

Prohibit Private Clinics from Exploiting NHS Moratoria on the Prescription of Puberty Blockers: Treatment for Gender Dysphoria in Children and Under-18s following the Bell vs Tavistock Ruling and Jan 2021 release of Whistle-blowers' Evidence

Synopsis

For the safety and well-being of children and young people under 18 diagnosed with gender dysphoria, the Green Party would prohibit private clinics from exploiting NHS moratoria on the prescription of puberty blockers, measures justified following the GIDS judicial review of Dec 2020, and would stop their associated fundraising campaigns launched since Jan 2021.

Motion

The Green Party recognises the distress caused to people under 18, and their families, from having to suffer long waits for access to advice and treatment for gender dysphoria from the NHS Gender Identity Development Service. Uncertainty over access to puberty blocker treatments has increased, or their prescription has been prohibited, following acknowledgment by the NHS of the following key findings from the High Court judgment in Bell vs Tavistock [\[link\]](#):

- Administering puberty blockers as a treatment for diagnosed gender dysphoria is properly described as "experimental" due to uncertainty over the short and long-term consequences for the patient, limited evidence as to efficacy and lack of clarity over purpose.
- In nearly all cases, initiating treatment with puberty blockers has led to cross-sex hormones as the treatment pathway, with potentially lifelong and life-changing consequences for the patient, such as loss of fertility and impact on sexual function and future relationships.
- Depending on age group, informed consent will either be impossible (age 10), highly unlikely (under 16), or should be supplemented by referral to a court acting in their protective role (ages 16 and 17). For children just entering puberty, some as young as 10, it will not be possible for them to understand what not being able to give birth to children could mean in adult life; or loss of fertility or full sexual function in later years.

On medical professional, safety and ethical grounds, the Green Party would:

- Provide extra mental health and well-being support services for children, young people and their families impacted by the withdrawal of GIDS treatment options following the Bell vs Tavistock ruling into the harms associated with puberty blockers and irreconcilability of informed consent at that age.
- Prohibit private clinics from advertising or administering puberty blockers as a treatment for children diagnosed with gender dysphoria, when the NHS has already refused or recommended against such treatment.
- Prohibit the practice, which whistle-blowers have raised the alarm about in Jan 2021, of asking minors to choose sperm donors for their eggs – as a means to insure against their subsequent infertility because of PB treatment. Asking a child to choose the genetic father (say) for their future potential child, and creating and storing their embryos, poses a host of highly problematic ethical issues, not least of all age-appropriateness and safeguarding.

Conference calls upon GPEX, the Green Party campaigns team and elected Green Party representatives to publicise this policy statement in any and all future work in this area.

Relevant passages around key themes from our Policies for a Sustainable Society:

On health practitioners as whistle-blowers:

“The health service should be managed as a “learning organisation” in which there is a clear responsibility for continual improvement and in which all staff are encouraged to comment on the systems in which they work and share learning in an open and fearless way.” HE208

On avoidance of unaccountable, private healthcare:

“Healthcare is not a commodity to be bought or sold. It must be a public service funded by, run by and accountable to local and national government and devoid of all privatisation,” HE104

On emphasis on mental health provision for children and adolescents:

“We recognise the importance of child and adolescent mental health and will ensure that services to support this are properly funded and accessible close to the people who need them.” HE1001

On the principle of protecting children from medical interventions they are not old enough to decide:

“The Green Party would seek to protect intersex minors from medical interventions that could be delayed until they are old enough to decide for themselves.” RR521

Key links to resources

Bell and A vs Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust, 1 Dec 2020

<https://www.judiciary.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Bell-v-Tavistock-Judgment.pdf>

NHS Amendments to Service Specification for Gender Identity Development Service for Children and Adolescents (E13/S(HSS)/e), 1 Dec 2020

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Amendment-to-Gender-Identity-Development-Service-Specification-for-Children-and-Adolescents.pdf>

Autistic girls seeking answers ‘are seizing on sex change’, Times, 9 Jan 2021

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/autistic-girls-seeking-answers-are-seizing-on-sex-change-3r82850gw>

How to launch a successful crowdfunder for trans youth healthcare, 21 Jan 2021

<https://www.gendergp.com/trans-kids-healthcare-crowdfunder-tips-puberty-blockers-gofundme/>

Children have been very seriously damaged’ by NHS gender clinic, says former Tavistock staff governor, Channel 4, 23 Jan 2021

<https://www.channel4.com/news/children-have-been-very-seriously-damaged-by-nhs-gender-clinic-says-former-tavistock-staff-governor>

CALL TO GREEN PARTY MEMBERS:

To countersign this Late Motion for Spring Conference 2021 please visit

<https://spaces.greenparty.org.uk/s/late-motions-forum-spring-2021/> or directly here

<https://spaces.greenparty.org.uk/content/perma?id=54941> and “Like” the motion by 2359 on Mon 8 Feb 2021.