

Position Statement on Prescribing in Gender Incongruence for Children and Young People

NHS South West London (SWL) does not support the routine prescribing of puberty-blocking medicines for children and young people (<18 years) by GPs in primary care. The prescribing responsibility for puberty-blocking medicines for children and young people will remain under the gender identity services.

- Children and young people will only have access to puberty-blocking medicines via a clinical trial as part of the new Phase One Southern Hub Service for Gender Incongruence in children and young people which will start accepting patients in Autumn 2023.
- The gender identity service will manage exceptional cases which are not eligible for the trial. These will be reviewed by an independent ethics and safeguarding group who will decide on whether puberty-suppressing hormones should be prescribed.
- A new National waiting list is actively managing patients. Where children or young people will benefit from additional local support, advice will be provided to GPs and local professionals on appropriate sources of support.
- Children, young people and their families are strongly discouraged from sourcing puberty suppressing or gender affirming hormones from unregulated sources or from on-line providers that are not regulated by UK regulatory bodies.
- When managing patients with gender dysphoria, the GP or local health professional should consider what safeguarding protocols may be appropriate for the individual child or young person's wider circumstances. GPs or local health professionals should explore what regulatory bodies may need to be informed if healthcare professionals registered with a UK professional body are prescribing medication contrary to NHS protocols⁴.

Rationale

- In September 2020, NHS England commissioned an independent and wide-ranging expert review of gender identity services for children and young people led by Dr Hilary Cass¹ which examined the Gender Identity Development Service (GIDS) at the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust, the only specialist gender dysphoria service for children and young people.
- In an interim report¹ in February 2022, Dr Cass emphasised the need to move away from the current model of a sole provider and to establish regional services that work to a new clinical model that can better meet the holistic needs of a vulnerable group of children and young people.
- Dr Cass sent further advice (July 2022) on the core components of this model¹ '*Regional centres should be led by experienced providers of tertiary*

paediatric care to ensure a focus on child health and development, with strong links to mental health services.

- In June 2023, NHS England published an interim service specification² for specialist gender incongruence services for children and young people to support Phase 1 providers in developing their new services.
- The Southern Hub is being formed through a partnership between Great Ormond Street Hospital, Evelina London Children's Hospital (part of Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust) and South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust. The service will start accepting patients during Autumn 2023³.
- During 2023/24 the Gender Identity Development Service at The Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust will focus on providing continuity of care for their open caseload of around 1,000 patients. The Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust will not offer new first time appointments.
- Information has been transferred to a new National waiting list and NHS England is writing to patients. Patient referral information is being reviewed to identify cases where children or young people may benefit from additional local support while on the waiting list. In such cases the Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) is contacting GPs and local professionals to provide advice on appropriate sources of support. Adolescents over 17 years will be referred to adult services.
- A review on the use of puberty-blocking medicines in children has concluded that further evaluation and data are required to know the impact, benefits and detriments of puberty-blocking medicines and a review of the ethical and safeguarding issues surrounding their use is also required. This will be examined as part of a clinical trial. Children and young people will only have access to puberty-blocking medicines via the clinical trial which in London will likely be run at UCLH. Exceptional cases which are not eligible for the trial will be reviewed by an independent ethics and safeguarding group who will decide on whether puberty-blocking medicines should be prescribed.
- Prescribing from unregulated sources and unregulated providers: Children, young people and their families are strongly discouraged from sourcing puberty suppressing or gender affirming hormones from unregulated sources or from on-line providers that are not regulated by UK regulatory bodies. SWL ICS does not routinely support shared care prescribing with private prescribers. [Prescribing: Interface policy – SW London Integrated Medicines Optimisation Committee \(icb.nhs.uk\)](#)

References

1. The Cass Review [Publications – Cass Review](#).
2. NHS England Interim Service Specification for Gender Incongruence Services for Children and Young People [NHS England » Interim service specification for specialist gender incongruence services for children and young people](#)

3. Great Ormond Street Hospital Statement on the development of gender identity services [Statement on NHSE intention to develop Early Adopter gender identity services | Great Ormond Street Hospital \(gosh.nhs.uk\)](https://www.gosh.nhs.uk/press-releases/2023/09/20/gosh-statement-on-nhse-intention-to-develop-early-adopter-gender-identity-services)
4. BMA Managing Patients with Gender Dysphoria [Gender incongruence in primary care \(bma.org.uk\)](https://www.bma.org.uk/press-releases/2023/09/20/gender-incongruence-in-primary-care)

Document History

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