

Helen's Story



"If we can manage people in the right way, the human way, then that is better for everyone in society."

Helen Holt, Consultant Endocrinologist at The Royal Bournemouth and Christchurch Hospitals, helps transgender people on their gender identity journey.

She believes passionately that everyone should be treated as an individual.

This is her story.

Ours is a very young specialty - the hormones insulin and cortisol - crucial for life - have only been known about since the last century.

My particular interest though, is in the sex hormones related to gender - testosterone and oestrogen. I see many patients with conditions related to these hormones, and in recent years an increasing number of transgender people.

I feel very strongly that we should not be defined by our gender - and certainly gender should not limit our choices. I want my sons to be able to dance and my daughter to be a physicist if that's what they choose. There is a lot of pressure right now for young people to conform to expectation and that worries me.

What my transgender patients have taught me, and some of them have had very difficult times, is the incredible journey people are prepared to go on so that their bodies can match the person they know they are inside.

Before gender reassignment surgery there were some very unhappy people on the margins of society, not accepted, and unable to flourish and be part of society. Some people feel that it is wrong for transgender people to have expensive operations and medicines - to them I say, even aside from the human factor, it is better for society not to have sad and depressed individuals - far better to have people well, and working and able to contribute in a meaningful way.

I love my rainbow lanyard. Often I am busy, and my face is one which betrays what I am thinking so when people look at me, they may see that I am worried or distracted. But I know that

if I am wearing my lanyard, transgender people, who may have had difficult experiences, will know that I am there for them.