Reflective practice was also facilitated by managers, to address both current issues and future practice, and to improve experiences for both participants and staff.

> *I think a lot of it is talking, like doing reflective practice, so where you'll talk as a group around your thoughts, your feelings, put a plan together, how are you going to manage this. I think it's quite important around these stereotypes, and actually making sure that person is an individual, they're treated with respect, and also that, I think staff need to be encouraged to talk about feelings and how they're affected as well.* (Staff member)

Some Hubs had themed sessions to address particular topics or cases. These were used as an opportunity to gather and refine ideas on how to make improvements to Hub practice, enhance inclusion and increase engagement. Some Hubs had run sessions on LGBT inclusion, but not specifically for trans people.

Some staff acknowledged that the success of reflective practice sessions relied on staff feeling comfortable "*airing your dirty laundry*" with colleagues about both successes and failures.

I think because it's the team as well, we feel okay to be vulnerable a little bit with each other, which is good, and it's healthy, because we just wanna be better, and we want better for our participants. (Staff member)

One Hub had also arranged for clinical supervision for staff. Although at the time of the interviews this was yet to take place, staff were optimistic about the benefits it would bring.

Reflective practice was undertaken in various formats within Hubs, and resulted in many productive outputs. However, the extent to which staff could engage was related to their psychological safety within their team.

Psychological safety

Team psychological safety is a concept describing a secure learning environment where individuals are trusting and respected, enabling them to feel secure and capable of change (Edmondson, 1999). Psychological safety is important in the context of staff discussing and working with trans participants so that they are able to make mistakes or challenge others without worry. Psychological safety was abundantly clear in some staff interviews, but some staff had needed to find alternative solutions.

I think half the time the team just need to feel supported if they do make a mistake, that actually you're not going to turn around and have a go. And actually they're learning as much as me, like in this role, you're always learning when you're working with people aren't you. You never know the answer. (Staff member)

I think I would still rather go to support workers for a lot of things, just because they're the same level as me you know, they deal with the same stuff. […] I'd rather go to people that I know are accepting and able to have those conversations that are productive and stuff like that. So yeah, it does depend to be honest. (Staff member)

In some Hubs, staff were aware of the need for psychological safety, but acknowledged that some staff were not entirely able to share their concerns freely. In these cases, there was work in progress to implement strategies to create a safe space for those colleagues and allow them to develop securely.

I know that I work with people that are really good with everyone, but there might be certain questions that they're not super comfortable with, and actually, how do you make it a safe space for them as well? Because actually, they don't all have the same experiences, and so would there be conversations that come up that make them feel – I don't know, uncomfortable, unsure, unable to answer or support people in that space? I don't know. (Staff member)

Support for staff was available from several outlets, although knowledge on how to access more formal routes and associated guidance was mixed. Staff were encouraged to reflect and grow their practice within teams, however the efficacy of these growth strategies were dependent on feelings of trust and respect from colleagues.

5.3 Summary

Disjointed information sharing meant that staff weren't always aware a participant was trans before meeting them (and therefore not prepared). There was also no consistent way of sharing this sensitive information between colleagues, when required.

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More detailed training and guidance was requested in order to help staff balance inclusivity and risk elements fairly and defensibly. Most staff were able to seek support from their immediate teams or managers. However this capacity to seek and share guidance was related to security and trust within teams, which were sometimes lower due to differences in approaches to working with trans people.

6.0 What still needs to be done?

6.1 Report summary

In order to contextualise the recommendations of this report, it is helpful to summarise the findings from this research.

The prioritisation of inclusion, choice and community at the Hubs were also reflected by Nesbitt-Day (2022) and contributed profoundly to trans participants feeling safe and accepted. In most cases, staff had a basic awareness and good working relationships with trans participants. However, the uniqueness of each trans participant's experience, combined with the small numbers of trans participants engaging and the range of situations that they required staff assistance with, meant that staff were often unsure if they were taking the right course of action. Learning from participants about their individual journeys and needs is useful for delivering tailored support, but staff shouldn't solely rely on this as some trans people may not feel comfortable sharing such personal information, especially in early interactions. Building a trusting working relationship takes time and showing trans participants that staff are knowledgeable and able to create safe spaces are key factors in this.

