



Gender Identity Research and Education Society
Registered Charity No: 1068137

<http://www.gires.org.uk>

ANNUAL REPORT October 2007

During the past year, GIRES has continued to provide information and education to people who experience gender discomfort, to their families and to those responsible for their care. Increasingly, government agencies, at national and local level, are inviting the charity to provide training, literature, website material and policy advice in respect of transgender issues. The fees earned from this work have substantially increased the charity's income. Its intellectual, as well as financial, resources remain strong, thus ensuring its ability to sustain the programme of work described below.

Maintaining a Strong Executive Committee. After ten years of excellent service to the charity Janeen and David Willis are retiring from the Executive Committee. In their respective roles as Chairman and Secretary, they have played major parts in developing GIRES' capabilities to serve the transgender community, for which their fellow trustees are most grateful. Fortunately the charity has been able to recruit highly competent replacements, Ms Celia McLeod and Dr Richard Curtis, both with special knowledge of transgender healthcare.

Seeking Better Medical Treatment for Adolescents Experiencing Profound and Persistent Gender Dysphoria. Having completed the Portman Project, to compare treatment practices internationally, GIRES has continued to work with Mermaids to change the present British practice, which diverges from that in leading centres overseas. In the UK, these adolescents are forced to endure the stress of inappropriate and unwanted full pubertal development before they are offered the medication that can safely suspend the production of the hormones that masculinise or feminise their bodies. Suspension of puberty, at an early stage, is a fully reversible treatment that relieves stress and allows the adolescent and the clinician more time in which confirm the depth and likely persistence of the gender discomfort.

In October 2006, GIRES distributed a critique of the British approach at a conference at the Royal Society of Medicine, where the Dutch paediatric endocrinologist made a presentation on the approach used in Amsterdam. Unfortunately, the clinic there cannot treat adolescents from other countries. The charity has also supported complaints made to the two NHS Trusts in London that jointly provide the UK's only medical service for gender variant children and adolescents. GIRES is trying to persuade other providers of medical services for these young people in the UK to offer a better alternative to the London approach. Meanwhile, an increasing number of British families are somehow finding the means to pay for their children to obtain treatment in the USA.

In recognition of the enlightened and highly informative articles on this topic published by some of the doctors with whom GIRES has been working to improve practice, it has made awards to:

- Professor dr Henriette A Delemarre-van de Waal and Professor dr Peggy T Cohen-Kettenis for their article "Clinical Management of Gender Identity Disorder in Adolescents: A protocol on psychological and paediatric endocrinology aspects"; published in the European Journal of Endocrinology

- Dr Christopher P Houk and Professor Peter A Lee for their article "The Diagnosis and Care of Transsexual Children and Adolescents: A Paediatric Endocrinologists' Perspective"; published in the Journal of Paediatric Endocrinology & Metabolism.
- Dr Norman P Spack for his article "Transgenderism"; published in the Lahey Clinic Medical Ethics Journal.
- Dr Simona Giordano: for her article "Gender Atypical Organisation in Children and Adolescents: Ethico-Legal Issues and a Proposal for New Guidelines"; to be published in the International Journal of Children's Rights

GIRES had its own paper on this topic accepted for presentation at the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) international symposium in Chicago in September 2007. It also made a presentation on this topic at the Transgender 2007 conference in Norwich. The GIRES website now contains a wide range of information on this topic for use by family members and clinicians, in the section entitled "Endocrine Treatment for Adolescents".

The British Society for Paediatric Endocrinology and Diabetes (BSPED) has withdrawn its approval from the guidelines that were written by the London clinicians to endorse their own approach. BSPED has also agreed to organise a meeting, including clinicians from the UK and overseas, as well as the support groups, to review the present approach to treatment.

Improving Care in the UK for Adults Experiencing Gender Dysphoria and Transsexualism. GIRES is still involved in the working group, established by the Royal College of Psychiatrists to produce new standards of care. As yet, there is no agreement on the draft document that the Chairman of the group has distributed for comment. The Department of Health intends to issue guidance for commissioners of care when the standards are agreed. GIRES is also represented on the Department's advisory group on transgender issues.

Informing Transgender People, Their Families and Clinicians about Medical Treatment for Gender Variance. The Department of Health has awarded GIRES a contract to prepare a literature that will be disseminated in printed form and via the Department's website. The members of the GIRES team that is undertaking this work are: Dr Richard Curtis, Professor Andy Levy, Dr Joyce Martin, Professor Zoe-Jane Playdon, Bernard Reed, Terry Reed and Dr Kevan Wylie. Following consultation with a:gender, Press for Change, FTM Network, The Gender Trust, Gendys, Beaumont Trust and Mermaids, GIRES has agreed with the Department a broad range of topics that will be covered in a series of individual booklets, published jointly by the Department and the NHS.

