

The North West Trans Needs Assessment

RESEARCH REPORT

Trans Resource and Empowerment Centre (TREC)
April 2010

ABOUT THE RESEARCH

The purpose of the North West Trans Needs Assessment Survey was to assess the needs of trans individuals and communities in the North West region of England. It was designed and analysed by researchers at the Trans Resource and Empowerment Centre (TREC). Thanks are due to the Scottish Transgender Alliance, who kindly hosted and provided feedback on the survey design. The survey was open from September 2009 until January 2010.

ABOUT TREC

Based in the North West of England, TREC provides a wide range of programming and empowerment opportunities for the trans community in a safe and accessible space. Our activities centre on the themes of Body and Health, Policy and Law, Creativity, Culture and Community, Safety and Networking.

TREC is an independent organisation that welcomes all trans people (18+) - including, but not limited to, people who identify as transgender, transsexual, cross-dresser, transvestite, androgynous, genderqueer, gender non-conforming, dual gendered, polygender, gender questioning, intersex and anyone else who feels that the gender assigned to them at birth incorrectly or incompletely describes their gender. We also have activities for partners, friends, families and allies.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The North West Trans Needs Assessment Survey collected quantitative and qualitative data of people who identify as trans¹ and who live in the North West of England through an online survey. Its purpose was to build up an evidence-base to provide information to policymakers and others about the needs of the North West's trans community and to inform the development of TREC as an organisation. A link to the online survey was distributed through e-mail networks of North West trans groups and individuals using a snowball method. There were 155 valid responses in total. The report itself is organised into quantitative (charts and graphs) and qualitative ('comments') sections relating to each of the questions.

The questions asked fell within the following four themes:

- a) Assessing priority needs
- b) Assessing priority activities
- c) Assessing involvement levels
- d) Optional demographic monitoring information

In section 1, intended to assess priority needs, we found that there are a significant minority of trans people who experience discomfort in their day-to-day activities, such as walking down the street (29.7%), travelling on public transport (29.4%) and contacting their landlord or housing authority (25.4%). Respondents expressed the greatest level of comfort with speaking to the police, with 83.3% answering positively. The majority of trans people surveyed (60.5%) do not feel comfortable using existing sports and leisure facilities. There were particular issues around the provision of safe changing facilities and inclusion in team sport.

When asked if trans people are provided with appropriate public services in their area, the majority of people (58.8%) were unsure. Participants commented specifically on difficulties with accessing appropriate medical services. Respondents were also unsure about whether trans people are adequately socially supported in their area (47.3%). Existing social support spaces were said to be limited in terms of resources. In response

¹ TREC defines trans as a category which includes people who identify as transgender, transsexual, cross-dresser, transvestite, androgynous, genderqueer, gender non-conforming, dual gendered, polygender, gender questioning, intersex and anyone else who feels that the gender assigned to them at birth incorrectly or incompletely describes their gender.

to the question of whether a service-providing trans organisation is needed in their area, the greatest number of people (47.4%) said yes and 36.2% were unsure. It was mentioned in the comments that there is no centralised resource and that finding information ‘involves a lot of research on our part’.

In the section 2 of the survey with questions to assess priority activities, the activities were broken down into the TREC themes: Community and Culture, Creativity, Body and Health, Safety, Policy and Law and Networking. As TREC would like to provide wide ranging services and activities in each of these themes, this approach is pragmatic. The top two activities most interesting to respondents in each theme area are as follows:

Theme	Would you be interested in?	Percentage
<i>Community and Culture</i>	Community Information Exchange Group	64.2%
	Discussion about the NW Trans Community	63.3%
<i>Creativity</i>	Photography	64.4%
	Filmmaking	44.6%
<i>Body and Health</i>	Transitioning Information	63.3%
	General Health/GP Access	51.4%
<i>Safety</i>	Crime Reporting Surgery & Police Liaison Service	68.8%
	Workshop on Personal Safety	61.5%
<i>Policy and Law</i>	Know Your Legal Rights Workshop	74.8%
	Accessing Trans Positive Public Services	68.0%
<i>Networking</i>	Trans People who Identify as LGB ² Group	48.6%
	Activism/Organising Group	45.9%

