17th July 2023

Dr Paul Bentley, Chief Executive

Kate Langford, Chief Medical Officer

Steve Fenlon, Deputy Chief Medical Officer
NHS Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board (ICB)

Dear Paul, Kate & Steve

Kent and Medway General Practitioners are writing to express our serious concern at the failure to commission the non-specialist elements of the NHS pathway of care for individuals with gender dysphoria, despite 2 previous letters (attached) highlighting our safety concerns and lack of equality of services for this group.



Transgender individuals have the right to be treated with the same respect, sensitivity and understanding as all patients. However, the lack of a commissioned service is perpetuating an unacceptable health inequality.

We understand that the ICB are not, currently, responsible for commissioning specialist services in this area and would encourage you to petition NHS England regarding this. However, local commissioners are responsible for commissioning non specialist elements of the NHS pathway of care for individuals with Gender Dysphoria and have been since 2019[[1]](#endnote-2). Due to the absence of appropriate local services prescribing has been left to GPs to pick up. Most GPs, along with some Endocrinology consultants, do not feel they have the necessary expertise to safely prescribe hormone treatments due to their complexity and the relatively low number of patients individual GPs will see.

The increasing numbers of individuals requiring treatment combined with the lack of adequate specialist services is leading patients to private providers, whose quality and governance standards are not always regulated to the same standard as NHS providers.

This gap in services is causing tensions between patients and practices leading to complaints and litigation. This cannot continue and we urge the ICB to undertake the following actions: -

1. Urgently commission a non-specialist gender prescribing and monitoring service.
2. Provide direct support for patients affected by the current lack of local NHS service provision via a single point of contact.
3. Endorse the attached patient information letter which explains why GPs are not able to follow instructions from a private Gender clinic.



On behalf of all the GPs in Kent & Medway the LMC seeks an urgent meeting to agree an immediate way forward.

Yours sincerely



Dr Gaurav Gupta

On behalf of the Kent & Medway GP Board

1. <https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/service-specification-gender-identity-services-for-adults-non-surgical-interventions/> [↑](#endnote-ref-2)