**Children and Young People’s Gender Services - Training and Education Framework**

**Request for Information (RFI) from NHS England**

**Your views may help shape new services**

The Commissioner will value your views and asks a number of set questions below. We expect you will find some questions more relevant to you and easier to respond to than others at this moment, however, please try to respond to as many as you can. Your views are valuable whether or not you have come across all of the aspects covered.

**Why complete this form?**

One or more further tender advertisement(s) will be issued at the appropriate time as/if required. Your responses at this point will not have a bearing on any future tender bids you may wish to submit. You will not be disadvantaged if you choose not to respond to this Request for Information (RFI), but it will be helpful to understand your views at this early stage, so you are encouraged to respond as fully as you can.

1. **Please return the questionnaire as fully as you can by sending as an attachment via the messaging system within the e-tendering portal.**
2. **Please return the form to us by:**

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| **5pm on 10th January 2025** |

Please read the text below before attempting to answer any of the questions.The details contained in this RFI are subject to change and are included here only as a guide. It does not constitute a formal commitment to commission this service.

If you would like to ask further information with respect to any aspects of the requirements, please send a message via the e-portal system.

All responses will remain confidential and will not be used within any potential future procurement process. This process does **not** constitute the start of a procurement process.

Please provide your name and contact details in the table below:

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Organisation name**  | **Your name**  | **Telephone**  | **Email**  |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Date completed:**  |

**Children and Young People Gender Services Training and Education Framework**

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| **1. Background** |
| NHS England is the direct commissioner of specialist services for children and young people (CYP) who present with issues of gender incongruence / gender dysphoria. A significant programme of work commenced in 2020 to improve the safety and quality of clinical interventions for CYP who present with issues of gender incongruence. In 2020 NHS England commissioned the independent [Cass Review](https://cass.independent-review.uk/), which has since published detailed findings and recommendations that focus on the establishment of a new clinical model that is fundamentally different to that followed by the former Gender Identity Development Service at The Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust in favour of a more cautious psychosocial model, that is less reliant on medical intervention.The Cass Review specifically recommended that NHS England commission an organisation to:* Develop a competency framework
* Develop a suite of training materials to supplement professional competencies, appropriate to their clinical field and level. This should include a module on the holistic assessment framework and approach to formulation and care planning.

Achievements to date in the transformation of these services include:* **A new interim service specification published:** An [NHS England interim service specification for specialist gender incongruence services for children and young people](https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/interim-service-specification-for-specialist-gender-incongruence-services-for-children-and-young-people/) was published which describes how the new services will take a more cautious approach to assessment, diagnosis and intervention, including social transition particularly for younger children; and that the primary clinical approach will be psychosocial and psychological rather than medical.
* **Tavistock Gender Identity Development Service was brought to a managed closure:** NHS England brought the Gender Identity Development Service at The Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust to a managed close.
* **Three new national Children and Young People’s Gender Services opened in London, the North-West and the South-West between April and November 2024.**
* **Established a National Research Oversight Board to oversee an academic strategy:** The [National Research Oversight Board](https://www.england.nhs.uk/commissioning/spec-services/npc-crg/gender-dysphoria-clinical-programme/implementing-advice-from-the-cass-review/cyp-gender-dysphoria-research-oversight-board/), includes the National Institute for Health and Care Research and a range of key experts in research, and is guiding the approach to a comprehensive programme of research.
* **National clinical policy for puberty suppressing hormones:** A new clinical commissioning policy was adopted that prevents the prescribing of Puberty Suppressing Hormones to CYP under 18 years of age for CYP who have gender incongruence or gender dysphoria due to the limited evidence around safety, risks, benefits and outcomes.
* **A specification changing the referral pathway into the CYP gender service:** [All new referrals to NHS Children and Young People’s Gender Services must be made through NHS secondary care services](https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/referral-pathway-for-specialist-service-for-children-and-young-people-with-gender-incongruence/) (mental health or paediatric services) to ensure that every child or young person has a thorough assessment of need, and that those who need it receive appropriate support from local teams while they remain on the waiting list. The new services will establish how support is given to families of younger children as close as possible to the referral date.
* **Training and education delivered by the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges:** To support the establishment of new services, NHS England commissioned the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges to design and deliver the induction training for new clinical staff in the NHS Child and Young People’s Gender Services.

