

Agenda Item

3.3

Joint Commissioning Committee

**Gender Identity Services for Children and Young People
Final Report of the Cass Review**

Dyddiad y Cyfarfod / Date of Meeting	21/05/2024
Statws Cyhoeddi / Publication Status	Open/ Public Not Applicable
Awdur yr Adroddiad / Report Author	Specialised Planning Manager for Vulnerable Groups
Cyflwynydd yr Adroddiad / Report Presenter	Director of Nursing and Quality Assurance
Noddwr Gweithredol yr Adroddiad / Report Executive Sponsor	Abi Harris, Interim Chief Commissioner

Pwrpas yr Adroddiad / Report Purpose	Endorse
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Engagement (internal/external) undertaken to date (including receipt /consideration at Committee/Group)		
Committee / Group / Individuals	Date	Outcome
Joint Committee	21/11/2023	Noted the information presented in the report regarding the NHS England Transformation Programme for children and young people with gender incongruence, Noted the mobilisation timescale and the risk of increased waiting times for children and young people as a result, Supported WHSSC's commissioning position of continuing to work with NHS England to progress services in line with the recommendations of the Cass Review,

		<p>Noted the information in the report regarding the financial risks linked to the NHS England mobilisation costs and potential revised tariff that are likely to present an ‘in year’ risk to WHSSC in 2024-25; and</p> <p>Supported inclusion of the proposal for funding for the provision of waiting list support in the WHSSC triangulated risk assessment process which will inform the 2024/25 Integrated Commissioning Plan (ICP).</p>
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Acronyms / Glossary of Terms	
CYP	Children and Young People
GIDS	Gender Identity Development Service
HEIW	Health Education Improvement Wales
ICP	Integrated Commissioning Plan
MDT	Multi-disciplinary Team

1. SITUATION/BACKGROUND

An independent review was commissioned by NHS England and NHS Improvement in 2020 to make recommendations on the services provided to children and young people who are exploring their gender identity or experiencing gender incongruence.

The independent review was led by Dr Hilary Cass OBE, a consultant paediatrician and former President of the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health. The Cass Review was commissioned to ensure that children and young people are able to access the best possible support from the NHS, and a high standard of care that meets their individual needs. It gathered evidence to determine how the NHS can provide sustainable models and pathways of care into the future.

The aim of the Cass Review was to ensure that children and young people who are questioning their gender identity or experiencing gender dysphoria, and who need support from the NHS, receive a high standard of care that meets their needs and is safe, holistic and effective.

The Interim Report from the Cass Review emphasised the need to move away from the 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 including 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 new services based in the North West (a partnership between Alder Hey Children's and Royal Manchester Children's Hospital) and London (a partnership between Great Ormond Street Hospital, Evelina London and South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust) opened on 1 April 2024. Both services have started to see patients and are prioritising the open cases transferred from the Gender Identity Development Service (GIDS) at the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust including 21 children and young people from Wales.

Phase 2 of the transformation programme proposes the development of additional regional services. The NHS Wales Joint Commissioning Committee Team and colleagues from Cardiff and Vale University Health Board attend the NHS Children and Young Peoples Gender Service Programme Board (South West England) with Bristol Royal Hospital for Children as a phase 2 regional provider. This will bring services closer to home for South and Mid Wales children and young people. North Wales patients will continue to receive services from the Phase 1 in the North West.

All of the providers will deliver services in the same way, working to a single NHS service specification and clinical model in alignment with the recommendations of the Cass Review.

There is a single, national waiting list for the service, managed by NHS Arden and Greater East Midlands Commissioning Support Service. As of the 31 March 2024, there were 259 Welsh patients on the waiting list for the Children and Young People's service. They hold the details of all children and young people who had previously been referred to the service at the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust and are receiving new referrals directly from referrers. Children and Young People will be seen in order of referral date. In Wales, referrals are made from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and are prior approved through the NHS Wales Joint Commissioning Committee.