In Section 3, which was intended to assess involvement levels, we found that 57.1% of respondents were already involved with social support groups and 42.9% of people were not. Of those who do attend groups, Manchester Concord, MORF, TransForum, Renaissance, Inner Enigma and Queer Youth Network were mentioned by multiple respondents. When asked whether they were currently involved with national or international trans organisations, the majority (75.4%) said that they were not. The groups mentioned in descending order were Roses, Sibyls, Trans Youth Network, UK Angels, A:genda, Press for Change, Queer Youth Network, TransAction Network and the Beaumont Society.

Assuming that the activities described in the survey took place monthly in central Manchester, 28.6% of people said that they would attend regularly (every couple of months), 25.6% said that they would attend occasionally, 23.3% said that they would seldom attend, 15.8% said that they would always attend and 6.8% responded ‘never’.

² Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual

When asked how often these services should be available, 45.4% responded 'monthly', 21.0% said 'weekly', 18.5% said 'daily' (such as a trans community centre), 14.3% said 'quarterly', 0.8% said 'yearly' and 0.0% said 'never'. Special access requirements included wheelchair accessibility, non-gendered toilets and clear speaking to assist with lip reading.

The final section was to monitor the diversity of survey respondents. The largest proportion of North West respondents live in Manchester (44.3%), followed by Lancashire (15.3%), Cheshire (13.7%), Merseyside (8.4%) and Cumbria (7.6%). 10.7% of those taking the survey listed their current location as 'other'. With regard to age, the highest percentage of people were between the ages of 45-61 (52.6%) and 25-44 (34.5%). The gender identity of respondents broke down in the following ways: women (including trans women) 53.6%, men (including trans men) 33.6% and other (e.g genderqueer or androgyne) 12.8%. In the comments section, some described their gender as complicated or in between. The next question was whether people's gender identity is the same as that assigned to them at birth. 77.4% said no and 22.6% said yes. Among the 22.6% of people who said yes could be those who identify as transvestite or those who do not identify as trans.

In response to the question about whether people considered themselves to be within specific identity categories, 51.2% said that they identified as an MTF/trans woman, 26.0% identified as a cross-dressing/transvestite person, 21.1% identified as an FTM/trans man, 8.9% as an androgyne/polygender/genderqueer person, 5.7% as another type of gender variant person and 3.3% as an intersex person. One respondent said that she saw herself as a woman and the trans aspect was 'unfortunate'. Another person said that they did not like gender binaries, while someone else commented that they think 'gender identity doesn't fit well into boxes'.

The question about sexual orientation yielded interesting results. There were no outright majority categories, but the largest proportion of people identified as heterosexual/straight (28.9%) and the remaining 71.1% were split between bisexual (21.9%), lesbian (13.3%), queer (9.4%), questioning (7.8%), undefined (7.0%), pansexual (6.3%) and asexual (2.3%).

The religion/belief breakdown of respondents was as follows: 49.2% of people do not have a religion, 34.9% are Christian, 12.7% chose 'other' (for example, Pagan), 2.4% are Jewish and 0.8% are Muslim. 25% of those surveyed consider themselves to be disabled and 75% did not. 85.6% of people come from a White British background, 9.6% from any other White background, 1.6% from a White Irish background, and 0.8% from: Mixed - White and Asian, Black or Black British - Caribbean, any other mixed background and any other ethnic group.

The annual income of respondents was split into two peaks: 24.4% earned over £30,000 per year and 23.6% of people earned under £6,000 per year.

REPORT FINDINGS

Section 1. Survey Questions to Assess Priority Needs

Question 1.1:

Do you feel comfortable...	Yes	No
Contacting your landlord or housing authority?	74.6%	25.4%
Walking down your street?	70.3%	29.7%
Using existing sports and leisure facilities?	39.5%	60.5%
Using existing educational and learning facilities (such as schools and libraries)?	74.7%	25.3%
Travelling on public transport?	70.6%	29.4%
Contacting the council?	79.2%	20.8%
Speaking with the police?	83.3%	16.7%

Comments:

“Although I have said no to feeling comfortable, it depends on the circumstances. Some days I do feel comfortable, but generally I don't. It is mainly with using schools and leisure facilities I feel uncomfortable and I am post op trans. Carlisle is a small place and people are aware of your circumstances. Trans people are also prevented from playing in competitive team sport, e.g. female cricket team/netball.”

