Volunteer Frequently Asked Questions

ChrysalisGIM supports trans, non-binary and questioning people and their families and friends through the provision of safe, confidential groups providing counselling, facilitated group work, workshops and peer support as well as through advocacy, training, and education because Gender Identity Matters.

# Welcome

Welcome to ChrysalisGIM, thank you for joining our team. ChrysalisGIM could not do the incredible lifesaving and life affirming work that we do without the dedication and professionalism of all our volunteers. As a new volunteer you may have questions about the work of ChrysalisGIM, the procedures involved in running our groups and many more. I hope that this document answers most of them and if you have more then please do ask one of our more experienced volunteers or contact the office.

*Andi Maratos*

Chief Executive Officer

# An introduction to ChrysalisGIM

Chrysalis started in 2005 when our founders Dianne and Laura created a safe meeting place in Southampton for trans and questioning people to meet with their peers, participate in workshops and receive counselling. Over the years our service has grown and developed, and we now have Support Groups across Hampshire and Dorset supporting trans, non-binary, and questioning people; their families and friends; as well as Wellbeing Drop-Ins which are a casual, supportive and safe environment for all trans\* people.

Each support group has four elements incorporated into the overall boundaries: counselling, speakers and workshops, peer support and facilitated group work. Each group facilitator has the responsibility of keeping within the guidelines whilst having the ability to influence the development of their group through their own personalities.

# What does GIM stand for?

GIM is short for *Gender Identity Matters*, this is our hashtag and our strapline because sometimes gender identity might cause you an issue and you need support or training to move forward but actually everyone’s gender identity matters and it is our object as a charity to promote and develop that understanding for individuals and wider society.

# What happens when I go to my group for the first time?

You’re introduced to your facilitator, or co-facilitator who meets with you prior to your first group attendance. You are then inducted into the group, shown any necessary H&S details and introduced to the group members.

You can sit in on the workshop however counsellors and non-core service volunteers cannot participate in the Circle of Trust.

# Speakers and Workshops

## How do we book speakers and workshops?

Speakers and Workshops are organised by both the group volunteer team and the Meeting Centre and Volunteer Coordinators in the office. The team provide local knowledge and connections, the MCV Coordinator supports the team with administration and wider networking. See the *Support Group Workshop Protocol* for more information

## How do we ensure speakers and workshops enable group members to make up their own minds on subjects rather than promoting a specific opinion or view?

It is not the intention of ChrysalisGIM to direct any one person’s individual process, nor to proscribe gender and societal rules. The broad range of speakers and workshops provide group members with information, topics for discussion, skills sessions, and the opportunity to meet with individuals of all walks of life and experience. Speakers are asked to adhere to a code of conduct and to make clear distinction between scientific fact, opinion, and personal experience. Speakers are volunteering their time and any feedback from the group should be delivered in a respectful manner. Group members are encouraged to influence which workshops are presented.

## What about when someone wants to hear a specific workshop?

Support group numbers are limited, and workshops are only open to those currently attending the group.

Group members are encouraged to work with the facilitator to devise the workshop and presenter schedule and all requests for speakers will be treated with respect and given due consideration. Where members have their own connections then speakers can be recommended. Chrysalis does not have funds to pay speakers, although the group could raise funds if they deemed it appropriate.

Popular speakers can be booked for Wellbeing rather than Support Groups if there is wider interest.

# Groups

## Who can come to ChrysalisGIM groups?

### Wellbeing Drop-In – a space for tea, coffee, biscuits, and chat

Anyone who is trans, non-binary, or questioning who wants a safe, confidential, casual space to meet with peers, relax and express themselves without judgement is welcome to the drop-in.

### Trans and Questioning Support Groups (T&Q)

For anyone who is trans, non-binary, and/or questioning who wants a safe, confidential, supportive space where they can explore their gender identity and vulnerabilities, receive counselling, listen to speakers, and participate in workshops and facilitated group work and can commit to regular attendance and engagement with counselling.

### Family and Friends Support Groups (F&F)

For anyone who is a close friend or who has a family member who is trans, non-binary or questioning who wants a safe confidential supportive space where they can explore their own process and experiences with peers. Counselling is available for all attendees. There are separate support groups for each type of relationship: parents, partners, etc.

## Do you have to live in the area to get support?

No – anyone who meets the criteria is welcome to attend a group provided they can attend regularly.

I’ve had lots of people asking me if we can have a group for location/type, what should I do?

Advise them to contact the office, we will endeavour to put them in touch with a peer mentor of similar life experience and to develop a group from there.