The next phase of the transformation programme (December 2024 onwards) will achieve the following:* Establish a specialist gender service based in a children’s hospital in **each of the seven NHS regions**in England
* Publish a refreshed**service specification for the specialist gender services**, to incorporate the findings of the final report from the Cass Review and the Holistic Assessment Framework developed by the Cass Review Clinical Expert Group
* **Form a National Provider Network**so that there is a consistent approach to service delivery, research and clinical audit
* Support the specialist gender services in establishing a**regional network of local services**that will include primary care, mental health services and paediatric services
* **Build a new clinical workforce that is trained through an education framework that is aligned to the new clinical model.**

Critical success factors in **building the new configuration of services and regional networks,** and ensuring long-term service stability, will be:* to create, and raise the profile of, a career pathway for those working in the NHS Children and Young People’s Gender Services; and
* a shared skills and competency framework relevant to all clinical and social care staff working in this area at different levels within the system.

The benefits of a competency framework are that it identifies the competencies needed to deliver the services required for CYP with gender incongruence, and their related healthcare needs. This will enable clinical staff to not only assess their own skills and competencies within a consistent and recognised framework, but also provide a career structure. It will describe the different types of roles that exist, and the relationship between them. Experience from other fields of healthcare is that this will support and promote staff recruitment and retention, as well as act as a quality improvement measure through performance criteria. Staff will use the competency framework alongside other key professional framework documents. This does not replace protocols and guidelines used in the service, but works alongside them, describing the knowledge required and performance criteria that should be met by an individual working with those protocols and guidelines. A tiered competency framework for CYP gender related training will describe the initial community contact workforce, secondary health, and staff working in the NHS Children and Young People’s Gender Services. The competency framework will underpin the fundamental knowledge and skills required to deliver the NHSE Interim Service Specification for CYP with gender incongruence, and the Holistic Assessment Framework delivered by the Cass Review Clinical Expert Group.The competencies within the framework can be used by managers in the formation of jobs descriptions and roles, and to help them describe the education and training required by individuals working in the service. The competency framework can also be used by managers and individuals within a service to help identify progression routes, identify the education and training required to enable an individual to undertake additional activities. The successful provider is required to develop the competency framework. In addition, it will be used to develop the required programmes of learning in the subsequent stages of the programme’s work. Further education and training modules would be developed to reflect the different levels of practice required. The training modules will recognise the varied levels of knowledge and skill required across the workforce. The training modules will be evidence based and will be underpinned by key topics around child and adolescent development, mental health, gender and safeguarding. This will include broader skills in adolescent care as well as the more specific aspects relevant to gender care. The competency framework and training content will be co-developed with an **expert consortium** that would need to be convened, comprising of senior clinicians and managers in the NHS CYP Gender Services, other clinical practitioners, representatives of Medical Royal Colleges, special interest groups and representatives of professional bodies. The use of a multi-professional consortium in product development is required to avoid bias or a focus on one professional group over others. Through the consortium, professional organisations should determine which of the transferable skills and competencies are already embedded in the training curricula of their specific staff groups, and they should identify where gaps may exist.**The competency framework, training curriculum and training resources will be of use to the following workforce:*** Specialist CYP Gender Services (MDT): See NHS England’s [Interim Service Specification](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.england.nhs.uk%2Fwp-content%2Fuploads%2F2023%2F04%2Finterim-service-spec-CYP-Gender-service-12-March-2024.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK) for NHS CYP Gender Services for a description of staff, roles and experience; in particular section 8.3 “Essential Staff Groups” and Appendix A.
* Secondary care specialists: CYP Mental Health Service practitioners working with CYP with gender concerns (including triage, assessment, formulation and support/intervention functions); Community Paediatricians and neuro-disability team practitioners; General paediatricians with an interest in Gender / Adolescent Medicine / Adolescent Mental Health.
* Primary care specialists: GPs with an interest; Health Visitors; mental health and wellbeing professionals in school.

