



**A GUIDE TO THE
BEAUMONT SOCIETY**
for transgender people

embracing all strands of
gender diversity

The Beaumont Society
27 Old Gloucester Street,
London,
WC1N 3XX.

Information Line 01582-412220

Registered charity No. 1135548

USEFUL WEBSITES

Websites of General Transgender Interest and Advice

www.northernconcord.org.uk

www.transliving.co.uk

www.beaumont-trust.org.uk

www.gender.org.uk/WOBSMatters

www.mermaidsuk.org.uk

www.gendertrust.org.uk

**Websites Offering Guidelines and Information
on the Gender Recognition Act, the Equality Act
and the European Court of Human Rights**

www.gires.org.uk

www.pfc.org.uk

THE BEAUMONT SOCIETY

The Society was founded in 1966 as a self help and social organisation for transvestites and transsexuals. We are still here over 40 years on, in a very different social climate, with a broader membership but with the same aims. The name comes from the Chevalier D'Eon de Beaumont, a celebrated French transvestite of the 18th Century.

The Society is run for, and by, people who are transgender, covering the spectrum from occasional cross dressers to post operative transsexuals. We are a national organisation run on a regional basis. There are members throughout the UK, with local groups in many areas, there are also members overseas.

The Beaumont Society is run by an Executive Committee of elected and co-opted Members who meet twice a year.

Membership of the Society

There are three types of Membership, Postal, Electronic, and Combined Postal and Electronic. Postal Members receive their service through the mail, Electronic Members are given access to the Members page of the Web Site www.beaumontsociety.org.uk, Combined members, as the name suggests, receive snail mail and access to the Members Page.

Personal Security

The Society operates a strict code of confidentiality and guarantees that all information given on your application form will only be seen by those officers responsible for considering and administering your membership. No personal information is passed to other members and the Society never supplies names and addresses to anyone inside or outside the Society without the member's express permission. It is not even necessary to give your real address on your application form, as long as you provide some means for the Society to communicate with you.

Contacting Other Members

The Society operates a Mailbox System which allows members to make contact with each others without the need for individuals to reveal their personal details. This is especially helpful for members who would be daunted by the prospect of attending group meetings, or even meeting another individual face to face for the first time. The contact system allows correspondence with other members whilst preserving anonymity.

It also has a Members' Area on its Website where members are free to display their profiles with contact details at the member's discretion.

Magazines

The Beaumont Magazine is published quarterly and the Beaumont Bulletin twice-yearly. Both come free with the membership fee.

The Bulletin contains Society business and Membership news; it is available to Members only.

The Beaumont Magazine is more general in content with features, colour photographs, readers' letters and many articles on social events and helpful tips. It provides a lifeline to those members who for one reason or another, are unable to participate in many of the social activities. For those who do, the Magazine also provides news and information on social activities of interest to members, including many events not organised by the Beaumont Society.

Social Events

The Society is associated with a number of hotel weekends at various venues There are many other popular events organised by the Society as well as "Weekend Social Events" organised by other groups and supported by the Society.

Many areas have regular meetings which may be held in members' own homes or other suitable venues. These meetings are quite informal, though sometimes something special may be arranged, such as clothes sales, wig or make-up demonstration and video showings. Usually they are simply somewhere you can dress in a safe, relaxed, friendly atmosphere, chat with other members, make friends and discuss problems. Wives, girlfriends, and families are always very welcome.

Help and Advice

Many members find support, comfort and advice from other Society members, however neither the Society nor its members are qualified to undertake counselling. Associated with the Beaumont Society is the Beaumont Trust, which can provide avenues to professional advice.

W.O.B.S (Women of the Beaumont Society) is financed by, but quite independent of the Society. It provides help and support and a forum for the partners of transgender people.

Non-Transgender Support.

The Beaumont Society, through its experienced members, offers talks and advice on transgender matters to interested parties. This includes support for surveys by recognised students on college and university courses involving research into 'transgender' related subjects, mainly through its magazine and website. We also encourage students to attend our social meetings to gain first hand experience of transgender peoples' life styles.

We provide representatives at meetings of community support bodies, such as the Samaritans, University LGB&T groups, Victim Support, Police Force diversity staff, etc., for talks on transgender matters, in which our personal backgrounds provide the basis for greater understanding of the subject.

Our social gatherings are usually open to those who have contact with transgender people but are not themselves transgender, such as the Police, Fire Service, Ambulance Service, and traders such as beauticians and hair dressers, shoe shops and clothing stores.

