# UK and US anti-trans health reports criticised for promoting harmful care restrictions



Two recent reports targeting healthcare for transgender youth have sparked outrage and widespread criticism from medical professionals and advocacy groups alike. Despite being widely rejected by leading medical organisations, both the Cass Review from the UK and a report by the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) continue to influence laws that restrict access to vital healthcare for transgender minors.

The Cass Review, released in April 2024, was commissioned by NHS England to evaluate gender identity services for children and adolescents. Led by Dr. Hilary Cass—a pediatrician without significant experience in treating transgender patients—the review’s 388 pages contained sweeping recommendations, including a severe limitation on the use of puberty blockers for individuals under 18, the promotion of psychotherapy as a primary treatment method, and a fundamental questioning of established practices in transgender healthcare. The review asserted that evidence supporting current treatment methods was insufficient, replacing those methods with what critics have labelled “exploratory therapy,” a practice widely equated with conversion therapy.

Following the report's release, NHS England imposed a ban on the use of puberty blockers for trans youth, a move critics argue contradicts the treatment accessibility available to cisgender children, who can still receive these medications for conditions such as precocious puberty. Despite the review’s reliance on contested claims, it has been cited in legal contexts and legislative discussions worldwide, affecting the rights of millions.

The situation is mirrored in the United States, where a recent HHS report emerged from a directive by the Trump administration aimed at “protecting children from chemical and surgical mutilation.” This 400-page document also questions the validity of gender-affirming medical interventions for youth, describing them as significantly risky and undersupported by evidence. The report promotes debunked theories surrounding “social contagion” and “rapid-onset gender dysphoria” as explanations for the rise in trans-identifying youth, while suggesting that autism predisposes individuals to gender dysphoria—a claim lacking robust evidence. The HHS report dismissed decades of research showing the benefits of gender-affirming care and promoted a psychotherapeutic approach reminiscent of conversion therapy, a perspective condemned by numerous medical organisations, including the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Both reports have faced extensive critiques for their methodological flaws. Independent studies have highlighted significant shortcomings characteristic of the Cass Review, such as the exclusion of trans individuals and specialists from the review process and unsubstantiated assertions regarding treatment efficacy. The HHS report also exhibited similar issues, not only promoting discredited concepts but also failing to engage with a vast body of peer-reviewed literature that demonstrates the positive outcomes of gender-affirming care.

The condemnation from major health organisations has been fierce. The World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH), American Academy of Pediatrics, and other prominent bodies have rejected the findings of both reports as misrepresentations of the current medical consensus. The American Academy of Pediatrics, in particular, expressed deep concern that the HHS report misrepresents pediatric care realities, highlighting significant research supporting gender-affirming interventions as life-saving for transgender youth.

Alarmingly, the influence of these reports continues to grow. The Cass Review directly contributed to the UK’s ban on puberty blockers for trans minors, while aspects of it have been referenced by courts in cases concerning transgender healthcare regulations, including a notable case brought before the U.S. Supreme Court. More than half of U.S. states have enacted restrictions on care for trans minors, often citing findings from the Cass Review and the recent HHS report as justification.

The implications of these developments are profound. As cisgender children maintain access to puberty blockers, questions arise about the truth of claims suggesting lasting harm from these treatments in trans youth. Advocacy groups warn that the promotion of “exploratory therapy” could increase mental health risks, including elevated rates of suicide attempts, among transgender youth.

In this landscape of rapidly evolving policies and health care practices, it is crucial that the global medical community continues to advocate for evidence-based medical care and the protection of rights for all individuals, regardless of gender identity. With over 300,000 transgender teens in the U.S. and numerous anti-LGBTQ+ bills circulating, the urgent call for informed, compassionate policies has never been more critical.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraph 1: [[1]](https://pridesource.com/article/anti-trans-reports-debunked)
2. Paragraph 2: [[4]](https://cass.independent-review.uk/home/publications/final-report/), [[5]](https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/evidence-gender-care-remarkably-weak-says-major-english-review-2024-04-09/), [[6]](https://www.theguardian.com/society/2024/apr/10/what-are-the-key-findings-of-the-nhs-gender-identity-review)
3. Paragraph 3: [[1]](https://pridesource.com/article/anti-trans-reports-debunked), [[4]](https://cass.independent-review.uk/home/publications/final-report/), [[3]](https://time.com/7281894/new-hhs-report-exploratory-therapy-transgender-youth/)
4. Paragraph 4: [[2]](https://www.axios.com/2025/05/01/hhs-report-gender-care-risk), [[5]](https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/evidence-gender-care-remarkably-weak-says-major-english-review-2024-04-09/)
5. Paragraph 5: [[2]](https://www.axios.com/2025/05/01/hhs-report-gender-care-risk), [[6]](https://www.theguardian.com/society/2024/apr/10/what-are-the-key-findings-of-the-nhs-gender-identity-review)
6. Paragraph 6: [[3]](https://time.com/7281894/new-hhs-report-exploratory-therapy-transgender-youth/), [[7]](https://www.theguardian.com/society/2024/apr/10/gender-medicine-built-on-shaky-foundations-cass-review-finds)
7. Paragraph 7: [[2]](https://www.axios.com/2025/05/01/hhs-report-gender-care-risk), [[3]](https://time.com/7281894/new-hhs-report-exploratory-therapy-transgender-youth/)
8. Paragraph 8: [[1]](https://pridesource.com/article/anti-trans-reports-debunked), [[3]](https://time.com/7281894/new-hhs-report-exploratory-therapy-transgender-youth/)
9. Paragraph 9: [[1]](https://pridesource.com/article/anti-trans-reports-debunked), [[2]](https://www.axios.com/2025/05/01/hhs-report-gender-care-risk)
10. Paragraph 10: [[1]](https://pridesource.com/article/anti-trans-reports-debunked)

