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Welsh Health Specialised
Services Committee

NHS Wales Specialist Children and Young People Gender Identity Services



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NHS Wales Specialist Children and Young People Gender Identity Services

The Welsh Health Specialised Services Committee (WHSSC) commission specialist gender identity services for children and young people in Wales through NHS England. In response to the recommendations of the independent [Cass Review](#) NHS England has started a programme of work to improve, expand and transform service provision for children and young people experiencing gender incongruence. Information about how NHS England are implementing advice from the Cass Review can be found [here](#).

WHSSC are committed to securing a safe, sustainable, robust and evidence based gender identity service for the children and young people of Wales.

Through involvement in the NHS England transformation programme, WHSSC is an active partner in shaping new provision closer to home through the phased establishment of services. This includes services closer to the Welsh borders and ultimately in Wales. The learning from this programme and the publication of the final findings of the Cass Review will inform the planning of a service for children and young people in Wales.

The [Interim Report](#) from the Cass Review 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.



In July 2022, Dr Cass sent further advice on the core components of the clinical model. You can read the advice in full [here](#). Key recommendations that the future regional centres should be led by experienced providers of tertiary paediatric care (Children's Hospitals) to ensure a focus on child health and development, with strong links to mental health services, established academic and education functions, a multi professional workforce and the ability to maintain a broad clinical perspective to embed the care of children and young people with gender uncertainty within a broader child and adolescent health context.

The Cass Review has submitted its [Final Report](#) to NHS England. The report describes what is known about the young people who are seeking NHS support around their gender identity and sets out the recommended clinical approach to care and support they should expect, the interventions that should be available, and how services should be organised across the country.

It also makes recommendations on the quality improvement and research infrastructure required to ensure that the evidence base underpinning care is strengthened. NHS England's response to the final report can be found [here](#).



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NHS Wales will consider the recommendations in the review of the service specification for the adult gender identity service in Wales which is planned for 2024.

WHSSC is in discussion with Cardiff and Vale University Health Board, the provider of the only children's hospital in Wales, about the development of a regional service in Wales as part of the provider network. In the meantime,

children and young people will continue to be referred to the national waiting list through Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). Children and young people will be seen by one of the Phase 1 providers based in the South or North West of England, or going forward, one of the regional services under development where they are closer to home. More information about the Phase 1 providers and regional service can be found [here](#).

Stakeholder Engagement

WHSSC are working closely with NHS England as a partner in the transformation programme whilst progressing discussions with Cardiff & Vale University Health Board about joining the provider network. This means that all stakeholder engagement on policies and specifications will be through NHS England but inclusive of Wales, as services for children and young people in Wales will be delivered to the NHS England service specification.

Details of consultations will be posted on this page, however you can also register as a stakeholder for the NHS England NHS Gender Services Clinical Programme.

This includes services for children and young people and is open to anyone that expresses an interest, including stakeholders in Wales. By signing up as a stakeholder, NHS England will invite you to review and comment on clinical policies and service specifications at an early stage of development, contact you directly about relevant consultation process and, if appropriate, invite you to take part in a policy development working group. It is really important the Welsh voice is heard, so if you haven't signed up already you can register your interest [here](#).



Policies and Service Specifications

Links to policies and service specifications can be found below. Links will be added to any new consultations as they go live.

Interim Service Specification for Specialist Gender Incongruence Services for Children and Young people:

NHS England published an [interim service specification for specialist gender incongruence services for children and young people](#) to support Phase 1 providers in developing their new services.

The public consultation on this draft interim service specification ran on the NHS England website for 45 days from 20 October to 4 December 2022. It received 5,183 responses in total.

[Read more about the consultation feedback](#) and NHS England's response.

Service Specification on the Referral Pathway in England:

Stakeholder engagement on a service specification outlining a new referral pathway for patients in England and management of the national waiting list completed in late August and a public consultation on the proposed specification is expected shortly. It is important to note that there are no changes to the way children and young people are referred in Wales. However, the service specification will outline the role of the National Referral Support Service (NRSS) which manages Welsh referrals and the national waiting list.

Final Service Specification for Specialist Gender Incongruence Services for Children and Young People:

The final service specification is anticipated to be out for consultation following the final report of the Cass Review and confirmation of the clinical model.

NHS England Clinical Policy: Puberty suppressing hormones for children and adolescents who have gender incongruence/ dysphoria:

NHS England has published a new clinical policy which confirms that puberty suppressing hormones will not be routinely commissioned for children and young people who have gender incongruence / gender dysphoria. You can read the consultation report, the policy document, and NHS England's consultation response here <https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/clinical-policy-puberty-suppressing-hormones/>

Research Oversight Board

A national Children and Young People's Gender Dysphoria Research Oversight Board has now been established. The oversight board includes representation from the Royal College of Paediatric and Child Health (RCPCH), key research funders including the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) and the Medical Research Council (MRC), other academic experts, clinicians representing the Phase 1 Service Providers and Dr Hilary Cass.

The oversight board will deliver its work with the support of three sub-groups, which will focus on research, quality improvement and data. Further information about the research oversight board can be found [here](#).

Referrals and the National Referral Support Service (NRSS)

In Wales, access to the national specialist gender incongruence service is through referral by CAMHS. All referrals are managed by the National Referral Support Service which is provided by NHS Arden and Greater East Midlands Commissioning Support Unit. Information about the NRSS and the service they provide can be found [here](#) and is also available in [Welsh](#).

We know that long waiting times can understandably cause anxiety and distress for children, young people and families. If a child or young person on the waiting list is distressed, please contact your local CAMHS service as they make the referral the individual should be known to them.

The NRSS website also contains further information about where to get support whilst waiting which can be found [here](#).



The Waiting List

There is now one national waiting list. A joint letter from NHS England and NHS Wales is being sent to patients on the waiting list to explain what happens next with their referral. The National Referral Support Service had initially planned to have all letters issued by the end of September 2023, however delays have meant that the new aim is to contact all patients by end of October. An update has been included on the [NRSS website](#).

Timeline

Phase 1 providers in both the North and South are working towards full mobilisation of their services by April 2024.

Children and Young People currently under the care of the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust

The Tavistock & Portman NHS Foundation Trust are no longer taking new referrals and their service will be brought to a managed close by the end of March 2024. There are a number of children and young people from Wales that remain under the care of the Tavistock & Portman NHS Foundation Trust. Where appropriate, the care of these children and young people will transfer to one of the new providers.



NHS Wales Specialist Children and Young People Gender Identity Services

November 2023



14.03.24 – Page 5 amended to reflect change from Interim Clinical Policy Status to published policy position.
10.04.24 – Page 3 & 4 amended to include reference to the Final Report of the Cass Review.