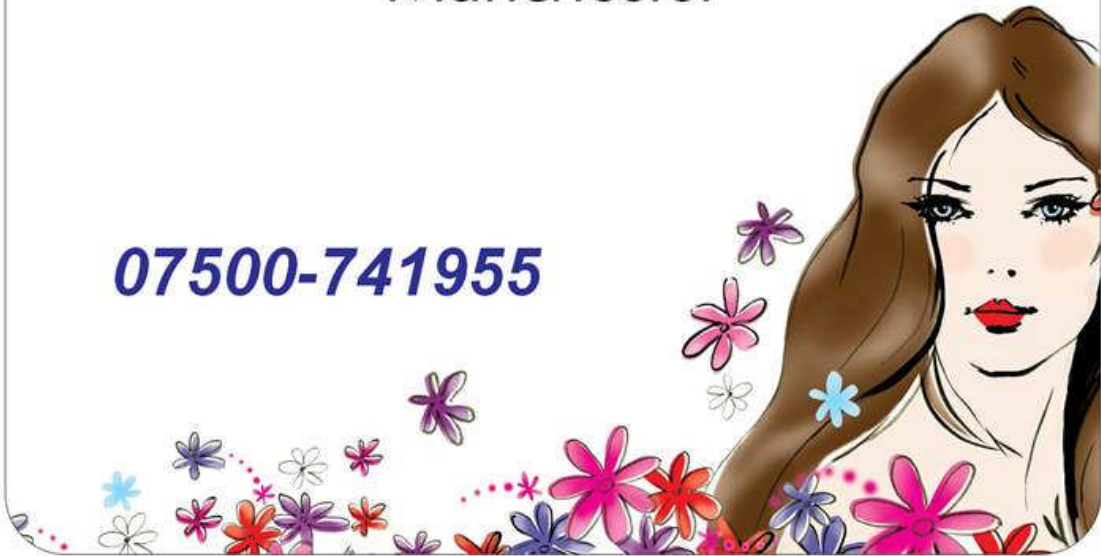


# TransForum

Manchester

07500-741955



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

# Member's Handbook

**The Privileges and Responsibilities of  
Membership of TransForum Manchester**

## **Mission Statement**

**TransForum Manchester** is a Transgender \* discussion group and mutual peer support forum for all Transgendered people and those in any way questioning their gender, together with their partners, family, friends & allies meeting in a Safe and Comfortable Space on the 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday Afternoon each month at 3:30pm.

Our Group has a wealth of personal experience and helpful contacts within the local community, local government, the police and the caring professions. We also provide social outings for all our members to promote affirmation in their preferred gender presentation and build confidence in public spaces

Although based in Manchester we have members who travel from all over the NW and beyond.

*TransForum Manchester was founded with the central belief that everyone should be safe and valued whatever their gender identity / gender diversity and have full freedom in their gender expression.*

*We welcome transsexual men and transsexual women, Transvestites and many other gender variant people including but not limited to androgyne / gender-queer / gender questioning people, cross-dressing & inter-sex people etc., however our main audience is Male to Female Transsexuals and Transvestites and those in-between Male and Female.*

Our aim is to help promote the life skills Transgender people need to interact socially in their own appropriate gender, and where appropriate provide information & signposting to help them live in their acquired gender (Transition).

We also aim to give the wider community an insight into the rainbow of Transgender identity.

### **We achieve all this through the Prime Objectives of TransForum Manchester**

The prime aims (“The Objectives”) of TransForum Manchester are to provide educational & supportive services for the Trans community. This is achieved by undertaking the following within the area of Greater Manchester, North West England and beyond as resources allow:

1 to provide a safe discussion and information sharing forum for all members to express and explore their gender identity; by providing a safe meeting space in the Manchester area for the trans and gender variant community, in all its diversity, which encourages them to voice their opinions and concerns and have them heard.

2 to welcome all those affected by gender dysphoria related to transgenderism, transvestism, transsexualism, gender queer, FTM (female-to-male), MTF (male-to-female) as well as other variations of identity within our diverse community; and those who live with any intersex condition or gender variance difficulty; also partners, close family members (over 18) and supporters, and all those wishing to gain knowledge about this condition and the transgender community;

3 to provide, where compatible with Objective 'a', social & mutual support and self help to all members; particularly those struggling to develop their own gender identity.