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## Bibliography

* <https://pridesource.com/article/anti-trans-reports-debunked> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
* <https://www.axios.com/2025/05/01/hhs-report-gender-care-risk> - A recent report from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) casts doubt on the benefits of gender-affirming care for minors, asserting that such interventions carry significant risks with limited supporting evidence. The 409-page document critiques treatments like puberty blockers, hormone therapies, and surgeries, citing potentially irreversible physical and psychological effects. This assessment contrasts sharply with the stance of major medical organizations such as the American Academy of Pediatrics, which advocates for gender-affirming care as potentially life-saving for transgender youth. The Academy expressed deep concern over the report, emphasizing existing research that shows high satisfaction and low regret among recipients of such care. The HHS did not disclose the names of the contributors to the report to preserve its integrity, but noted the team included doctors, ethicists, and a methodologist. Meanwhile, the White House has directed the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to further study the long-term effects of gender transition, including potential regret among patients.
* <https://time.com/7281894/new-hhs-report-exploratory-therapy-transgender-youth/> - The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) released a report promoting 'exploratory therapy' as a non-invasive alternative to gender-affirming care for transgender youth, claiming psychotherapy can treat pediatric gender dysphoria. The report attempts to distance this approach from widely discredited 'conversion therapy,' but LGBTQ+ advocates argue it is a rebranding of the same harmful practice. Major medical organizations, including the American Academy of Pediatrics and American Medical Association, support gender-affirming care and have condemned conversion therapy as ineffective and damaging. The HHS report follows a Trump Administration Executive Order threatening to strip federal funding from providers offering gender-affirming care to individuals under 19. This order led to the mandated release of the report and reflects a broader federal policy shift denying the legitimacy of gender identity. Legal battles are ongoing, with Supreme Court cases potentially reinforcing or dismantling protections for transgender youth. Advocacy groups warn the recommended therapy could increase mental health risks, including suicide attempts, among transgender youth. With over 300,000 transgender teens in the U.S., and more than 500 anti-LGBTQ+ bills proposed in 2025 alone, experts and activists stress the importance of evidence-based medical care and legal protections for LGBTQ+ individuals.
* <https://cass.independent-review.uk/home/publications/final-report/> - The Cass Review, commissioned by NHS England, examined gender identity services for children and young people. Led by Dr. Hilary Cass, the 388-page report made sweeping recommendations, including severely restricting puberty blockers for trans youth under 18, promoting psychotherapy as the primary treatment approach, and questioning established practices in transgender health care. The review claimed insufficient evidence exists for current treatment approaches while promoting what critics call 'exploratory therapy'—widely recognized as a form of conversion therapy. Following the report's release, NHS England immediately implemented a ban on puberty blockers for trans youth, though these medications remain available to cisgender children for conditions like precocious puberty. The review has been cited in courts and legislatures worldwide despite facing rejection from major medical organizations.
* <https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/evidence-gender-care-remarkably-weak-says-major-english-review-2024-04-09/> - A comprehensive review commissioned by England's NHS has found the medical evidence supporting gender care for adolescents to be 'remarkably weak' and insufficient in clarifying long-term outcomes. Conducted by Dr. Hilary Cass, the report highlights the need for improved care for youth with gender dysphoria but emphasizes the lack of reliable evidence to determine the best approach. It recommends extreme caution regarding medical interventions such as puberty blockers and hormones before the age of 18. Additionally, the report suggests that for pre-pubertal children, early professional consultation is vital, while for adolescents, explorative processes should be normalized over rigid gender stereotypes. Responding to the review, the NHS plans to make puberty blockers available only through clinical trials and has restructured its service providers, though a significant backlog of cases remains. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak acknowledged the review's call for caution due to the uncertain long-term impacts of medical and social transitioning.
* <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2024/apr/10/what-are-the-key-findings-of-the-nhs-gender-identity-review> - The Cass Review, commissioned by NHS England, examined gender identity services for children and young people. Led by Dr. Hilary Cass, the 388-page report made sweeping recommendations, including severely restricting puberty blockers for trans youth under 18, promoting psychotherapy as the primary treatment approach, and questioning established practices in transgender health care. The review claimed insufficient evidence exists for current treatment approaches while promoting what critics call 'exploratory therapy'—widely recognized as a form of conversion therapy. Following the report's release, NHS England immediately implemented a ban on puberty blockers for trans youth, though these medications remain available to cisgender children for conditions like precocious puberty. The review has been cited in courts and legislatures worldwide despite facing rejection from major medical organizations.
* <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2024/apr/10/gender-medicine-built-on-shaky-foundations-cass-review-finds> - The Cass Review, commissioned by NHS England, examined gender identity services for children and young people. Led by Dr. Hilary Cass, the 388-page report made sweeping recommendations, including severely restricting puberty blockers for trans youth under 18, promoting psychotherapy as the primary treatment approach, and questioning established practices in transgender health care. The review claimed insufficient evidence exists for current treatment approaches while promoting what critics call 'exploratory therapy'—widely recognized as a form of conversion therapy. Following the report's release, NHS England immediately implemented a ban on puberty blockers for trans youth, though these medications remain available to cisgender children for conditions like precocious puberty. The review has been cited in courts and legislatures worldwide despite facing rejection from major medical organizations.