

Proud Trust trans inclusion toolkit: A guide for supporting trans (including non-binary) young people in schools

<https://www.theproudsttrust.org/download/draft-trans-inclusion-toolkit-for-consultation-141024/>

Why has the Proud Trust suddenly produced a draft trans inclusion schools toolkit? Why now?

The previous government's draft [Gender Questioning Children schools guidance](#) was published for consultation last year, and the final version is due to be published by the new government in the New Year.

Since Stonewall's first trans inclusion schools guidance in 2015 there has been an explosion of 'LGBT+' organisations offering trans guidance and training for schools, all promoting the same 'gender affirmation' model as the Proud Trust does here. Schools really are spoilt for choice.

The Proud Trust and Cass

Running to 56 repetitive pages, the toolkit was planned in 2023 when the [final report of the Cass Review](#) was expected to be imminent. The final report was eventually published in April this year.

On its website the Proud Trust [asks the question](#): "Does this toolkit reflect the recommendations in the Cass Review?" but doesn't answer it. They say: "We do have concerns about many of the recommendations in the Cass Review" which is a confession that they are unconcerned with evidence-based practice. That should be a red flag for any school considering using this toolkit.

The Cass Review has important implications for schools [as we have written here](#). We wonder why a school would want to use guidance that does not reflect up-to-date research and evidence. Both major political parties support full implementation of the Cass Review's recommendations which makes the Proud Trust toolkit redundant.

Nevertheless it's worth reviewing, as the first new post-Cass schools guidance that completely ignores Cass. It is notable though that there is evidence the Proud Trust has been influenced by the Cass Review, or at least the media coverage and ensuing public debate, and has taken some lessons from this.

The draft toolkit shows the same lack of knowledge and understanding of child development as every other 'trans inclusion schools toolkit.' However, the language used serves to obscure the age group, using the terms young person/people 276 times and trans young person/people 103 times.

By comparison, child/children appears 76 times, including only 5 mentions of trans child/children. It is hard to see why the Proud Trust is shy of using this term unless they are fully aware of the growing opposition to the concept of the 'trans child.'

Cass doesn't use the term 'trans children' and the last government followed her lead by using the term 'gender questioning children' (GQC). The updated Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance separates the LGB from the GQC, highlights the potential safeguarding issues and doesn't call these children 'transgender.'

So our first question about this toolkit is: What does 'trans inclusion' mean for schools?

Broadly, it reinstates the 'trans child' as a distinct class and presents the problem in schools in terms of inclusion or exclusion of this vulnerable group. This fits nicely into the Diversity, Equality and Inclusion rulebook that schools are very familiar with, so is likely to be viewed as more of the same supposedly 'good practice.'

When you drill down into the details it becomes clear that 'trans inclusion' means full integration of anti-reality, anti-science concepts of 'gender.' Much of this document is a repetitive mantra of slogans and key words. In practical terms the inversion of reality means that a school is unable to distinguish between boys

and girls in language or in policy, such as provision of toilets, changing-rooms and sports. A school must ensure the erasure of all boundaries between the sexes.

Everyone in the school, teachers and children alike, must act on this belief and speak its language. Failure to do so is punishable. The 'trans child', therefore, is a mechanism used to instil an ideology.

A school may operate on the basis of reality or on the basis of 'trans inclusion' but it can't do both.

We analyse each section of the draft toolkit below. By far the longest sections are A Proactive Whole-School Approach to Inclusion and Supporting a Trans Young Person, which are linked. Without whole school commitment there would be no 'social transition' and no 'trans child', a category which depends on every teacher and every child in the school treating a child as the opposite sex.

Introduction to the Toolkit

This is the Proud Trust's explanation for why the toolkit is needed:

"While significant strides have been made within society (including schools) to support LGBT+ young people, a lack of consistency, confidence and clear guidance has meant that many LGBT+ young people, and in particular trans young people, are still suffering needlessly. This is against the backdrop of antitrans media messaging, misinformation, ignorance and anti-trans lobbying groups which target schools and parents. The compounding effect of this creates fear and a lack of confidence in teachers and other youth professionals who want to do the right thing by and for LGBT+ young people." (p. 5)

The Proud Trust's statement is a reflection of the fact that the landscape has completely changed in recent years and it's also a revealing insight into how the trans lobby views those changes.

Prior to the Keira Bell judicial review in 2020, unquestioning celebration of 'trans kids' was the media staple for years. More balanced media coverage began to tentatively emerge [towards the end of 2017](#), thanks to some brave journalists, but it was the Bell case that undoubtedly put the subject into the media spotlight.

