



Jenny Cunningham + Carolyn Brown + Edited by Penny Lewis

WHY TRANS IDEOLOGY MATTERS

Social engineering and indoctrination in schools

WHY TRANSGENDER IDEOLOGY MATTERS
Social engineering and indoctrination in schools



Published by the Scottish Union for Education

Dr Jennifer Cunningham completed her medical training in South Africa before emigrating to the UK. She retired in 2016, having been a community paediatrician in Glasgow for almost thirty years. She worked in a Glasgow child development centre in neurodevelopment paediatrics and was closely involved in establishing the city-wide autism diagnostic service. In retirement she has been a member of the Scottish Union for Education (SUE) advisory board and has completed a masters degree in English Literature.

Carolyn Brown is a retired Depute Principal Educational Psychologist. She worked in Fife Education Service for thirty-five years. Before that she was a secondary school teacher for nine years. She taught English then worked as a support teacher for pupils with behaviour issues. She has been an adviser to the Scottish Government on Autism and was the only education contributor to the Scottish Sign Guidance on Autism (2016). During her career she wrote numerous articles in a variety of psychology journals.

Since retiring she has continued to write. Her articles and comments have appeared in various media outlets including the Times, the Scotsman, the Telegraph, the Sunday Post and Genspect. She is Convenor of ScotPAG, a multiagency group of professionals from Education, Social Work and Health, and writes a regular blog for the ScotPAG website.

Foreword

In May 2026, to coincide with the Scottish Parliament elections, the Scottish Union for Education (SUE) produced a manifesto. This document sets out the problems with the current education system and highlighted parents' and teachers' concerns. What the manifesto made clear was that the crisis in Scotland was not a financial crisis. There are shortages of funds in all levels of education. No amount of breakfast clubs will solve Scotland's education crisis, because the problem is not one of funding or poverty. The issue is a poverty of ambition and a fundamental failure of the political class to understand the purpose of education and to place real value on the intellectual life of the nation.

Standards of education and pupil engagement and discipline will continue to decline, unless there is radical reform of the education system and teacher training. Scottish education was once very good, because as a nation, we placed considerable social value in knowledge, culture and intellectual skills. Today it is poor and uninspiring because we have adopted a system, the Curriculum for Excellence (cfe), which has abandoned the basic ideas that made our schools work.

In the past we saw schools, and universities, as places where children were introduced to our accumulated knowledge in the sciences and the best work in the arts and humanities. We describe this approach as traditional or liberal education. We equipped pupils with the skills to read and to do maths, and we exposed them to some of the best cultural works produced by Scotland and from across the world. School was about the transfer of knowledge and at the same time it was about socialisation, the process of introducing all children to the universal values shared by our society within a liberal democracy.

In this old system we helped children to value honesty and objectivity. They learnt about the gift of being able to see the world as others see it, and the importance of self-reflection. We organised schools so that children could practice these values and cultivate personal qualities, such as kindness, loyalty and self-discipline. We socialised children by exposing them to the values held by society at large, values shared by the majority of parents. Sometimes pupils rebelled against those values, but normally parents and the school were on the same side, and pupils tested the boundaries of adult authority and common morality. Readers would be mistaken if they thought that the current discussion about transgenderism and the so-called ‘toilet wars’ were just another example of the age-old issue of generations in conflict. What is happening in schools today is not socialisation, it is social engineering.

Today teachers and education authorities are teaching children ideas about history, race, environment and gender and sexuality which are all alien to the outlook of many parents. Many teachers are being ‘re-educated’ or trained in this new ideology, whether it’s through government sponsored projects on decolonisation and anti-racism or training courses on gender. This is a top-down process, however radical it may appear, in which

government is engineering a social revolution through the education of our children.

When a government looks at the education system as a tool to shift social attitudes rather than a reflection of existing attitudes something is seriously wrong. Education is being used as a tool of indoctrination, rather than opening children's minds to a whole range of ideas. Schools are becoming places where children are trained to believe the new narrow orthodoxy of diversity and inclusion. This social engineering undermines the family and places parents in opposition to schools and some teachers. There is no subject area in which the process of indoctrination in Scottish schools is more clearly expressed than on the questions of gender.

That is why SUE has taken the transgender ideology and sex education so seriously. It's not that SUE supporters are prudish, nor that we would like to return to the social norms of the 1950s. We are concerned about sex education and transgender ideology in schools because it is the clearest expression of government overreach. The Scottish state is using schools to morally and political direct our children's thoughts and values.

Many teachers and pupils do not accept transgender ideology. They don't subscribe to the idea that a child can be 'born in the wrong body' or that men can chose to use women's toilets if they 'identify' as a woman. The fact that government policy demands that both teachers and pupils participate in transgender fiction is particularly problematic for young children, for whom understanding truth and lies is key to their personal and social development.

Readers may think that transgender ideology doesn't really affect them because their school has not adopted government

policy and the headteacher has demonstrated common sense. However, schools have very little autonomy on these issues and increasingly ‘inclusive education’ ideology means they are embedded in all areas of the curriculum. No child is untouched by this ideology; it is part of a broader so-called ‘progressive’ outlook that is confusing and demoralising children. This ideology is grounded in the idea that the old frameworks of understanding that we developed over centuries to make sense of the world are no longer useful. Our culture encourages children to see the past as a place of bigotry and darkness rather than insight and inspiration. All we have to work with is the present, and here children are confronted by a catalogue of risky and harmful experiences. Today children are often taught about their rights and encouraged to see themselves as entitled, rather than as contributors to our common world.

Back in summer 2023 Dr Jenny Cunningham wrote *Transgender ideology in Scottish schools: What’s wrong with government guidance?* It described the weaknesses in the Scottish Government advice and dissected the unconvincing research on which it was grounded. You can access the pamphlet on SUE’s Substack. Since that publication we have had the Supreme Court ruling in favour of For Women Scotland (FWS), the defeat of the Scottish Government Gender Recognition Act and the Cass Review. It is no longer career-threatening to be gender critical, but it remains difficult, particularly for those working in the public sector. Organisations such as the Free Speech Union and FWS are engaged in an ongoing struggle to defend individuals who have refused to conform to the demands made by transgender activists. In this pamphlet Jenny Cunningham and Carolyn Brown set out the current state of affairs, the problems with the children’s rights agenda, the weaknesses of the Cass Review, the damage caused by social transitioning and the disastrous impact of gender ideology on the relationship between families and schools.

FOREWORD

The transgender question is the clearest and most dangerous expression of Scottish Government's social engineering. That is why policy, guidance and charities must be challenged in all schools.

Penny Lewis is a university lecturer, member of the SUE advisory board and an editor of the SUE Substack

01

Invoking 'children's rights' & eroding parental authority Jenny Cunnigham

Martin Guggenheim, Professor of Clinical Law at New York University, renowned expert on child law and children's advocate since the 1970s, found himself increasingly opposed to those in the children's rights movement, in particular '*with respect to the exercise of parental authority*'. He wrote the book *What's Wrong with Children's Rights* in order to assess whether the concept of 'children's rights' actually serves children's interests [1] Guggenheim argued that since the 1960s the children's rights movement had been characterised by '*three related components*': being dominated by lawyers, looking to the courts for adjudication, and being '*based on the rhetoric of rights*'. [1, p. 8] This marked a significant shift from children's '*needs*' – developmental, educational and health – to '*rights*'. He emphasises that children are dependent on adults, primarily their parents, throughout their childhood, because childhood involves '*the natural course of development*', at the end of which children will enter adulthood. In fact, it is sensible to believe that '*it is a child's right not to be deemed capable of making decisions*' made by adults, precisely because they lack the intellectual maturity and experience to judge the implications of such decisions or take responsibility for them. [1, pp. 9–10]

Regrettably, a leading characteristic of the children's rights movement is its propensity to separate children's interests from their parents. It is also its most egregious error.[1, p. 13]

Guggenheim insists that it is problematic to discuss children's rights in various situations without considering the rights of the adults on whom they are dependent. He points out that proponents of children's rights regularly challenge laws that give parents '*the primary authority to control the details of a child's upbringing*'. This attempts to remove some of this control and shift it to other adults (such as state officials, like judges, education authorities or teachers) or to the child. Alternatively, they attempt to gain rights for children that adults have.[1, pp. 17–18] Unsurprisingly, many children's rights advocates '*expend considerable energy relying on International Law to advance children's rights, such as the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights and its Convention on the Rights of the Child*'. [1, p. 14]

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) has operated as an international agreement since 1990, establishing minimum standards for economic, legal and political rights for children in those countries that have ratified it. In 1991, the UK government endorsed it in part by developing its own legislation within the Children Act 2004. This meant it was not committed to UNCRC directives in policy or law-making, directives that have become increasingly political. Scotland, however, has gone much further. In 2023, the Scottish parliament passed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill, which received Royal Assent in 2024. This makes the UNCRC part of Scottish law, which means Scottish courts can enforce it against public authorities in Scotland, superseding any previous laws. Andrew Tettenborn, Chair of Law at Swansea University, has outlined some of the demands laid out in a UNCRC report to the UK in 2023:

Setting up youth parliaments and incorporation of their views into national policy-making; completely preventing schools selecting by religion; giving children the right to declare their gender identity; and compulsory LGBT-friendly sex education 'without the possibility for faith-based schools or parents to opt out of such education'.[2]

The Scottish government has followed this 'advice' almost to the letter, incorporating it into policy, such as the Scottish Youth Parliament, Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood (RSHPP) education, and *Supporting Transgender Pupils in Schools: Guidance for Education Authorities and Schools – Revised*. Tettenborn suggested that the incorporation of the UNCRC will '*in practice unduly enfranchises activist pressure groups*' to achieve what they want through UNCRC diktat, using '*lawfare rather than politics*'. [2] The government's LGBT Inclusive Education is being implemented by the LGBT activist group Time for Inclusive Education (TIE). The *Guidance on LGBT Inclusive Education* includes as the first of its seven learning themes '*Understanding the Equality Act 2010, the UNCRC and human rights*'. [3, p. 5] It spells out the requirements of the UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act (2024) in detail in an appendix. [3, p. 12] Both TIE and the government emphasise that parents cannot withdraw their children from any part of LGBT Inclusive Education, as it runs through every part of the Curriculum for Excellence.