1.1 The Final Report of the Cass Review

The final report from the independent review of gender identity services for children and young people was published on 10 April 2024. Link here <https://cass.independent-review.uk/home/publications/final-report/>.

The Joint Commissioning Committee is committed to securing safe, sustainable, robust and evidence-based gender identity services for the children and young people of Wales and as such welcomes the final report.

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: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/nhs-englands-response-to-the-final-report-of-the-independent-review-of-gender-identity-services-for-children-and-young-people/> .

There are a number of recommendations that extend to the adult gender identity service and it is proposed that the NHS Wales Joint Commissioning Committee consider and accept the recommendations of the final report in the review of the service specification for the adult gender identity service in Wales which is planned for 2024. The review of the gender reassignment surgery policy proposed in the ICP 2024-25 will also need to be considered; noting that at present the NHS England policy is used.

NHS England has committed to setting out a full implementation plan, following full consideration of the final report, in due course, including the detail and structure of their approach. They have also set out seven immediate priorities as they continue to build a new service configuration with increased capacity and that works to an evidence-based model of care as set out below:

- 1.** NHS England will continue to fully support the newly opened children and young people's gender services based in London and the Northwest as they operationalise and expand their new services. Helping them to overcome challenges around staff recruitment will be a top priority as this will determine the pace at which they will be able to see new patients from the waiting list in addition to supporting the care of all those patients who have been transferred as a result of the closure of the Tavistock GIDS.
- 2.** NHS England will do everything possible to accelerate its programme of work to bring on board additional regional service providers in line with your interim advice to mobilise regional centres led by experienced children's hospitals. We are supporting Bristol Royal Hospital for Children (part of University Hospitals Bristol and Weston NHS Foundation Trust) to develop a mobilisation plan that describes how a new service will open in the autumn this year. In addition, paediatric specialist hospital Trusts across the country are working with us to explore the possibility of hosting additional Children and Young People's Gender Services.
- 3.** The clinical approach set out in our published interim service specification remains consistent with the findings and recommendations of your review and

we will continue to apply this as we look to bring on board additional regional centres. As we look to develop a final version of this service specification, we will particularly strengthen the description of the infrastructure that will be needed for the new services to operate within regional networks to ensure the specialist regional centres are connected with a matrix of local secondary care paediatric services, children and young people's mental health services, primary care, and school nursing. We would expect to launch a public consultation on any revisions to the service specification during the course of 24/25 and to provide Integrated Care Boards with the guidance and support they will need to build the local services.

4. NHS England will publish a separate, but related service specification by June 2024 that defines access into the new children and young people's gender services. We are currently considering the responses during our public consultation that closed in March. As part of this, we will consider relevant findings and recommendations in your final report, including the importance you attach to ensuring all parents have access to support in understanding the importance on keeping options open and the risks of enabling a premature social transition. We also note your support for our consultation proposal to only allow referrals into the specialist services from secondary care providers which would bring an end to direct referrals from primary care.
5. NHS England will commission the required professional training curriculum and competencies framework, not just for staff working in the new gender services but also for clinicians working in secondary care, primary and community care.
6. NHS England will review the use of gender affirming hormones through a process of updated evidence review and public consultation, similar to the rigorous process that was followed to review the use of puberty suppressing hormones. In the meantime, you have made clear that the new providers should be 'extremely cautious' when considering whether to refer young people under 18 years for consideration of hormone intervention. In order to support the providers in following your advice we have established a national multi-disciplinary team (MDT) that will review and need to agree all recommendations for hormone intervention, and we are pleased to confirm that Professor Judith Ellis has agreed to chair this MDT on an interim basis while a permanent chair is appointed. The first meeting of this new national MDT will take place later this month.
7. NHS England has already announced that it is bringing forward its review of the adult service specifications, and we have written to the Chief Executives of the organisations that host the GDCs to inform them that this will be undertaken in the context of a broader, systemic review of the operation and delivery of the GDCs. NHS England will provide more detail very soon, but we envisage it will be informed by the deployment of external quality improvement experts into the services.

