

Referral Pathways for Trans and Gender Diverse Affirming Care

Gender affirming care and referrals

Not all trans and gender diverse people will want to medically affirm their gender, but if they do, there are two main types of medical procedures they can consider.

These are:

- gender affirming hormone treatment (GAHT)
- gender affirming surgeries.

Who should I refer to?

Some trans and gender diverse people have talked to their friends and peers about possible clinicians for them, although that may not always be the case. The [Trans Health SA Practitioners' List](#) provides a list of practitioners that have been recommended by trans and gender diverse people.

Gender affirming hormone treatment (GAHT)

GAHT is a hormone treatment option that a trans or gender diverse person may choose to engage in as a part of their gender affirming healthcare.

A referral may not be necessary for a client to access GAHT.

The [Australian Professional Association for Transgender Health's](#) (AusPATH) informed consent guidelines can be used as the most direct method to prescribing hormones, with a prescription for treatment given to the trans or gender diverse person by a GP. This could include a referral to an endocrinologist or Sexual Health Physician (necessary for prescription of testosterone).

Informed consent for GAHT can be used when:

- a GP is confident in their ability to manage a client's hormone levels,
- a GP is confident that their client is able to provide informed consent to treatment and is not experiencing active, untreated psychosis, cognitive impairment, dementia, brain injury, severe personality disorders or dissociative identity disorder.

If a client is receiving ongoing support for complex mental health issues such as the above, a letter can be requested from the treating practitioner to indicate whether they have assessed that the client can provide informed consent.

If a GP is **not** confident in determining that an individual can provide informed consent for treatment due to the presence of complex mental illness, **or** is not confident in prescribing and managing hormone levels themselves, they should refer the person to another health professional.

It is common for an endocrinologist or Sexual Health Physician managing hormones to request a letter of support from a Mental Health Practitioner, however, this is not always the case and is not necessary.

Gender affirming surgeries

Gender affirming surgeries include but are not limited to: facial feminisation or masculinisation, 'top surgeries' (breast reduction, removal, enhancement), and 'bottom surgeries' (orchidectomies, hysterectomies, phalloplasty, vaginoplasty).

Gender affirming procedures can only be performed by trained specialists so a referral is necessary to access these. Typically, these specialists will request a letter of support from a psychologist or psychiatrist. Two of these letters may be required for 'bottom surgeries'.

GAHT are not a necessary precursor for accessing affirming surgeries.

Private health may be necessary to access affirming surgeries, particularly 'bottom surgeries', however, this is dependent on the provider.

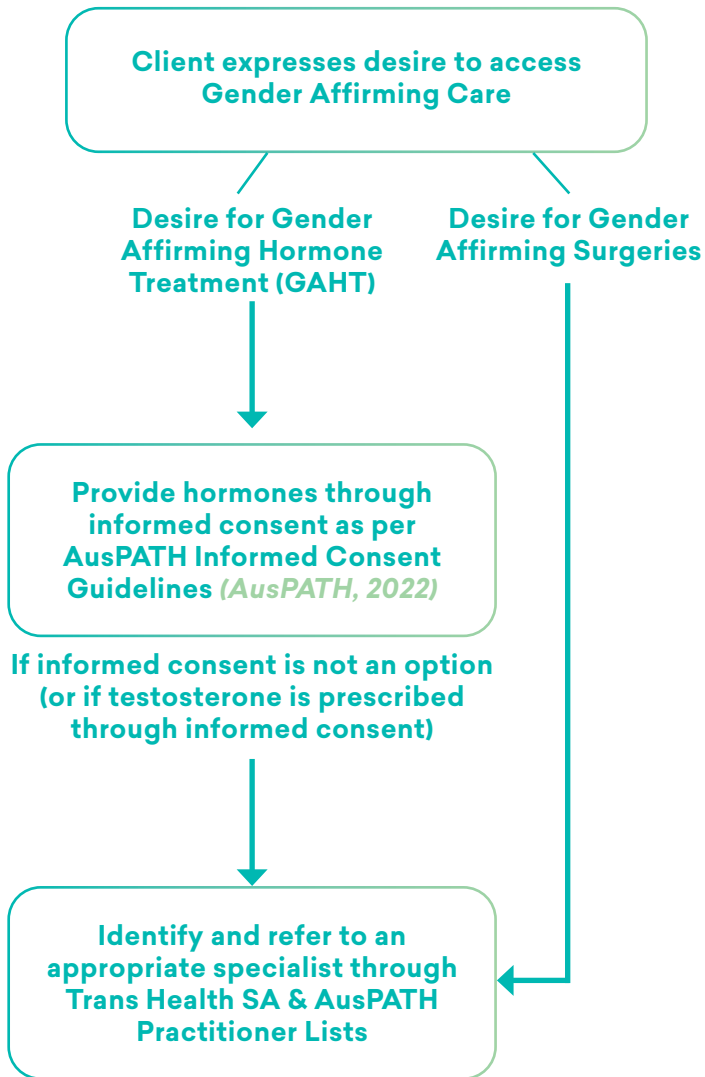
Mental health referral letters

Specialists delivering gender affirming care may request a supporting letter from a Mental Health Practitioner. These letters should contain the client's history of gender dysphoria or desire to transition, their capacity to provide informed consent, whether any significant mental illnesses are present and whether these are being treated.

A client does not need a gender dysphoria diagnosis for one of these letters.

Some trans and gender diverse people may also seek referrals for psychologists or psychiatrists to receive mental health support. This support may or may not be related to their gender identity, but it is still important to ensure that whoever you refer them to is 'trans friendly'.

Referral pathways



Further information

For referral options, visit Trans Health SA:
www.transhealthsa.com

For more information on working with trans clients, visit SHINE SA's education resources including our Introduction to Working with Trans and Gender Diverse People webinars and Online Course:
www.shinesa.org.au/webinars-podcasts
www.shinesa.org.au/activity/intro-tgd-online

For templates for writing approval or referral letters for gender diverse clients, visit TransHub:
www.transhub.org.au/downloads

For current information on processes of providing care to gender diverse people, visit AusPATH:
www.auspath.org.au/standards-of-care

Contact us

Gender Connect Country SA is a free service for people in country SA who have questions about being or supporting those who identify as trans, gender diverse or gender questioning.

Monday – Thursday
3:00 pm – 8:00 pm
(Closed Public Holidays)

Phone
08 7099 5390

Email
genderconnectcountrysa@shinesa.org.au

WebChat
shinesa.org.au/gender-connect