Tettenborn predicted that rather than the UNCRC incorporation serving the interests of children, the SNP and Greens would use it '*quietly to impose their authoritarian brand of activism on the people of Scotland*'. [2] His prediction has proven remarkably prescient (and not just in relation to LGBT Inclusive Education). On 17 February 2026, the Scottish parliament passed the controversial 'Children (Withdrawal from Religious Education and Amendment of UNCRC Compatibility Duty) (Scotland) Bill'

– by 66 votes for and 51 against. It received Royal Assent on 2 April 2026.[4] This changes the right of parents to withdraw their children from religious education and religious observance in school. Schools now have to inform a child if their parent asks for them to be *withdrawn* from either or both. Where the child disagrees with the parent’s view and is deemed capable of forming a view, the school will have to follow the child’s wishes. If the parent asks for their child to continue to participate in religious observance, the child will not have the legal right to object.[4] Green Party MSP Maggie Chapman had an amendment accepted by the Bill’s proposer, Jenny Gilruth, SNP MSP and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills. This stated that: *‘Ministers will give further consideration to providing children with an independent right to withdraw from religious observance’*. Gilruth agreed that this would give a future government the flexibility *‘by way of a regulation-making power to create a right for pupils to request withdrawal from religious observance’* (rather than necessarily requiring primary legislation).[4]

This legislation and the amendment perfectly illustrate the way in which children’s rights advocates utilise international law to undermine the rights of parents, as Guggenheim argued, and demonstrate the authoritarian activism of the SNP and Greens that Tettenborn predicted.

Subsequently, Maggie Chapman welcomed the government’s support for her amendment:

But it is only the first step in securing equitable rights for all children in Scotland to choose what religious activities they participate in. If we are a society that respects the rights of children and young people we must listen to them and empower them to make their own choices and exercise their own rights independently of any adult.[5]

Chapman was challenged by Penny Lewis, Scottish Union for Education advisory board member:

You are promoting the idea that the government knows better than parents. And you are undermining the authority of teachers. There is a difference between adults and children. Adults make judgements on the best interests of children. Children are not able to make these judgements – this is the basic principle of parenting, schooling and citizenship. When we all get to 16 or 18 we have rights to assert our own autonomy. You don't seem to grasp this important distinction. Most people don't recognise your agenda about giving children adult rights. Children need love, care and boundaries.[5]

Chapman's post exposed another side to her 'children's rights' agenda:

Nobody should be forced to take part in religious activities – praying, singing hymns, affirming a belief in a god – we still have work to do to ensure that religious observance in our schools is delivered in a way that is appropriate to our multi-faith society.

Lewis's response was steely:

Scottish children are not forced to sit through hours of religious worship. If anything, parents complain that many traditional Christian rituals have been abandoned in school. Kids don't know bible stories – an essential part of literature – nor do they sing hymns. They are being cut off from their heritage – not being given freedom. To me it shows a complete lack of respect for ordinary people and real adult freedom.[5]

Of course, Chapman's party has vowed to disestablish the Anglican Church if in government. In the recent Gorton and Denton by-election in England, the Greens campaigned almost exclusively around the specific concerns of Muslim voters.

When children's interests are subverted to serve the political and ideological agendas of those wearing the mantle of children's rights advocates, it becomes imperative to defend parents' rights to raise their children according to their own and wider society's beliefs and values.

02

When peddling a lie causes
harm to all and undermines our
education system

Carolyn Brown

The Scottish government guidance *Supporting Transgender Pupils in Schools* continues to cause concern among many professionals.[1] The guidance is emblematic of the Scottish government's entire *modus operandi* for its contention that it is 'progressive', 'inclusive' and supports diversity. But nothing could be further from the truth. Not only has the Scottish government failed to adequately review its regressive guidance for schools, but it has also repeatedly refused to engage in any reasonable level of discussion or consideration of the facts and the proper implementation of the Supreme Court ruling of 16 April 2025. This is not responsible government.

Supporting Transgender Pupils in Schools risks causing psychological harm potentially to all children and their families. Furthermore, the guidance promotes a fantasy, a denial of reality, and arguably is contributing to the erosion of the very fabric of our Scottish education system.

Helen Joyce has stated on various occasions that when a lie is imported into any organisation, the organisation become corrupted.[2] Not only that, but the lie breaks the organisation

at the very point of its purpose. So, a safeguarding organisation becomes an anti-safeguarding organisation; schools stop being places of education and become places of indoctrination. We are already witnessing this across nearly all our public services. And the fact that the Scottish government refuses to engage in any meaningful analysis of this indicates that they have backed themselves into a gender identity ideological corner but are refusing to admit it. It is also becoming clear that the Scottish government is using taxpayers' money to buy the affirmation of specific charities which act to lobby and confirm the Scottish government's policies and planning.[3] This is authoritarian behaviour in action.

Supporting Transgender Pupils in Schools is guidance which states as fact that gender identity exists. But all definitions of gender identity are circular. For example, a common explanation is, 'Gender identity describes how a person feels about their gender'. There is no evidence whatsoever for the existence of this concept. No human can change sex. No child is 'born in the wrong body'. There are plenty of children and adults who do not conform to sex stereotypes. Some of these individuals do indeed experience psychological issues, but it is illogical and unnecessary to conclude that they need to change their bodies to try to look like the opposite sex.

The problem being visited on our schools is that for at least the last five years, our Scottish government has been invested in our pupils receiving a huge pedagogical lie – that is, the lie that gender identity exists. 'Trans' children, in any real or accurate sense, do not exist, except in the minds of those harbouring vested interests and who wish children to believe in such a concept. The term 'transgender' is itself indefinable. Stonewall describes it as '*an umbrella term to describe people whose gender is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with, the sex they were assigned at birth*'. Such definitions are so vague and circular as to be meaningless.

Basically ‘transgender’ is a twenty-first century version of transsexual: an adult condition, dominated by middle-aged men. The questions to be asked is: why is the Scottish government invested in this adult concept being embedded into all aspects of our education system?

Gender identity ideology has become significantly embedded in the systems and processes of nearly every Scottish primary and secondary school. A study conducted in 2024 by ScotPAG and Women’s Rights Network Scotland, whose results were presented in their report *How captured are our councils and public services?*, found that all councils referred their education services to the guidance *Supporting Transgender Pupils in Schools*.^[4] Research by For Women Scotland, presented in the report *What’s happening in your child’s classroom?* (2024), found that 95% of schools supported self-identification; 89% of schools supported teaching gender identity; and 75% of schools used a third-sector group, such as LGBT Youth Scotland or Time for Inclusive Education (TIE), to provide professional development for staff and advice regarding school planning and projects.^[5] Education Scotland, the regulatory body for Scottish education, states on the TIE website that all schools must use TIE materials.^[6]

Hannah Barnes argued that there is good evidence that many gender-questioning children who state they are ‘transgender’ will develop into adults who are gay or lesbian. Barnes noted that at the Gender Identity Development Service (GIDS), many of the children identifying as ‘transgender’ had internalised homophobic responses from family and immediate contexts^[7] Unfortunately, the Scottish government’s guidance supports affirming and social transitioning for children who state they are ‘trans’, even though pupils would be much better supported by professional input which explored the reasons for their anxiety and distress.

There are many reasons why a child or teenager might state that they think they are ‘trans’, for example, autism, anxiety, abuse, bullying, trauma, bodily hatred and social contagion. These are the issues which should be addressed via effective psychological assessment, appropriate care and safe, evidenced-based interventions. The Scottish government’s guidance does none of that.