SOME USEFUL DEFINITIONS

Transgender describes the general case of a person adopting clothing, appearance or lifestyle of the gender opposite to that assigned to them at birth. The term embraces *all aspects of gender variation* from fetishistic transvestism at one extreme – through variations of cross dressing – to gender reassignment at the other extreme.

Biological sex is the condition of being male or female, as determined by chromosomes and body chemistry. In puberty it is marked by the development of secondary sexual characteristics, e.g., facial hair in men, breast development in women.

Gender is expressed in terms of masculinity and femininity. It is how people perceive themselves and how they expect others to behave. It is largely culturally determined.

Transvestism refers to the adoption, fully or partially, of the clothes normally identified as belonging to the opposite sex. Some people may also dress as part of a disguise, for entertainment or fetishism.

Cross-Dressing is the desire to adopt the clothes, appearance and behaviour normally associated with the opposite gender. For some it is simply "dressing up", while for others, known as Dual Role Cross-Dressers, it is a need to adopt the opposite role as fully as possible, on a temporary, or on a full-time basis. Sometimes such individuals are referred to as **transgenderist**.

Gender Dysphoria refers to the dissatisfaction with one's gender (masculinity or femininity) which is in conflict with one's physical sex. The term is usually restricted to those who seek medical and or surgical assistance to resolve their difficulty.

Transsexuality is a profound form of Gender Dysphoria, where the need is to express oneself and to be, as far as possible, in the gender to which one feels comfortable irrespective of biological sex.

Hermaphroditism or Intersexuality is where the physiological sex is ambiguous or dual. The situation may, or may not, be accompanied by various degrees of Gender Dysphoria. The condition may be due to chromosomal complexes, such as Klinefelter's Syndromes, congenital errors of metabolism such as androgen insensitivity syndrome and adrenogenital syndrome.

There may also be effects from the hormone balance in the foetus or the placenta.

Homosexuality is a situation where sexual attraction is felt for people of the same sex rather than the opposite sex.

Bisexuality is where sexual attraction is to either or both sexes. In general, those who are homosexual or bisexual are quite satisfied with their gender and body. Most men who cross-dress are not homosexual.

GENDER IDENTITY

Gender identity refers to a person's sense of themselves as masculine or feminine. The cause of Gender Dysphoria remains uncertain and may be a combination of nature and nurture. There is no evidence that is an inherited condition. Cross dressing and transsexualism may have need of skilled specialist counselling. Neither condition is amenable to "cure", any more than left-handedness. At one end of the scale is the occasional transvestite; while at the other end of the spectrum is the transsexual who, with thoughtful and carefully directed therapy, usually becomes happier as an individual after the gender affirmation process.

Between these two extremes are graduations, with the cross-dresser functioning somewhere in between. The cross-dresser who knows that he, or she in rare cases, is not alone and not insane is more able to come to terms with the condition and learn to live with it. Gender possibilities are broad, as are those of sex. People can exist anywhere along the continuum.

CROSS-DRESSING

Cross-dressing means different things to different people and tends to be little understood, though work in recent years to change public attitudes means that it is, perhaps, no longer a subject of fear, but is more seen as being a means of expression. It is a subject commonly treated in the press in a way that exploits it for sensationalism, but women's magazines seem to be more sympathetic. Perhaps it is not seen as a threat to women as it is to men. When one is very close to the person, however, it may well be a different matter. Among families it can seem very threatening at first.

Understanding is not as good as it might be among people in the caring professions, the clergy, police and social workers, who may be called on to offer help.

The unhappiness often experienced by many cross-dressers comes from loneliness and anxiety about their situation and considerable confusion about their feelings. In a sense they are a minority group, who fail to conform to what is regarded as normal behaviour, and may, therefore, fear the consequences should the activity be discovered.

Society's acceptance of females who choose to dress in traditionally male clothes is widespread in the West, but cross-dressing by males is much less accepted. Partners are often concerned that their man may become homosexual or transsexual, though this is unlikely to happen. Some cross-dressers do opt to live full time as women and some may be homosexual or bisexual by coincidence.

Incidence of Cross-dressing.

The incidence of cross-dressing is estimated at approximately one in a hundred of the male population. The incidence of transsexualism is considerably rarer, estimated at between one in ten thousand and one in fifteen thousand of the population. The actual figures may be considerably higher. Many cross-dressers dress in utmost secrecy for fear of censure or ridicule, while those who have overcome this problem can be said to have "come out of the closet." It should be pointed out that while some cross-dressers say that their dressing is an expression of their "femininity", transsexuals dress in a way they feel appropriate for their innately determined gender identity.