The medical scandal at the Tavistock GIDS, leading to its closure, and the instigation by NHS England of the independent Cass Review followed. The Cass Review final report has received global recognition as the most researched and comprehensive report on gender healthcare for children to date.

There is now a reckoning to be had regarding a medical scandal that came out of an ideological movement directed at children. There are justified concerns now among clinical and educational professionals, as well as the general public, about what we are teaching children in schools that has led to so many children heading for the gender clinic in the belief that they are really the opposite sex.

What the Proud Trust describes as 'anti-trans media messaging, misinformation and ignorance' is in reality a media (or some parts of it) doing its job. The days of actual 'misinformation and ignorance' are over, along with 'no debate.' Following Cass, the media, along with the general public, are more informed about the harms of 'trans' ideology to vulnerable children than ever before.

It is also true that the more aware parents have become of what their children are being taught about 'gender identity' in schools the more opposition there is to these ideas that are being taught to children as fact. In this area, more knowledge equals more opposition so it's not surprising that some groups are redoubling their efforts to stem the tide of growing awareness and take us back to circa 2015 when people were ignorant of the harms.

In place of the Cass Review's [eight systematic reviews of evidence](#), new research, review of international guidelines, and regular consultations with stakeholder groups including young service users and clinical professionals over a period of four years, the Proud Trust trans inclusion toolkit is informed by two surveys. We have written about the problems with one of them, the #BeeWell survey [here](#).

The other is from the [Manchester Metropolitan University](#). The survey was promoted on social media and via The Proud Trust's 'professionals contacts', along with 'young people and supporting staff attending The Proud Trust LGBT+ Youth Summit event in Manchester.'

In other words those surveyed were mainly people who already agree with, or learned from, the Proud Trust. This is what makes a survey biased and unreliable. The researchers concede: "we acknowledge our own position as researchers who are committed to trans inclusion within schools."

Some responses from children reflect concerns outlined in the Cass Review about the role of YouTube 'trans influencers', the internet and peer groups in facilitating social contagion.

For the question about where they had got information about trans people and their experiences from, the top responses were: 'social media' (181, 26%), 'friends' (159, 23%), and 'internet search' (153, 22%). Some of the additional written responses indicate that many young people had got the information from the Internet and social media, e.g. 'Trans influencers' and mentioned the benefits of knowing about other trans people and hearing their stories, for example, on YouTube.

The Proud Trust shows no curiosity about this.

Consistent with all other organisations that bill themselves as 'LGBT+' the Proud Trust is concerned only with the T+.

There are 14 mentions of 'LGBT+ young people' in the draft toolkit, most of which are in the introduction. This is a dishonest portrayal of who the toolkit is for. The toolkit does not support 'LGB young people,' it does the opposite, by redefining sexual orientation as an 'identity.'

It is a common strategy, to use the 'LGB' to divert attention away from controversial ideas which are less likely to be noticed when they are embedded within an established and publicly supported framework of support for gay people. Using the LGBT acronym to introduce guidance aimed only at the T suggests that opposition to the toolkit could also be framed as 'anti-LGB.'

Introduction to Trans Identities (p. 8)

This section lays the foundation of language and concepts the school must learn and use, according to the Proud Trust. Getting it right is 'essential' they tell us. The Golden Rule is to 'always use the language people would use about themselves' even though people may 'use language in different ways' and the language people use about themselves 'often shifts and changes over time.' This is quite a task, which perhaps explains why it needs 57 pages of rules.

The definition of the key word underpinning the Proud Trust's ideas is circular nonsense:

'Gender' refers to a person's identity. A person's gender identity is a reflection of how they see themselves and who they know themselves to be.

This is meaningless. From this beginning, what follows is a treatise on trans ideology's concepts and beliefs and its rules and obligations. After failing to define 'gender' the section makes clear that the Proud Trust is using the term to mean 'boy' or 'girl', but they have redefined these categories as 'identities', not sexes.

Thus, sex is 'assigned at birth' and

‘for most people, a ‘matching’ gender is also assigned eg. if a penis is observed by the health professional on a newborn or prenatal scan, they will inform the pregnant person that the baby is a boy.’

This is not a description of the real world.

Once boys and girls are redefined as identities, anything goes. You can even be neither a boy or a girl by defining your identity as ‘non-binary.’ From this denial of biological reality comes all the ‘gender affirming’ language necessary to describe the new world of subjective perception.