“I get stares and verbal abuse walking down the street. I wouldn't feel comfortable speaking to the council or housing authorities because I am unsure how they would react to trans issues. I would not speak to the police because I have had negative experiences in the past. I cannot use sports/leisure facilities because of my body (changing rooms are the issue).”

“I don't feel I belong in single gender spaces like changing rooms, and I've had hassle due to my appearance on public transport.”

“Do not use sports facilities as where I live they are privately owned and ran, and as far as I am aware existing law in the UK allows the owners to discriminate against the trans community.”

“I have had several cases of verbal abuse. Changing facilities and reaction of others. Council use a call centre which has no sensitivity to vulnerable people.”

“I am very nervous about the risk of hate crime and abuse when I am presenting as a woman, so don't really feel comfortable outside of my 'safe spaces' (i.e. university, social circle), such as on the bus or walking down the street.”

Question 1.2:

Are trans people provided with appropriate public services in your area?	Percentage
Yes	19.6%
No	21.6%
Unsure	58.8%

Comments:

“Most services are probably appropriate, but some employees and members of the public can make life awkward, embarrassing, humiliating and threatening.”

“There are local projects to involve the LGBT community. Blackpool has LGBT community development workers.”

“I have not come across any public services that support trans people and neither do I expect to. I choose to act female so I fit in with what's available as best as I can.”

“(It is) incredibly difficult accessing appropriate medical services, even with a helpful GP.”

“There are no specific health care services for trans people in Greater Manchester, everyone has to go to London Charing Cross Gender Identity Clinic even for the first psychiatric assessment as this is where the area health authority have their contract for services. This is really inconvenient; especially for those of us with other health issues for whom travelling to London via public transport simply isn't possible (I'm non-driver & a wheelchair-user). I also believe that in an area with such a large population as the North West there should be appropriate health care provision for trans-issues provided locally.”

Question 1.3:

Are trans people adequately socially supported in your area	Percentage
Yes	23.0%
No	29.7%
Unsure	47.3%

Comments:

“Not really accessed much - but I'm confident about the development of a resource and empowerment centre in terms of it being able to provide front-line support and advocacy.”

“I think trans women are particularly vulnerable (I am a trans man and I honestly don't feel the same vulnerability or fear that women do), and it might be a good idea to organise counselling help for them.”

“Trans people who do not wish to be part of the "trans community" are not supported as individuals, not everyone, wants to be a part of a "community" with one voice and a one size fits all approach to trans issues.”

“Whilst there are a few social/support groups these tend to be limited in terms of funding and, therefore, resources. They mainly offer a space to socialise not a programme of activities for trans people, which is what I'm looking for.”

“I don't know anyone else here who is trans, because it is a small town there isn't anything for trans support in my area. I know of no others like me in our town. I am lonely.”

Question 1.4:

Is a service-providing trans organisation needed in your area?	Percentage
Yes	47.4%
No	16.4%
Unsure	36.2%

Comments:

“Yes, because there isn't one currently, and I feel it is needed.”

“The services should include counselling or psychotherapy as well as organising social events and also very important - organising events for friends and family to attend, and a fixed and safe venue for a support group to operate from.”

“A service would be helpful, however, greater public understanding and awareness would be more helpful, allied to further changes in the law.”

“We are a significant and growing community with no centralised service resource. We desperately need one!”

“As a young trans man it's difficult to acquire information on anything trans related from one place. Finding ANYTHING out involves a lot of research on our part, relying most often solely on the internet, which is not always reliable. A service providing trans organisation may be helpful as more of a 'one stop shop' so to speak.”

