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Dear Professor Smith,

NHS England's Clinical Policy in relation to Puberty Suppressing Hormones (PSH) and implications for the Scottish Service

[Redacted – Out of scope]

NHSGGC position on NHS England's Policy

As you will be aware, on 12th March 2024, NHS England announced that after a thorough review of evidence, there is insufficient evidence to support the safety or clinical effectiveness of PSH to make the treatment routinely available at this time.

The clinical significance of this has subsequently required NHSGGC and NHS Lothian to review their position. NHSGGC currently has national responsibility for the assessment of gender dysphoria in Young People, with subsequent referral for medication interventions to paediatric endocrinology services in NHSGGC and NHS Lothian.

Following consultation with senior medical staff and the clinical team responsible for the delivery of PSH our shared view is that Scottish practice should align with the position taken by NHS England, and to do otherwise would present significant risk. New referrals from the NHSGGC Young Persons Gender Service (based at Sandyford Services), to paediatric endocrinology services in NHSGGC and NHS Lothian, have been paused while we review the implications for our service. Aligning with NHS England, those patients who are currently on PSH treatment should continue on treatment with close monitoring and support, as they wish to and as guided by individual clinical assessments within each service.

As NHS England has taken the position that all access to PSH treatment will only be made available via a formal clinical research trial, we ask that any future PSH treatment is carried out in partnership with the NHS England research proposal and would see a Scottish centre within any research proposal.

[Redacted – Out of scope]

In summary, NHSGGC and NHS Lothian ask that you formally support the position set out above, namely:

- Pause to new referrals from the NHSGGC Young Persons Gender Service to Paediatric Endocrine services with immediate effect.
- Urgently explore the possibility that future PSH treatment can be carried out in partnership with the NHS England research proposal.
- [Redacted – Out of scope]

NHSGGC and NHS Lothian commit to individual communication with the young people and families who are impacted by these decisions to explain the change in treatment pathways. The distress these decisions may potentially cause is recognised and the service will ensure this is completed before a public position statement is issued.

There is therefore an urgent need for both a formal statement of support from your office and clarity on the Scottish Government's position on Young Persons' Gender Services in Scotland, in response to these developments.

We are of course happy to discuss any aspect of this in more depth if necessary.



Dr Jennifer L. Armstrong
Board Medical Director



Tracey Gillies
Executive Medical Director, NHS Lothian