As with all other ‘trans toolkits’ it is the passage on ‘transition’ that exposes the reality so it’s worth quoting in full:

‘Transition might include (but is not limited to) social changes such as changing their name, asking people to use different pronouns to refer to them and/or changing the way that they dress or present themselves. For some people, a transition could include medical aspects such as surgical procedures (which are only available to those over the age of 18 via the NHS) and/or hormone therapy. The role of schools in supporting a young person’s transition will always be with the ‘social’ part of transition, rather than the ‘medical’, as the latter will be supported by medical practitioners.’

This passage is telling. The ‘gender affirming’ model is revealed as a progression: social transition leads to medical transition; a ‘gender affirming’ approach leads to gender affirming hormones and surgery. What begins as an affirmation of a child’s feelings ends with the surgeon’s knife. This is presented as normal and unremarkable; changing body parts is no more or less of a deal than changing clothes.

Regarding the issue of medical transition, it is noteworthy that the illustration of four people used for this toolkit includes two who are disabled. We have noticed that an increasing number of young ‘trans’ people pictured at recent demonstrations are using walking sticks or wheelchairs. Is this coincidental or the result of brittle bones caused by puberty blockers? Is the Proud Trust trying to normalise the idea that disability is this widespread in the young adult population?

Legal Context (p. 16)

This section is fairly short. It depends on the protected characteristic ‘gender reassignment’ in the Equality Act 2010 but misrepresents it. The example it uses for direct discrimination is ‘A trans girl is told that she is not allowed to wear the girls’ uniform because she is trans.’

In fact a boy remains legally a boy, no matter what ‘gender identity’ he claims, because under-18’s do not possess a gender recognition certificate. The school therefore can lawfully treat him in the same way as they treat every other boy. The school may be sensitive and make some concessions if a child is distressed, but it is free to decide how to do this. A boy may not be allowed to wear the girls’ uniform not ‘because she is trans’ but because he is a boy.

Likewise, the section implies that single-sex toilets may be indirect discrimination against a child who ‘identifies’ as the opposite sex, and Public Sector Equality Duty is explained only in terms of supporting the ‘trans child.’ Other children’s rights and safeguarding implications that schools must consider are left out.

Along with ignoring Cass, the toolkit ignores updates in the Dept for Education guidance [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) (KCSIE), stating:

The KCSIE guidance on safeguarding for schools makes it clear that being trans is not in itself a safeguarding issue

It is only in a footnote that they explain

The 2024 KCSIE guidance contains a new section entitled 'Children who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or gender questioning' in which it states, "This section remains under review". KCSIE is therefore the most up-to-date statutory guidance on safeguarding trans young people.'

This is incorrect. The 2024 version amended by the previous government has not been changed by the new Labour government after taking office and, although under review, remains the latest version.

The 2024 KCSIE guidance states:

However, the Cass review identified that caution is necessary for children questioning their gender as there remain many unknowns about the impact of social transition and children may well have wider vulnerabilities, including having complex mental health and psychosocial needs, and in some cases additional diagnoses of autism spectrum disorder and/or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

And advises:

As such, when supporting a gender questioning child, schools should take a cautious approach and consider the broad range of their individual needs, in partnership with the child's parents..

As the new government is committed to fully implementing Cass, this is not likely to change substantially and it is irresponsible of the Proud Trust to mislead schools by omission in this way.

The toolkit also relies on old RSHE guidance (2019) that was updated by the previous government although the draft has not yet been finalised and published by the Labour government. The Proud Trust toolkit states:

LGBT+ inclusion is part of the statutory Relationships Education, Relationship and Sex Education, and Health Education curricula.

The 2019 guidance does not in fact use the term 'LGBT+.' The 'plus' has been added by the Proud Trust with no explanation of what it includes. The [previous government's draft guidance](#) does not use the term 'LGBT' at all. After a review, the section on Gender Reassignment (p.12) has been completely revised and gives this advice:

Schools should not teach about the broader concept of gender identity. Gender identity is a highly contested and complex subject.

The draft guidance also advises:

If asked about the topic of gender identity, schools should teach the facts about biological sex and not use any materials that present contested views as fact, including the view that gender is a spectrum.

There is no mention of the previous government's draft [Gender Questioning Children guidance](#) in the Toolkit itself but the Proud Trust [has this to say on their website page](#):

we would urge extreme caution against following the recommendations, as we are concerned that some of them go against the Equality Act 2010

So the Proud Trust has rejected Cass and everything that reflects the evidence of the Cass Review. The suggestion that a school may be acting unlawfully is a common tactic to scare teachers who cannot be expected to be thoroughly versed in the workings of the Equality Act.

It is dishonest of the Proud Trust not to provide schools with information about the latest updates, drafts and public consultations from the previous government, to inform teachers of the current direction of thinking.