In view of your advice about the need for caution in the initiation of medical interventions for young people under 18 years of age, our letter instructs the

adult gender clinics to implement a pause on offering first appointments to young people below their 18th birthday. This letter also makes clear that NHS England expects full cooperation from the GDCs in the delivery of the data linkage study, on which we have corresponded separately.

1.2 Stakeholder Briefing

A briefing on the Publication of Cass Review Final Report has been published on the NHS Wales JCC website. Link here:

<https://whssc.nhs.wales/commissioning/whssc-policies/gender/publication-of-the-cass-review-final-report-stakeholder-briefing-docx-pdf/>

Key points include:

- The NHS Wales Joint Commissioning Committee Team and colleagues from Cardiff and Vale University Health Board attend the NHS CYP Gender Service Programme Board (South West) with Bristol Royal Hospital for Children as a phase 2 regional provider. The Board are considering how services can be brought closer to home for Welsh patients with the potential of a satellite clinic being set up on Health Board premises as an initial starting point for collaborative working.
- The NHS Wales Joint Commissioning Committee has written to Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW) to set up a working group to consider current training available for gender care. This work will include linking with the work being undertaken by NHS England to ensure consistency of approach and access to training materials.
- The access criteria for the Welsh Gender Service provided by Cardiff and Vale University Health Board is already age 18 plus, therefore no young people under 18 are seen or offered gender affirming hormones before their 18th birthday under the current service specification. The NHS Wales Joint Commissioning Committee will also review the use of gender affirming hormones as part of the planned review of the adult service specification for non-surgical interventions commencing in 2024.
- The NHS Wales Joint Commissioning Committee will consider the recommendations of the final report as part of the planned review of the adult service specification for non-surgical interventions in commencing in 2024.

1.3 Senedd Debate on the Cass Review

The Welsh Conservatives brought a debate to the plenary session on the 1 May 2024 the following motions of which were approved:

- Noted the publication of the Cass review
- Noted that NHS Wales commissions gender identity services for children and young people 17 and under from NHS England
- Noted that NHS England has concluded there is not enough evidence to support the safety or clinical effectiveness of puberty suppressing hormones for the treatment of gender dysphoria in children and young people at this time.

In addition, the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care in the Senedd debate made it clear of her intention to instruct the NHS Wales JCC to ensure the Welsh Gender Service fully cooperates in the delivery of the data linkage study.

2. SPECIFIC MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

The final report of the Cass Review has implications for the provision of adult services. A review of the specification (CP182) for Gender Identity Services for Adults (non-surgical) in Wales is planned to commence in 2024.

The NHS Wales JCC commissions Cardiff and Vale University Health Board to provide gender identity services for adults (non-surgical) through the Welsh Gender Service. Whilst this service is commissioned in Wales, in light of the Cass Review it is proposed that the NHS Wales JCC works with NHS England in the review of the service specification for adult services (non-surgical) rather than a single site approach.

NHS England has committed to setting out a full implementation plan, following full consideration of the final report including the detail and structure of their approach. When the NHS England implementation plan is available, it is proposed that the NHS Wales JCC considers implications for Wales for both the CYP and adult services. This may include an evidence review and public consultation on the use of gender affirming hormones and a systemic review of the operation and delivery of adult services.

3. KEY RISKS / MATTERS FOR ESCALATION

There are no risks associated with adapting this approach identified.