**4 Offer mutual support, advice, signposting and intervention wherever possible to local Trans people whose rights and liberties are challenged or denied within society.**

**5 to advance public education about all the aspects of gender dysphoria / gender diversity related to transgenderism, transsexualism, transvestism or intersex conditions; and promote acceptance of all transgender, gender variant or intersexed people; by providing educational & training services to local government, public service organisations, employers, the NHS, police, universities, schools, families and individuals about the reality of being Trans, their legal rights, care and transitioning pathways and the particular challenges and joys faced by Trans people.**

**6 Campaign and liaise with government, healthcare and mental health services to improve the legal and medical options available to Trans people, and to de-pathologise Transgender as a mental illness; to being a natural diversity.**

**7 to work with the police and other bodies to address the issues of transphobic hate crime through education, facilitating the reporting of such crime(s) information on crime prevention and signposting sources of support for those suffering such crime(s);**

**8 to maintain close links with all groups and services relevant to our aims and to involve these groups and supportive organisations, including public sector bodies, in the work of the Association; a representative from TransForum will wherever possible, attend every major service users meeting in Manchester and the surrounding areas to provide a link to and a voice for the Transgendered community**

**9 to promote a positive image of Trans people both in the LGBT community and wider public community, so as to give the Trans community a clear and consistent voice to Local Service providers**

**11 to keep confidential all personal information about group members and confidential discussions.**

**12 to Gain constituted group and / or Charitable status so as to seek funding, to enhance public credibility and pursue other opportunities to improve the services provided to Trans people.**

## **Statement of Confidentiality**

All members are required to maintain the confidentiality of all other group members and visitors in respect of their Trans(gender)\* status, Trans History or association with the Trans community.

Members are reminded that some members are living in 'stealth mode' or may not be out to family, friends, employers or colleagues. On no account should any member of the group 'out' any other member for any reason whatsoever without the express consent of the individual(s) involved.

Anyone who does so will not be admitted to future TransForum meetings or invited to our events.

\* Trans / Transgender is an umbrella term used to describe a whole range of people whose gender identity or gender expression differ in some way from the conventional gender assumptions made about them when they were born.

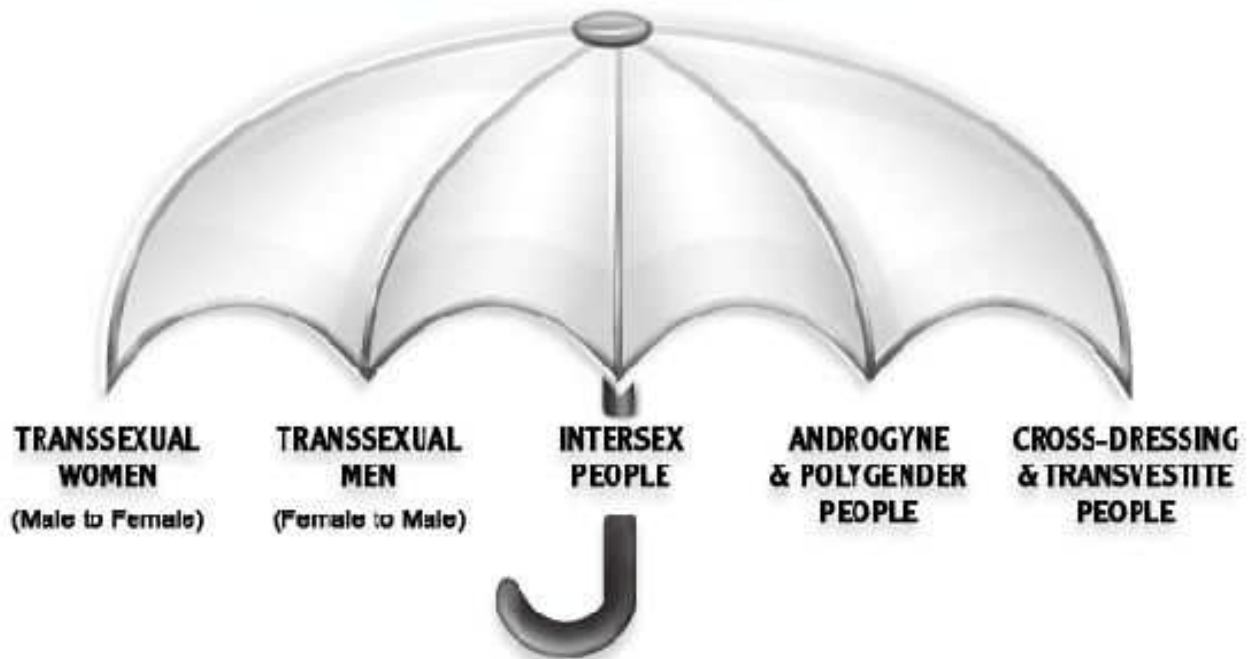
At TransForum we use the terms transgender people and trans people to include all those who consider themselves to fall under the trans / transgender umbrella and also include those Gender Diverse people who don't identify as part of the trans community.