And let's remind ourselves that the reason the thinking has changed is because the safety of children was put at risk.

A Pro-Active Whole-School Approach to Inclusion (p. 22)

This very long section includes all the new rules of the belief system outlined in section 2. Schools must be 'proactive' in replacing sex-based policies with 'gender identity' policies ready for when a child identifies themselves as 'transgender.'

'Trans inclusion' must be promoted 'in all areas of the school.' 'Gender neutral' policies (including toilets) are suggested as a means to be 'inclusive' even though girls are likely to self-exclude from facilities that are mixed-sex, for obvious reasons. At this point, it is not credible for the Proud Trust to claim ignorance of this.

This highly prescriptive section includes a list of things to say and what not to say, for example:

Don't say: You can choose to be whatever gender you want (Being trans is not a choice).

Instead say: I support you in being your authentic self.

Teachers are teachers, not activists. It is not their role, nor is it within their professional competency to make judgments such as either of the above statements regarding a child's beliefs. Schools must maintain a supportive but neutral environment and inform parents or outside agencies where appropriate if a child is having problems. Teachers must never step outside their professional role into political activism.

A further example is very revealing:

Don't say: Normalise

Instead say: Usualise

The Proud Trust emphasises this in their sex education booklet *Sexuality aGender*. The reason they give is that the word 'normal' suggests that some things are not normal, and children should not judge other people's sexual proclivities in this way. The motive for telling children it is wrong to judge anyone's sexual preference is suspect in itself, but there is another reason the word 'normal' is not to be used.

This example explains why:

Don't say: Normal (When referring to someone who is not trans.)

Instead say: Cis

This is how children are taught that 'being trans' is a normal variation of the human condition. It is a way to indoctrinate children into unconsciously replacing the reality that boys are male and girls are female with the ideology of being 'trans' or 'cis' as the normal understanding of human beings: both boys and girls can be male or female, trans or cis.

The rest of this section is dedicated to all the ways a school can thoroughly immerse children into the world of gender identity by ensuring the school environment reflects it in every way: LGBT groups, displaying Proud Trust posters and leaflets, highlighting the support and services available to trans young people, pronoun badges, Progress Pride Flag lanyards and posters.

The resulting overwhelming and over-stimulating environment created is not for the benefit of children.

In case the message isn't getting through, schools can specifically celebrate trans identities for a full two months and four days every year:

Key Calendar Dates

LGBT+ History Month UK February

International Trans Day of Visibility 31 March

International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT) 17 May

Pride Month June

International Non-Binary People's Day 14 July

International Pronouns Day Third Wednesday of October

This is not a neutral environment for children to grow up in, but a highly politicised and thorough induction into the Proud Trust's beliefs.

Supporting a Trans Young Person (p. 37)

The toolkit states: 'The kind of support that a school might offer trans students' – inevitably – 'will be in relation to social transition.'

This will include 'Using facilities appropriate to their self-identified gender rather than the sex/gender assigned to them at birth.' It also includes not telling parents if the child objects to this.

In this (also very long) section the Proud Trust makes various claims based on one study, such as this from a study by Kristina Olson et al:

Children who are allowed to socially transition (for example change their name, choose their own clothes and haircut, choose their pronouns) and who are supported in their gender identity have developmentally normative levels of depression and only minimal elevations in anxiety compared to cisgender children.

This one study is used to support the activist claim that mental health issues in these children arise only because of 'a lack of positive support' (the 'minority stress' theory.) This is not supported by the Cass Review. Using one study (which may be poor, and the results of which may not be replicated in other studies) is cherry picking research to support a belief. This is why the Cass Review conducted a systematic review of all the published, peer-reviewed research on social transition, the conclusion of which was:

The systematic review showed no clear evidence that social transition in childhood has any positive or negative mental health outcomes, and relatively weak evidence for any effect in adolescence. However, those who had socially transitioned at an earlier age and/or prior to being seen in clinic were more likely to proceed to a medical pathway (76).

The Proud Trust's claims are manipulative of teachers' well-meaning desire to support distressed children by following the Proud Trust's advice, such as this:

Proactively creating a supportive, trans positive environment can go a long way to ensure the wellbeing of trans students, as well as being a preventative measure with regards to mental health issues.

The Cass Review describes social transition as “an active intervention because it may have significant effects on the child or young person in terms of their psychological functioning and longer-term outcomes.” Teachers are not clinical professionals and are not qualified to intervene in this way.

