



T : 0300 244 4000
E : genderidentityhealth@gov.scot

Trina Budge
trina.budge@forwomen.scot

Our Reference: 202200298034

1 June 2022

Dear Trina Budge ,

REQUEST UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (SCOTLAND) ACT 2002 (FOISA)

Thank you for your request dated 02 May 2022 under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (FOISA).

Your request

You asked for "Please provide any correspondence and/or meetings (date, attendees, agenda, minutes, notes) which reference the Cass Review or Cass Interim Report in Feb, March or April 2002. We then confirmed with you and amended the dates to "Feb, March, April 2022" and you clarified correspondence to be " I mean any written correspondence or communication".

Response to your request

I enclose a copy of some of the information you requested.

Under section 25(1) of FOISA, we do not have to give you information which is already reasonably accessible to you. If, however, you do not have internet access to obtain this information from the website(s) listed, then please contact me again and I will send you a paper copy.

Some of the information you have requested is available online. A recent parliamentary question on this topic can be found here: <https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/official-report/what-was-said-in-parliament/meeting-of-parliament-28-04-2022?meeting=13715&iob=124454>

The minutes of the National Gender Identity Healthcare Reference Group held on 13 April 2022, will be



published here [National Gender Identity Healthcare Reference Group - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot).

An exemption under section 38(1)(b) of FOISA applies to some of the information you have requested. This is because personal information such as phone numbers, staff names and email addresses were included in email trails and have been redacted.

An exemption under section 30(b)(i) of FOISA applies to some of the information you have requested. This is because early versions of media lines, press releases and parliamentary questions which differ from the final, cleared lines, are considered to be free and frank provision of advice.

This exemption is subject to the 'public interest test'. Therefore, taking account of all the circumstances of this case, we have considered if the public interest in disclosing the information outweighs the public interest in applying the exemption. We have found that, on balance, the public interest lies in favour of upholding the exemption. This is because releasing early versions of media responses, news releases and parliamentary questions could contain factually inaccurate information and therefore be misleading to the public.

Your right to request a review

If you are unhappy with this response to your FOI request, you may ask us to carry out an internal review of the response, by writing to Michael Kellet, Director of Population Health at

Directorofpopulationhealth@gov.scot or:

Director of Population Health

St Andrew's House

Regent Road Edinburgh

EH1 3DG

Your review request should explain why you are dissatisfied with this response, and should be made within 40 working days from the date when you received this letter. We will complete the review in accordance with FOISA as soon as possible, and not later than 20 working days from the day following the date we receive your review request.

If you are not satisfied with the result of the review, you then have the right to appeal to the Scottish Information Commissioner. More detailed information on your appeal rights is available on the Commissioner's website at: <http://www.itpublicknowledge.info/YourRights/Unhappywiththeresponse/AppealingtoCommissioner.aspx>.

Yours sincerely

On behalf of Gender Identity & Healthcare Access
HIE : Gender Identity & Healthcare Access

St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG
www.gov.scot



INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE

Accredited
Until 2020



Annex A

Document A - Email to NHS Education Scotland

From: [redacted Scottish Government Policy team]

Sent: 24 March 2022 10:41

To: [redacted National Education Scotland]

Subject: Gender Identity and healthcare work

[redacted – out of scope]

In the meant time, I thought you may find this interim report on review of Young people's gender identity services and some of the recommendations it makes interesting and relevant: [Interim report – Cass Review \(independent-review.uk\)](https://independent-review.uk)

[redacted]

Document B - Email to National Gender Identity Healthcare Reference Group

From: [redacted (38 (1)(B)) - Scottish Government Policy Team]

Sent: 13 April 2022 16:23

To: [redacted (38 (1) (B))– National Gender Identity Healthcare Reference Group]

Subject: Information from this morning's meeting

Hi all

Thank you for your participation in the meeting earlier today.