## Do people have to come to every group meeting?

The support groups rely on regular attendance to maintain healthy group dynamics and a safe, supportive space. Support group attendees are generally expected to attend most meetings and to advise their facilitator of planned absences. If someone is absent for two meetings without prior discussion with their facilitator then the facilitator will contact them to check everything is OK. If a group member has prolonged absences or patchy attendance a member of the support team will check in with them as places in the support groups are limited and typically there is a waiting list.

## How do people recognise personal progress?

All support group members are invited to think about their personal goals and reasons for attending group when joining and at regular (six monthly) intervals through one-to-one feedback sessions with a group volunteer and during regular group process reviews.

## How long do people come to ChrysalisGIM?

Typically, people come to the support groups for six months to two years whilst they work through the issue or vulnerability which brought them to us.

Wellbeing is open to all trans, questioning and non-binary people, who can attend both support group and wellbeing or just wellbeing.

## When should someone move on from the Support Group?

When someone has reached their personal goals or is otherwise no longer vulnerable in relationship to their gender identity or that of their loved one then they should consider moving on from the support group, perhaps transitioning to wellbeing, or perhaps becoming a volunteer or a supporter.

Awareness of the purpose of the support group, and counselling within that group, as well as recognition of their own goals and achievements and of the waiting list and limited number of spaces within the support group all help facilitate individuals moving on. It is hoped that many will move on to other roles within ChrysalisGIM, retaining that sense of community which we all work to deliver.

## When is the right time to become a volunteer?

Many former Chrysalis group members go on to become Chrysalis volunteers, and the organisation welcomes applications at any time. We have a wide range of volunteering roles from ambassador to office volunteering, fundraising and governance as well as the core service delivery roles, speakers and presenters.

Anyone who wishes to apply can contact the office for a volunteer pack.

It is essential that anyone who wishes to return to Chrysalis takes a significant break (typically six months) from group attendance (including Wellbeing) before they commit to returning as a core service volunteer or apply to become a trustee.

## What if someone is disruptive in the group?

Initially the facilitator should speak with the individual, discussing the boundaries and group contract and working to identify their frustrations and other reasons for causing disruption. It may be necessary to ask someone to leave the group, perhaps for a period of time, or to review their commitment to the code of conduct.

Where an individual is drunk, under the influence of drugs or in a state where they could cause harm to themselves or others then the facilitator will ask them to leave.

Further information and guidance are provided in the *Core Service Delivery Risk Assessment* which all volunteers should familiarise themselves with.

Where an ongoing situation cannot be managed satisfactorily within the group then the facilitator should contact the office for guidance. Clear records must be kept.

In an emergency, standard H&S procedures such as calling 999 should apply.

## Do we remind people about the groups?

Email reminders are sent out to all current and lapsed group members three to five days prior to the group(s) they are members of by the office.

Facilitators are expected to send a text reminder to group members one to three days prior to the group

## What happens if someone stops attending or communicating?

If a support group member misses two consecutive sessions without notice then the facilitator should contact them to check they are OK. If someone misses more sessions then the office can follow up with an email. Once someone hasn’t attended for three or more sessions they move to the lapsed category and a final email is sent to them to determine if they wish to continue with ChrysalisGIM.

The support groups have waiting lists and anyone who is not regularly attending will be contacted to remind them that they need to use their space or it will be given to the next person on the waiting list.

Counsellors will discuss missed sessions during contracting with their clients however as a rule if a client misses two sessions they are considered to have voluntarily terminated their current counselling sessions.

## Can people come back to ChrysalisGIM after an absence?

Yes, ChrysalisGIM is open to any and all who need our services. We recognise that transition is a process and unique to each individual and that for some people engagement and disengagement is part of their process.

Anyone who has been absent for more than three consecutive support group sessions or six months of wellbeing needs to contact the office to rejoin.

## What if I have concerns about a group member?

Can the concerns be alleviated or managed by a workshop or group discussion session?

If serious refer to the *Core Service Delivery Risk Assessment* and consult with your line manager, supervisor, and/or the office team for advice.

In emergency dial 999

# How do people join ChrysalisGIM?

First Contact

Face to face meet up with facilitator

Invited to attend, given address

First contact is through a trained advisor in the office or at an outreach event; the facilitator then contacts the new person to arrange a face to face meeting. At this meeting the expectations of the individual and the nature of the groups offered are discussed and if the individual agrees to the code of conduct they are provided with details of the group location.

