

What is Parental Responsibility?	Who has Parental Responsibility?	Same Sex Couples
<p>The term 'Parental Responsibility' attempts to focus on the parent's duties towards their child rather than the parent's rights over their child. If you have parental responsibility, your most important roles are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a home for the child • Protect and maintain the child • You're also responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disciplining the child • Choosing and providing for the child's education • Agreeing to the child's medical treatment • Naming the child and agreeing to any change of name • Looking after the child's property <p>Parents have to ensure that their child is supported financially, whether they have parental responsibility or not.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mothers automatically have Parental Responsibility and will not lose it if divorced. • Married fathers automatically have Parental Responsibility and will not lose it if divorced. • Unmarried fathers do not automatically have Parental Responsibility. • Step-fathers and Step-mothers do not automatically have Parental Responsibility. • Grandparents do not automatically have Parental Responsibility. 	<p>Adoption</p> <p>In November 2002, the Adoption and Children Act passed into law and, for the first time, allowed unmarried couples, including same-sex couples, to apply for joint adoption. Applications for adoption must be made to an adoption agency. These may be run by the local authority or an approved agency. The adoption assessment is lengthy and thorough. If you are a couple applying to adopt you will both be assessed, and will need to demonstrate the stable and enduring nature of your relationship. Following a successful assessment the application is referred to an Adoption Panel. If you are approved by the Panel, you will go through a matching process. This involves a child or young person being placed with you. Depending on the success of this placement, an application can be made to the court for an adoption order. At this stage further reports will be placed before the court to help them reach a final decision. If successful both partners will have parental rights for the child.</p>
<p>Parental responsibility for separated parents</p> <p>If you have parental responsibility for a child but you don't live with them, it doesn't mean you have a right to spend time with your children. However, the other parent must include you when making important decisions about their lives, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determining the child's education and where the child goes to school; • Choosing, registering or changing the child's name; • Appointing a child's guardian in the event of the death of a parent; • Consenting to a child's operation or certain medical treatment; • Accessing a child's medical records; • Consenting to taking the child abroad for holidays or extended stays; • Representing the child in legal proceedings; • Determining the religion the child should be brought up with. <p>They do not need to be consulted on day to day decision about the child's well being.</p>	<p>An unmarried father can obtain Parental Responsibility by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marrying the mother; • Having his name registered or re-registered on the birth certificate if his name is not already registered; the law changed in 2003 so that unmarried fathers who registered or re-registered their name on their child's birth certificate after 1st December 2003 will have parental responsibility for their child. • Entering into a parental responsibility agreement with the mother; • Obtaining a parental responsibility order from the court; • Having obtained a residence order prior to 22/4/2014; • Being named as the resident parent under a child arrangements order; 	<p>Surrogacy</p> <p>Surrogacy is where a woman carries a child for intended parents and relinquishes her parental status upon the birth of the child. This is commonly an option for male same-sex couples who wish to have a child without sharing responsibility with the child's mother/s. Under English law, the surrogate is always treated as the legal mother of a child at birth. If the surrogate is married or in a civil partnership, her husband/civil partner is treated as the child's second parent. This excludes the intended father(s) from having any legal status at birth. Parents who enter into a surrogacy arrangement may apply to the court within six months of their child's birth for a 'parental order' to acquire parenthood. Parental orders are designed specifically for surrogacy situations, and have the effect of extinguishing the status of the surrogate mother (and her husband, wife or civil partner), and granting full parental status to the applicant/s. Following the grant of a parental order, the child will be issued a new birth certificate naming the applicant/s as the child's parent/s.</p> <p>Donor insemination</p> <p>Donor insemination involves using donor sperm. This can be obtained by using an anonymous sperm donor (from a sperm bank), or using a known donor or a friend. If a baby is conceived in a UK licensed fertility clinic or at home and the couple are in a civil partnership or married, then the non-birth mother will automatically be the second legal parent and will be named as such on the birth certificate. If the couple are not in a civil partnership or married, but the baby is conceived in a clinic they will need to complete a simple form at the clinic for the non-birth mother to be the legal parent, and to appear on the birth certificate. If the baby is conceived at home then the non-birth mother will need to apply to adopt the child to gain legal rights. Regardless of the method of conceiving the donor will have no legal parenthood status.</p>

Define: Asexual
A person who generally does not experience sexual attraction to any group of people

Define: Androgyny
A gender expression that has elements of both masculinity and femininity

Define: Biological Sex
The physical anatomy and gendered hormones one is born with.

