

Capturing Journeys ...and setting goals

Capturing the lives of young trans people from across England



**gendered
intelligence**

understanding gender diversity
in creative ways



CONTENTS

1. Introduction
4. Our Young Trans Participants - A Quick Glance
7. Resilience of Young Trans People
10. Identity
28. Key Workers and Support Services
31. Health
51. Sex and Relationships
57. Social World
69. Learning World
78. Aspirations and Passions
81. Setting Goals
88. Summary
91. References
92. Glossary
95. Acknowledgements and credits

INTRODUCTION

The Capturing Journeys and Setting Goals Project is a needs assessment tool, which was used with 40 young trans people from across England in 2010 and 2011. It involved a series of one-to-one interviews that were carried out by our staff at regular intervals throughout the project. This was done to capture the current and recent past experiences of young trans people, to identify their needs, to discuss the overarching visions they had for their lives and to set goals to take their life forward. This report captures many of these experiences, aims and aspirations and offers some analysis around them.

The aims of this report are to:

- Capture important qualitative data regarding the ongoing needs of young trans people from across England
- Identify and explore specific needs in relation to their experiences and highlight good practice as well as current gaps in service provision
- Contextualise our findings with what has been written about young trans lives and to highlight gaps in research and knowledge relevant to young trans people

How the interviews worked

These aims were communicated to each of the participants at the beginning of each interview. In order to structure an interview with a young trans person, a form was designed by members of the steering group and our trans youth support worker. Each form was to be completed in conversation with a Gendered Intelligence staff member. The discussion centred firstly around “capturing your journey” and then “setting goals”. When asking these questions we were keen to know what was happening for the young trans person both now, and in their recent history- the last 6 months or so. The worker may have made suggestions

during the conversation to get a deeper understanding of their needs and hopefully offer better and appropriate support. If there was anything a young person would rather not answer or discuss that was respected.

A 'Setting Goals' table was designed to help the young trans person visualise their future, near and distant. At Gendered Intelligence we feel that when we visualise where we want to be in the future it can help us to set small realistic steps that will help us become happier and more satisfied with our current situation.

The goal-setting laid out some basic questions:

- **What might be my overall vision for the future? (long term)**
- **What are my goals for the future? (shorter term)**
- **What do I need to achieve those goals?**
- **Who can help me?**

All participants were given a copy of their form, and their setting goals table for their own record, as well as to consider any changes they might want to make. Where possible, Gendered Intelligence's intentions were to revisit these goals and the issues that arose with each person after an agreed period to see how things change over time.

Our values

We believe it is important for young people to have the opportunity to widen their horizons, increase understanding of where they are in life and set their own goals. We want to ensure that our members know how to get all the information they need in order to make decisions and reach those goals.

As an organisation, we want to build up a picture of what life is like for young trans people from across England - to record the various journeys and successes that many young trans people achieve. We also want to capture some of the difficult and more challenging aspects of living as a young trans person in this country. We wish to explore how our members cope with these difficulties, what strengths they draw on and how they ensure that they look after themselves.

Why we do the Capturing Your Journey Interviews

As a youth centred organisation, we want to identify how we can help young trans people achieve their goals. The information from the Capturing your Journey discussions informs the direction of the Gendered Intelligence Youth Group activities and our peer support work in particular, as well as feeding into our full range of services. Talking to the young people about their experiences also enables us to identify where other organisations (either from within the LGBT community and voluntary sector, or from other more general and mainstream services) can and should help. It may be that those organisations do not know enough about trans identities to be able to help as fully as they would like, and again, perhaps Gendered Intelligence and our young trans members can help with this by working together as a team and get involved in educating professionals.

It is also possible that there is actually no help available, because there is a gap in existing service provision. Capturing these gaps is valuable because it enables us to work with allies, funders, statutory and voluntary organisations, informing them about what needs to change to enable young trans people to achieve their potential and live full lives on equal terms to non trans people.

At present, there is little widespread knowledge or understanding about trans people, and even less about young trans people. In this report, this is our opportunity to tell you about the reality of their lives.

OUR YOUNG TRANS PARTICIPANTS - A QUICK GLANCE

Before the Capturing Your Journey and Setting Goals interviews, we asked all 40 young people about various aspects of their identity by completing our membership form.

Gender identity

Of the 40 participants

- 8 identified as male or boy (20%)
- 14 identified as a trans man or FTM (35%)
- 4 identified as female or girl (10%)
- 5 identified as a trans woman or MTF (12.5%)

The remaining 9 participants (22.5%) identified as outside of the gender binary in the following ways

- 5 identified as Gender queer (12.5%)
- 1 identified as Fluid (2.5%)
- 1 identified as Non-gendered (2.5%)
- 1 identified as FTM Questioning (2.5%)
- 1 identified as Questioning (2.5%)

Regions

Of the 40 participants 16 live in London (40%). In addition 12 live in the Home Counties (30%). This breaks down as 6 living in Surrey, 2 in East Sussex, 1 in West Sussex, 1 in Hertfordshire, 1 in Berkshire and 1 in Essex. The remaining 12 of the 40 live further afield (30%). This breaks down as 2 living in Bristol, 2 living in Portsmouth, and 1 living in each of the following cities and regions: Oxford, Dorset, Cambridge, Hereford, Leicester, Manchester, Liverpool and Nottingham.

Ethnic background and faith

26 young people identified themselves as White British (65%); 3 identified as Black British (7.5%); 9 identified as mixed race (22.5%); 1 identified as Middle Eastern (2.5%) and 1 identified as Irish (2.5%)

Of the 40 young participants 35 (87.5%) of them did not identify with any particular faith or belief, whilst 2 identified as Christians (5%), 1 as Buddhist (2.5%) and 1 identified as Muslim (2.5%)

Sexual Orientations

Of the 40 participants:

- 4 identified as heterosexual (10%)
- 0 identified as lesbian (0%)
- 6 identified as Gay (15%)
- 3 identified as Bisexual (7.5%)

Because sexual orientation categories rely on gender identity categories, many of our young trans people identified as outside of the sexual orientations - heterosexual or LGB. Instead:

- 11 identified as pansexual (27.5%)
- 5 identified as queer (12.5%)
- 2 identified as Homoflexible (5%)
- 1 identified as Pancuddly (2.5%)
- 1 identified as into men (2.5%)

In addition:

- 2 would rather not say (5%)
- 4 said they were Questioning (10%)
- 1 said, “it’s complicated” (2.5%)

Disabilities and Long-term Illnesses

The young trans people that we interviewed disclosed a range of physical health needs, disabilities and specific learning difficulties.

Of the 40 participants

- 13 have a disability or long-term illness (32.5%)

This breaks down as the following:

- 6 have registered physical disabilities (15%)
- 7 have specific learning difficulties (17.5%) including four who have dyslexia; two have dyspraxia and one young person has Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and dyscalculia