**UK Health Secretary will launch immediate and urgent inquiry into gender treatment for children.**

**Safeguarding Our Schools – Scotland** welcomes the news that the UK Health Secretary Sajid Javid is to begin an urgent inquiry into the treatment being offered to children struggling with issues around their gender.

Reported in [The Times,](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwjxwdTIoqr3AhWKQUEAHXr9BDEQvOMEKAB6BAgDEAE&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.thetimes.co.uk%2Farticle%2Fsajid-javid-inquiry-into-gender-treatment-for-children-wc3r3d9sn&usg=AOvVaw0j0CDvtTqTcqeHyTRrmIFK) Javid believes that the current system of care is ‘failing children’ and has raised concerns that some non-specialist staff “felt under pressure to adopt an unquestioning affirmative approach” to transitioning. Javid is also alarmed that the preliminary finding by the review being carried out by [Dr Hilary Cass](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwiSlbrfoqr3AhUJa8AKHQzDBc8QjBB6BAgDEAE&url=https%3A%2F%2Fcass.independent-review.uk%2Fpublications%2Finterim-report%2F&usg=AOvVaw2wFrjTV_GIxhFwJMhyjrIO), former president of the Royal College of Paediatrics, shows evidence that other complex issues such as mental health, trauma, and neurodiversity where subject to overshadowing when gender is raised.

The concerns around how under 18’s with questions about their gender identity have been politicised, have been compared with those that were found to have influenced and impacted the care of children in Rotherham, in regards to the sexual exploitation they were subjected to by grooming gangs, where many were worried about being called racist. This time people have worried about being called bigots or transphobic and have therefore become complicit in their silence.

It has been reported that the Health Secretary will be preparing for legal changes to enable Dr Cass to access NHS database and identify children who have been treated by the Tavistock Gender Clinic in order to check how many of them have later regretted taking puberty blockers and cross sex hormones.

Whilst we welcome this intervention in England, we are concerned that this is not being reflected across Scotland, where health and education are devolved matters. The treatment of children with gender incongruence in Scotland appears to be seen as an equality issue, which is the wrong vehicle to address the multifaceted and often extremely complex reasons for children to be struggling with gender identity. Dr Cass said in her recently published Interim Report, that children were being affected by a lack of expert agreement about the nature of gender identity problems, a ‘lottery of care’, and long waiting lists. We are of the opinion that having a Scottish postcode is no reason for these same concerns to be avoided.

Javid has been reported as saying: “That overly affirmative approach where people just accept what a child says, almost automatically, and then start talking about things like puberty blockers – that’s not in the interest of the child at all.” We agree. We have raised concerns, alongside others in Scotland, around the affirmation approach to children questioning their gender that is being pushed by the Scottish Government and has been accepted and disseminated by many Local Authorities and schools, often without parents being involved.

There needs to be a similar inquiry into why children in Scotland are being used to further what would appear to be an adult, political agenda. Questions need to be asked of The Sandyford, who revealed in a Freedom of Information (FOI) by For Women Scotland, that they don’t even record the sex of the children presenting to them. If they do not record the sex of a child, there is no way for them to be able to identify if the increase in girls, as reported by the Tavistock, is reflected in Scotland.

We need to ask serious questions of the Scottish Government, politicians, and political parties who have unquestioningly gone along with this and why they are ignoring evidence. We need to stop political lobby groups such as LGBT Youth Scotland, Time for Inclusive Education (TiE) and others from having unfiltered access into our childrens education, pushing an affirmative model of care that we can see quite clearly, is lead leading to significant harm.

We all have a duty of care towards the safeguarding of children and right now Scotland’s Government and political parties, NHS services, Education Departments, Local Authorities, and the Children’s Commissioner are failing in that duty. They must now answer why they are not affording the same evidenced based approach to the care of children as England. Or at least asking questions.