This inclusivity includes, but is not limited to:

Cross-dressing & transvestite people, trans women, trans men, transsexual men & Transsexual women, people with a trans history, people identifying as androgyne, polygender, genderqueer, gender non-conforming, dual gendered, & non-gender identifying, gender questioning people, gender variant & gender diverse people, transgender people & intersex people and anyone who has questions about or who feels that the gender (Physical Sex) assigned to them at birth incompletely describes or does not at all describe their own personal gender or non-gender identity.

## **The Trans(gender) Umbrella**

## TRANSGENDER or TRANS UMBRELLA



### **TransForum Membership Rules and Conditions**

**1** Membership of the Association is open to any person over the age of 18 years who is in good standing, is interested in furthering the Objectives of the Association, who has filled in a membership form, has agreed not to act in any discriminatory, prejudiced or oppressive way, to keep confidential all personal information about group members & confidential discussions and who has paid any annual subscription as may be laid down from time to time by the Executive Committee.

**2** The Association may establish a junior membership section for those under the age of 18 years, although this group shall not be permitted to vote on any matters pertaining to the business of the Association or to the election of members of the Executive Committee. Members under the age of 18 years shall, however, have the power to elect two of their number to represent them at meetings of the Executive Committee, these representatives may comment on the discussions and business of the Association, but shall not be permitted to vote, either, on any matters pertaining to the business of the Association or to the election of members of the Executive Committee.

**3** Membership of the Association shall also be open to any body corporate or unincorporated association which is interested in furthering the Association's work and has paid any annual subscription as may be laid down from time to time by the Executive committee (any such body being called, in this constitution, a "member organisation").

**4** Every individual member aged over 18 years in good standing and every organisation which is a member in good standing shall have one vote on any question to be decided at the AGM or at general meetings of the Association.

**5** Each member organisation in good standing shall appoint an individual to represent it and to vote on its behalf at meetings of the Association; & may appoint an alternate to replace its appointed representative at any meeting of the Association if the appointed representative is unable to attend.

**6** Each member organisation shall notify the name of the representative appointed by it, and of any alternate, to the secretary. If the representative or alternate resigns from or otherwise

leaves the member organisation or is no longer held to be in good standing, he or she shall forthwith cease to be the representative of the member organisation.

7 The Executive Committee may by a majority vote and for good reason terminate the membership of any individual or member organisation: provided that the individual concerned or the appointed representative of the member organisation concerned (as the case may be) shall have the right to be heard by the Executive Committee, accompanied by a friend, before the final decision on membership is made.

8. The Association shall ensure that with regard to all its services, activities and facilities there shall be no discrimination against any person on the basis of gender, gender reassignment, marital status, sexual orientation, age, disability, unemployment, financial status, ethnicity, colour, creed, maternity status, spent conviction or political belief or any other inappropriate reason.

9. All the Association's services shall be wherever practical available to all of its members, but services, activities and facilities shall not be available to anyone who acts in ways that are discriminatory as described above or otherwise abusive whilst they are on the Association's premises or taking part in the Association's activities.

Members behaving in a discriminatory or abusive way will be asked to leave and may at the executive committee's decision be excluded from all future activities of the association.

10 All members in good standing who have attended at least 3 ordinary monthly meetings shall be entitled to stand for election to the executive committee at the groups AGM, providing the statutory 14 days notice of nomination has been given to the Executive committee's secretary of their intention to stand for election.

