# I make my complaint on Principle 1. Accuracy, fariness and balance. In my complaint I wanted to demonstrate prejudicial and unbalanced treatment over time in relation to puberty blockers.

# The Media Council decision of [FERN HICKSON AGAINST THE NELSON MAIL](https://www.mediacouncil.org.nz/rulings/ruling-by-the-new-zealand-media-council-in-the-complaint-of-fern-hickson-against-the-nelson-mail/) which upheld the complaint in part and reported

Ms Hickson asserts that the balance of Stuff’s coverage is firmly in favour of the “transgender supportive perspective”. …**.The Council does not have the resources to carry out its own research to verify this** but hopes Stuff and other media outlets will consider whether they are taking a balanced approach overall. It is important that all reasonable views are allowed to be heard, given the seriousness of the matters under consideration. Despite these reservations**, the Council believes that there is insufficient evidence to uphold a complaint under Principle (1) and trusts that Stuff and other media outlets will keep a watching brief on developments in this area and cover it in a balanced manner.**

Because of the lack of the capacity to investigate coverage over time i have prepared a listing of all of the articles that mention puberty blockers over the last six years (since 2018)so that the Council have the evidence with which to assess my claim.

**Stuff Coverage of Puberty Blockers 2018-2023**

**Search Strategy**

**Stuff.co.nz was searched for the word ‘puberty blockers’**

48 stories were returned

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/searchresults?q=%22puberty+blockers%22>

I decided to select only those stories appearing in the past six years (starting 2018)

7 coloured blue were about the Conversion Practices Prohibition Legislation and related to concerns voiced by Simon Bridges that the bill would lead to parents having to support and clinicians having to prescribe puberty blockers. In all the stories this potential impact was discounted despite the NZ Guideline taking a pro social transition and ‘affirmative only’ stance for children that regards not treating as ‘not a neutral option’ and likely to cause harm. The comments by Simon Bridges are the only commentary sceptical of puberty blockers made in the last six years.