Section 2. Survey Questions to Assess Priority Activities

Question 2.1: Community and Culture

Would you be interested in a...?	Percentage³	Number
Community Information Exchange Group	64.2%	70
Discussion about the North West Trans Community	63.3%	69
Creating a NW Trans Archive	59.6%	65
Film and Discussion about Trans History	57.8%	63
Lecture about the History of the Trans Community	55.0%	60
Trans Community Group Capacity Building Workshop	46.8%	51
Other (please specify)	11.0%	12

Comments:

“Services available from NHS and PCT.”

“Lectures about famous/influential trans people, or talks given by them. E.g. a talk by Patrick Califia or Kate Bornstein, a talk on Sylvia Rivera.”

“Trans awareness training for public service providers.”

“Trans employment assistance/grants.”

³ The percentage category is a calculation of the percentage of respondents who answered the particular question affirmatively. Respondents could choose as many activities as they wanted.

Question 2.2: Creativity

Would you be interested in...?	Percentage	Number
Photography	64.40%	65
Filmmaking	44.60%	45
Creative Writing	42.60%	43
Drama/Performance Art	39.60%	40
Newsletter Production Team	38.60%	39
Art	30.70%	31
Blogging Group	30.70%	31
Painting	25.70%	26
Drawing	25.70%	26
Podcasting	18.80%	19
Other (please specify)	10.90%	11

Comments:

“Access to same as mainstream society without fear or prejudice.”

“I am a musician (church organist) and give occasional "classical" concert.”

“Music is my art form, I sing and play the guitar, though this may already covered by one of the above.”

“Social events, not necessarily in a pub.”

Question 2.3: Body and Health

Would you be interested in a...?	Percentage	Number
Counselling Services	66.10%	72
Transitioning Information	63.30%	69
General Health/GP Access	51.40%	56
Acceptance/Empowerment Workshop	47.70%	52
Exercise Classes	39.40%	43
Research Presentation	39.40%	43
Sexual Health	35.80%	39
Nutrition/Healthy Eating Consultation	31.20%	34
Massage Workshop	30.30%	33
Holistic Therapies	25.70%	28
Other (please specify)	4.60%	5

Comments:

“Anything; I am already involved in doing a lot of these things but would love the opportunity to develop my skills.”

“Befriending groups.”

“Tai chi.”

Question 2.4: Safety

Would you be interested in...?	Percentage	Number
Crime Reporting Surgery and Police Liaison Service	68.80%	66
Workshop on Personal Safety	61.50%	59
Self-Defence Classes	51.00%	49
Safety Buddy System	49.00%	47
Community Safety Leadership Group	28.10%	27
Other (please specify)	5.2%	5

Comments:

“Safe house facilities.”

“Street safety.”

“In school to have some sort of lesson about trans people and how there just like everyone else... and not freaks like they mostly think!”

Question 2.5: Policy and Law

Would you be interested in a...?	Percentage	Number
Know Your Legal Rights Workshop	74.80%	77
Accessing Trans Positive Public Services	68.00%	70
One-to-one Legal Advice Surgery	51.50%	53
Living In-Between Legal Workshop	41.70%	43
Talk on Queering Policies and Politics	41.70%	43
International Legal Situation Lecture	30.10%	31
Other (please specify)	5.80%	6

Comments:

“Advocacy and self-advocacy support.”

“Employment laws.”

“CPS policy and guidelines about treatment of transsexual without GRC.”

“General legal advice relating to being a trans activist - laws regarding holding / taking part in protests for example.”

Question 2.6: Networking groups

Would you be interested in a ...?	Percentage	Number
Trans People who Identify as Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Group	48.6%	53
Activism/Organizing Group	45.90%	50
MTF Networking Group	40.40%	44
Older Trans People Group	39.40%	43
LGBT Unity Group	36.70%	40
FTM Networking Group	35.80%	39
Partners and Significant Others Group	35.80%	39
Parents and Families Group	29.40%	32
Religion/Spirituality Group	28.40%	31
Genderqueer Networking Group	27.50%	30
Trans Youth Group	24.80%	27
Disability Group	22.90%	25
Trans People of Colour Group	17.40%	19
Other (Please Specify)	6.4%	7

Comments:

“Open networking!”

“Transgender heterosexual group.”

