

Agenda Item 12

Public Question from Mr Adrian Hart

In January, HOSC heard a presentation from the Sussex Gender Service (SGS) but many questions on prescribing practice, age of access, and pathway safeguards were not answered and remain outstanding. The Cass Review nationally, the ongoing NHS Sussex review locally alongside the jaw-dropping New Statesman expose of the scandal here in Brighton & Hove, emphasise the need for clear safeguarding protocols and transparent communication with families. The Council's Trans Inclusion Schools Toolkit and the role of activist organisations in schools have correlated directly with NHS pathways for gender care such as SGS (yet this committee applies zero scrutiny). In light of these links, what steps will HOSC take to assure residents that appropriate safeguarding oversight exists between education, primary care and specialist services (and data on referrals and prescribing are available for scrutiny), and that the affected families whose invitations to meet councillors are typically ignored, will henceforth be consulted?

(a) Links

<https://www.sussex.ics.nhs.uk/children-and-young-people-under-18-years-of-age-who-were-offered-gender-care-at-the-wellbn-general-practice-brighton/>

<https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/health/2025/08/health-bosses-failed-to-act-on-nhs-clinic-prescribing-gender-drugs-to-kids-for-five-years>

<https://can-sg.org/2025/08/22/protecting-children-the-nhs-sussex-controversy/>

<https://democracy.brighton-hove.gov.uk/documents/s210114/HWB%20deputation%20-%20suggested%20revision%20003.pdf>

(b) References

1. The answer to Cllr O'Quinn's question to Dr Allen on Jan 29th asked about bridging hormones and whether NHS GPs were prescribing these (or is it done privately) was not clear. It seems SGS does not have the data. Nor could Dr Allen answer a question about the number of girls being referred, but promised to report back. A question from Cllr Bagthoth registered her concern that only 2 appointments were necessary and Dr Allen could not answer her question on how many change their minds. Both Dr Allen and Dr Rutherford curtailed questions (notably questions Cllr Hill hoped to ask)

because they had to leave. Answers to all these questions were promised but, 9 months later, Dr Allen informed HOSC the information is not in fact readily accessible.

2. Cass Review Final Report (2024), ch.4, ch.5, ch.16
3. NHS England: CYP Gender Services Service Specification (2024)
4. Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018, updated 2023)
5. Children Act 1989, Section 47 Duty to Investigate
6. Local Government Ombudsman – Learning Lessons from Serious Case Reviews
7. NHS Sussex ICB Terms of Reference for WellBN Investigation (2025)
8. BHCC Equalities Impact Assessments for the Trans Inclusion Schools Toolkit
9. High Court proceedings on hormone prescribing to minors (2025)