

beaumont



*Supporting the transgender community for over 50 years*

# **A GUIDE TO THE BEAUMONT SOCIETY**

*embracing all strands of  
gender diversity*

[www.beaumontsociety.org.uk](http://www.beaumontsociety.org.uk)

**The Beaumont Society  
27 Old Gloucester Street  
London  
WC1N 3XX**

**Information Line 01582 412220  
Registered Charity No. 1135548**

# The Beaumont Society

The Beaumont Society was founded in 1966 as a self-help and social organisation for transvestites and transsexuals. We are still here, fifty years later, in a very different social climate, with a broader membership but with the same aims. The name comes from the Chevalier d'Eon de Beaumont, a celebrated French transvestite of the 18th Century.

The Society is run for, and by, people who are transgender—covering the full spectrum from occasional cross-dressers to post-operation transsexuals. We are a national organisation run on a regional basis. There are members throughout the UK, with groups in many areas. We also have members overseas.

The Beaumont Society is run by an Executive Committee of elected and co-opted members that meets twice a year and operates in accordance with the constitution.

## Membership of the Society

There are two types of membership, Electronic Only and Postal Plus.

**Postal Plus** members receive a copy of the Society's quarterly magazine through the post in a plain envelope as well as having full access to the members' area of the Society's website.

**Electronic Only** members just have access to the members' area of the Society's website, but they can read the current magazine, back copies of the magazine and participate in a number of interesting forums.

## Personal Security

The Beaumont Society operates a strict code of confidentiality and guarantees that all information given on your application form will only be seen by those officers responsible for considering and administering your membership. No personal information is passed to other members and the Society never supplies names and addresses to anyone inside or outside the Society without the member's express permission. It is not even necessary to give your real address on your application form, as long as you provide some means for the Society to communicate with you.

## Contacting Other Members

The Society's website enables members to contact one another easily and safely, but for those without internet access we operate a mailbox system which allows members to make contact with each other without the need for individuals to reveal their personal details. This is especially helpful for members who would be daunted by the prospect of attending group meetings, or even meeting another individual face to face for the first time. The contact system allows correspondence with other members whilst preserving anonymity and is particularly useful for those who do not have access to the internet.

## Magazines

The Beaumont Magazine is published quarterly and this comes free with Postal Plus membership as part of the subscription. The magazine is a colourful, high quality, attractive and tasteful publication with interesting features, photographs, contributions by members and many articles on social events and helpful tips. It provides a lifeline to those members who for whatever reason are unable to participate in many of the social activities. For those who do, the magazine also provides news and information on social activities of interest to members, including relevant events not organised by the Beaumont Society itself.

Digital Only members can read the magazine and back copies of the magazine on the Society's website.

## Social Events

The Society is closely associated with several hotel weekends at various venues. There are also many other popular events such as weekend social events organised by local or regional groups and supported by the Society. In addition we try to inform members of transgender events organised by others.

Many areas have regular meetings which may be held in members' own homes or other suitable venues. These meetings are usually quite informal, though sometimes something special may be arranged, such as clothes sales and wig or make-up demonstrations. Usually they are simply somewhere where you can dress in a safe, relaxed and friendly atmosphere, chat with other members, make friends and discuss problems. Wives, partners, girlfriends, boyfriends and families are always very welcome.

## Help and Information

Many members find support, comfort and information from other Society members; however neither the Society nor its members are qualified to undertake counselling.

## Beaumont Partners

Beaumont Partners is a volunteer resource run by the wives and partners of trans people who provide confidential support and extend the hand of friendship to other women who have discovered that their partners are transgender. The objectives of Beaumont Partners are:

- To further improve the quality of support offered to women after the discovery that their partner is transgender.
- To support female partners of transgender people so that they do not feel alone with their issues.
- To listen with empathy based on their own experiences of living with a transgender person.

We do not yet have a similar provision to support the partners of female to male transpeople.

## Support Within The Wider Community

The Beaumont Society, through its experienced members, offers talks and information on transgender matters to interested parties. We can provide representatives at meetings of community support bodies, such as the Samaritans, university LGB&T groups, Victim Support, Police Force diversity staff, etc., for talks on transgender matters, in which our personal backgrounds provide the basis for greater understanding of the issues.