Aspects of Cross-dressing.

The majority of cross-dressers are heterosexual, often married with families. The desire to cross-dress often begins at an early age when the only available clothes may be those belonging to female members of the family. A young boy feeling the need to cross-dress, may suffer feelings of isolation and guilt. At first cross-dressing is often non-sexual but during puberty may take on erotic overtones.

Cross-dressing is a form of behaviour not a disease and, therefore, the term "cure" does not apply. In some societies it might be perceived as a harmless quirk. It may, however, be regarded as threatening in a relationship. Often the cross-dresser has avoided telling his partner, believing it may pass once he is in a stable relationship, only to be discovered accidentally at a later stage when it re-emerges. The female partner may feel let down, confused or angry at not being told and wonder what other secrets may be hidden away. Often cross-dressing is simply a safety valve and a form of escape from the pressures and responsibilities of work and social demands. A partner may react with complete revulsion, leading to separation and divorce. At the other extreme, the partner may find the behaviour pattern intriguing, perhaps even stimulating. The majority probably fall in between these two extremes and reach some sort of compromise and tolerance, but not necessarily full approval.

The cross-dresser who indulges at the expense of time spent with his partner and family and at the cost of purchasing the equivalent of a double wardrobe of clothing, risks alienating both his partner and family. If the couple can work together in mutual acceptance of their feelings and to support their partnership, there is a real possibility that the marriage may be strengthened and enhanced. Such cross-dressers may well develop a better understanding of the opposite sex.

Many partners through lack of knowledge assume that cross-dressing equates with homosexuality. More commonly a partner may feel inadequate and believe that somehow she must have failed her husband as a woman. Often the most damaging reaction is the feeling of being deceived and that the secret has gone unshared despite the intimate life which they may otherwise have. Like the cross-dresser themselves, the partner may fear adverse reaction from parents, relatives, friends and particularly children of the marriage.

It is important to remember that people who cross-dress are primarily individuals and that labelling can do considerable damage. Individuals should not be categorised and each person should be treated as an individual in their own right.

It takes great courage to admit that one cross-dresses. It is quite likely that individuals may initially contact a helping organisation such as a gay helpline or the Samaritans, both well known for their confidentiality.

TRANSSEXUALITY AND GENDER REASSIGNMENT

Transsexuality represents the ultimate in gender dysphoria (sometimes referred to by the medical profession as gender identity disorder). The majority of transsexual people – whether male-to-female or female-to-male – feel certain from an early age that their true gender identity is at odds with their biological sex. There is indeed some medical evidence in such cases that brain functions related to gender identity show significant differences from that usually expected from their apparent physical sex.

Gender Reassignment. The UK Gender Recognition Act of 2004 provides for formal recognition by means of a Gender Recognition Certificate (GRC) if a person is shown to have been living as a member of the opposite sex for a minimum of two years. This allows for a change of birth certificate with all that that entails with regard to rights and privileges.

A transsexual person in effect becomes subject to the standard rules and regulations that govern their acquired gender. For example, under the terms of the Gender Recognition Act, married transsexuals are required to divorce their spouse (presumably on the grounds that a person may only marry someone of the opposite sex). However, they can if they wish re-establish their relationship through a civil partnership (as for all same-sex couples).

The Equality Act of 2010 gathers together and supersedes a number of previous acts of Parliament and sets out a wide range of anti-discrimination measures (e.g. employment, education, provision of services, etc.) for people with 'protected characteristics', which include gender reassignment.

The act states, '*A person has the protected characteristic of gender reassignment if the person is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning the person's sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex.*'

On the face of it, gender reassignment (as defined by the two acts of Parliament) can be achieved without a transsexual person having to undergo gender reassignment surgery – or any other medical intervention for that matter – so long as he or she can demonstrate having lived in their innately felt gender for the required period of time.

Appearance is an area of particular concern for transsexual persons. Unfortunately, medical intervention for gender reassignment (whether by hormone treatment or surgery) can often have only a limited effect on the appearance of male to female transsexuals once puberty has passed. Hair removal by electrolysis, and breast implants, are generally successful, though vocal chord surgery can be more problematical. Facial reconstruction – albeit very expensive – can have a significant effect. For female to male transsexuals the outlook is more positive, the effect of androgen therapy generally having a transforming effect on secondary sexual characteristics of facial hair, and on voice pitch and timbre. Phalloplasty has also become quite successful.