The psychiatrist David Bell has stated:

Characterising a child as ‘being transgender’ is harmful as it forecloses the situation and also implies that this is a unitary condition for which there is a unitary treatment. It is much more helpful to use a description: the child suffers from distress in relation to gender/sexuality, and this needs to be explored in terms of the narrative of their lives, the presence of other difficulties such as autism, depression, histories of abuse and trauma, and confusion about sexuality.[8]

School-based psychological harm is everyone’s problem

Supporting Transgender Pupils in Schools is the guidance provided to all Scottish schools and is supported by all our councils and public services. Schools use the guidance to plan arrangements for toilets and changing rooms, what goes on in classrooms, school corridors, the playground, and extracurricular activities. Third-sector activist organisations, funded by the Scottish government – such as LGBT Youth Scotland, Stonewall and TIE – encourage schools to embed gender identity ideology across curricular subjects; they invite pupils to access youth groups run by them; and they encourage schools to celebrate gender ideological events such as Pride month and Pride community events. Such an approach is encouraging children to collude in a fantasy. This is education that, in effect, seeks to manipulate children and their families into accepting an alternative world which is counterfactual to reality.

One primary harm resulting from the imposition of what is in effect a lie is the erosion of trust between teachers, children and their families. When adults lie to children, they risk damaging their credibility as reliable sources of information. Children who initially view teachers as authoritative may begin to question the veracity of *all* statements made in that educational context. The promotion of a counterfactual idea is more than likely to result in the development of disbelief and mistrust. If, for example, a school has agreed to socially transition a boy who now claims to be a girl, children in that context are being required to disbelieve the evidence of their own eyes.[9]

Such a situation will not only negatively impact on the level of trust between pupils and teachers but will also cause confusion and anxiety for many children. This confusion and anxiety are likely to find their way into the home situation. There are parents all over Scotland who have reported that they have been gaslit by their child's school, thereby eroding trust between home and school.[10]

Enforcing a lie in an educational context also fosters a worldview for children where deception is normalised. This is not a well-balanced cognitive framework to be providing for children. Where schools are promoting gender identity ideology as fact, an environment is created which will cause ongoing exposure to spurious claims. This displaces opportunities for honest communication and may limit children's ability to develop negotiation and problem-solving skills. In extreme cases, this may contribute to antisocial behaviours, because children have learned that manipulation is an acceptable interpersonal strategy. The result is likely to be a strained dynamic where children feel less emotionally secure. There is the real potential, particularly in a long-term and persistent educational context, that children may carry forward this insecurity into their own relationships as adults.[11]

It is also the case regarding children's social learning that authority figures such as teachers influence children's moral development. Deception as part of the educational process teaches children that lying is an acceptable tool for control or avoidance. Studies have demonstrated that children, exposed to adult deception, including that of teachers, are more prone to cheat and lie themselves, especially in school-age groups.[12]

It is more than likely that the deception perpetrated by gender identity ideology activists, and those who are complicit, has visited a major harm across the entire Scottish education system. It may well be a major contributor to the general malaise in education commented on currently by critics. There are key indicators that our Scottish education system is in significant distress: a rise in home schooling; a significant decrease in school attendance; increasing reports of pupil anxiety; concerns about increasing behavioural issues; falling attainment figures; and poor teacher morale.

Last summer 2025, ScotPAG interviewed two senior educationalists.[13] Both interviewees felt it was necessary to remain anonymous. The Scottish context remains a place where it is difficult for people to engage in open discussion and critical thinking without being attacked by activists and punished by employers. The interviewees were a retired manager of a large council education service, and a headteacher at a moderately sized primary school. Both shared their concerns about the impact gender ideology, and the transgender movement is having on our Scottish education system, the teaching profession, and pupils and their families. Of the guidance *Supporting Transgender Pupils in Schools*, the education manager stated:

The guidance was shockingly misinformed and did not present a balanced approach. I thought the guidance was pandering to an

ideology that is basically just a fad. I thought that the guidance was potentially dangerous, not based on sound evidence and not at all helpful to anyone, let alone professionals in the Scottish education system.

The headteacher commented:

Children are being encouraged to believe lies and to disbelieve facts. This has huge potential to confuse children and to cause mental stress. I also think that there are huge cultural and societal implications for promoting what is in effect a mass deception.

So many children do feel different and it is just a normal part of growing up. That is nothing new. But over the last decade, children have been encouraged and indoctrinated to think that there is something wrong with themselves. Those children who feel like they don't fit in, and children in general, have been encouraged down the rabbit hole of gender ideology which has the attraction of badges, banners, affirmation and being made to feel special. This is a collective harm which in turn, harms society.

Educators need to prioritise transparency to foster resilient, honest learners and strengthen school bonds with families. By committing to truthfulness, teachers can mitigate some of harms already caused by gender identity ideology in our schools. But our Scottish government and all our public services need to embrace reality, not to mention find a way of rectifying its errant safeguarding procedures, as a matter of urgency.

03

Revised government guidance: time for educational professionals to start exercising judgement Jenny Cunningham

The Scottish government has revised its previous guidance (2021), but little has changed apart from advice that toilets, changing rooms, accommodation on residential trips, and possibly some competitive school sports teams must become single sex. This reverses previous advice that transgender-identifying pupils could use the facilities of their choice, based on their professed gender identity (usually the opposite of their actual sex). The government has only belatedly made these changes because it was forced to.

This guidance document has been updated in light of the Supreme Court's judgement in For Women Scotland Limited v Scottish Ministers, which clarified the definition of 'sex' and related terms for the purposes of the Equality Act 2010, and the decision in Hurley v Scottish Borders Council which clarified that primary and secondary schools are required to provide separate toilets for boys and girls.[1, p. 6]

It should be noted that it was only the courageous determination of women's rights organisations in the first case, and parents' plucky resolve to challenge their child's school and local authority in the second, that succeeded in compelling the government to concede.

The only other significant change made by the government was to acknowledge explicitly that the guidance is non-statutory:

This guidance aims to help school staff in Scotland's education authority, grant-aided, and independent schools to provide transgender young people with the best possible educational experiences. [...] This guidance is non-statutory and is designed to help education authority, grant-aided and independent schools to make decisions effectively but cannot be prescriptive or specific about what is required in individual circumstances. [They] are responsible for ensuring that their policies and practices take full account of the legal requirements of the relevant legislation.[1, p. 7]

It is clear that the government is putting responsibility for implementing the practical consequences of the clarified legal framework (e.g. what toilets to make available to transgender-identifying pupils) onto education authorities and schools – which will no doubt face litigation challenges if they get things wrong.

The fact that the guidance is explicitly non-statutory means that education authorities and headteachers have the opportunity not just to exercise their discretion over school facilities but can now begin to exercise *judgement* about the content of the guidance itself. This guidance is about imposing a programme of ideological indoctrination on education staff and pupils – a programme employing contested gender ideology that has nothing to do with evidence-based knowledge. This is borne out by the government's admission that the guidance is based on a document produced by the transgender activist group LGBT Youth Scotland:

This guidance has been developed from Supporting Transgender Young People which was developed and published by LGBT Youth Scotland in 2017. The guidance is therefore based on the experiences of transgender young people and good practice approaches suggested by school staff, and a wide range of

professionals with expertise in the field of education and human rights.[1, p. 7]

There are five key areas which demand the rational, scientific judgement of Scottish educators.

1. The basis of the guidance lies in gender identity theory: the idea that children and adolescents have an innate or emergent gender identity that can be different to their biological sex. Children introduced to these ideas may easily come to believe the fantasy that they are in the ‘wrong’ body and can change their sex. Adolescents can come to seek relief from the turmoil of puberty and their psychosocial difficulties in the cult of medical ‘gender realignment’: changing their secondary sexual characteristics in order to pass as the opposite sex.
2. There is inescapable evidence that there has been an unholy marriage between transgender ideology and gender identity medical services, both within national health services like the NHS and international professional bodies promoting so-called gender-affirmative care. Education staff cannot ignore or distance themselves from the trajectory that children and adolescents are following if they come to identify as ‘transgender’, and the harms associated with medical gender reassignment.
3. Social transition (adopting the persona of the opposite sex, including by name change and use of preferred pronouns) is *encouraged* by the guidance – as the first step in a pupil adopting a transgender identity. However, this is not a neutral act; it may be expected to lessen the likelihood of a child’s gender dysphoria resolving naturally at puberty. Dr Hilary Cass, author of the internationally recognised comprehensive review of gender-affirmative medicine for NHS England, found no clear evidence of benefit for social transition and, furthermore, noted a correlation between early social transition and the decision to proceed to medical gender reassignment.[2, p. 31]

4. There is a misinterpretation of statistics used in the guidance to justify why the guidance is needed. These statistics, supplied by LGBT Youth Scotland, amplify apparently significant difficulties and threats facing transgender-identifying pupils in Scottish schools.
5. The main vectors of gender identity indoctrination and its influence over the government are transgender activists in LGBT Youth Scotland (through its schools charter scheme and its groups operating in most secondary schools and a few primary schools) and Time for Inclusive Education (through its management of the government's LGBT Inclusive Education platform).

Expanding on these five areas highlights why education authorities and headteachers need to assert the need for scientific, evidence-based education as a defence against ideological indoctrination.