As promised I am sending the link to the interim Cass Review report - <https://cass.independent-review.uk/>

You may be interested to know we were asked for a response to some correspondence which included points on this topic – this was our response:

'The Cass Review is not considering or reviewing NHS Scotland clinical services. However, Scottish Government has previously stated it will closely consider the findings of the Cass Review and note publication of the interim report. The interim report has not set out final recommendations.'

Scottish Government's NHS Gender Identity Services: Strategic Action Framework commits to the establishment a national reference group to oversee the implementation of commitments within the framework. Information on that reference group will be published on Scottish Government's website in due course.'

[redacted out of scope of request]

[redacted (38 (1) (B))]

Document C – Media Enquiry

From: [redacted (38 (1) (B))– Gender Identity Healthcare Policy Team

Sent: 20 April 2022 14:40

To: [redacted (38 (1) (B))–Scottish Government Communications

Cc: News Desk[redacted (38 (1) (B))– ; Communications Health & Social Care [redacted (38 (1) (B))
Director of Population Health [redacted (38 (1) (B)) Deputy Director [redacted (38 (1) (B))

Subject: RE: Media query - Puberty blockers – Express

[redacted (38 (1) (B))–

Looks good. Tiny tweak from me below if that's ok? We keep being asked if we'll consider the Cass review and we've already stated that we will.

[redacted (38 (1) (B)) – Policy team

From: [redacted (38 (1) (B)) – Scottish Government Communications

Sent: 20 April 2022 14:29

To: Redacted ([redacted (38 (1) (B))] Scottish Government Gender Identity Policy Team

Cc: News Desk[redacted (38 (1) (B))– Communications Health & Social Care ; [redacted (38 (1) (B))–
Director of Population Health [redacted (38 (1) (B))– Deputy Director [redacted (38 (1) (B))– >

Subject: RE: Media query - Puberty blockers - Express

A Scottish Government spokesperson said:

“We recognise that access to, and delivery of, NHS gender identity services in Scotland requires improvement and have announced £9 million of planned investment to achieve this, with £2 million allocated for 2022-23.

“As we have previously stated we will carefully consider the findings of the Cass Review in the context of NHS Scotland services when the final recommendations are available as we look to improve services.”

Background

The Cass review was commissioned by NHS England in Autumn 2020 to make recommendations about services provided by NHS England, to children and young people who are questioning their gender identity or experiencing gender incongruence. It is examining how these clinical services are delivered to ‘ensure that the best model(s) for safe and effective services are commissioned’.

This review is not considering or reviewing clinical services within NHS Scotland. The Scottish Government has previously stated it will closely consider the findings of the Cass Review within the context of NHS Scotland services. No final recommendations have yet been made by the review.

In December 2021 the Scottish Government published a NHS gender identity services: strategic action framework. This set out how we will work to fund service improvements, address waiting times and support those waiting to access gender

identity services within NHS Scotland. £9 million of planned investment was announced to support this Framework, with £2 million allocated for 22-23

From: [redacted (38 (1) (B))]Scottish Government Gender Identity Policy Team

Sent: 20 April 2022 13:58

To: Communications >

Cc: News Desk [redacted (38 (1) (B))]– Communications Health & Social Care [redacted (38 (1) (B))]– ; Director of Population Health [redacted (38 (1) (B))]– Deputy Director [redacted (38 (1) (B))]–

Subject: RE: Media query - Puberty blockers - Express

Hi [redacted (38 (1) (B))]

Redacted 30(b)(i)

Scottish Government Policy Team

From[redacted (38 (1) (B))]– Scottish Government Communications :

Sent: 20 April 2022 10:58

To: [redacted (38 (1) (B))]– Scottish Government Gender Identity Policy Team}

Cc: News Desk [redacted (38 (1) (B))]– < Communications Health & Social [redacted (38 (1) (B))]–

Subject: Media query - Puberty blockers - Express

Hi all,

We've been asked to respond to comments below from For Women Scotland following a debate at UKG looking at the Cass Review and puberty blockers.

They say: "Scottish Politicians need to get their heads out of the sand and follow the lead of MPs who are taking heed of the findings of the Cass Review. This threatens to be the scandal of our time. The use of puberty blockers on children is experimental but in Scotland, there is no tracking of patient outcomes or follow up care, despite concerns that they affect bone density, brain development and fertility.