Discrimination Against Non-Transsexual People. It is clear that the Equality Act does not include non-transsexual transgender people as a protected category. Nevertheless, cross-dressers appearing in public have the normal protection of the law as regards unfair dismissal, assault and other forms of abuse which come under the heading of hate crime.

It should be emphasised that cross-dressing is not in itself a crime. However, when in public cross-dressers are advised if possible to avoid drawing attention to themselves by inappropriate behaviour. This is particularly true when dealing with highly sensitive issues such as the use of public conveniences.

Provision of Goods and Services. The goods and Services Act (2007) (largely superseded as far as transgender is concerned by the Equality Act of 2010) deals with transgender discrimination in the provision of 'Goods and Services' against transsexual people only. However, nearly all shops and services have adopted a positive attitude towards all transgender people.

Many service providers such as beauticians and hairdressers, clothing and shoe shops, holiday rentals and hotel accommodation advertise their goods and services in transgender club magazines.

Often problems are caused not so much by how a person is dressed, but rather by how they behave and act. Many companies and large department stores have a positive diversity policy towards staff as well as customers. It would be difficult for private shops and businesses to refuse goods and services on religious grounds for instance, and recent cases have shown that even these businesses have to comply with the Act in practice, if only because of the difficulties in distinguishing between cross-dressers and transsexuals.

JOINING THE BEAUMONT SOCIETY

To join the Beaumont Society simply fill in the application forms on the following two pages and post them with the annual subscription to the Society at the address indicated. The option of paying by standing order is provided and (since the Society is a registered charity) your subscriptions can be gift aided, which increases the value of your subscription to the Society.

ALL INFORMATION WILL BE TREATED IN THE STRICTEST CONFIDENCE

Name you wish to be known by within the Society

Are you over 18? YES/NO (delete as appropriate)

Tick which membership you would like? POSTAL INTERNET COMBINED

POSTAL ADDRESS — for use only on mail to you. Block capitals please.

Would you like mail to be marked 'Private and Confidential' YES / NO

NAME

ADDRESS

.....

.....

COUNTRY.....POST CODE.....

EMAIL (for renewal reminder).....

Would you like your email address to be in the annual membership list? YES / NO

The annual subscription is £29.00. Please tick box to indicate payment method

- Standing Order: Complete the 'Optional Standing Order' section opposite
- Cheque/Postal Order: Payable to 'Beaumont Society'. Send with form.
- PayPal: Payable to: email@beaumontsociety.org.uk *
- Electronic Bank Transfer: Use bank details as for Standing Order opposite *

* Please provide Payment Transaction Date and Reference Number

Please sign in the box below and send the complete form to:

**THE BEAUMONT SOCIETY
27 OLD GLOUCESTER ST
LONDON WC1N 3XX, UK**

I wish to join the Beaumont Society and agree to treat in strict confidence any information about other members of the Society. I agree to abide by the rules and accept the constitution of the Beaumont Society. I understand that any guidance or information given to me constitutes only a personal opinion and does not necessarily reflect that of the Society.

SIGNED (Real Name)DATE.....

Optional Standing Order If you wish to pay your annual subscription by standing order please fill in the box below and we will forward it to your bank.

To the Manager (Bank Name)

Bank Address

.....Post Code

Please pay : Norwich and Peterborough Building Society, 5 Cathedral Square,
Peterborough, PE1 1XH

for the credit of "The Beaumont Society" Sort Code 08-60-81 account No. 34085389

the sum of £..... Annually starting on DD.....MM.....YYYY.....

quoting reference : BS No (for office use only)

Please debit my account No.Sort Code-.....-.....

Account Name(s)

SignedDate

Optional Gift Aid

Signing the following declaration will enable the Beaumont Society to reclaim the tax you pay on your subscription/donations. This will increase the value of your subscription/donations by 25% and will cost you nothing personally.

"I confirm that I am a UK taxpayer and would like the Beaumont Society to treat all subscriptions/donations that I have made for the six years prior to this year and all subscriptions/donations I make hereafter, as gift aid donations, until I notify you otherwise."

Full Name

Address

.....Post Code

SignedDate

NB. The above name and address must be as recognised by HMRC and you must pay an amount of income tax and/or capital gains tax at least equal to the tax that the Beaumont Society reclaims on your subscription/donations in the tax year (currently 25% of your subscription/donations). If in the future your tax circumstances change please notify the Beaumont Society to cancel your declaration. Please also notify the Beaumont Society if you change your name or address.

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