



RE: Independent review of gender identity services for children and young people

May 24, 2022

Dear Cass Review Team,

The Gender Dysphoria Alliance is an international, volunteer run organization of adults who have experienced gender dysphoria. Some of us have fully medically transitioned and others have desisted or detransitioned. Our primary objective is to better understand gender dysphoria in its many forms, and advocate for safe, evidence-based care.

As patients/former patients of gender health services ourselves, we're very concerned about the deterioration of the quality of care in recent years and are especially concerned about the medicalization of minors under the Affirmative or Informed Consent Model of Care. We believe that activism, not evidence, has been the primary driver of current practices. We consider it very unethical and unsafe for the healthcare system to depart from its foundations of quality evidence, clinical competencies, and safeguarding, in favor of political narratives.

We have observed the shift in demographics among those adopting trans identities and seeking medical transition. It concerns us how little is known about why that shift has taken place. Reduced stigma could account for some inflation in numbers, but not a completely new cohort of girls with no history of gender non-conformity or dysphoria. Historically, the natal females who sought medical transition were butch lesbians and were far outnumbered by natal males with autogynephilia and effeminate gay men.

As an organization, we are broadly in favour of a gender exploratory therapeutic model of the kind that has been implemented in Sweden and Finland. We also advocate strongly for more countries/jurisdictions to carry out independent, systematic reviews of trans medical practices, including proper clinical evaluation of outcomes. We are grateful that you are conducting this independent review.

As we are now seeing in countries that have carried out such reviews, this approach leads to very different regulatory frameworks, compared with those taking a more ideologically driven approach. Countries carrying out these reviews tend, for example, to understand the need to move away from experimental interventions, such as puberty blockers, for young people, and place a much greater emphasis on exploratory therapy.

Our hope is that, as more evidence about the clinical effectiveness of different approaches is made available, organisations like our own will be in a much better position to endorse specific pathways with greater confidence.

We are available to answer any questions you may have, in support of your review.

Warm regards,

The Gender Dysphoria Alliance Leadership Team

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