“If needed, specific religious groups as well as general (eg Trans Jews, Trans Christians, Trans Muslims, etc).”

“I’m me; I don’t want to be put in a box or indulge in activities that are restricted to the transgender communities. I want to do what I want to do as part of the general community.”

Section 3. Survey Questions to Assess Involvement Levels

Question 3.1:

Are you currently involved with any social support groups?	Percentage
Yes	57.1%
No	42.9%

Groups mentioned:

Manchester Concord (14 times)
 MORF (11 Times)
 TransForum (11 Times)
 Renaissance (9 Times)
 Inner Enigma (5 Times)
 Queer Youth Network (4 Times)

Comments:

“Prefer not to say; but a range of disability organisations.”

“Although I have said yes, it is more a medical support group...”

“Only online providing support and advice through LiveJournal and various forums.”

Question 3.2:

Are you currently involved with a national or international trans organisation?	Percentage
Yes	24.6%
No	75.4%

Groups Mentioned:

Roses (4 Times)
 Sibyls (4 Times)
 Trans Youth Network (4 Times)
 UK Angels (3 Times)
 A:genda (3 Times)
 Press for Change (3 Times)
 Queer Youth Network (3 Times)
 TransAction Network (3 Times)
 Beaumont Society (Twice)

Question 3.3:

Assuming they are provided monthly in Manchester City Centre, how often do you think you would attend the types of activities and services we have described in this survey?	Percentage
Never	6.8%
Seldom (once or twice a year)	23.3%
Occasionally (three or four times a year)	25.6%
Regularly (every couple of months)	28.6%
Always (every month)	15.8%

Comments:

“Always would depend on date & time of events. I would LIKE to go every time if possible. I can't decide between "Weekly" and "Daily". I feel that something should be available as a drop-in, always there, and maybe weekly workshops.”

Question 3.4:

How often should these services be available?	Percentage
Never	0.0%
Yearly	0.8%
Quarterly	14.3%
Monthly	45.4%
Weekly	21.0%
Daily (such as a Trans community centre)	18.5%

Comments:

“Daily would be great, but might need too much resource, at least initially. I help run several groups that meet monthly and generally this is enough and is sustainable. For Manchester I think it should be weekly when it's possible to resource TREC for Weekly events.”

“My main problem attending would be a weekly activity, monthly would be good. Contact via e-mail is good if the activities require contact between meetings.”

Question 3.5: Special access requirements

“Wheelchair access needed. Lift or level access would be helpful”

“Must be weekends, due to nature of my job, also friendly to disabling diabetes, so must be a venue where eating is not frowned upon.”

“I am hearing impaired, so it would be nice if speakers/people who work in the centre were able to speak clearly so lip-reading would be possible.”

“Non-gendered toilets would be great.”

“Possible changing rooms for trans people who can't attend dressed.”

Section 4. Diversity Monitoring Information

Question 4.1:

Which area do you currently live in?	Percentage
Cumbria	7.6%
Cheshire	13.7%
Greater Manchester	44.3%
Merseyside	8.4%
Lancashire	15.3%
Other	10.7%

Question 4.2:

Age	Percentage
Under 15	0.9%
15-24	7.8%
25-44	34.5%
45-64	52.6%
65+	4.3%

The average age of respondents is 45 years old.

Mean: 45.19828, Median: $(47+47)/2 = 47$, Mode: 47, Standard Deviation: 12.769

Question 4.3:

What is your gender identity?	Percentage
Man (including FTM trans man)	33.6%
Woman (including MTF trans woman)	53.6%
Other (e.g. genderqueer or androgyne)	12.8%

Comments:

Frequently mentioned in comments: transvestite (x5) and genderqueer (x3).

“My gender is complicated; I have more distaste of gender binaries and having to abide to these than a gender identity.”

“Socially I am regarded as a woman, but do not believe in the binary.”

“I am in between and happy to be so.”

“I am currently oscillating between male and female.”