Our social gatherings are usually open to those who have contact with transgender people but are not themselves transgender, such as the Police, Fire Service, Ambulance Service, and traders such as beauticians, hairdressers, shoe shops and clothing stores.

We can also provide support for surveys by recognised students on college and university courses involving research into 'transgender' related subjects, mainly through the magazine and website. We also encourage students to attend our social meetings to learn from transgender people.

## Some Useful Definitions

Descriptive terms relating to gender have a useful purpose, but they can be misleading if applied too rigidly. It should be borne in mind that, in reality, there is a spread of different characteristics that tend to merge into each other at the edges. Usage of these terms may change over time.

**Transgender** is an umbrella term and generally describes the case of a person adopting clothing, appearance or lifestyle of a gender different from that assigned to them at birth. The term embraces all aspects of gender variation.

**Biological sex** is the condition of being male or female, as determined by chromosomes and body chemistry. In puberty it is marked by the development of secondary sexual characteristics, e.g. facial hair in males, breast development in females.

**Gender** is expressed in terms of masculinity and femininity. It is how people perceive themselves and how they expect others to behave. It may be partly culturally determined, but may also be partly determined by brain development in the foetal stage of pregnancy. However, the term is increasingly used as a synonym for biological sex and the boundaries between the terms have become blurred.

**Cisgender.** A person whose gender identity, gender expression and biological sex are all congruent (e.g. man—masculine and male; woman—feminine and female.)

**Transvestism** refers to the adoption, fully or partially, of the clothes generally identified as associated with those of a sex different from that assigned to them at birth. They do not wish to live permanently in this role.

**Cross-Dressing** is the desire to adopt the clothes, appearance and behaviour generally associated with those of a sex different from that assigned to them at birth.

**Gender Dysphoria** is the persistent personal discomfort experienced by transpeople through conforming to society's cultural expectations. It may continue when individuals seek to overcome that discomfort by living in a role more congruent with their gender identity because of the adverse reaction of others. Dysphoria in many transpeople can include disgust with their sex characteristics, as these conflict with their gender identity.

**Transsexual** is a term that is most likely to be seen in legal and medical documents. Unfortunately it is not popular with many who are diagnosed as transsexual who generally prefer the terms ‘transgender’ or ‘trans’. In law a transsexual person is one who ‘proposes to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone gender reassignment’ (Equality Act, 2010) The term ‘transsexual’ is specific and does not include non-binary identities.

**Intersex Conditions.** There are a number of intersex conditions. In some the appearance at birth is neither clearly male or female. The situation may or may not be accompanied by gender dysphoria. Inconsistencies in development may be associated with atypical sex chromosomes such as Klinefelter syndrome (XXY) or Jacob’s syndrome (XYY). There may also be effects from the pre-natal hormone balance.

**Homosexuality** is a situation where sexual attraction is felt for people of the same sex.

**Bisexuality** is where sexual attraction is to either or both sexes.

There is no direct correlation between sexual orientation and gender identity. In general, those who are homosexual or bisexual are quite satisfied with their gender and body, and so most people who cross-dress are heterosexual. However everyone is different and the Beaumont Society embraces all strands of gender diversity.

## Gender Identity

Gender identity refers to a person’s sense of themselves as masculine or feminine—the binary model. There is a presumption in society that this sense of identity will be consistent with the sex assigned at birth. The causes of Gender Dysphoria remain uncertain and there is no evidence that it is an inherited condition. Cross-dressers and transsexuals may have need of skilled specialist counselling. Neither condition is amenable to “cure” any more than left-handedness. Whether one is an occasional cross-dresser, a post-therapy transsexual or someone who comes between these definitions it is important to know that you are not alone, nor do you have a mental illness. There is a multiplicity of gender identities and people can exist anywhere on the continuum.

## Cross-Dressing

Cross-dressing means different things to different people and tends to be little understood, though work in recent years to change public attitudes means that it is, perhaps, no longer a subject of fear but seen as being a means of expression. It is a subject commonly treated in the press in a way that exploits for sensationalism, although women’s magazines do seem to be more understanding. Perhaps it is not seen as a threat to women as it is to men. When one is very close to the person, however, it may well be a different matter. For family members it can seem very threatening at first.