## **Termination of Membership of TransForum Manchester**

A member of the group shall cease to be a member if they

- (1) Directly resigns as a member of the Association or are the representative of an organisation which ceases to be a member (They may then apply for direct membership in their own right);
- (2) Ceases to respond to e-mail or letter for a period of one year or more, or who's main means of contact is bouncing for 3 or more months. In either case the committee will make one last effort to contact the member to ascertain if they wish to continue in membership of the association.
- (3) Notifies the Executive Committee of a wish to resign.
- (4) By majority vote of the executive committee ceases to be a member of the association deemed to be in good standing.

## **Disciplinary Procedure**

A member shall be deleted from the membership list if the executive committee resolve for good reason that they are no longer deemed to be of "good standing" and shall be removed from membership of the association, provided that before any such decision is implemented, such member shall be afforded the opportunity & the right to be heard on the matter at a meeting of the Executive committee.

They shall also have the right to be accompanied by a friend provided that such friend may not speak on their behalf without the express consent of the Executive Committee.

## **Annual General Meeting (AGM) & Election to the Executive Committee**

- (1) The Executive Committee shall arrange an annual general meeting to take place within the first six months of each financial year (which is the calendar year) or as soon as practicable thereafter.
- (2) Every annual general meeting shall be called by the Executive Committee and the secretary shall give at least 21 days' notice of the annual general meeting to all members of the Association and include the time, place and date of the AGM..

- (3) Before any other business is transacted at the first annual general meeting, the persons present shall appoint a chairperson of the meeting from the existing temporary committee. The appointed current chairperson of the executive committee will be the chairperson of subsequent annual general meetings. But should it be the case that he or she is not present before any other business is transacted, the persons present shall appoint a chairperson for that meeting.
- (4) The Executive Committee shall present to each annual general meeting the report and accounts of the Association for the preceding year.
- (5) Members of the executive committee will normally serve for two years, before seeking re-election.
- (6) Nominations for election to the Executive Committee must be made by members of the Association in good standing in writing and must be in the hands of the secretary of the Executive Committee at least 14 days before the annual general meeting. Nominations for the Executive committee will only be accepted from members who have attended at least 3 ordinary monthly meetings of The Association. Should nominations exceed vacancies, election shall be by secret ballot of the members in good standing who are present at the annual general meeting.

### **Special General Meetings**

The Executive Committee may call a special general meeting of the Association at any time. Also, If at least six members of the Association who are in good standing or half of the Executive Committee members request such a meeting, in writing, stating the business to be considered, the secretary shall call a meeting. At least 21 day's notice must be given. The notice must state the business to be discussed & the time, date and location of the meeting.

## **Executive Committee**

**Honorary Officers of TransForum :** The honorary Officers of the association are a Chairperson, a Secretary, a Group Co-ordinator, Deputy Group Co-ordinator and a Treasurer, elected by the members from amongst themselves at the annual general meeting of the Association. The honorary officers will hold office on the executive committee from the conclusion of that meeting for a period not exceeding two years before seeking re-election.

**The Executive Committee** shall consist of not less than 4 members and not more than 7 except as in 7 below. The Executive Committee being the honorary officers specified in the preceding clause; and

- (1) Not more than three new members elected at the annual general meeting who shall hold office from the conclusion of that meeting;
- (2) The Executive Committee may, in addition, appoint not more than 2 co-opted members, but no-one may be appointed as a co-opted member if, as a result, more than one third of the members of the Executive Committee would be co-opted members. Each appointment of a co-opted member shall be made at an ordinary meeting of the Executive Committee & shall take effect from the end of that meeting unless the appointment is not yet vacant in which case the appointment shall run from the date when the post becomes vacant.
- (3) Half of the members of the Executive Committee shall retire from office at the end of the second year's annual general meeting after the date on which they came into office, but they are still qualified to be immediately re-elected or re-appointed.
- (4) The proceedings of the Executive Committee shall not be invalidated by any vacancy among their number or by any failure to appoint or any defect in the appointment or qualification of a member.
- (5) Nobody shall be appointed as a member of the Executive Committee who is aged under 18 or who would, if appointed, be disqualified under the provisions of the following clause.
- (6) No person shall be entitled to act as a member of the Executive Committee whether on a first or on any subsequent entry into office until after signing in the minute book of the Executive Committee a declaration of acceptance and of willingness to act in the best interests of the Association, and in support of its objectives.
- (7) The Executive Committee may at their option specify a handover period of not more than 3 months if the committee changes substantially. During this period the size limit of 7 may temporarily be exceeded.