"Countries like Sweden have already halted the use of blockers and Finland only prescribes in exceptional circumstances: Scottish Ministers cannot pretend they are unaware of these international developments. We would ask NHS Scotland to commit to the findings of the Cass review and ask them if they will undertake their own review off the back of the interim report?

Below is a line from January, the copylist saved with it was huge so if you could add in colleagues who should be aware that would be great.

Are there any updates needed to the line or is it still accurate. Can we address the Cass report at all?

[Redacted (30 (b)(i))]

Query

As mentioned, I have a comment from For Women Scotland off the back of a Commons debate yesterday in which Sajid Javid introduced the Cass report findings and described the current model of trans healthcare for children as "borderline ideological".

FWS has said: "Scottish Politicians need to get their heads out of the sand and follow the lead of MPs who are taking heed of the findings of the Cass Review. This threatens to be the scandal of our time. The use of puberty blockers on children is experimental but in Scotland, there is no tracking of patient outcomes or follow up care, despite concerns that they affect bone density, brain development and fertility.

"Countries like Sweden have already halted the use of blockers and Finland only prescribes in exceptional circumstances: Scottish Ministers cannot pretend they are unaware of these international developments. We would ask NHS Scotland to commit to the findings of the Cass review and ask them if they will undertake their own review off the back of the interim report?"

This is for online so a comment asap would be great.

Thanks

Redacted [redacted (38 (1) (B))]

Document D – Email from NSS National Services Scotland to National Gender Identity Clinical Network for Scotland

From: nss ngicns [redacted (38 (1) (B))]-

Sent: 10 March 2022 11:57

To: [redacted (38 (1) (B))] National Gender Identity Clinical Network Steering group

Cc:

Subject: Cass independent Review - Interim report

Dear all,

Please see attached a link to the Interim report from the Cass Review.

<https://cass.independent-review.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/The-Cass-Review-Interim-Report-Final-Bookmarked.pdf>

Kind regards,

[redacted (38 (1) (B))]-

Document E – extract from National Gender Identity Healthcare Reference Group – Chairs brief 13 April 2022

LEAD [Redacted 38(1)(b)]

[Redacted (38(1)(b))] will provide a policy update, including ongoing work to fulfil SG Framework commitments since the last meeting:

This will include:

[Redacted out of scope of request]

- [Redacted (38 (1) (b))] will also highlight the publication of the Cass review's interim report and after the meeting will circulate the link to the group.
- The Cass review was commissioned by NHS England in autumn 2020 to make recommendations about services provided by NHS England, to children and young people who are questioning their gender identity or experiencing gender incongruence. This review is not considering or reviewing clinical services within NHS Scotland however, Scottish Government has previously stated it will closely consider the findings of the Cass Review.

Outcome/Closure

- [Redacted out of scope of request]

Document F – Email to Deputy Director alerting them of this topic

From: Gender Identity Healthcare Policy Team [redacted 38 (1)(b)]

Sent: 29 April 2022 17:20

To: Deputy Director Health Improvement office [redacted 38 (1) (b)]

Subject: Potential Hot Topic?

Hi redacted [38(1)(b)]

[redacted 30 (b) (i)]

[redacted 38 (1)(b)]

- Unattributed reports last weekend in The Times (24th) indicated the UK Government is considering additional powers for the ongoing Cass Review into NHS England's gender identity services for young people to better allow it to access NHS data. This has been misreported in other media outlets as an announcement by UK Gov of a new inquiry into gender identity services for young people.
- A known PQ at FMQ on the 28th from Meghan Gallacher (Con) asked if SG would establish an inquiry into the Scottish young people's gender identity service in Glasgow and raised concerns about prescription of 'puberty blockers'. The FM highlighted that SG will consider the findings of the Cass review when published and highlighted the small number of young people prescribed puberty blockers. No subsequent media coverage so far (29 April).

Redacted [38(1)(b)]