Understanding is sometimes not as good as it might be among people in the caring professions; the clergy, doctors, police and social workers who may be called upon to provide help. It is becoming increasingly accepted that cross-dressing may indicate some underlying degree of gender variance and it is this that provides the subconscious pressure. The gender variance may be at a lower level than that experienced by those seeking gender reassignment.

The unhappiness often experienced by many cross-dressers comes from loneliness and anxiety about their situation and considerable confusion about their feelings. In a sense they are a minority group who fail to conform to what is regarded as 'normal' behaviour and may, therefore, fear the consequences should the activity be discovered.

## **Incidence of Cross-Dressing**

The incidence of cross-dressing is estimated at approximately one in a hundred of the population. The incidence of transsexualism is considerably rarer, estimated at between one in five thousand and one in ten thousand of the population. ([www.gires.org.uk](http://www.gires.org.uk)) The actual figures may be considerably higher.

Many cross-dressers dress in utmost secrecy for fear of censure or ridicule, while those who have overcome this fear can be said to have 'come out of the closet' and may consider themselves to be 'gender gifted'.

## **Aspects of Cross-Dressing**

The majority of cross-dressers are heterosexual, often married with families. The desire to cross-dress often begins at an early age when the only available clothes are those belonging to other members of the family. Consequently a child feeling the need to cross-dress may suffer feelings of isolation and guilt. At first cross-dressing is often non-sexual but during puberty may take on erotic overtones. The impetus to cross-dress may indicate some degree of gender variance as indicated earlier.

Cross-dressing is a form of behaviour not a disease and, therefore, the term 'cure' does not apply. In some cultures it may be perceived as a harmless quirk. It may, however, be regarded as threatening in a relationship. Often the cross-dresser has avoided telling his or her partner, believing it may pass once he or she is in a stable relationship, only to be discovered accidentally at a later stage when it re-emerges. The partner may feel let down, confused or angry at not being told, and wonder what other secrets may be hidden away. Often cross-dressing is simply a safety valve and a form of escape from the pressures and responsibilities of work and social demands. A partner may react with complete revulsion, leading to separation and divorce. However, it is also true that the partner may find the behaviour intriguing, perhaps even stimulating. The majority of relationships probably fall between these two scenarios and reach some sort of compromise and tolerance, but not necessarily full approval.

The cross-dresser who indulges at the expense of time spent with his or her partner and family, and at the cost of purchasing the equivalent of a double wardrobe of clothing, risking alienating the whole family. If the couple can work together in mutual acceptance of their feelings and to support their partnership, there is a real possibility that the marriage may be strengthened and enhanced. Such cross-dressers may well develop a better understanding of the opposite sex.

Many partners, through lack of knowledge, assume that cross-dressing equates with homosexuality or bisexuality, but this is rarely the case. More commonly partners may feel inadequate and believe that somehow they have failed their spouse. Often the most damaging reaction is the feeling of having been deceived and that the secret has gone unshared despite the intimate life they may otherwise have. Like the cross-dressers themselves, partners may fear adverse reactions from parents, relatives, friends and particularly children of the marriage.

It is important to remember that people who cross-dress are primarily individuals and that labelling can do considerable damage. Individuals should not be categorised and each person should be treated as an individual in their own right.

It takes great courage to admit that one cross-dresses. It is quite likely that individuals may initially contact a helping organisation such as the Beaumont Society, a gay helpline or the Samaritans; all well-known for their confidentiality.

## Transsexuality and Gender Reassignment

Transsexuality represents the ultimate in gender dysphoria. The majority of transsexual people, whether male-to-female or female-to-male, may feel certain from an early age that their true gender identity is at odds with their biological sex. There is indeed some medical evidence in such cases that brain functions related to gender identity show significant differences from those usually expected for their apparent biological sex.

**Gender Reassignment.** The UK Gender Recognition Act of 2004 provides for formal recognition by means of a Gender Recognition Certificate (GRC) if a person can provide relevant evidence to show they have been living in their chosen gender for at least two years. This also allows for a change of birth certificate. As a result of the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013, couples can remain married after a GRC has been issued—if the spouse approves. A transsexual person in effect becomes subject to the standard rules and regulations that govern their acquired gender.