Question 4.4:

Is your gender identity the SAME as the gender you were originally assigned at birth?	Percentage
Yes	22.6%
No	77.4%

Comments: None

Question 4.5:

Do you consider yourself to be within any of the following categories?	Percentage
MTF / trans woman	51.2%
FTM / trans man	21.1%
Intersex person	3.3%
Androgyne / polygender / genderqueer person	8.9%
Cross-dressing / transvestite person	26.0%
Other type of gender variant person (please specify)	5.7%

Comments :

“I would not class a transvestite and cross dresser in the same category”

“Gender identity doesn't fit well into boxes I think.”

“I have a distaste of gender binaries and stereotypes. I am proud to say I am a woman but I don't want to have to be like a stereotypical woman and at times I act quite like a stereotypical man. It's complicated.”

“A normal girl but with a birth sex mix-up/mistake.”

“I am a woman; the trans aspect is simply unfortunate.”

Question 4.6:

What is your current sexual orientation?	Percentage
Asexual	2.3%
Bisexual	21.9%
Gay	3.1%
Heterosexual / Straight	28.9%
Lesbian	13.3%
Pansexual	6.3%
Queer	9.4%
Questioning	7.8%
Undefined	7.0%

Comments:

“Queer, in a civil partnership, but somewhat bi as I have always been.”

“I don't have a sexual orientation as such; I am attracted to people, their gender doesn't matter and my "sexuality" is fluid.”

“I always prefer women, whichever gender I am in.”

“I also have an alternative sexuality - that being something different to orientation.”

“I don't know. I just want someone to love me.”

Question 4.7:

What is your religion/belief? (The categories are based upon the 2001 Census)	Percentage
Buddhist	0.0%
Christian	34.9%
Hindu	0.0
Jewish	2.4%
Muslim	0.8%
Sikh	0.0%
No Religion	49.2%
Other religious belief	12.7%

Comments:

“Convert but struggling to be pious in respect of my new faith and being trans”

“Pagan”

Question 4.8:

Do you consider yourself to be a disabled person? (Under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 a disability is a physical or mental impairment which has a sustained and long-term adverse effect on your ability to carry out normal day to day activities.)	Percentage
Yes	25.0%
No	75.0%

Comments: None

Question 4.9:

What is your ethnic group? (The categories are based upon the 2001 Census)	Percentage
White British	85.6%
White Irish	1.6%
Any other White background	9.6%
Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	0.0%
Mixed - White and Black African	0.0%
Mixed - White and Asian	0.8%

Any other mixed background	0.8%
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0.0%
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0.0%
Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi	0.0%
Any other Asian background	0.0%
Black or Black British - Caribbean	0.8%
Black or Black British - African	0.0%
Any other Black background	0.0%
Chinese	0.0%
Any other ethnic group	0.8%

Question 4.10:

What is your current gross annual income? (including all earnings, benefits, pensions and student loans)	Percentage
Up to £6,000	23.6%
Between £6,001 and £10,000	10.6%
Between £10,001 and £15,000	9.8%
Between £15,001 and £20,000	10.6%
Between £20,001 and £25,000	7.3%
Between £25,001 and £30,000	13.8%
£30,001 or more	24.4%

Section 5. Additional Information

Question 5.1: Is there anything else that you would like to share about yourself?

Comments:

“I am very disillusioned about the lack of any form of coherent support and the excruciatingly long intervals between things happening.”

“I am post-op trans (person) and we need support and services”

“There are times I need somewhere safe to be me, away from the constraints of work/family. Most of the NW groups meet during the week, which are inaccessible to me, which is unhelpful and combined with home situation, makes me rather surly and depressed, which is never a good thing. Somewhere to explore, socialise, learn and meet others would be a godsend, especially if it was on a weekend.”

“Although I have a trans background, I don’t especially identify as trans and live mostly in stealth. As such I’d not be likely to attend on a regular basis, but if there were any interesting or thought provoking films / lectures / talks then perhaps I’d come along.”

“I’m only partially out. Work and family life is compromised to enable myself to enjoy a good lifestyle. I desperately want to transition but don’t have the confidence that society would not discriminate against me = lose my lifestyle.”

“Working as a trans woman is still very difficult for many of us. I’ve been made redundant 5 times for being trans!”

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