Guidance based on gender ideology

Unsurprisingly, the guidance uses definitions employed by gender identity theory:

Gender identity – a person's deeply-felt internal and individual experience of gender. This may or may not correspond with their biological sex. [...] 'Transgender' and 'trans' are umbrella terms for people whose gender identity differs in some way from their biological sex.[1, p. 46]

So the starting point is the unverifiable existence of a subjective feeling, on the basis of which children – mainly adolescents (70% of them girls) – have been referred to Scotland's gender identity service for young people, at the Sandyford Clinic, Glasgow, in considerable numbers since 2014. As of March 2024, there were 997 on its waiting list, and currently initial appointments are being offered to those referred in November 2019.[3, 4] Some

of those referred have been treated with puberty blockers, and they, together with many others, have been given masculinising or feminising (cross-sex) hormones. Those who turn 18 transfer to the adult gender service and can be referred for surgical realignment if desired (mastectomies for girls or castration for boys, as well as more radical invasive procedures).

The marriage between transgender ideology and gender identity health services

Educational authorities and headteachers cannot turn a blind eye – in the way the government chooses to do – to the growing evidence of harm resulting from gender ideology in schools. On the one hand, there are the risks and long-term complications of both puberty blockers (which disrupt development of sex organs, bones and brain) and cross-sex hormones (infertility, loss of libido, sexual dysfunction, painful vaginal atrophy in females, urinary complications, a wide range of health problems, and the need for lifelong medication). Perfectly healthy bodies can be mutilated by surgical interventions. On the other hand, major international reviews in Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Germany, the USA and the UK have shown that there is an extremely weak evidence base for gender medicine. One of the most comprehensive of these is the Cass Review, involving four years of research and analysis on behalf of NHS England. It was endorsed by NHS Scotland, which in 2024 suspended the prescription of puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones for those under 18 years.

Social transitioning

The social transition of pupils in schools cannot be assumed to be a benign act of ‘respect’. Based on her preliminary findings, Cass cautioned that *‘it is important to view [social transition] as an active intervention because it may have significant effects on the child or young person in terms of their psychological functioning’* [5, p. 62] and that *‘it is important to acknowledge that it is not a neutral act’*. [2, p. 63]

The Cass Review considered differing views on social transitioning, noting the concern that it may change a child's developmental trajectory and strengthen his or her desire to medically transition.[2, p. 31] Adolescents may socially transition autonomously, but affirmation from teachers can reinforce their rejection of their bodies and increase social pressure from peers to maintain their transgender identity. Cass pointed out that:

In the UK and internationally, it is now the norm for many children and young people to present to gender clinics having undergone full or partial social transition. The systematic review [found that] those who had socially transitioned at an earlier age and/or prior to be seen in clinic were more likely to proceed to a medical pathway. [2, p. 31]

Although the government rhetorically accepted the Cass Review, the guidance ignores Cass's concerns about social transitioning:

Transition: A multi-step process as transgender people begin living their lives in a way that affirms their gender identity. In schools this will primarily consist of a social transition: young people changing their name, pronoun use and physical appearance (hairstyle, clothes and so on).[1, p. 48]

Staff are advised that if approached by a pupil to discuss his or her gender identity, 'ask what support you can give' and 'what name and pronoun you should use to address them'. [1, pp. 17–18] Staff should also 'show empathy and be affirming of how they feel'. [1, pp. 17–18] Even more important is the guidance's insistence that that information about socially transitioning a pupil may be withheld from parents:

A transgender young person may not have told their family about their gender identity. Inadvertent disclosure could cause needless stress for the young person or could put them at risk and breach legal requirements Therefore, it is best to not share information

with parents or carers without considering and respecting the young person's view and rights.[1, p. 32]

The guidance points out that the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is now incorporated into Scots law. [1, p. 52] Article 16, which ensures a child's right to privacy, is interpreted as meaning that '*If a young person comes out as transgender there is no immediate need to inform their parents or others.*'[1, p. 53]

Of course, if educational authorities and headteachers were to consider the concerns presented in the Cass Review and stop social transitioning of pupils in school, the need to withhold information from parents would not arise.

Statistics

The revised guidance reiterates statistics from the 2021 guidance, which are drawn from a poor-quality survey published by LGBT Youth Scotland in 2018 and that could not be generalised due to its small sample size, use of self-selected respondents, and risk of bias. It purports to show that '*transgender young people*' experience bullying (82%), experience suicidal thoughts (63%), and self-harm (59%), and that most of those who reported mental health problems had been bullied (83%).[1, pp. 8–9] However dubious the survey's methodology and results, the suggestion is that being transgender-identified gives rise to these poor outcomes. In fact, it is the other way round: it is because some pupils have significant mental health conditions, have autism, are in care, or have experienced trauma or abuse that they are attracted to transgender ideology in the mistaken belief that their psychosocial difficulties and unhappiness could be alleviated by gender transitioning. The Cass Review made it clear that among the tsunami of adolescents referred to gender identity services from 2014, there was a high proportion who had these *pre-existing*

difficulties and who only developed gender incongruence/dysphoria subsequently.[2, pp. 26–27]

Transgender activists: the main vector for gender identity ideology

By LGBT Youth Scotland's own admission, it is this highly vulnerable cohort of adolescents that populate LGBT Youth Scotland groups in secondary schools. According to many of the parents in contact with the Scottish Union for Education, it is only after joining these groups that their teenage children become convinced that they are 'transgender' and must pursue medical transitioning. In many cases they have become alienated from their parents, seeing them as an obstacle to their desire to medically transition. Cementing the government's close alliance with LGBT Youth Scotland, it has just awarded the organisation nearly £500,000 for 2025–2026. A government spokesman said the funding was '*particularly important at a time when we are seeing a rise in attacks against the LGBTQI+ community*'. [6]

In fact, we are at a time that calls for robust judgement by education authorities and headteachers, condemnation of the indoctrination of pupils through the guidance, and opposition to LGBT Youth Scotland's groups in schools and withdrawal from its charter scheme. Parents should be emboldened to challenge education authorities and headteachers to take their concerns about social transitioning seriously and to get gender ideology out of Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood (RSHP) education.

04

Pernicious puberty blocker trial: social contagion is at the root of a medical scandal

Jenny Cunningham

In December 2025, James Esses, former barrister and now a campaigner against paediatric medical transition, launched the following petition online:

Cancel the clinical trial into puberty blockers & safeguard vulnerable children. The government is aware of the potential irreversible impact (physical and emotional) of puberty blockers, having acknowledged an 'unacceptable safety risk' following the Cass Review. Yet, hundreds of children are about to be given puberty blockers under a government-sanctioned trial. We want the trial to be cancelled.

By 29 January 2026, 139,418 signatures had been submitted to the UK Parliamentary Petitions Committee. The government responds to all petitions that get more than 10,000 signatures. When a petition has over 100,000 signatures, it is considered for a debate in Parliament. The Department for Health and Social Care responded to the petition on behalf of the government, on 2 February 2026.^[1] A parliamentary debate took place on 23 March 2026.

The trial, led by King's College London, plans to recruit 226 children and adolescents, below the age of 15 years, who have

‘gender incongruence’, with the aim of measuring the effects of puberty blockers (PBs) on their quality of life, emotional wellbeing and physical development – including brain and bone development.[2] PBs halt the significant changes that normally occur during puberty, interfering with the development of secondary sexual characteristics and sex cells (eggs and sperm), bone development, and emergent cognitive capacities. In its response to the petition, the Department of Health and Social Care stressed that:

We are following the expert advice of the Cass Review to establish a clinical trial to determine the relative benefits and harms of puberty suppression in young people with gender incongruence. [...] The Independent Cass Review concluded [...] that there is not enough clinical evidence for the safe and effective routine use of puberty suppressing hormones to treat gender incongruence in under-18s. For that reason, the Government supported and extended indefinitely the ban on their use outside of research.[1]

The government’s response went on to state that the ‘*bar for a UK clinical trial to be approved is extremely high, with the PATHWAYS trial going through rigorous rounds of scientific, clinical, ethical and regulatory review*’. The supposedly rigorous approval process included oversight by the National Institute for Health and Care Research funding committee, the Health Research Authority, an independent research ethics committee and the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA).

The trial was due to begin this April. However, MHRA has now written to the King’s College London team, advising that the trial will be paused pending further discussions, because of several new concerns:

The safety and wellbeing of the participants to be recruited to the PATHWAYS clinical trial is paramount, particularly in view of the age of the children and young people who may be involved.

For this reason, MHRA is applying the highest scrutiny and taking a cautious and measured approach.[3]

One suspects that rather than being part of a routine process, the pause has been precipitated by an unprecedented amount of opposition to the trial – on clinical, scientific and ethical grounds – from a number of professional organisations and many critics of paediatric medical transition.[4, 5, 6]

A very serious concern raised by MHRA (and by many critics) is that the trial has ill-defined or no criteria for withdrawal of participants from the trial if there is evidence of compromised bone development after 12 months or less on PBS. Similarly, if changes to MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) scans suggest compromised cognitive pathways, MHRA recommends that advice be sought from ‘*experts in neuroimaging*’ to clarify what changes would warrant withdrawal of participants from the trial.

