



Letter from LGBTQ+ Organisations Regarding Healthcare for Trans Children and Young People

Dear Wes Streeting and James Palmer,

We are writing to you as organisations representing trans and LGBTQ+ young people to highlight our serious concerns around ongoing restrictions to gender-affirming care for children and young people.

Despite initial promises, you have taken the decision to cap participants for the PATHWAYS trial into puberty-suppressing hormones at just 226, and now have decided to pause the trial altogether following a letter from an individual known to hold anti-trans views.

It [has been reported](#) that the Government established a working group last year to review the prescription of gender-affirming hormone treatments (GAHT). Following an evidence review, NHS England paused the prescription of GAHT for 16 and 17 year olds and updated its guidance on shared care with GPs to restrict access to these treatments.

As organisations that work with and support trans young people, we are deeply concerned about the impact of your approach.

The use of gender-affirming treatments, including puberty blockers and GAHT, has been proven to be safe and effective in bringing about changes to a person's body that they want as part of their transition.

Whilst we support efforts to gather more evidence into trans healthcare, the fact that medications are prescribed off-label should not be considered a reason to pause their prescription.

The majority of medical interventions lack the kind of high-quality evidence being used to justify restrictions on trans healthcare. This is particularly the case in young people's healthcare where [most treatments](#) in hospital settings are 'off-label' - without the extraordinarily high bar for evidence currently being sought by NHS England.

Restricting access to treatments that have been available for many years and that are deemed appropriate and effective by [international standards of care](#) is wrong and dangerous.

There are significant risks associated with denying trans young people care that they need. No consideration has been given to the [well-documented](#) damage to young people's mental health associated with restrictions in gender-affirming care. Equally, no clear evidence has been provided that psychological interventions alone provide any clear benefit in helping trans young people feel better about their gender.

Recent data sourced from the National Child Mortality Database found a marked increase in the number of trans children who died by suicide following the major restrictions in the availability of gender-affirming treatments for under 18s in the past five years.

We know that child mortality is disproportionately high among trans children. We know that poor mental health is a driving factor in the increase in completed suicides. And we see time and time again in our services and communities that loss of healthcare is a key driver of mental illness. Being trans isn't a risk in and of itself, but being denied healthcare is.

We can work together to prevent further harm by taking a more careful, compassionate, and supportive approach. But the extreme lack of caution being shown by the Government and NHS England through its continued assault on the availability of gender-affirming care risks causing serious long-term damage to a generation of trans youth.

In particular, the [updated guidance](#) advising GPs to refuse shared care for 16 and 17 year olds from some non-NHS providers could lead to forced detransition for those already receiving GAHT. Many families have chosen to seek care outside the NHS due

to 6+ year waiting lists for appointments - it is cruel and unnecessary for trans people to have this vital source of care stripped away from them.

For those of us in the trans community, recent years have been punctuated by funerals and memorials for loved ones we have lost. We have seen firsthand the serious impact of the rise in anti-trans hostility - and the associated rollbacks in our long-held rights.

We are urging you to change direction - stop siding with anti-trans campaigners and start listening to the trans young people at the centre of these decisions. We urge you to reverse the restrictions on gender-affirming care for young people, and ensure the NHS provides timely, holistic care to all trans people, on the basis of informed consent.

Signed,

TransActual

IGLYO - The International LGBTQI Youth and Student Organisation

Mermaids

The Kite Trust

Gendered Intelligence

Proud2Be

FFLAG

SAGE Staffordshire

The Proud Trust

Mosaic LGBT+ Young Persons' Trust