

England to end puberty blockers for under-18s

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Young people in England will no longer be prescribed puberty blockers by gender identity clinics, officials said on Tuesday.

The banning of the medication—which pauses the physical changes of puberty such as [breast development](#) or [facial hair](#)—will affect anyone

under the age of 18 being treated by the state-funded National Health Service (NHS).

It follows a spike in referrals to over 5,000 in 2021-2022 from just under 250 a decade earlier.

The government welcomed the NHS's decision.

"Ending the routine prescription of puberty blockers will help ensure that care is based on evidence, expert clinical opinion and is in the best interests of the child," said junior health minister Maria Caulfield.

The decision follows a public consultation on the issue.

An independent review commissioned by the NHS in England in 2020 has also looked at [gender](#) identity services for children under 18.

An interim report published in February 2022 by review lead Hilary Cass pointed to a lack of long-term evidence on the outcomes of children and young people prescribed [puberty](#) blocking medication by the Gids clinic.

Gids, the Gender Identity Development Service, which is due to close at the end of March, had not collected routine and consistent data "which means it is not possible to accurately track the outcomes and pathways that children and [young people](#) take through the service", Cass said.

The NHS has said all children being referred for treatment will from April instead attend two new clinics based at the renowned Great Ormond Street Hospital in London and Alder Hey Children's Hospital in northwestern Liverpool.

It has said those being treated at the clinics will be supported by clinical

experts in neurodiversity, pediatrics and [mental health](#), "resulting in a holistic approach to care".

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