Reflecting on an amalgamation of comments within this research and research in other areas of the justice system (such as Ellis & Opsal, 2023), it appears that trans women are viewed with more uncertainty by those in the justice system than trans men. This may be because there is a focus on trans women with sexual offences in the media, and cisgender women in the justice system are seen as more vulnerable, so there is apprehension around allowing trans women into female occupied spaces. Conversely, the opposite seems to be true for trans men. This may be linked to there being less visibility in the media, and therefore less presumptions around their offence types, or that trans men in single-gender spaces are perhaps viewed as less vulnerable than cisgender women. The visibility of non-binary people in the justice system appears to be minimal. This coincides with findings from several other care related sectors (Stevens, 2022).

The experiences of trans people were impacted by how they were perceived by others. Perceptions differed for staff and other participants, but were both informed somewhat by stereotypes. Staff were conscious of risks to and from trans people, and these factors had been balanced on a case-by-case basis for trans participants at the Hub. However, stereotypes also informed hypothetical situations, which were sometimes catastrophised and led staff to feel they needed more support in making decisions balancing risk and inclusivity. Conversely, Hub participants tended to rely on visual appearances to inform their reactions to trans people. Those who passed well encountered greater inclusion, those who didn't were misgendered, though not actively excluded.

At the centre of these key issues is a need for improved awareness across all bases; for other participants, for staff, and organisationally.

6.2 Recommendations

These recommendations are based on the findings from this research, however they are relevant to any organisation working with or supporting trans people.

Within Hubs

1. Training for staff
   - From someone with lived experience
   - At the start of employment, and regular refreshers
   - With time to discuss information

2. Consulting trans participants
   - About what they want support with (if anything)
   - About how they'd prefer misgendering incidents to be addressed
   - About how to improve service delivery

3. Environment
   - Pride flags or bunting all year round
   - Posters or leaflets for specific services or LGBT and trans friendly services
   - Pronoun badges for staff

4. Consider dedicated sessions for minority groups

5. Trans awareness events for participants

6. Focus on promoting allyship for non-LGBT staff and participants

7. Normalise conversations about discrimination, prejudice and stereotypes

8. Normalise conversations about trans people and gender identity

Organisational

9. Compile a list of specialist organisations for trans people, and LGBT and trans friendly organisations

10. Establish a process and a specific place for storing and sharing information on trans status

11. Create guidance for making risk decisions involving trans people, and update this regularly

12. Confirm clear escalation routes – including timeframes for responses and assigned SPOCs in CFO, HMPPS, IA

Continue to:

13. Listen to participants' voices

14. Focus on individuals rather than characteristics

15. Highlight participants' strengths

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16. Include trans people's needs in all activities

17. Be flexible and responsive to participant needs

18. Celebrate diversity events such as pride and trans awareness week

19. Establish/maintain boundaries with all participants about treatment of others

20. Provide gender neutral bathrooms

21. Recruit diverse staff

22. Expand the use of SPOCs for minority groups

23. Expand availability of clinical supervision for all operational staff

6.3 Conclusion

The findings of this report broaden the evidence base exploring how trans people navigate a cis-normative and binary world, especially when it comes to service provisions. It depicts how trans people interact with community justice services and identifies key influences on how these are experienced. In addition, this research also outlines considerations for those working with trans individuals and how that impacts on the services they provide.

The prevailing themes around creating safe, inclusive spaces and the importance of awareness and allyship are essential elements for all services in advancing trans inclusivity. Though more work is required to explore the needs of those with intersecting identities or multiple disadvantages, this research contributes to a foundation of knowledge about trans people's experiences.

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