





# Gender Affirmation

Support at every step

## *Need more information?*

For more information about Irish Life Health's Gender Affirmation Cover, please visit:

[www.irishlifehealth.ie](http://www.irishlifehealth.ie)

\*Benefits available on selected Irish Life Health plans. Please check your table of cover.  
Gender Affirmation benefit is available on selected plans to new and renewing members.  
Terms and conditions do apply so please check your Member Handbook.

Irish Life Health dac is regulated by the Central Bank of Ireland.

[www.irishlifehealth.ie](http://www.irishlifehealth.ie)

# Gender Affirmation

## When the mirror doesn't reflect your mind

Gender isn't always as it appears.

Gender dysphoria – the feeling that your actual gender doesn't match the one you were assigned at birth – is far more widely understood now than in the past.

At birth, a baby is assigned a gender based on their physical appearance. With so many social expectations around how males and females look, act and think, any mismatch between someone's authentic gender and what's expected of them and their feelings inside can cause profound anxiety.

## Supporting you at every step

Gender dysphoria is a recognised medical diagnosis. It is certainly not a mental illness.

If someone has a deep need to live according to their gender identity, rather than their assigned gender, intervention can be appropriate. If this happens, Irish Life Health can offer support along the transition process.



## The benefits now available

As it is such a life-changing decision, the gender affirmation process may involve a number of very important steps:

### 1 Initial Consultation

Expert consultation and advice about your gender identity is the essential first step. Your GP can refer you to a Gender Identity Psychiatrist or Psychologist for an initial assessment and diagnosis.

#### How we can help\*

**GP Visits:** Contribution towards the cost of attending a GP.

### 2 Expert Assessment

An expert (or team of experts) can fully assess the many social, psychological and physical issues that can contribute to gender dysphoria.

#### How we can help\*

**Healthy Minds Benefit:** Mental Health Support  
Online access to mental health assessments and content and up to 6 counselling sessions via phone, chat, video or face to face.

**Consultant Visit Benefit:** Contribution towards the cost of attending a consultant

### 3 Treatment

If your expert care team confirms gender dysphoria, they will put a personalised treatment plan into action. This can include:

**Cross-sex Hormone Therapy:** During this process, you are prescribed the hormones of your preferred gender. By taking these, you will alter certain physical characteristics. As this happens, your multi-disciplinary care team will monitor your progress via regular check-ups.

**Real Life Experience:** Before any surgery can take place, you must live full time as your preferred gender identity for a significant period. Doing so is known as Real Life Experience (RLE) and helps confirm that this surgery is the right decision.

#### How we can help\*

**GP Consultant Benefit**

**Healthy Minds Benefit:** Mental Health Support

For some people this is a sufficient intervention for them to enjoy life with minimal dysphoria.

Others may choose to progress with gender affirmation surgeries.

### 4 Gender Affirmation Surgery

Having completed your RLE, you may decide to have surgery to permanently alter your sexual appearance. This will only happen if you and your care team believe that you are ready.

#### How we can help\*

**Gender Affirmation Benefit:** Cover towards your medical costs for gender affirmation surgical procedures

**Health Minds Benefit:** Mental Health Support

### 5 Surgery Follow-up

A full follow-up plan is put in place under the supervision of your GP or a qualified healthcare professional.

#### How we can help\*

**GP Visit Benefit**

**Consultant Visit Benefit**

**Healthy Minds Benefit:** Mental Health Support

**Nurse-on-Call Benefit**

**Physiotherapy Benefit**