4. ASSESSMENT

Objectives / Strategy	
Dolen i Nod (au) Strategol CBC / Link to JCC Strategic Goal(s)	Not Applicable
	The JCC was established on 1 April 2024. As yet the JCC strategic goals have not yet been developed.
Dolen i Feysydd Strategol CBC / Link to JCC Strategic Areas	Not Applicable
	The JCC was established on 1 April 2024. As yet the JCC strategic areas have not yet been developed.
Dolen i Ddeddf Llesiant Cenedlaethau'r Dyfodol – Nodau Llesiant /	A Healthier Wales
	A more equal Wales

Link to Wellbeing of Future Generations Act – Wellbeing Goals 150623-guide-to-the-fg-act-en.pdf (futuregenerations.wales)	
Dolen i Hwyluswyr Ansawdd <i>(Canllawiau Statudol Dyletswydd Ansawdd (llyw.cymru)) /</i> Link to Enablers of Quality <i>(Duty of Quality Statutory Guidance (gov.wales))</i>	Learning, Improvement & Research Culture and valuing people
Dolen i Feysydd Ansawdd <i>(Canllawiau Statudol Dyletswydd Ansawdd (llyw.cymru)) /</i> Link to Domains of Quality <i>(Duty of Quality Statutory Guidance (gov.wales))</i>	Safe If more than one applies please list below: Effective Person Centred
Effaith Amgylcheddol/ Cynaliadwyedd (5R) / Environmental /Sustainability Impact (5Rs)	No - Not Applicable If more than one applies please list below:

Impact Assessment		
Ansawdd <i>Ydych chi wedi ymgymryd â Sgrinio Asesiad o’r Effaith ar Ansawdd? /</i> Quality <i>Have you undertaken a Quality Impact Assessment Screening?</i>	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>	No: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Outcome:	If no, please include rationale below: This report outlines the findings of the Cass Review. NHS England has undertaken impact reports as part of the new service specification and clinical policy
Cydraddoldeb	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>	No: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

<p><i>Ydych chi wedi ymgymryd â Sgrinio Asesiad o'r Effaith ar Gydraddoldeb? /</i> Equality <i>Have you undertaken an Equality Impact Assessment Screening?</i></p>	<p>Outcome:</p>	<p>If no, please include rationale below: This report outlines the findings of the Cass Review. NHS England has undertaken impact reports as part of the new service specification and clinical policy</p>
<p>Cyfreithiol / Legal</p>	<p>There are no specific legal implications related to the activity outlined in this report.</p>	
<p>Enw da / Reputational</p>	<p>There is no direct impact on the reputation of the Joint Committee as a result of the activity outlined in this report.</p>	
<p>Effaith Adnoddau (Pobl / Ariannol) / Resource Impact (People / Financial)</p>	<p>Yes (Include further detail below)</p> <p>There are likely to be costs associated with aligning with the NHS England Implementation programme. A further paper will be brought to the JCC once the implementation plan has been confirmed.</p> <p>The Joint Committee may wish to consider the impact of the Cass Review on CAMHS resources which currently sit outside of the NHS Wales JCC commissioned service. The NHS Wales JCC has updated the CAMHS Implementation Network about the ongoing transformation programme and the final report of the Cass Review to assist their understanding of potential resource implications.</p>	

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are asked to:

- **Endorse** the recommendations of the Cass Review and the continued alignment of the NHS Wales Joint JCC with the NHS England Implementation Plan.
- **Note** the Cabinet Secretary's direction that the Welsh Gender Service fully co-operates in the delivery of the data linkage study.
- **Note** the implications for CAMHS which may require additional resources outside of the commissioned service.
- **Note** that the NHS Wales Joint Commissioning Committee has written to Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW) to set up a working group to consider current training available for gender care. This work will include linking with the work being undertaken by NHS England to ensure consistency of approach and access to training materials.

6. NEXT STEPS

- The NHS Wales JCC Team will write to Cardiff & Vale University Health Board setting out the intention for the Welsh Gender Service to fully comply with the data linkage study and alignment with the NHS England Implementation Plan.
- Consider the NHS England Implementation Plan and provide Joint Committee with a detailed update at a later date.
- Commence the review of CP182 (Gender Identity Services for Adults – Non surgical) in alignment with the NHS England implementation plan.