The Equality Act (2010) of 2010 gathers together and supercedes a number of previous acts of Parliament and sets out a wide range of anti-discrimination measures (e.g. employment, education, provision of services etc.) for people with *'protected characteristics'*, which includes gender reassignment.

The act states, *'A person has the protected characteristic of gender reassignment if the person is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning the person's sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex'* The Commons Women and Equalities Select Committee report on Transgender Equality (2015) recommends changing the protected characteristic to *'gender identity'* which would protect all trans people.

On the face of it, gender reassignment (as defined by the two acts of Parliament) can be achieved without a transsexual person having to undergo gender reassignment surgery—or any other medical intervention for that matter—so long as he or she can demonstrate having lived in their innately felt gender for the required period of time.

Appearance is an area of particular concern for transsexual persons. Unfortunately, medical intervention for gender reassignment (whether by hormone treatment or surgery) can only have a limited effect on the appearance of transsexuals once puberty has passed. Hair removal by laser or electrolysis and breast implants are generally successful, though vocal chord surgery can be more problematical. Facial reconstruction—albeit very expensive—can have a significant effect. For transmen the effect of testosterone therapy can have a transforming effect on secondary sexual characteristics such as facial hair and voice pitch and timbre. Surgeons are becoming more successful in phalloplasty operations.

**Discrimination Against Non-Transsexual People.** It is clear that the Equality Act does not currently include non-transsexual transgender people as a protected category. Nevertheless, cross-dressers appearing in public have the normal protection of the law as regards unfair dismissal, assault and other forms of abuse which comes under the heading of hate crime.

It should be emphasised that cross-dressing is not in itself a crime. However, the Beaumont Society would advise cross-dressers that when in public they should avoid drawing attention to themselves by inappropriate behaviour. This is particularly true when dealing with highly sensitive issues such as the use of public conveniences.

**Provision of Goods and Services.** The Goods and Services Act (2007) (largely superseded as far as transgender issues are concerned by the Equality Act of 2010) deals with transgender discrimination in the provision of 'goods and services' against transsexual people only. However, in the experience of Beaumont Society members, nearly all shops and services have adopted a positive attitude towards all transgender people.

Many service providers such as beauticians and hairdressers, clothing and shoe shops, holiday rentals and hotel accommodation advertise their goods and services in transgender club magazines such as the *Beaumont Magazine*.

Other problems are caused not so much by how a person is dressed, but rather how they behave and act. Many companies and large department stores have a positive diversity policy towards staff as well as customers. It would be difficult for private shops or businesses to refuse goods and services on religious grounds, for instance, and recent cases have shown that even these businesses have to comply with the Act in practice, if only because of the difficulties in distinguishing between cross-dressers and transsexuals.

## JOINING THE BEAUMONT SOCIETY

To join the Beaumont Society simply fill in the application form at the end of this booklet and post it with the appropriate annual subscription to :

The Beaumont Society  
27 Old Gloucester Street  
London  
WC1N 3XX

or join online at [www.beaumontsociety.org.uk](http://www.beaumontsociety.org.uk)

The option of paying by standing order, electronic bank transfer or PayPal is provided and, since the Society is a registered charity, your subscription can be Gift Aided which increases the value of your payment to the Society at no extra cost to you.



# USEFUL WEBSITES

## Websites of General Transgender Interest and Advice

**[www.beaumontsociety.org.uk](http://www.beaumontsociety.org.uk)**

The Beaumont Society supporting the transgender community for over 50 years.

**[www.beaumont-trust.org.uk](http://www.beaumont-trust.org.uk)**

The Beaumont Trust is a charitable educational resource for those looking to learn more about Gender Dysphoria, Transgender Issues and related matters.

**[www.mermaidsuk.org.uk](http://www.mermaidsuk.org.uk)**

Mermaids is a support group for children and young people up to 19 years old and suffering with issues with their gender identity; and their families, friends, and wider networks such as schools, youth groups, or medical professionals.

**[www.gires.org.uk](http://www.gires.org.uk)**

The Gender Identity Research and Education Society (GIREs) sets out to improve the lives of trans and gender non-conforming people, including those who are non-binary and non-gender through research and education.