Opponents of the trial want it stopped, not just made a little more ‘rigorous’. Hilary Cass’s influential review was an important step in discrediting ‘affirmative gender care’, including the use of PBS in peripubertal children and adolescents, by demonstrating ‘remarkably weak evidence’ for their use. [7, p. 13]

What really jarred with this was her recommendation that PBS be used in a clinical trial context. Cass has welcomed the PATHWAYS trial. In a BBC News interview she said:

My review uncovered a very weak evidence base for benefits from the use of puberty blockers for children and young people with gender dysphoria. In fact, some children had more negative than positive effects. However, given that there are clinicians, children and families who believe passionately in the beneficial effects, a trial was the only way forward to make sense of this.[8]

Elsewhere, she has argued that desperate families continue to get the drugs from unregulated providers and foreign sources. She believes that if evidence is found that they do not help children it would stem demand.[9] These arguments sound more like wishful thinking than reasoned and ethically sound positions.

Neither the leader of the trial, Professor Emily Simonoff, nor Hilary Cass appear to have taken cognizance of the major American study by the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), *Treatment for Pediatric Gender Dysphoria: Review of Evidence and Best Practices*, published in November 2025. In many ways, it supersedes the Cass Review, and it surpasses it in several important respects. First, it is an umbrella review – it is a systematic review of all the international systematic reviews.

The umbrella review found the overall quality of evidence concerning the effects of any intervention on psychological outcomes, quality of life, regret or long-term health is very low.[10, p. 13]

Second, the HHS Review surpasses the Cass Review by including two pertinent chapters – one on terminology, the other on ethics.

Terminology

The Cass Review is agnostic about the terminology and concepts employed in paediatric gender medicine. The Foreword begins: ‘*This Review is not about defining what it means to be trans, nor is it about undermining the validity of trans identities.*’[7, p. 12] Cass never interrogates the terminology explored in the HHS Review, often using some of it uncritically.

At the start, the HHS Review gives an important clarification about the diagnosis of *gender dysphoria*:

Gender dysphoria is based entirely on subjective self-reports and behavioral observations, without any objective physical, imaging, or laboratory markers. The diagnosis centers on attitudes, feelings, and behaviors that are known to fluctuate during adolescence. Additionally, the natural history of pediatric gender dysphoria is poorly understood, though existing research suggests it will remit without intervention in most cases.[10, p. 10]

The HSS Review discusses the particularly problematic use of the term *gender identity*.

When first used in the 1960s, it meant the sense of knowing to which sex one belongs, that is, the awareness ‘I am a male’ or ‘I am a female’. Almost everyone has a gender identity in this sense [...] today the phrase ‘gender identity’ is used in a significantly different way.

For example, in the glossary of WPATH (World Professional Association for Transgender Health), ‘*gender identity*’ is defined as ‘*a person’s deeply felt internal sense of their own gender*’. So what does ‘gender’ mean? One meaning given in the glossary is that gender can mean ‘*gender identity*’. But gender cannot mean gender identity, otherwise the WPATH’s definition would be that gender identity is a person’s deeply felt internal sense of their gender identity – a circular definition! [10, pp. 34–35]

The HSS Review makes the point that the fact that there is no clear definition of gender identity ‘*is a serious problem, because the term figures centrally in the justification for medical intervention*’. One gender identity is, of course, being ‘*transgender*’ – for a person whose gender identity does not ‘match’ their natal sex. The HSS Review argues that *transgender* is ‘*not a clinical term and does not correspond to a medical diagnosis*’. Nevertheless, gender-questioning and socially transitioned children ‘*are routinely referred to as “transgender children”*’. [10, pp. 36–38]

Ethics

The HHS Review devotes a whole chapter to different aspects of ethical issues and to ‘*Research Ethics*’ in particular. It is critical of the UK’s planned PB trial and points out that critics worry about prescribing PBS, even in research settings, given the

recognized inability of clinicians to distinguish between patients whose gender dysphoria will persist into adulthood from those whose gender dysphoria will resolve on its own and the high likelihood that any patient who begins PBS will go on to cross-sex hormones and possibly surgery.[10, p. 244]

There are other important ethical problems to consider.

‘*The Nuremberg Code is a foundational and international accepted statement of norms guiding human subject research.*’ It stipulates that the design of an experiment should be ‘*based on the results of animal experimentation and a knowledge of the natural history of the disease or other problem under study*’. In other words, animal studies should be carried out before PBS are tested on humans, ‘*to understand how these affect fertility, brain development and bone development, and whether fertility can be recovered after puberty suppression*’.[10, pp. 244–245] Sally Baxendale’s literature review of the impact of puberty suppression on neurophysiological function (which included 11 animal studies) indicated that cognitive effects were not fully recovered after discontinuation of PBS.[11]

In an interview for the *British Medical Journal*, Hiliary Cass argued that:

Based on existing literature, I cannot say with certainty that there aren’t children who could benefit from puberty blockers, though I believe the numbers are likely to be very small [...] While we don’t understand the cause – it’s not simply about ‘being in the wrong body’ – these children have always existed, and we need to figure out the best ways to support them.[12]

Aside from the transgender activist trope about ‘being born in the wrong body’, it is not true that these children have always existed in the sense Cass implies. Her own review meticulously documented that the cohort of children and adolescents presenting to gender identity services in the UK and internationally from around 2014 were *uniquely different* from the small numbers, of mainly boys, who had gender dysphoria from early childhood which generally resolved at puberty. For example, in the 10 years from 1989, when the predecessor of the Tavistock Gender Development Service (GIDS) started, to 2000, there was a total of 160 referrals.[13] According to Cass, from 2014 ‘*referrals to the Tavistock GIDS began to increase at an exponential rate, with the majority of referrals (over 70%) being birth registered females presenting in early teenage years*’. GIDS received approximately 5000 referrals in 2021–2022 alone.[7, p. 85] Cass characterised this new cohort as ‘*complex*’.

Many had co-occurring conditions: mental health diagnoses (including eating disorders, depression, anxiety and body dysmorphic disorder), neurodevelopmental disorders (especially autism spectrum disorders), experience in the care system and previous trauma, (such as sexual and physical abuse). Many were same sex attracted.[7, pp. 90–94]

Cass, in her desire to justify her belief that a small number of children and adolescents may benefit from PBs or medical transition, tried to fit ‘gender incongruence’ into a medical framework.

For some children and young people with gender incongruence, ‘innate’ or biological factors may play a part in some individuals, in ways that are not yet understood, and in others psychosocial factors, including life experiences, and societal and cultural influences, may be more important.[7, p. 117]

However, she has to concede that because biological factors have not changed in the last ten years, there must be other reasons for

the increase in referrals and for ‘*the disproportionate representation of birth-registered females*’.[7, p. 117]

Cass agrees that peer influence during adolescence is ‘*very powerful*’, as is the influence of social media. ‘*The Review has heard accounts of female students forming intense friendships with other gender-questioning or transgender students in school, and then identifying as trans themselves.*’[7, p. 122] Nevertheless, when considering the possibility that these peer influences might suggest the phenomenon of social contagion, she argues that ‘*this is potentially the most contested explanation, with the term “social contagion” causing distress to some in the trans community*’. [7, p. 117] Contested it certainly is, with transgender activists internationally reacting vehemently against this characterisation of the explosive increase in the numbers of mainly adolescent girls expressing transgender identities. It challenges the whole basis of gender ideology – that individuals have an innate, deeply felt gender identity in conflict with their natal sex.

The HHS Review argues that ‘*social influence is a likely factor*’ in the epidemiological changes that international systematic reviews of paediatric gender medicine have all identified. It does not mention social contagion specifically but references the study in 2018 by ‘*physician and researcher, Lisa Littman*’, who ‘*popularized the phrase “rapid onset gender dysphoria” or ROGD, in the peer reviewed literature*’.[10, p. 69] This described adolescents and young adults, predominantly female, in whom gender dysphoria began during or after puberty and was not reported to have been experienced in childhood. Lisa Marchiano, a Jungian psychoanalyst, also mentioned in the HHS Review, had used the term ROGD in a paper in 2017, to describe a new presentation of teens:

coming out as trans in peer clusters, as we have seen happen before with suicide and eating disorder contagion. My fear – and I am hardly alone in this – is that adopting a transgender identity

has become the newest way for teen girls to express feelings of discomfort with their bodies – an issue adolescent girls typically experience. The problem here is that many young women are seeking transition after coming to identify as transgender, and transition can have extreme consequences.[14]

Littman too had surmised that transgender identification among female friendship groups was very like other social contagions, such as anorexia nervosa and self-harming. She developed a parent survey consisting of 90 open-ended questions. Data was collected anonymously from 256 parents, whose adolescent or young adult children had suddenly identified as transgender in adolescence. Over 80% were natal females; 41% had a preceding homosexual or bisexual orientation; and nearly two-thirds had had a diagnosis of a mental health disorder or neurodevelopmental disability prior to the onset of gender dysphoria. Furthermore, 86.7% of parents reported that:

along with the sudden or rapid onset of gender dysphoria, their child either had an increase in social media/internet use, belonged to a friend group in which one or multiple friends became transgender-identified during a similar timeframe, or both.