# Money

## Is there a cost to register with ChrysalisGIM?

Yes – individuals pay £5 to register for our support services

## Is there a cost to attend ChrysalisGIM groups?

Yes – group subs are £5 per session, paid up front by cash or through standing order.

## What if someone can’t afford the subs?

The facilitator has discretion; if a group member cannot pay the subs they can access the local or main slush fund for one to two sessions. Where someone requires ongoing financial support to attend management approval must be obtained.

## How is ChrysalisGIM funded?

As a charity Chrysalis is reliant on donations and trust funds to offer our services. We also run campaigns such as #FlytheTransFlag which promote awareness and understanding as well as encouraging donations.

ChrysalisGIM also sells merchandise and delivers training and these provide essential revenue streams.

ChrysalisGIM receives no statutory funding.

If you want to find out more or get involved with fundraising or governance, then come along to the Annual General Meeting and get involved. All volunteers are voting members of ChrysalisGIM

# Governance

## How is ChrysalisGIM governed?

ChrysalisGIM is a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO) with a *constitution* and a board of trustees who are elected at the annual general meeting (AGM).

## Can anyone be a trustee?

Anyone who is not currently accessing one of our support groups can put themself forward as a trustee, either at the AGM or during the year through contacting the office.

## When is the AGM?

12 to 15 months after the last one. Typically, this means the AGM is held in the first quarter of ChrysalisGIM’s financial year April to June.

Can anyone vote at the AGM?

Voting members of ChrysalisGIM can vote at the AGM, volunteers are defacto voting members and encouraged to attend the AGM.

# Counselling

## How much counselling should someone have?

Counselling is booked in blocks of eight sessions and progress is regularly reviewed by the client and counsellor.

Chrysalis counselling is open-ended, and it is up to the client to determine when they have worked through their current issues and are ready to take a break or move on. For many people 8-16 sessions is enough, for some counselling may last two to three years.

## Who manages the counselling waiting list?

### Counselling at In Person groups:

The facilitator manages the counselling waiting list, the counsellors advise the facilitator at the wash-up if they have space to take on a new client. The facilitator then liaises with the next person on the waiting list, inviting them to meet with the counsellor. It is the client’s choice whether to work with the counsellor. Some members may want to meet and talk with all counsellors before making their decision, some may want to go straight in with the next available counsellor.

### Other Counselling:

Counselling offered in virtual space or at locations and times unconnected with the physical support groups is managed by the Counselling Administrator.

People can self-refer to the counselling waiting list or can request to be added through their facilitator or key worker.

## How do people access counselling?

### Counselling at In Person groups:

All support group attendees are offered an initial eight sessions of counselling, to start soon after their first group attendance.

If group members wish to reengage with counselling, or to work with a different counsellor then they should first discuss this with their current counsellor and then their facilitator to return to the waiting list.

### Other counselling:

Counselling, and the ways it can be accessed, will be discussed with the first contact by the advisor.

Virtual counselling is available through

* Video call
* Video call with text
* Phone\*
* Text\*
* Email\*

\*Counselling through these mediums is limited by availability of trained counsellors and should not be offered without consultation with the Counselling Administrator

## What are the counselling slots?

### Counselling at In Person groups:

Each counsellor has up to three counselling slots.

T&Q support group counselling slots are 6-7, 7-8 and 8-9, sessions are 50 minutes in length.

F&F support group counselling slots are 7-8 and 8-9.

## What about when someone wants to hear a specific workshop?

Clients can discuss with their counsellor and other clients to rearrange their session time so they can attend part of the workshop or trust circle as well. If a client misses two counselling sessions then they will be considered to have terminated their counselling.

## How many people can a counsellor have on their books?

### Counselling at In Person groups:

Each counsellor has up to three counselling slots. The counsellor will advise the facilitator if they have space to take on a new client.

Trainee counsellors can only take on a maximum of two clients until approved by their supervisor and training provider for more.

### Other counselling:

The number of counselling slots and availability will be dependent on the volunteering arrangement with the counsellor and any restrictions applied by the training provider.

Trainee counsellors can only take on two clients until approved by their supervisor and training provider for more.

# Office and Admin

## What happens if I need to get my password changed for my @chrysalisgim.org.uk account?

Please message Dawn through Teams or email her from your personal account to [dawn.harding@chrysalisgim.org.uk](mailto:dawn.harding@chrysalisgim.org.uk)

## How do I claim my expenses?

Expenses should be claimed monthly, contact the office for a copy of the Expense Procedure.