

The Right Honourable Gillian Keegan MP, Secretary of State for Education

25th October 2022

Dear Gillian Keegan

Congratulations on your appointment as Secretary of State for Education. We are writing to you from six organisations that are campaigning for women's rights and child safeguarding. We all share a concern about children being transitioned in school. Details of our organisations are attached.

In September 2020, NHS England commissioned an independent and wide-ranging review of gender-identity services for children and young people. Led by Dr Hilary Cass, a former president of the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health, it identified a sharp rise in referrals to the Tavistock Gender Identity Development Service (GIDS), a change in the pattern of children experiencing gender issues and a lack of evidence to support clinical decision-making.

NHS treatment for children with gender distress is now being remodelled to recognise the fact that gender distress in children is often a phase, not a permanent organic condition. Children should not be put on a pathway to sterilisation and lifelong medical treatment to which they cannot consent.

If this is true in health, it should also be the approach in schools.

Historically, very few children have grown up to be transsexuals. But schools, encouraged by pressure groups, are now promoting the idea that a child can be "born in the wrong body". This has led to an epidemic of children declaring transgender identities. YouGov research commissioned by Sex Matters in February 2022 found that seven in ten secondary schools have at least one trans-identifying pupil. In some schools, prevalence is as high as one child in ten.

Parents contact us every week, distraught that a school is socially transitioning their child without adequate consideration for the child's mental and physical health, and sometimes without even consulting them. Parents are told that if they raise concerns, they may be treated as a danger to their child and referred to social services. Often these children are same-sex attracted and/or on the autistic spectrum.

Many schools have policies to support the use of breast binders, which constrict breathing and cause pain and damage to soft tissue, lungs and spine. The harms may be permanent. Many schools allow male children who identify as transgender to use girls' toilets and showers (and vice versa), and male children to compete in girls' sports. These policies undermine privacy, dignity and fairness for other pupils.

The Department for Education has been working for some time to produce guidance for schools based on the Equality Act 2010 and principles of child safeguarding. This is important and urgent

Sex Matters is a human rights organisation campaigning for clarity about sex in law, policy and language | sex-matters.org | info@sex-matters.org

Directors: Michael Biggs, Rebecca Bull, Naomi Cunningham, Maya Forstater, Emma Hilton, Helen Joyce

work. As the previous Secretaries of State have recognised, schools must take a “safeguarding first” approach. In August Suella Braverman, as Attorney General, usefully set out the legal position in relation to the Equality Act 2010. Schools should protect all pupils from bullying and harm, and make reasonable accommodations for those with gender distress. But schools must not pretend that a child has actually changed sex. Rules that relate to boys and girls should be fair and justified, and do not need to be waived for individual children with gender distress. This agrees with guidance that Sex Matters and Transgender Trend produced with input from equality, human-rights and education lawyers (a copy is attached).

In addition to guidance on the law, a review of curriculum and teaching materials is also needed. We would encourage you to think about this within the framework of impartiality. Schools should no more be promoting the idea that there is something wrong with the healthy bodies of gender non-conforming and potentially gay children than they should be promoting bulimia, anorexia, cutting, underage sex, drinking, smoking, sexual exploitation, gangs or illicit drugs. LGBTQ+ clubs in schools, and the involvement of outside organisations such as Stonewall, Mermaids and Educate and Celebrate, should also be addressed from a safeguarding and impartiality perspective.

We urge you to publish the long-awaited guidance for schools, in line with the previous Attorney General’s advice. This must enable whole-school rules, not continual negotiation. Schools should allow parents to inspect all RSE teaching materials.

Once those immediate steps have been taken, a “Cass Review for Schools” is urgently needed. Please commission an independent expert review of the promotion of gender ideology in schools, and its impact on gender distress and on child safeguarding. The medical principle to “first do no harm” should also be applied to schools.

And finally, we would like to request a meeting with you at the earliest opportunity.

Yours sincerely

Bayswater Group hello@bayswatersupport.org.uk

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Kate Barker, **LGB Alliance** info@lgballiance.org.uk

Tanya Carter, **Safe Schools Alliance** info@safeschoolsallianceuk.org

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Stephanie Davies-Arai and Shelley Charlesworth, **Transgender Trend** info@transgendertrend.com



Bayswater Support Group

A self-help group of parents whose children have a transgender identity. They are wary of medical solutions to gender dysphoria, when exploring gender roles is part of normal child development.

The group offers somewhere to talk, share and be understood and also works to educate public bodies about adolescent gender dysphoria.

www.bayswatersupport.org.uk



Fair Play For Women

Campaigning and consultancy group which raises awareness, provides evidence and analysis, and supports policy-makers to protect the rights of women and girls in the UK. Has specific expertise on the harm done to women by allowing males to participate in female sports and to apply for transfer to female prisons.

Director is Dr Nic Williams

www.fairplayforwomen.com



LGB Alliance

Registered charity set up in 2019 to advocate for the rights of gay, lesbian and bisexual people.

It was founded because groups that used to support LGB people have switched their attention to the promotion of gender-identity theory, which LGB Alliance regards as regressive and homophobic.

CEO is Kate Barker

www.lgballiance.org.uk



Safe Schools Alliance

A group made up of parents and professionals that seeks to challenge harmful school materials and policies that prioritise sex self-ID over the privacy, safety and dignity of all children. Focuses on children, specifically on safeguarding and the correct interpretation of the Equality Act.

Chief spokeswoman is Tanya Carter

www.safeschoolsallianceuk.net



Sex Matters

Sex Matters is a human rights organisation campaigning for clarity about sex in law, policy and language.

Produces analysis, guidance and campaigns across all areas of law and policy where sex matters.

Executive director is Maya Forstater

www.sex-matters.org



Transgender Trend

Founded in 2015 to draw attention to the harms done by gender-identity ideology to children, especially in schools and in medicine. The Interim Report by the independent Cass Review into the Tavistock Gender Identity Development Service vindicated Transgender Trend's stance.

Director is Stephanie Davies-Arai BEM

www.transgendertrend.com

Further information: www.sex-matters.org/posts/category/groups-defending-sex-based-rights/