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## NHS blocks puberty blockers in the UK. Dippe: "They can cause serious health issues"

This landmark decision would have been unthinkable only a few years ago. NHS England has decided a few days ago that puberty-blockers (such as triptorelin) will no longer be prescribed at authorised state-run clinics to children and adolescents experiencing gender dysphoria. This is a very significant backtrack considering that, for years, hundreds of underage youths, some as young as 10 or 11 years-old, were allowed to start a gender transition process at London's Tavistock Clinic, with no guaranteed counselling sessions, i.e. assisting those in need to decide on their personal options. SIR interviewed **Tim Dieppe**, head of Public Policy at Christian Concern, a leading pro-life charitable organisation, to understand the underlying rationale for this U-turn.



In 2022, the British government commissioned a review conducted by renowned paediatrician Dr Hilary Cass, whose research had shown that, contrary to popular opinion, there was scarce data on the use of puberty-blocking drugs, particularly in relation to their irreversible effects on patients. The findings of the review led to the NHS ordering the closure of the Tavistock Gender identity clinic, which was prescribing these drugs to very young patients who were unsure of their sexual identity. The drugs paused puberty to give the young patients time to choose their preferred gender. In the vast majority of cases, by adolescence, such uncertainty about sexual identity is no longer present, the Cass Committee found, so this was the wrong approach. Consequently, to interpret this ambiguity as evidence that minors need to undergo gender reassignment would, according to the Commission, have devastating and irreversible consequences if it were to involve hormone blockers and surgical procedures such as mastectomies. **Why is it wrong to prescribe hormone blockers?** Because they interfere with puberty, which is a natural process. They can cause serious health problems and young people are not usually aware of these effects. Between 80% and 90% of children and young people with gender dysphoria overcome this uncertainty as they go through puberty. This is when they realise that they cannot fight nature or their bodies. **There have also been high-profile cases, such as that of Keira Bell.** Yes. This 16-year-old girl took the Tavistock Clinic to court, claiming that they had prescribed hormone blockers to prepare her for a mastectomy, but had failed to ensure that she had the counselling to fully understand the value of her fertility. This emblematic story has had an impact on the government's decision. In addition, the World Professional Association for Transgender Health, which researches gender dysphoria, denounced that hormone blockers can cause health disorders and cancer, and that in most cases minors do not understand the impact on their fertility. Hannah Barnes' book 'Time to think', specifically about the 'Tavistock' clinic, denounced that 99% of people who take hormone blockers go on to complete gender reassignment. In other words, the process of gender reassignment is accelerated without time to think. **Why was the approach so liberal before the new restrictions?** Because 'Tavistock' practitioners were worried that they would be accused of resorting to conversion therapy, which is banned, unless they allowed minors access to hormone blockers. The public was shocked at the idea that very young boys could be given hormone blockers in a few visits. Hormone blockers have not been banned outright, but are available at a cost and are often offered to minors on an experimental basis. Many parents insist that their children should be allowed to take them if they believe they need to change their gender.