Littman hypothesised that the belief that ‘non-specific symptoms’, associated with trauma, psychiatric problems and the anxieties that are part of normal puberty, ‘can be perceived as proof of being transgender’; the belief that ‘the only path to happiness is transition’; and the belief that ‘anyone who disagrees with the self-assessment of being transgender or opposes the plan to transition is transphobic and should be cut out of one’s life’ are pathognomonic of social contagion.[15]

Littman’s study provoked a transgender activist outcry, and its publisher responded by promising a review and ‘corrections’. Seven months after the initial publication, *PLOS One* issued

a ‘*correction*’ – but none of the results had changed.[16] Littman was not the only one vilified for suggesting that a social contagion had swept up the cohort of adolescents presenting to gender identity clinics. When Sweden’s Board of Health and Welfare confirmed a 1500% rise in gender dysphoria diagnosis among female 13- to 17-year-olds, between 2008 and 2018, Colin Wright, the evolutionary biologist and writer on evidence-based science, tweeted ‘*two words – social contagion*’. His colleagues denounced him as a transphobic bigot; activists emailed universities ‘*to poison my job prospects*’; and a professional jobs board warned against hiring him. ‘*My academic career never recovered.*’[17]

In a section of the HHS Review examining these epidemiological shifts, it notes that ‘*nonbinary identities now feature prominently in contemporary clinical settings and research populations*’. For example, one research project in 2020 found that of 11,914 survey respondents identifying as transgender or nonbinary, almost two-thirds identified as nonbinary. ‘*This creates a new set of ethical challenges as these patients seek Pediatric Gender Medicine interventions.*’[10, p. 69] A study by the Society for Evidence-Based Gender Medicine, using data from the National College Health Assessment, with around 57,000 respondents among us undergraduates (average age 20, and 70% female), found almost 1 in 20 self-reporting a transgender identity in 2025. The number of students identifying as ‘*nonbinary/other*’ far outnumbered those identifying as ‘*trans woman*’ or ‘*trans man*’. Nonbinary type identities included ‘*gender queer*’, ‘*gender fluid*’ and ‘*agender*’.[18] Wright points out that this ‘nonbinary’ category adopts identities ‘*which are said to be neither, both, or somewhere between male and female*’.

These include labels like ‘demiboy’, ‘genderfluid’ or ‘two-spirit’. These are social identities, not biological ones [...] ‘nonbinary’

identities have no anatomical or physiological referent. They are conceptual, political and responsive to cultural trends – hallmarks of social contagion.[17]

Social contagion is a compelling framework for understanding today's transgender identification, and – as the writers, clinicians and researchers quoted stress – it has such dangerous implications for the adolescents caught up in it. For as long these '*conceptual, political and cultural trends*' are not confronted and changed, healthy adolescents will continue to be exposed to dangerous medical interventions, bodily mutilations, probable infertility and lifelong health risks. It makes it imperative that both the PB trial and paediatric medical transition are stopped.

05

Time for Inclusive Education (TIE): implementing LGBT Inclusive Education & insulating it from criticism and parental concern Jenny Cunningham

Many parents recognise the clear and present danger posed to children and adolescents by the Scottish government's *Supporting Transgender Pupils in Schools: Guidance for Scottish Schools* (2021) – even in its revised edition (2024). This guidance entrenches gender ideology in Scottish education and promotes the social transitioning of pupils identifying as 'transgender' (sometimes without the knowledge of parents).[1] It also disregards the findings of the Cass Review, which raised questions about the advisability of socially transitioning children.[2, pp. 31–32] Gender ideology also permeates the government's Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood (RSHPP) education.[3] Parents and readers recognise the threat to children's safety from the involvement of transgender activist charity LGBT Youth Scotland, which has contributed to vulnerable youngsters thinking that they may have been 'born in the wrong body' – a belief that can potentially drive their attempts to achieve the impossible goal of becoming the opposite sex through harmful medical treatment with puberty blockers, cross-sex hormones, and even surgical mutilation of their bodies. However, parents need to be aware of a more subtle or subversive challenge to be met in the form of another activist charity, Time for Inclusive Education (TIE),

whose influence now pervades Scottish education through the government's LGBT Inclusive Education.

Celebrating its 10th anniversary last year, TIE pointed out that from its beginning in 2015 '*as a grassroots campaign*' (actually just two Scottish independence supporters, Jordan Daly and Liam Stevenson) '*we are now a national charity with a team of six, who create and deliver our school services and resources*' (these two men, now co-directors, three General Teaching Council for Scotland-registered teachers, and a manager).[4] Initially, TIE promoted itself as a charity which addressed '*homophobic, biphobic, and transphobic bullying with an educational approach*'. It set out to '*create resources for schools, run workshops and assemblies for teachers on behalf of the Scottish government*'. [4] It was a key policy influencer in the government's LGBT Inclusive Education Working Group (set up in 2017) and became involved in implementing LGBT Inclusive Education in schools after September 2021. TIE claims that its campaign '*led to Scotland becoming the first country in the world to agree to integrate LGBT themes – including diverse families, anti-bullying, history, and rights – across the school curriculum*'. [4]

Unlike its fellow transgender activists in the Working Group, such as LGBT Youth Scotland and Stonewall Scotland, TIE presents itself as a campaign to root out anti-LGBT prejudice and bullying from Scottish schools, rather than as a transgender activist organisation. This, it could be argued, made it more acceptable to teachers and education staff and less concerning to parents and carers. It assuages doubts by eliding sexual orientation (lesbian, gay and bisexual) with transgender identity (the 'T' in LGBT), talking about challenging anti-LGBT prejudice and bullying in general. Nevertheless, behind the scenes, so to speak, TIE supported the Scottish government's aborted gender recognition legislation, which would have allowed self-identification as the opposite sex, even without gender reassignment, thus giving

transgender-identifying men the ‘right’ to invade women’s facilities, services, sports and prisons; it misrepresented these ‘rights’ in terms of the Equality Act 2010, and it also supported drag queen events for all ages.[5]

The government’s Guidance on *LGBT Inclusive Education* argues that

LGBT inclusive education facilitates a proactive, educational approach within schools to address the stereotypes, social stigma, and inequalities that can often lead to prejudice or prejudiced-based bullying experienced by learners who are LGBT, perceived or thought to be LGBT by others, or who have LGBT family members.[6, p. 4]

It goes on to state that ‘*all local authority run schools in Scotland are expected to implement LGBT inclusive education through the Curriculum for Excellence in alignment with the national approach*’. The *National Approach* specifies that LGBT Inclusive Education should be integrated within teaching and learning across curriculum areas and subjects around key themes. These themes include:

identifying prejudice, discrimination and bullying (including homophobia, biphobia and transphobia); recognising and challenging gender stereotypes; diverse families, including LGBT parents and siblings; the history of LGBT equality movements; and LGBT past and present figures and role models.[6, p. 7]

The *National Platform* was launched to host all the resources and materials available to schools, an Implementation and Evaluation Toolkit, and ‘*a national professional learning course*’ in two stages: ‘*an E-learning module*’ and ‘*a face-to-face training input*’ delivered locally in schools to the whole staff.[6, p. 8] All education staff in local authority schools in Scotland are expected to complete the E-learning module, and schools are encouraged to engage TIE in the face-to-face training.

It should be noted that this learning course sits behind a firewall on the *National Platform* and is available only to teaching staff, not to parents, although parents and interested parties can access some of the resources. In small print on the platform site, it indicates that the *National Platform* and professional training course are managed by TIE on behalf of the Scottish government. [7] In its *Outcomes Report 2023–2024*, TIE says that it received a grant of £321,000 from the Scottish government ‘to cover core costs in our service delivery’.[8, p. 23]

In this outcomes report, TIE’s directors highlight what they see as an important change:

in recent years we have seen and felt the return of nasty and dangerous anti-LGBT narratives – especially online [...] The rise and promotion of online disinformation, polarisation, prejudicial narratives, and hate across mainstream social media platforms accessed by children and young people has had a negative effect.
[8, p. 3]

The directors signalled that TIE was scoping an ‘*innovative new project designed to help address this phenomenon and complement our current work*’.[8, p. 3]

The new project was announced last year: a collaboration between TIE and the Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD). ISD describes itself as an international, independent and non-profit organisation that is ‘*dedicated to safeguarding democracy and human rights by reversing the rising global tide of polarisation, extremism and authoritarianism*’.[9] TIE launched an additional (‘voluntary’) professional learning course as part of its menu of LGBT-inclusive training, known as the *Digital Discourse Initiative*, billed as providing teachers and educators in Scotland with ‘bespoke’ tools to counter the effects of ‘*online hate and disinformation*’ and ‘*teach core critical and digital media literacy skills*’. It describes TIE

and ISD as ‘*respective experts in anti-prejudice education and counter-extremism strategies*’.[10]

So, you might ask, is there a concern about this new orientation and collaboration? After all, most parents are also worried about what children and teenagers are accessing on social media sites which may be harmful. When you understand *which* extremists the ISD identifies as promoting hate and disinformation, in what contexts and what narratives they see as deleterious, it becomes evident that this collaboration is concerning, if not a little sinister. This becomes clearer when you examine two ISD reports: *A Year of Hate: Understanding Threats and Harassment Targeting Drag Shows and the LGBTQ+ Community* (2023)[11] and *A Year of Hate: Anti-Drag Mobilisation Efforts Targeting LGBTQ+ people in the UK* (2023).