15 mentioned puberty blockers – coloured orange Only 3 stories (numbered 1,2 and 3 below ) cover puberty blockers in detail. A fourth story (no 13 below) was the subject of the upheld media council complaint mentioned above. Over the last six years Stuff has not interviewed or quoted a single person (other than Bridges) or any organisation whose view addresses any of the complexity of the emerging international story or increasing local concern about puberty blockers.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1 | [Trans health advice scrubbed following complaints | Stuff.co.nz](https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/health/300838494/trans-health-advice-scrubbed-following-complaints) |
|  | Stuff › trans-health-advice-scrubbed-following-complaints |
|  | [Thumbnail image](https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/health/300838494/trans-health-advice-scrubbed-following-complaints) |
|  | 24/03/2023 **...** **Puberty blockers** were pioneered to address a condition called precocious puberty, in which children start to undergo puberty too early. Since ... |
|  | This [only article published since September 2022 that discusses puberty blockers](https://twitter.com/marcdaalder/status/1638973865249603584) rather than cover the complexities of the issue the article has doubled down on claims of those concerned being ‘anti-trans’ despite the lack of evidence this is the case. It was syndicated from Newsroom. It has already been corrected twice – once in relation to the defamatory information it contained, secondly in the light of information tweeted by [the Ministry of health](https://twitter.com/minhealthnz/status/1639025294173696001) and [here](https://twitter.com/minhealthnz/status/1640082868004179969) where the Ministry wrote *‘Much of Marc’s story is false including the headline. The website was not changed due to an anti-trans pressure or any other external pressures’.*  However Daalder’s article still claims that ‘*Pressure from the public, including anti-transgender activists, contributed to the Ministry of Health’s decision to remove health advice regarding* [*puberty blockers*](https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/health/129962797/puberty-blockers-still-considered-safe-and-reversible-health-ministry-says) *from its website in September’.*  Moreover OIAs that have been available since December 2022 confirmed that the Ministry is to produce an evidence review. See [this OIA](https://www.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/information-release/h2022014878_response.pdf) page 15 where Dr Timothy Jelleyman, Chief Clinical Advisor, Child and Youth Health wrote in response to a letter ‘The Ministry of Health are in the process of making puberty blocker guidance on their website clearer. Updated guidance will be better aligned wth the limits of available evidence. Work on an evidence brief is planned to support this over the next few months.  And on page 19 that ‘This is a work in progress, and we could say that the Ministry of Health has received indication that the statement ‘safe and reversible’ needs looking into. Other jurisdictions such as Sweden and UK have also been grappling with this question recently’. |
| 2 | [**Puberty blockers** still considered safe and reversible, health ministry ...](https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/health/129962797/puberty-blockers-still-considered-safe-and-reversible-health-ministry-says)  This is the article that was the subject of my initial complaint. Journalist sought information that PBs were safe and fully reversible, described opponents as ‘TERFS’ to the Ministry, found her own evidence of harms but did not mention it in the article.  Stuff › national › health › puberty-blockers-still-consider ed-saf... 25-09-2022 The OIA above is also relevant to this story |
| 3 | [Call for more research into use of **puberty blockers** | Stuff.co.nz](https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/health/124409488/call-for-more-research-into-use-of-puberty-blockers)  5 sentences (of about 30 in the story) summarise elements of opposing view in the article but no authority is quoted. The story had to be significantly changed because of complaints. |
|  | Stuff › call-for-more-research-into-use-of-puberty-blockers |
|  | [Thumbnail image](https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/health/124409488/call-for-more-research-into-use-of-puberty-blockers) |
|  | 8/03/2021 **...** **Puberty blockers** were not an option as she had already been through puberty. Shields has experienced dysphoria over her bone structure and ... |
| 4 | [Experts hope reforms will help 'crisis' in access to trans healthcare ...](https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/124907876/experts-hope-reforms-will-help-crisis-in-access-to-trans-healthcare)  Health system changes and Not about puberty blockers by entirely uncritical about gender medicine for young people |
|  | Stuff › national › experts-hope-reforms-will-help-crisis-in-acces... |
|  | [Thumbnail image](https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/124907876/experts-hope-reforms-will-help-crisis-in-access-to-trans-healthcare) |
|  | 22/04/2021 **...** Call for more research into use of **puberty blockers** ... Access to services including hormone treatments, counselling and surgeries was in ... |
| 5 | |  | | --- | |  |   [The bullying hypocrisy unleashed over Posie Parker | Stuff.co.nz](https://www.stuff.co.nz/opinion/131620080/the-bullying-hypocrisy-unleashed-over-posie-parker)  Mention only of puberty blockers are a complex issue |
|  | Stuff › the-bullying-hypocrisy-unleashed-over-posie-parker |
|  | [Thumbnail image](https://www.stuff.co.nz/opinion/131620080/the-bullying-hypocrisy-unleashed-over-posie-parker) |
| 6 | 28/03/2023 **...** Issues such as gender identification, queer expression, restroom access, **puberty blockers** and the like are not simple ones. |
