



Baroness Morgan
Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care
Welsh Government
5th Floor
Tŷ Hywel
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

22nd April 2024

Dear Baroness Morgan

In response to the publication of the Cass Review in England, and subsequent remarks from the Trefnydd Jane Hutt MS in the Senedd on 16th April in response to a request for a government statement in the Siambwr on the review, we would like to invite you to meet us to discuss the implications of the Cass Review for Wales. Attached are briefings from Sex Matters and Transgender Trend on the key findings from the Cass Review, to support any work the Welsh government is doing to consider, learn from and respond to the review.

As you will be aware, the UK government has committed to implementing Dr Cass's recommendations in full in England. Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Wes Streeting, unambiguously welcomed the report and confirmed that a Labour government would do the same. The significance of the Cass Review's findings for children and young people in Wales as well as England must not be underestimated given that the pathway for gender-distressed Welsh children and young people includes referral to gender services in England.

The Trefnydd's confirmation that the Welsh government is committed to improving the treatment pathway for gender-distressed young people in Wales is welcome. However, we are concerned that this does not come with any commitment to concrete action to ensure improvements in their care, and that the Welsh Gender Service will be outside the scope of the review NHS England will be undertaking of adult services in England. We welcome the Trefnydd's assurance that the Welsh government will be "driven by the evidence" to best support the needs of young people. Given the Cass Review's findings about the lack of evidence for the efficacy of puberty blockers and medical treatment pathways for young people, the case for change is clear.

Dr Cass has emphasised that the children and young people covered by her review deserve the same standards of high-quality evidence-based care as others. The "exceptionalisation" and diagnostic overshadowing that were allowed to prevail meant that clinical practice for gender-questioning children fell short of minimum requirements. We believe questions need to be asked in Wales as well as in England about why this happened and why a culture of disregarding the safeguarding of children was allowed to become the norm.

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

We would also recommend asking the Executive Board of Cardiff and Vale University Health Board to make a thorough investigation of the outcomes for graduates from GIDS in order to help plan safe and high-quality services for children and young people in both Wales and England. The Joint Commissioning Board in the NHS Wales Executive may want to seek evidence that the Welsh Gender Service is meeting the standards and terms set out by commissioners in order to reassure both health practitioners across Wales and the wider community.

The Cass Review shows an urgent need to ensure that patients transferring from child to adult gender services, as well as the other adults accessing those services, receive holistic, well-evidenced care. As Dr Cass notes, brain maturation continues until at least age 25: it makes no sense to draw a line at age 18, and treat everyone above that age as equally able to provide informed consent and equally unlikely to see their gender distress resolve naturally.

The Secretary of State in England has announced that a review of adult gender services will now take place and we are keen to understand what plans you have to review services in Wales including the adult gender-identity service for Wales based in Cardiff.

We very much hope you will be making a statement about the Cass Review in the Senedd at the earliest opportunity and that you will accept our invitation to meet. To arrange this, please ask your office to liaise with Laura Pascal at PublicAffairs@sex-matters.org.

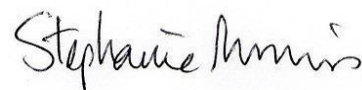
Yours sincerely



Maya Forstater
Chief Executive Officer
Sex Matters



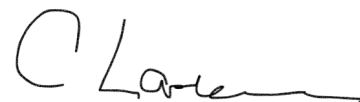
Kate Barker
Chief Executive Officer
LGB Alliance



Stephanie Davies-Arai BEM
Director
Transgender Trend



Ali Morris
Executive Committee Member
Merched Cymru



Cathy Larkman
Head of Wales
Women's Rights Network