Combating Transphobia. GIRES has extensive experience of helping organisations to develop policies and train their staff to combat transphobia and support transgendered people. The police, in particular, have on many occasions sought GIRES' help, at national and local level, in instilling respect for transgendered people among their officers and staff and protecting them at work and in the community. The charity is still participating in the Diversity Advisory Group established by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary. The National Police Improvement Agency (NPIA, previously known as CENTREX) awarded GIRES a contract to prepare comprehensive information on transgender issues for dissemination via the NPIA website. Three police services are currently using that material on a pilot basis, ahead

of its being made available to all police services. GIRES also presented workshops at conferences arranged by West Midlands Police and the Merseyside Police Authority, as well as contributing to events organised by the Metropolitan Police Service.

GIRES has made a great effort to reduce the transphobic bullying that emanates from schools, perpetrated by staff as well as by pupils. The victims include:

- a – Gender variant children and adolescents
- b – Children of transgender people
- c – Transgender teachers and other members of staff
- d – Transgender people in the community

GIRES, in collaboration with other trans groups, has been advising the Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF) on the measures that are necessary to combat this bullying and will participate in the preparation of guidance, which, it is hoped, the DCSF will distribute to all schools. The Home Office (HO) has awarded GIRES a contract to prepare guidance on combating transphobic bullying in schools, which will be published on the HO website. GIRES was also invited to brief the staff of a school, where the parent of one of its pupils had just commenced transition and been subjected to intrusive media attention. Although there are important differences between transphobic and homophobic bullying in schools, there are also similarities, for which reason GIRES has maintained a good working relationship with the organisers of Schools Out and attended its annual conference.

Supporting the Families of Gender Variant People. GIRES has used the experience it has gained by working with some 200 family members to prepare an article that it has submitted for publication in a professional journal, as well as a piece for its own website. It has made presentations on this topic at a meeting of the Federation of Family Support Groups, as well as the WPATH symposium and the Transgender 2007 conference. It has also continued to support individual families.

Promoting Research into Atypical Gender Identity Development. Understanding the biological influences on the development of gender identity is highly important in forming attitudes among those upon whom transgendered people depend. It is also helps the many transgendered people seeking to know about themselves. At the GIRES annual meeting in 2006, Ernie Govier described research into the hearing capabilities of transsexual people that he planned to undertake with Professor Milton Diamond. Following the meeting, Dr Richard Curtis arranged the participation in this research of a group of transsexual people for whom he provides medical care. The early results seem to confirm that the hearing capabilities of transsexual people, especially trans women, accord with their gender identities. The findings would not be used to develop a diagnostic tool but only to provide further evidence that neurobiological factors are involved in the development of atypical gender identity.

Contributing to Other Conferences. In addition to the above work, GIRES contributed presentations, workshops and literature at conferences dealing with transgender issues organised by the Federation of Family Support Groups, the National Union of Students, Warwick University Students Union, the Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement, the Department of Health's LGBT group, London Pride's transgender group and Pride Youth Swindon.

Awarding a Travel Bursary to Professor Stephen Whittle. For many years, Professor Stephen Whittle has ably championed the trans community. He has been elected as President of WPATH. In recognition of his work and to mark his presidency, GIRES awarded him a travel bursary to cover his cost of attending the WPATH symposium.

Other Work. The organisations that have sought GIRES' assistance with policy development in respect of transgender issues include the Equal Opportunities Commission, the Crown Prosecution Service, the Home Office, Surrey County Council and the Royal Borough of Kingston on Thames. As part of its effort to work effectively with other trans groups, the charity's representatives attended meetings of the Gender Trust, TranzNet and Mermaids, making a presentation in the latter case on the Dutch approach to treating transsexual adolescents. Recognising the need for productive collaboration between all LGBT groups, GIRES also regularly attends the meetings for these groups that are hosted by the Greater London Authority. GIRES continues to contribute to the work of the Parliamentary Forum on Transsexualism. It also participates in the patient involvement processes and annual meetings of the West London Mental Health Trust, which is responsible for the Gender Identity Clinic at Charing Cross Hospital, and collaborates with the Trust's Gender and Sexuality Sub-Group.

Financial Position. GIRES remained financially strong during 2006. Its income in that year, some £9,100 was substantially less than the £13,100 received in the previous year. The main reason for the decline was that no grants were received, compared to 2005, when £3,500 was obtained towards the cost of the Portman Project. However, overall expenditure declined to an even greater extent, from nearly £21,000 to some £9,200. The cessation of expenditure on the Portman Project, nearly £9,000 in the previous year, accounted for most of the decrease. The net result was a breakeven position.

GIRES' reserves policy is to retain, as a minimum, sufficient unrestricted funds to cover (a) the current levels of governance costs and expenditure on literature for a period of 12 months and (b) any outstanding costs of a project that the charity has made a binding commitment to undertake and cannot be met from any funds restricted to that use. Applying that policy to the end of 2006, resulted in a figure of some £4,600. Actual unrestricted funds at that date, over £18,000, were substantially greater than the required minimum.

Following the year-end, GIRES received nearly £8,000 by way of fees in respect of the work that it was commissioned to undertake by the Department of Health and the NPIA, which is described above. After covering the necessary disbursements associated with this work, a substantial surplus will remain to fund the charity's other projects, as will be shown when the charity publishes its accounts for 2007.