|  | Stuff › national › guideline-change-removes-demeaning-barrier... |
|  | [Guideline change removes 'demeaning' barrier to **hormone** therapy ...](https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/129403493/guideline-change-removes-demeaning-barrier-to-hormone-therapy)  Not about puberty blockers by 100% positive about gender medicine for young people and the absence of mental health assessment before proceeding. |
|  | [Thumbnail image](https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/129403493/guideline-change-removes-demeaning-barrier-to-hormone-therapy) |
|  | 1/08/2022 **...** The delay was because adults seeking access to **hormone** therapy in the Southern DHB were required ... testosterone **blockers** and testosterone. |
| 7 | [I Am: It took 15 years of pain before he could tell his family that he ...](https://www.stuff.co.nz/entertainment/tv-radio/117173101/i-am-it-took-15-years-of-pain-before-he-could-tell-his-family-that-he-wasnt-a-girl) 100% positive about puberty blockers. |
|  | Stuff › entertainment › tv-radio › i-am-it-took-15-years-of-pain... |
|  | [Thumbnail image](https://www.stuff.co.nz/entertainment/tv-radio/117173101/i-am-it-took-15-years-of-pain-before-he-could-tell-his-family-that-he-wasnt-a-girl) |
|  | 5/11/2019 **...** The struggles of puberty were awful. ... He soon began binding his chest and taking **puberty blockers**, that stopped the production of ... |
|  | [Helping your transgender child navigate change | Stuff.co.nz](https://www.stuff.co.nz/life-style/parenting/big-kids/five-to-ten/103602258/helping-your-transgender-child-navigate-change) Advocates social transition and says puberty blockers are completely reversible |
|  | Stuff › helping-your-transgender-child-navigate-change |
|  | [Thumbnail image](https://www.stuff.co.nz/life-style/parenting/big-kids/five-to-ten/103602258/helping-your-transgender-child-navigate-change) |
|  | 3/05/2018 **...** "**Puberty blockers** or hormone suppressing medications can help to give them some breathing space to focus on life and allow them time to make ... |
| 8 | [Alabama tries to use US Supreme Court abortion ruling to ban ...](https://www.stuff.co.nz/world/us-canada/300626755/alabama-tries-to-use-us-supreme-court-abortion-ruling-to-ban-transgender-medication) |
|  | Stuff › world › us-canada › alabama-tries-to-use-us-supreme-co... Alabama making treatment illegal |
|  | [Thumbnail image](https://www.stuff.co.nz/world/us-canada/300626755/alabama-tries-to-use-us-supreme-court-abortion-ruling-to-ban-transgender-medication) |
|  | 1/07/2022 **...** ... Alabama law that would make it a felony to give **puberty blockers** or hormones to transgender minors to help affirm their gender identity. |
| 9 | [Coronavirus: Trans New Zealanders unable to get gender-affirming ...](https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/health/300019640/coronavirus-trans-new-zealanders-unable-to-get-genderaffirming-healthcare) 100% in favour of gender medicine and puberty blockers for children. |
|  | Stuff › national › health › coronavirus-trans-new-zealanders-un... |
|  | [Thumbnail image](https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/health/300019640/coronavirus-trans-new-zealanders-unable-to-get-genderaffirming-healthcare) |
|  | 24/05/2020 **...** Jackson and his mum felt he was ready to talk to a medical professional about **puberty blockers**. His mum has been searching for a GP who ... |
| 10 | [Transgender health pathways but no reassignment surgery for NZ ...](https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/health/102625695/transgender-health-pathways-but-no-reassignment-surgery-for-nz) 100% in favour 2 mentions syndicated from NZ Doctor magazine. |
|  | Stuff › national › health › transgender-health-pathways-but-no-... |
|  | [Thumbnail image](https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/health/102625695/transgender-health-pathways-but-no-reassignment-surgery-for-nz) |
|  | 27/03/2018 **...** ... depression and suicidal ideation among transgender people need to be remembered, she says, and she outlined how helpful **puberty blockers** ... |
| 11 | [Transgender rights debate: Separating the facts from the fiction ...](https://www.stuff.co.nz/life-style/well-good/teach-me/111011211/transgender-rights-debate-separating-the-facts-from-the-fiction) Part of a longer article on topics raised in relation to self ID 100% positive on puberty blockers |
|  | Stuff › life-style › well-good › teach-me › transgender-rights-d... |
|  | [Thumbnail image](https://www.stuff.co.nz/life-style/well-good/teach-me/111011211/transgender-rights-debate-separating-the-facts-from-the-fiction) |
|  | 25/03/2019 **...** Denny, who has helped transgender youth aged five to 25 socially or medically transition for over 10 years, says **puberty blockers** are not ... |
| 12 | [Damien Grant: We're having a free speech moment. It isn't going well](https://www.stuff.co.nz/opinion/131660282/damien-grant-were-having-a-free-speech-moment-it-isnt-going-well) Mention only |
|  | Stuff › opinion › damien-grant-were-having-a-free-speech-mo... |
|  | [Thumbnail image](https://www.stuff.co.nz/opinion/131660282/damien-grant-were-having-a-free-speech-moment-it-isnt-going-well) |
|  | 7 days ago **...** ... and has raised concerns about the use of **puberty blockers**. Posie Parker is escorted out of Albert Park by police after she was met by an. |
| 13 | [Transgender conference sparks fierce national backlash | Stuff.co.nz](https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/128897870/transgender-conference-sparks-fierce-national-backlash)  This story was the subject of Media Council complain that was upheld in part and which led the Media Council to <https://www.mediacouncil.org.nz/rulings/ruling-by-the-new-zealand-media-council-in-the-complaint-of-fern-hickson-against-the-nelson-mail/> Sceptics about puberty suppressions portrayed in a very negative light |