Define: Bisexual
A person who experiences sexual, romantic, physical, and/or spiritual attraction to people of their own gender as well as another gender

Define: Cisgender
A description for a person whose gender identity, gender expression, and biological sex all align

Define: LGBTQ+
Lesbian
Gay
Bisexual
Trans
Queer / Questioning
+ = Other

Define: Sexuality
A person's sexual preference or orientation. Who they are attracted to.

Define: Drag Queen
A man who dresses up in an exaggerated feminine form usually in a show or theatre setting.

Define: Gender Dysphoria
Where a person experiences distress due to a mismatch of their biological sex and their gender identity.

Define: Heterosexual
A medical definition for a person who is attracted to someone with the other gender.

Define: Homosexual
A medical definition for a person who is attracted to someone with the same gender.

Define: Transvestite
A person who dresses as the opposite gender expression for any one of many reasons, including relaxation, fun, and sexual gratification.

Define: Intersex
A person with a set of sexual anatomy that doesn't fit within the labels of female or male (e.g., XXY phenotype, uterus, and penis)

Define: Pansexual
A person who experiences sexual, romantic, physical, and/or spiritual attraction for members of all gender identities/expressions

Define: Transgender
A person whose gender identity is the binary opposite of their biological sex, who may undergo medical treatments to change their biological sex

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Define: Gender Identity
Gender identity is a way to describe how you feel about your gender. You might identify your gender as a boy or a girl or something different. This is different from your sex, which is related to your physical body and biology.

Important legal changes that have affected LGBTQ+ people in the UK

- 2000: Government lifts the ban on lesbians and gay men serving in the Armed Forces.
- 2001: Age of consent for gay/bi men is lowered to 16.
- 2002: Equal rights are granted to same-sex couples applying for adoption.
- 2003: Repeal of Section 28 - Section 28 was a law that made it illegal to talk positively about homosexuality in schools.
- 2003: A new law comes into force protecting LGBT people from discrimination at work. Until 2003 employers could discriminate against LGBT people by not hiring them or not promoting them, just because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.
- 2004: Civil Partnership Act is passed.
- 2004: Gender Recognition Act is passed - This Act allowed trans people to change their legal gender. This means that they can get a new birth certificate that reflects who they really are, which helps for future legal processes like marriage.
- 2007: It becomes illegal to discriminate against people because of their sexual orientation or gender identity when providing them with goods or services.
- 2008: The Criminal Justice and Immigration Act makes 'incitement to homophobic hatred' a crime.
- 2009: A new law gives better legal recognition to same-sex parents.
- 2013: The Marriage (Same-Sex Couples) Act is passed.

Trans Teens and Children

If a child is under 18 and thought to have gender dysphoria, they'll usually be referred to a specialist child and adolescent Gender Identity Clinic (GIC). Treatment is arranged with a multi-disciplinary team (MDT). This is a group that may include specialists such as mental health professionals and paediatric endocrinologists. Most treatments offered at this stage are psychological, rather than medical or surgical.

If the child is diagnosed with gender dysphoria and they've reached puberty, they could be treated with gonadotrophin-releasing hormone (GnRH) analogues. These are synthetic hormones that suppress the hormones naturally produced by the body. They also suppress puberty and can help delay potentially distressing physical changes caused by the body becoming even more like that of the biological sex, until they're old enough for other treatment options. The effects of treatment with GnRH analogues are considered to be fully reversible, so treatment can usually be stopped at any time.

Teenagers who are 17 years of age or older may be seen in an adult gender clinic. They are entitled to consent to their own treatment and follow the standard adult protocols.

Gender Reassignment surgery will not be considered until a person has reached 18 years of age.

Schools and LGBTQ+ Students

All Schools are required to have a policy relating to LGBTQ+ Students and how they are supported in schools. However each case will be dealt with on an individual basis as to what is best for the students. Discussions will be conducted with Safe guarding team, parents, wellbeing teams and appropriate external agencies involved in the students care.

Where to get more help and support

- Parents and trusted family members
- Teachers and School Staff including School Nurse and Wellbeing Team
- Your Doctor or Community Nurse
- NHS Online
- Young Stonewall: <https://www.youngstonewall.org.uk/>
- The Proud Trust – Local Support groups: <https://www.theproudstust.org>
- Friends and Family of Lesbians and Gays: <https://www.fflag.org.uk/>

Some of these terms are controversial in their definitions and may mean slightly different things to different people. These definitions have been taken from Stonewall charity.

Define: Stress

A state of mental or emotional strain or tension resulting from adverse or demanding circumstances.

Define: Chronic Stress

The response to emotional pressure suffered for a prolonged period of time in which an individual perceives they have little or no control.