### **Termination of Membership of the Executive Committee**

A member of the Executive Committee shall cease to hold office if:

- (1) he or she ceases to be a member of the Association or is the representative of an organisation which ceases to be a member; or if :
- (2) he or she is absent without the permission of the Executive Committee from all their meetings held within a period of six months and the Executive Committee resolve that his or her office be vacated; or if :
- (3) he or she notifies the Executive Committee of a wish to resign
- (4) he or she ceases to be a member of the association deemed by the executive committee to be in good standing
- (5) the executive committee resolve for good reason that they shall be dismissed from the committee, provided that before any such decision is taken, such member shall be afforded the opportunity & shall have the right to be heard on the matter at a meeting of the Executive committee and they shall have the right to be accompanied by a friend provided that such friend may not speak on their behalf without the consent of the Executive Committee.
- (6) At least three members of the Executive Committee shall remain in office when the notice of resignation takes effect.

# Being a Good Member and Ally of the group

1. **Don't derail a discussion.** Even if it makes you personally uncomfortable to discuss someone else's issue...it's really not about you or your comfort. It's about someone else's issue, and you are absolutely free to not engage rather than try to keep other people from continuing their conversation.
2. **Do read links/books** referenced in discussions. Again, even if things being said make you uncomfortable, part of being a good member or ally is not looking for someone else to provide a complete class in the subject midstream. Do ask questions, but do expect to do at least some of your own research.
3. **Don't expect your feelings** to be a priority in a discussion about someone else's issue. Often people get off onto the **tone argument** because their feelings are hurt by the way a message was delivered. If you stand on someone's foot and they tell you to get off? The correct response is not "Ask nicely" when you were in the wrong in the first place!
4. **Do be quiet and listen.** I cannot emphasize enough the importance of listening to the people who are actually living the experience. There is nothing more obnoxious than someone (however well intentioned) coming into the space of a marginalized person or group and insisting that they absolutely know what the solution is, even though they've never had the person's experience. You can certainly make suggestions, but don't be surprised if your ideas aren't well received because you've got the wrong end of the stick somewhere.
5. **Don't play Oppression Olympics.** For example, if you're in the middle of a conversation about racism, then now is not the time to talk about how hard it is to be a white woman and deal with sexism. Being oppressed in one area does not mean you have no privilege in another area. Terms such as intersectionality and kyriarchy exist for a reason. Also...that's derailing the discussion. **Stop it!**
6. **Do check your privilege.** It's hard and often unpleasant, but it's really necessary. And you're going to sometimes get things wrong, because no one is perfect. But part of being a good friend and / or ally is being willing to hear that you're getting it wrong and ask for and listen to an explanation.
7. **Don't expect a pass into safe spaces** because you call yourself an ally. You're not entitled to access everywhere as a result of not being a bigot or discriminatory. Sometimes it just isn't going to be about you or what you think should happen. Your privilege didn't fall away when you became an ally, and there are many intra-community conversations that may need in some part to take place away from the gaze of the privileged.
8. **Do be willing to stand up to bigots.** Even if all you do is tell a friend that what they just said about someone else's marginalized status is unacceptable, you're doing some of the real work of being a friend and ally.
9. **Don't treat people like accessories or game tokens.** Really, you get no cool points for having a diverse group of friends. Especially when you try to use that as license to act unacceptably, if it's disguised as a joke !.
10. **Do keep trying.** Fighting bigotry is a war, not a battle and it's generational.

So, keep your goals realistic, your spirits up (taking a break to recoup emotional, financial, physical reserves, etc. is a-okay), and your heart in the right place.

**Together we'll get it right.**

# Contact Information

## Group Information and discussion pages

**Telephone:** 07500-741955  
**Website** [www.transforum.org.uk](http://www.transforum.org.uk)  
**Yahoo e-Group** <http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/TransForum-TG-DiscussionGroup/>  
**Facebook Page** [www.tinyurl.com/transforumfb](http://www.tinyurl.com/transforumfb)

## TransForum Executive Committee members

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