The executive summary in the first report explains that ISD research has examined the ‘*trends in anti-LGBTQ+ hate and extremism with a particular focus on harassment targeting all-ages drag shows*’ because it provides ‘*useful insight into the key actors engaged in anti-LGBTQ+ activism as well as the key narratives and tactics used to attack these communities*’.[11, p. 4] Among the key actors are the usual suspects: ‘*Far right groups and actors*’, ‘*Right-wing media influencers*’, ‘*Conspiracy theorists*’, ‘*Radical right and conservative parties/politicians*’ and ‘*Religious groups*’. The last group identified is the ‘*Parents’ rights’ movement*’ (note the quotation marks), *composed of parents concerned about children being exposed to ‘gender ideology’ or drag performers. [...] These groups typically use the ‘protecting children’ narrative, as well as claiming their rights as parents to control the information and identities which children are exposed to are being eroded. [...] Opposition to drag performances sits alongside this set of issues.* [11, pp. 8–9]

So, parents concerned about RSHP content and the social transitioning of transgender-identifying children and

adolescents or Drag Queen Story Hour in UK libraries are regarded by the ISD as ‘anti-LGBTQ+ activists’ at best or extremists at worst. In correspondence with the Scottish Union for Education, TIE stated that the Digital Discourse Initiative does not address parents’ groups or describe them as ‘extremists’; nor does it mention ‘trans ideology’ or describe anyone who questions trans ideology as ‘extremists’. It seems a little disingenuous for TIE to distance itself from the ISD reports and characterisation of the ‘parents’ rights’ movement when it describes its relationship with ISD as a collaboration between ‘*respective experts in anti-LGBT prejudice and counter extremism strategies*’.

According to TIE, the Digital Discourse Initiative focuses on the online prejudice and disinformation to which ‘*children and young people are increasingly exposed*’. It provides teachers ‘*with tools to teach critical and digital media literacy*’.[10]

The question is this: what ‘prejudices’ and which ‘disinformation’ are in TIE’s crosshairs? One of TIE’s key slogans has always been ‘*The children of tomorrow must grow up without the prejudices of today*’.[12] As parent and University of Dundee lecturer Penny Lewis points out, this implies that ‘*every new generation must be insulated from the ideas of their parents and grandparents*’.[13] TIE has all along been in lockstep with the government’s guidance on supporting transgender pupils in schools and gender ideology in RSHP teaching. So what about parents or critics of transgender ideology who hold gender-critical views, or oppose the social transitioning of pupils (sometimes behind parents’ backs) – do they promote anti-LGBT prejudice? And opposition to PBS and every aspect of medical gender transitioning, or objections to RSHP on religious grounds – do these constitute disinformation?

Although parents have the limited right to withdraw their children from the sexual health component of RSHP teaching,

they cannot withdraw from any aspect of LGBT Inclusive Education because – as both the government guidance on LGBT Inclusive Education and TIE stress – ‘*Learning related to LGBT inclusive education is part of a broader curriculum and will be included across curriculum areas*’.[6, p. 9]

Parents have to remind themselves that they are the ones who love their children unconditionally and have their best interests at heart, and not the Scottish government or its educational quango TIE. Consequently, we have to keep speaking out for parents’ rights and organising to expose where these are being transgressed, despite the obstacles posed by TIE and LGBT Inclusive Education.

Conclusion

The majority of parents in contact with SUE and ScotPAG, whose children have been socially transitioned in school, report that the children have been involved in LGBTYS clubs in school, or have friends who have identified as 'transgender'. They have been convinced by trans activists, or peers, that their parents are/will be an obstacle to them medically transitioning to the opposite 'gender' (or a 'nonbinary' gender identity). In almost all cases, the parents have been the last to know about their children's determination to transition, by which time family relationships have been fundamentally altered or even ruptured.

Some parents, and more thoughtful teachers, may be sympathetic to parents in this position, but some are indifferent, expressing the view that it is not happening to their children or in their schools. All parents need to recognise that the Scottish government's encouragement of social transitioning by teachers, and sanctioning of LGBTYS activities in most secondary and many primary schools, puts all children at potential risk. Adolescents are at the highest risk from what has become a social contagion of transgenderism.

We owe it those parents already affected by this problem, and those whose youngsters are most vulnerable to transgender activism, to show our solidarity with parents whose children have undergone social transition behind their backs. All parents should raise concerns about transgender indoctrination in schools. Parents must assert their right to know what is being taught or promoted in Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood (RSHPP) and in LGBT Inclusive Education. All parents need to ignore accusations of prudish behaviour or Victorian morality and campaign for greater honesty about the sex education curriculum. Parents continue to have the right to object to, and remove children from, teaching that transgresses their values and beliefs.

It is our hope that this pamphlet will provide parents and teachers with insights into the dangers posed by transgender ideology and that it will help them to develop the arguments required to promote collective solidarity and to challenge unacceptable state indoctrination in our schools.

There are many organisations that, like SUE, are attempting to develop material and organise events to challenge government policy and bring about real change. If you are looking for more information the organisations below are all very useful.

- [For Women Scotland](#)
- [Sex Matters](#)
- [Murray Blackburn Mackenzie](#) – policy analysis collective (especially on Scottish government policy)
- [ScotPAG](#)
- [Transgender Trend](#)
- [Genspect](#) – international gender-critical advocacy group (and supporting detransitioners)
- [Clinical Advisory Network on Sex and Gender](#) (CAN-SG) – clinical opposition to gender medical transition

Please let us know if you would like us to come to your parent council to discuss these issues.

For further reading

SUE Substack Newsletters

[No. 71 \(23 May 2024\)](#) – The Holyrood meeting with parents of children who had been socially transitioned

[No. 84 \(19 September 2024\)](#) – The final report of the Cass Review: strengths and weaknesses

[No. 116 \(8 May 2025\)](#) – Gender ideology with dire consequences for children and adolescents

[No. 124 \(9 July 2025\)](#) – RSHP consultation: smoke and mirrors

ScotPAG articles

[In a World of Scams, ScotPAG Exposes the Biggest Scam of All! Scottish Education in Ruins!](#)

References

Chapter 01

1. Guggenheim M. 2007. *What's Wrong with Children's Rights*. Harvard University Press.
2. Tettenborn A. 15 January 2024. 'The rights of the child?' *The Critic*.
3. Scottish government. 2024. 'Guidance on LGBT Inclusive Education'.
4. The Scottish Parliament. 2026. Children (Withdrawal from Religious Education and Amendment of UNCRC Compatibility Duty) (Scotland) Bill.
5. Maggie Chapman. 18 February 2026.

Chapter 02

1. Scottish Professionals Advising on Gender. scotpag.com
2. Joyce H. 15 January 2025. How gender ideology breaks medicine, science and society. Genspect.
3. Sanderson D. 28 March 2026. How the SNP spends billions 'to buy loyalty from charities'. *The Times*.
4. ScotPAG. 2024. How captured are our councils and public services?
5. For Women Scotland. 2024.
6. ScotPAG. Enthralled by TIE! March 2025.
7. Barnes, H. 2023. *Time to Think: The inside story of the collapse of the Tavistock's gender service for children*. Swift Press.
8. Bell D. 26 April 2024. The Cass review of gender identity services marks a return to reason and evidence – it must be defended. *The Guardian*.

9. Peng Q, et al. 2021. It is hard for children to accept a teacher's lies: implications of authority on children's evaluation of lies. *Cognitive Development*. Vol.60 (October–December): Article 101093.
10. Inciteful Sister. 4 September 2025. Episode 22. Mums under cover – adult transitioners.
11. Liu X, et al. 2022. An experimental investigation of association between children's lying and behaviour problems. *Frontiers in Psychological Cognition*. Vol.13 Article: 982012.
12. Millum J. 2024. Lying to our children. *Journal of Practical Ethics*. Vol.11 (issue 2).
13. ScotPAG. 2025. Educationalists speak out on the impact of gender ideology on Scottish schools.

Chapter 3

1. Scottish government. September 2025. Supporting Transgender Pupils in Schools: Guidance for education authorities and schools – revised.
2. Cass H. 2024. Independent review of gender identity services for children and young people. Final report.
3. Public Health Scotland. 5 November 2024. NHS gender identity clinics: waiting times for first outpatient consultation.
4. Sandyford: The young person gender service.
5. Cass H. 2022. Independent review of gender identity services for children and young people. Interim report.
6. Grant G. 3 October 2025. Youth LGBT charity at centre of previous paedophile scandals given almost £500k of taxpayers' cash. *The Mail Scotland*.