The section emphasises a need to view the confusion or distress of even the most vulnerable children through the lens of gender identity ideology, including SEND and autistic children and those in the care system – the very groups identified in the Cass Review as needing cautious and sensitive assessment for underlying issues.

Again the Proud Trust uses only one study, from 2018, to support its advice to use a child’s preferred name and pronouns. It claims that ‘misgendering’ is ‘transphobia’ and if done deliberately could constitute discrimination.

They say ‘The primary responsibility of a school is always to do what is in the best interests of the young person’ without considering that social transition might not be in the best interests of a child, let alone consider whether it might in fact be harmful.

Gender affirmation is imposed on children through the constant reinforcement of pronouns, pronouns, pronouns (the word appears a total of 50 times throughout the document).

Here is the Proud Trust’s Top Tip:

Think about what opportunities you have in your school to ask for or share people’s pronouns.

- Add pronouns to staff name badges or on classroom doors. This can ‘usualise’ the asking and sharing of pronouns. It can also open the way for young people to have conversations with staff that they might otherwise be reluctant to have.
- Provide young people with pronoun badges that they can pin to their uniform.
- Create easy opportunities for young people to share their pronouns. For example, if students have student profiles, they could share their pronouns there.

What the Proud Trust is proposing here is the normalising of a concept through its reinforcement everywhere a child looks during the school day. Instilling an unevidenced belief in children’s minds is a process more accurately described as indoctrination.

In this section the Proud Trust repeats the mantra that ‘All students should be able to use toilet facilities that correspond with their gender identity,’ and ‘All students should be able to use changing room facilities that correspond with their gender identity.’ They state again that it may be indirect discrimination not to allow this and that ‘A trans young person using a toilet does not in itself create a safeguarding concern.’

The purpose of ‘usualising’ the idea of ‘trans’ and ‘cis’ rather than thinking in terms of male and female is revealed by this statement: ‘Being trans is not inherently a risk to cis pupils.’

It becomes clear that the word ‘trans’ is used as a cover. It hides the fact that it is boys who are sharing facilities with girls, which *is* an inherent safeguarding risk. It diverts teachers’ attention away from basic rules that protect all children’s privacy and boundaries, and the safety of girls.

Again, the Proud Trust reveals that they have been paying attention to current debates with this admonition: ‘it is not enough to cite ‘privacy and dignity’ as justification to discriminatory policies’ and they reveal their view of this: ‘Care should be taken in each case to avoid a decision based on ignorance or prejudice.’

Teachers must be alert to this kind of emotional manipulation. Children deserve to have their privacy and dignity respected by the adults caring for them. Ensuring the protection of girls is not ignorance or

prejudice. Safeguarding children comes above everything, including the Equality Act, the latest 'Equality, Diversity and Inclusion' initiatives and the Proud Trust's advice.

If girls do object to having boys in their private spaces the Proud Trust suggests that 'this can be dealt with through positive education and, if necessary, the school's anti-bullying processes.'

There is no measured way to say it: this is despicable. The Proud Trust is suggesting that it is the girl who is the bully if she objects or expresses discomfort at the violation of her boundaries.

The Proud Trust does not seem to recognise girls as human beings and that girls have rights too. Girls have every right to object if a boy is using their toilet or changing-room, every right to recognise that he is a boy and every right to express her boundaries.

Glossary of Key Terms (p. 52)

To understand whether guidance is based on reality or ideology only takes a look at the glossary of terms used and their definitions.

The same ideological nonsense that has been confusing children in schools for some time now is evident in the definitions used by the Proud Trust.

The glossary in this draft toolkit is the same re-education manifesto of every 'LGBT' or Trans organisation. Without giving us a comprehensible definition of 'gender' the concept of gender identity is used to redefine all words with established meanings based on sex.

Thus, sexual orientation is redefined as:

"The part of a person's identity related to who they are attracted to."

To be gay, then, is to 'identify' as gay. Sexual orientation, along with sex, is swallowed up and erased by 'gender identity.' Two protected characteristics in the Equality Act have been redefined as subjective feelings, taking away legal protections based on being female or being same-sex attracted.

Conclusion

A school following the advice in the Proud Trust draft schools toolkit would be liable to legal challenge on the basis of discrimination against children with protected characteristics, including legally protected beliefs. It would lay a school open to the charges of political indoctrination and failure to safeguard children. Teachers put themselves at professional risk by interfering with children's development in this way and by actively intervening in a child's psychological/mental health issues in an area they don't understand and are not qualified to treat. Schools are establishments of learning, not centres of trans activism. No responsible school would use the trans inclusion toolkit from the Proud Trust.

<https://www.transgendertrend.com/>