Define: General Anxiety Disorder

A condition characterized by 6 months or more of chronic, exaggerated worry and tension that is unfounded or much more severe than the normal anxiety most people experience.

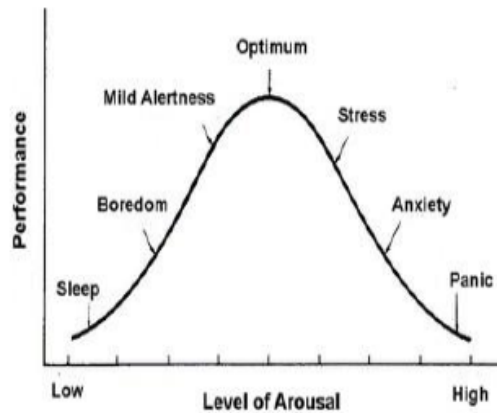
Define: Social Anxiety Disorder

Also called social phobia, is intense anxiety or fear of being judged, negatively evaluated, or rejected in a social or performance situation.

Define: Depression

People experience low mood, loss of interest or pleasure, feelings of guilt or low self-worth, disturbed sleep or appetite, low energy, and poor concentration.

Some stress is good as it can motivate people however too much can be detrimental, especially if over a long period of time.



Symptoms of Chronic Stress

Chronic stress affects the whole body. It can have several physical or psychological symptoms, which can make functioning on a daily basis more challenging. The type and severity of symptoms vary considerably from person to person. Signs and symptoms of chronic stress can include:

- Irritability, which can be extreme
- Fatigue
- Headaches
- Difficulty concentrating,
- Rapid, disorganized thoughts
- Difficulty sleeping / insomnia
- Digestive problems and changes in appetite
- Feeling helpless
- A perceived loss of control
- Low self-esteem
- Loss of sexual desire
- Nervousness
- Frequent infections or illnesses
- High blood pressure

Anxiety Disorders

Anxiety is an evolutionary and survival mechanism which is often linked to the flight or fight response. The brain responds to a perceived threat or danger by releasing stress hormones such as adrenaline and cortisol which cause the physical symptoms of anxiety. Once the threatening situation has stopped, the body will usually return to normal.

But if someone has an anxiety disorder these feelings of fear and danger can be ongoing and interrupt their daily routine long after the threat has gone. They can make them feel like things are worse than they actually are.

General Anxiety Disorder is a long-term condition that causes a person to feel anxious about a wide range of situations and issues, rather than a specific event. People with GAD feel anxious most days and often struggle to remember the last time they felt relaxed. As soon as 1 anxious thought is resolved, another may appear about a different issue.

Social Anxiety Disorder, also called social phobia, is a long-lasting and overwhelming fear of social situations. Social Anxiety is more than shyness. It's an intense fear that does not go away and affects everyday activities, self-confidence, relationships and work or school life.

Symptoms of General Anxiety Disorder

Mental symptoms of anxiety can include:

- Racing thoughts,
- Uncontrollable over thinking,
- Difficulties concentrating,
- Feelings of dread, panic or 'impending doom',
- Feeling irritable,
- Heightened alertness,
- Problems with sleep,
- Changes in appetite,
- Wanting to escape from the situation you are in, and
- Dissociation.

Physical symptoms of anxiety can include:

- Sweating,
- Heavy and fast breathing,
- Hot flushes or blushing,
- Dry mouth,
- Shaking,
- Hair loss,
- Fast heartbeat,
- Extreme tiredness or lack of energy
- Dizziness and fainting, and
- Stomach aches and sickness.

Treatments for Chronic Stress and Anxiety

- Therapy and Counselling such as Cognitive Behaviour Therapy
- Medications – including SSRI's, Benzodiazepines, and Beta-blockers
- Self Care including mindfulness, meditation and journaling.
- Alternative therapies such as acupuncture.

Things to Remember

- Everyone experiences stress and anxiety at points in their lives.
- Only a Doctor or Mental Health Professional can diagnose Chronic Stress or an Anxiety Disorder.
- There are treatments available and coping mechanisms.
- Having a stress or anxiety disorder is not a sign of weakness and is more common than people think.

Where to get more help and support

- Parents and trusted family
- School Staff and Wellbeing Team
- GP or Practice Nurse.
- MIND - <https://www.mind.org.uk> Help line - 0300 123 3393 open 9am to 7pm, Monday to Friday or Text: 86463
- Young Minds - <https://youngminds.org.uk> Text: 85258 or Parents Helpline: 0800 802 5544
- Stem4 - <https://stem4.org.uk/>