Chapter 4

1. UK government. 2 February 2026. Response to petition: Cancel the clinical trial into puberty blockers & safeguard vulnerable children.
2. Kings College London. November 2025. Puberty suppression And Transitional Healthcare With Adaptive Youth Services (PATHWAYS).
3. MHRA. 20 February 2026. MHRA statement on the Pathways puberty blocker trial.
4. Bell D, Helyar S. 2024. Would a puberty blocker trial be ethical? Clinical Advisory Network on Sex and Gender.
5. Clinical Advisory Network on Sex and Gender. 18 December 2025. Open letter from clinicians to Wes Streeter on the PATHWAYS puberty blocker trial.

REFERENCES

6. Waters A. 2026. Puberty blockers: growing calls to pause controversial trial from medics, lawyers, and public. *BMJ*. 392:s134.
7. Cass H. 2024. Independent review of gender identity services for children and young people. Final report.
8. Roxby P, Holt A. 22 November 2025. New puberty blockers trial to begin after UK ban. BBC News.
9. Spencer B. 30 November 2025. Puberty blocker trial ‘vital’ after clinic buried study, says Cass. *The Times*.
10. US Department of Health and Human Services. November 2025. Treatment for pediatric gender dysphoria: review of evidence and best practices.
11. Baxendale S. 2024. The impact of suppressing puberty on neuropsychological function: a review. *Acta Paediatrica*. 113(6):1156–1167.
12. Cohen D. 18 December 2025. ‘This is why the trial is necessary’: experts behind the puberty blockers study respond to mounting opposition. *BMJ*.
13. Barnes H. 2023. *Time to Think: The inside story of the collapse of the Tavistock’s gender service for children*. Swift Press.
14. Marchiano L. 2017. Outbreak: on transgender teens and psychic epidemics. *Psychological Perspectives*. 60(3):345–366.
15. Littman L. 2018. Parent reports of adolescents and young adults perceived to show signs of a rapid onset of gender dysphoria. *PLOS One*. 13(8):e0202330.
16. Shrier A. 2021. *Irreversible Damage: Teenage girls and the transgender craze*. Swift Press.
17. Wright C. Reality’s Last Stand. 3 December 2025. Evidence backs the transgender social-contagion hypothesis.
18. Society for Evidence–Based Medicine. October 2025. Transgender identification in college youth is at an all-time high but may be reaching a plateau.

Chapter 5

1. Scottish government. 2025. Supporting Transgender Pupils in Schools: Guidance for education authorities and schools – revised.
2. Cass H. 2024. Independent review of gender identity services for children and young people. Final report.
3. Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood.
4. Time for Inclusive Education. 10 years of TIE: a decade of change.

5. For Women Scotland. 2024. What's happening in your child's classroom? Sex and gender in Scottish secondary schools. pp. 39–40.
6. Scottish government. 2024. Guidance on LGBT Inclusive Education.
7. Scottish government. Resources for the National Approach to LGBT Inclusive Education in Scotland.
8. Time for Inclusive Education. TIE Outcomes Report 2023–2024.
9. Institute for Strategic Dialogue. Powering solutions to hate, extremism and authoritarianism.
10. Digital Discourse Initiative: Strategies to counter online hate and disinformation.
11. Institute for Strategic Dialogue. 2023. A year of hate: understanding threats and harassment targeting drag shows and the LGBTQ+ community.
12. Institute for Strategic Dialogue. 2023. A year of hate: anti-drag mobilisation efforts targeting LGBTQ+ people in the UK.
13. TIE: Time for Inclusive Education.
14. Lewis P. 19 October 2023. A quango by another name. SUE Newsletter. No38.

The SUE Manifesto for Scottish Education

The Scottish Union for Education believes our education system needs radical reform. We have a crisis in schools and colleges that won't be solved by rebranding quangos, changing ministers, or more breakfast clubs. What we really need is a major cultural shift to roll back the radical teaching reforms that have taken place over the past two decades. We need to return to a system which places knowledge at its heart.

KNOWLEDGE IS OUR INHERITANCE

Knowledge is not, as the radicals suggest, simply about filling children's heads with facts, or as the neuroscientists argue, extending their long-term memory. Knowledge is our inheritance, everything we have learnt in the arts, humanities and sciences and everything we have added to the world that is innovative, beautiful and meaningful. Introducing our children to this common resource is the purpose of education. We need to revive this knowledge-based approach, and to reject the soft skills and wellbeing agendas that currently shape our education. This radical reform is urgently needed to provide young Scots with the abilities, and understanding, they need to make their way in a changing world.

A KNOWLEDGE-BASED SOCIETY IS DEMOCRATIC

So much of Scotland's cultural inheritance is bound up with an enthusiasm for learning and intellectual curiosity. In *To a Louse*, Robert Burns wrote about the great gift of seeing '*ourselves as others see us*'. It was a celebration of our capacity to make judgements without personal bias, emotion or self-interest, the idea that we could all be objective, given a good education. With objectivity came a serious expansion of human knowledge, the extension of the right to vote and the idea that *everyone* could contribute to public life. Until very recently we had one of the best education systems in the world because, as a society, we placed a high value on reason and imagination. Our forefathers took science, literature and history seriously and recognised their importance in all aspects of life, from national economics to personal development.

THE CURRICULUM FOR EXCELLENCE CUT OUR CONNECTION WITH THE PAST

When Scotland introduced the Curriculum for Excellence in 2010, it abandoned that precious legacy. This is not an overstatement; we should not underestimate how impoverished and mechanistic our education system has become. Today's school leavers seem to know much less than their parents and grandparents. Their learning is narrow and yet unfocused; their homework is dull and formulaic. Teachers complain that they are encouraged to 'teach to the test', rather than risk introducing children to potentially redundant 'information'.

OUR CHILDREN ARE NOT INSPIRED

The fact that such large numbers of children are absent from school suggests that the education system, without knowledge at its heart, has lost its core sense of purpose. School seems to have left Gen Z less curious, and more anxious, than preceding generations. It would be easy to blame war, technology,

politicians and mobile phones for this motivational crisis. Society, families, and changes in technology undoubtedly play a role, but Scotland needs to take a long hard look at its education system and the flawed theories on which it is based.

OUR SCHOOLS ARE BEING POLITICISED

The SNP government has used the absence of curriculum content to politicise schools and universities. School values are no longer related to education and personal development, but the government agendas. The General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCs) now argues that Social Justice – trans ideology, Critical Race Theory and zero-carbon agendas are professional ideals. Under the cover of professional standards, ethics and inclusion, many PGDE teacher training courses operate a McCarthy-like culture that demands political conformity. Trainees are still, despite the Cass Report, being ‘taught’ that it’s OK to hide the social transitioning of a child from their parents.

OUR HISTORY IS BEING REWRITTEN

Not satisfied with training the next generation to ‘toe the party line’, there is a growing trend to rewrite history and to condemn previous generations for their attitudes on women, race and sexuality. Our common history is rarely treated as a source of inspiration, but understood instead as a realm of abuse and violence. This contempt for our predecessors is a deeply destructive cultural phenomenon.

Restoring a culture that places a high value on intellectual curiosity and wants to learn from the past, will not be easy. Change is something that must begin with parents and teachers rather than with politicians.

SEVEN CHANGES THAT COULD TRANSFORM SCOTTISH EDUCATION

- [1] Dump the Curriculum for Excellence and put knowledge back at the heart of education.**
- [2] Drop all policies that undermine the authority of the teacher and their expertise.**
- [3] Create a system of standard assessment, particularly for reading ages.**
- [4] Outlaw McCarthyism in the General Teaching Council for Scotland and PGDE courses.**
- [5] Support our libraries, museums, theaters and galleries to give children an inspiring introduction to the achievements of past generations.**
- [6] Stop teaching transgender ideology and critical race theory to children.**
- [7] Give Parent Councils power to hold schools to account.**

Please share this manifesto with your friends and family and discuss it with anyone interested in the future of education.

Scottish Union for Education – Newsletter No143

Themes: May 2026 election, Highland Council and inclusive education

SCOTTISH UNION FOR EDUCATION
JAN 15, 2026



PLEASE SUPPORT SUE'S WORK. Click on the link to [Donate or upgrade](#) and become a paid subscriber. All our work is financed by donations.

Scottish Union for Education – Newsletter No162

Themes: transgender ideology is still being peddled in our schools

SCOTTISH UNION FOR EDUCATION
MAY 28, 2026



SUE will be publishing three pamphlets over the next few months, including one on reading and one on history. The first pamphlet, however – written by Jenny Cunningham and Carolyn Brown – looks at the continuing promotion of transgender ideology in schools.

[sign-up to our weekly Newsletter](#)

JOIN

SUE SUBSTACK IN CONVERSATION

[Join us on our YouTube Channel](#)



FRANK FUREDI – LIONEL SHRIVER – KATHARINE BIRBALSINGH – GRAHAM LINEHAN



HELP

**DONATE
TO SUE**



Scottish Union for Education

info@sue.scot

scottishunionforeducation.substack.com