



Transition.

What is the probable timescale?

- Q1. *OK, so I am a Transsexual, how long before I can be a complete person?*
- A. Do you feel as though you need 'treatment'? If so what have you already done? Have you seen a Counsellor or a Gender Advisor?
- Q2. *I don't know where to start, but I am sure of who I am!*
- A. Let us take this one step at a time. You say you are sure about who you are. Have you spoken to a Counsellor or a Gender Advisor?
- Q3. *Do I need to?*
- A. It is a good idea, speaking to a Counsellor will enable you to be sure that you are not making a mistake in your life. If you have not already contacted Chrysalis, do so now. They have Counsellors and Gender Advisors who will be able to help you make the right choices for you. This is your journey and it will need to proceed at the pace which is necessary for your personal development. At the Chrysalis meetings you will have a chance to explore your feelings in confidence.

Q4. *What is the process?*

A. Your GP will refer you for a Psychiatric Assessment, or you can arrange to see one of the few private Psychiatrists if you have the financial availability.

Q5. *What happens at the Psychiatric Assessment?*

A. This will be an in depth interview which is aimed at exploring your inner self. The assessor needs to be certain that you have Gender Identity Disorder before you will be enabled to proceed.

Q6. *What happens then?*

A. After this initial assessment, if you are diagnosed with Gender Dysphoria that is to say that the assessor has recognised that you are Transsexual. You will then be expected to start your 'Real Life Test'. That means that you will be expected to start your 'in role' experience by your next visit. The time between appointments will vary depending on the route you are taking

and the availability of resources in your area. It could be anything between three and six months.

Before you return for your second visit you will be expected to have shown a commitment by changing your name legally (by deed poll). The level of commitment you are able to give will enable the rate you progress. You will need to show that you need this with every ounce of yourself before you will be put on a programme of change which will include hormones. At every stage you will have the support of Chrysalis.

Q7. *What happens to me when I am prescribed Hormones?*

A. After initial blood tests to establish which particular hormones are right for you, you will be given a prescription. For the first six to eight weeks, you will barely notice the changes that are already taking place in your body. Soon after this time period you will experience a sort of female puberty. No

matter how much advance warning you are given, nothing can really prepare you for the changes you will experience. Your emotions will be erratic; you may be tearful or highly sensitive. Your breasts will start to swell and this can be an uncomfortable, even painful experience. In time your skin will soften and your feet may slightly reduce in size.

Q8. *What about the visible male side of me like beard growth and body hair?*

A. Unfortunately taking hormones does not affect the rate of growth nor the amount of body hair you have. These will have established themselves in your body at puberty. There are available beard removal treatments and ways to reduce body hair. Unfortunately these treatments can be expensive and are not available on the National Health.

Q9. *What else do I need to do?*

A. By now you should be an established member of Chrysalis who will be able to assist you in

unlearning most of the responses and coping strategies that you learnt in your former male life, these will need to be replaced with the female equivalent. This can be a difficult process as it is much harder to unlearn an established skill than it is to learn a new skill. This is one of the areas where Chrysalis can help. They have an established programme at their Meetings which are designed to provide you with a greater awareness of the new role you are seeking to transition into.

Q10. *What about my voice?*

A. Speech therapy is sometimes available on the National Health. For those with available funding there is the opportunity to obtain speech therapy privately. The use of words is just as important as the tone that they are delivered in. At the Chrysalis Meetings you will have a chance to practice word usage. Learning to use your voice to your best advantage comes mainly through practice. Hormones do not change the way your voice has developed.

Q11. *When will I be ready for surgery?*

A. That will depend on the route you are taking. Your progress should be monitored by either your National Health consultant or your private one. They will need to know that you are living 'in role' full time. Before being given the appointment for Gender Reassignment Surgery you will be referred for another psychiatric evaluation. This will also be an in-depth interview to assess your progress through your Life Test. You will need to show that you are now able to be accepted as female. Questions may focus around how you are sustaining relationships at home, work and socially. Your involvement with Chrysalis will ensure that you have the best possible start. The surgeon will need to be sure that this is the right path for you before he commits to surgery. Once Gender Reassignment Surgery has taken place, it is irreversible. The actual timescale depends largely on you. It can take anything from two to five years on the NHS. Chrysalis will be available to support you when needed.

CHRYSALIS
Now has
MEETING CENTRES
in the
Southampton, Portsmouth
and
New Forest areas
which are open
on the First and Third
FRIDAYS
of each month

A small charge will be made.

There is also a Support Group
on the second Tuesday of each month

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