**[www.pfc.org.uk](http://www.pfc.org.uk)**

Press For Change (PFC) is a key lobbying and legal support organisation for transpeople.

**[www.gendertrust.org.uk](http://www.gendertrust.org.uk)**

The Gender Trust is a charity helping transpeople and those affected by gender identity issues.

## JOINING THE BEAUMONT SOCIETY

To join the Beaumont Society simply fill in the application form opposite and post it with the annual subscription to the Society at the address indicated. The option of paying by standing order is provided and (since the Society is a registered charity) your subscriptions can be gift aided, which increases the value of your subscription to the Society. Or perhaps consider joining online at [www.beaumontsociety.org.uk](http://www.beaumontsociety.org.uk)

The following information may be useful to you when completing the form.

### **Payment by Standing Order**

If you wish to pay your annual subscriptions by standing order please fill in the box below and we will forward it to your bank.

### **Option for donating by Gift Aid**

Signing the following declaration will enable the Beaumont Society to reclaim the tax you pay on your subscription/donations. This will increase the value of your subscription/donation by 25% and will cost you nothing personally. It does however help the Society to increase the level of help and support we can offer to our members.



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## Application Form

ALL INFORMATION WILL BE TREATED IN THE STRICTEST CONFIDENCE

Name you wish to be known by within the society .....

Are you over 18? YES/NO (Delete as appropriate)

Tick which membership you would like? **POSTAL PLUS** **ELECTRONIC ONLY**

POSTAL ADDRESS - for use only on mail to you. Block capitals please.

Would you like mail to be marked 'Private and Confidential' YES/NO

NAME

ADDRESS .....

.....

EMAIL (for renewal reminder) .....

Would you like your email to be in the annual membership list? YES/NO

The annual subscription can be found on the website Please tick box to indicate your preferred payment method

- Standing Order: Complete the 'Optional Standing Order' section overleaf
- Cheque/Postal Order: Payable to 'Beaumont Society' Send with Form.
- Paypal: Payable to: email@beaumontsociety.org.uk \*
- Electronic Bank Transfer: Use bank details as for Standing Order opposite\*

*Please provide Payment Transaction Date and Reference Number \**

I wish to join the Beaumont Society and agree to treat in strict confidence any information about other members of the Society. I agree to abide by the rules and accept the constitution of the Beaumont Society. I understand that any guidance or information given to me constitutes only a personal opinions and does not necessarily reflect that of the society.

Signed (real name) ..... Date \_\_/\_\_/20\_\_

To the Manager (Bank Name).....  
 Bank Address  
 .....  
 .....  
 ..... Postcode ....

Please pay: Lloyds Bank, George Street, Luton

For the credit of "The Beaumont Society" Sort Code 30-95-28 account No. 04366060  
 The Sum of £                      Annually on the \_\_/\_\_/20\_\_ (Leave the date of the first payment blank in case of delays in the post.)  
 Quoting reference BS Number..... (office use only)  
 Please debit my account number ..... Sort Code \_\_\_\_\_  
 Account Name .....

Signed ..... Date \_\_/\_\_/20\_\_

**OPTIONAL GIFT AID**  
 Signing the following declaration will enable the Beaumont Society to reclaim the tax you pay on your subscription/donations. This will increase the value of your subscription/donation by 25% and will cost you nothing personally.

"I confirm that I am a UK taxpayer and would like the Beaumont Society to treat all subscriptions/donations that I have made for the six years prior to this year and all subscriptions/donations I make hereafter, as gift aid donations until I notify you otherwise."

Full Name .....

Address .....

..... Post Code \_\_\_\_\_

Signed ..... Date \_\_/\_\_/20\_\_

*NB. The above name and address must be recognised by HMRC and you must pay an amount of income tax and/or capital gains tax at least equal to the tax that the Beaumont Society claims on your subscription/donations in the tax year (currently 25 % of your subscription/donations) . If in the future you tax circumstances change please notify the Beaumont Society to cancel your declaration. Please a/so notify the Beaumont Society if you change your name or address.*

**Beaumont Society - established 1966. Registered Charity (from 2010) No. 1135548**