Core skills and competencies (common and specific) are needed for each group of these professionals. There are shared competencies, applicable for a wide range of professional roles. In addition, each professional group will require competencies in addition to these and those already gained in core professional training. An appropriate method for assessing requisite competencies of clinical staff across the care pathway is required and this will be in addition to existing accountability processes (e.g. supervision) in place.  |

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| **2. Key information related to the RFI** |
| To meet its commitment to delivering the Cass Review recommendations relating to education and training NHS England will commission an expert third party (or parties) to establish a consortium of relevant organisations, to develop a competency framework and develop a curriculum and suite of core training materials as a subject foundation to supplement professional competencies for clinical staff throughout the care pathway. The aim is to ensure that staff deliver consistent, competent and holistic care. The deliverables must be consistent with and build upon the training developed and delivered by the AoMRC.Co-design methodologies that involve service users / stakeholders in the development of the competency framework, training curriculum and training resources would be required. It is understood existing competency frameworks can be utilised in the build phase.*Stage 1 Deliverables** Establish the expert consortium; agree membership and terms of reference.
* Detailed scoping process and plan for delivery, endorsed by the expert reference group, including plans for wider stakeholder engagement.

*Stage 2 Deliverables* An outline framework that will describe the key elements of the proposed competency framework, and how it will be developed, including:* Method for identification of roles across the pathways, and identifying the competencies required for the identified roles.
* Approach for describing the competences at which individuals will be required to function within the identified roles across the pathways (e.g. initial community contact; secondary health care services; tertiary level gender service)
* Reference to National Occupational Standards that are relevant to the activities of staff working across the pathway.
* Outline of the proposed competency framework (e.g. common competences for all staff working in the service; role specific competences) including a guide to how the framework should be used.
* Identification of existing competency frameworks that can be considered or linked to as part of the development of the competencies.
* Approach and plan for how staff competence will be assessed.

*Stage 3 Deliverables* * A competency framework for specialist and special interest practitioners across the pathway.

*Stage 4 Deliverables** An outline description of education and training modules and methods for delivery.
	+ The training modules will recognise the varied levels of knowledge and skill required across the workforce.
	+ Due to the continuously evolving nature of the evidence base, staff training and CPD needs to be embedded in the service principles
	+ Interactive training curricula for in-person and remote training by the provider.
	+ Virtual / on-line resources
	+ Plan for handover of training delivery to the NHS CYP Gender Services through a National Provider Network that has been established, after an initial phase of delivery by the provider.

*Stage 5 Deliverables** Education and training modules to reflect the different levels of practice required.
* Handover of training delivery to the National Provider Network.
* Assessment tool for staff competence.
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| **3. Request for Information response**Please respond to each of the following questions: |
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|  | **Question**  | **Response** |
| 1 | **Does your organisation require any further information in relation to the deliverables set out in section 2 above, and if so, what information is required?**  |  |
| 2. | **Would your organisation consider submitting a proposal to fulfil the deliverables?**  |  |
| 3 | **Can you identify any potential constraints to delivery that NHS England could address in the tender specification and process?** |  |
| 4 | **Would your organisation be able to fulfil all the deliverables set out in section 2 above?****If no, would your organisation be able to fulfil certain deliverables? Please describe which deliverables your organisation could deliver.** |  |
| 5 | **Please provide an indicative timeframe for your organisation to fulfil each deliverable?** |  |
| 6 | **Please provide an indicative breakdown of costs for your organisation to fulfil the deliverables.****All costs should be inclusive of VAT.**  |  |
| 7 | **Would your organisation have any concerns about NHS England owning the intellectual property rights for the training curriculum or training resources developed?****If yes, please provide an overview of the concerns.** |  |
| 8 | **Do you have any other comments which would assist NHSE in finalising any tender documentation** |  |

Please return your completed document using the information shown.

**Thank you. We appreciate your help and time to consider the documentation provided and to enter your views in this RFI.**