|  | Stuff › transgender-conference-sparks-fierce-national-backlash |
|  | [Thumbnail image](https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/128897870/transgender-conference-sparks-fierce-national-backlash) |
|  | 10/06/2022 **...** It's really hard to be trans in our world at the moment.” Fraser said they wanted to state that **puberty blockers** were safe, and that young ... |
| 14 | [The best shows to watch on TVNZ OnDemand right now | Stuff.co.nz](https://www.stuff.co.nz/entertainment/tv-radio/300287907/the-best-shows-to-watch-on-tvnz-ondemand-right-now) Mention only in a Review of a film called the end. |
|  | Stuff › the-best-shows-to-watch-on-tvnz-ondemand-right-now |
|  | [Thumbnail image](https://www.stuff.co.nz/entertainment/tv-radio/300287907/the-best-shows-to-watch-on-tvnz-ondemand-right-now) |
|  | 30/04/2021 **...** He's trans, but he wasn't allowed to start **puberty blockers** early enough, and sometimes he bleeds. He can't stand it. |
| 15 | [Gender-affirming surgery not a 'nice to have' but 'absolutely ...](https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/health/125887430/genderaffirming-surgery-not-a-nice-to-have-but-absolutely-essential) Does not contain the words but positive about youth transition |
|  | Stuff › national › health › genderaffirming-surgery-not-a-nice-t... |
|  | [Thumbnail image](https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/health/125887430/genderaffirming-surgery-not-a-nice-to-have-but-absolutely-essential) |
|  | 31/07/2021 **...** Henderson was now looking to start gender-affirming **hormone** replacement therapy and then hoped to have top surgery. |
| 1 | [Conversion therapy ban deserves its broad, not uncritical, support ...](https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/politics/opinion/127728106/conversion-therapy-ban-deserves-its-broad-not-uncritical-support) Says PB is not a matter for the CPP legislation |
|  | Stuff › national › politics › opinion › conversion-therapy-ban-d... |
|  | [Thumbnail image](https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/politics/opinion/127728106/conversion-therapy-ban-deserves-its-broad-not-uncritical-support) |
|  | 10/02/2022 **...** If your 12-year-old declares they want to take **puberty blockers**, you do not face prosecution if you raise objections. So what does happen? |
| 2 | [Proposed law banning gay conversion practices unlikely to ...](https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/300380972/proposed-law-banning-gay-conversion-practices-unlikely-to-criminalise-parents) |
|  | Stuff › national › proposed-law-banning-gay-conversion-practi... |
|  | 12/08/2021 **...** ... against it due to the alleged risk of criminalising parents “for trying to advise their 12-year-old child not to take **puberty blockers**”. |
| 3 | ['Shame': Conversion Therapy bill passes first reading but is opposed ...](https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/politics/125983270/shame-conversion-therapy-bill-passes-first-reading-but-is-opposed-by-national-party) Quotes simon Bridges on regret and Keira Bell |
|  | Stuff › national › politics › shame-conversion-therapy-bill-pass... |
|  | [Thumbnail image](https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/politics/125983270/shame-conversion-therapy-bill-passes-first-reading-but-is-opposed-by-national-party) |
|  | 5/08/2021 **...** It included UK woman Keira Bell who said she should've been challenged more before she was allowed to take **puberty blockers** at 16 and now ... |
| 4 | [The Detail: How the proposed conversion therapy ban will work ...](https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/the-detail/300374429/the-detail-how-the-proposed-conversion-therapy-ban-will-work) |
|  | Stuff › national › the-detail › the-detail-how-the-proposed-conv... |
|  | [Thumbnail image](https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/the-detail/300374429/the-detail-how-the-proposed-conversion-therapy-ban-will-work) |
|  | 5/08/2021 **...** ... to explain whether a parent who forbade their 12-year-old child from taking **puberty blockers** might be prosecuted with the proposed law. |
| 5 | [National Party will allow conscience vote on conversion therapy ban ...](https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/politics/127667189/national-party-will-allow-conscience-vote-on-conversion-therapy-ban-after-block-voting-against-it-under-judith-collins) |
|  | Stuff › national › politics › national-party-will-allow-conscience... |
|  | [Thumbnail image](https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/politics/127667189/national-party-will-allow-conscience-vote-on-conversion-therapy-ban-after-block-voting-against-it-under-judith-collins) |
|  | 2/02/2022 **...** ... that parents could be prosecuted for “having a conversation with their children about, say, not supporting the use of **puberty blockers**”. |
| 6 | [How the National Party could learn from John Key | Stuff.co.nz](https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/politics/opinion/300382680/how-the-national-party-could-learn-from-john-key) Not relevant |
|  | Stuff › how-the-national-party-could-learn-from-john-key |
|  | [Thumbnail image](https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/politics/opinion/300382680/how-the-national-party-could-learn-from-john-key) |
|  | 15/08/2021 **...** Conversion therapy is nuts. But National is right to oppose until Labour can say that blocking access to **puberty blockers** will not result in ... |
| 7 | ['Deeply disappointed': Young Nats call for National Party to support ...](https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/politics/125975928/deeply-disappointed-young-nats-call-for-national-party-to-support-conversion-therapy-bill) |
|  | Stuff › national › politics › deeply-disappointed-young-nats-cal... |
|  | [Thumbnail image](https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/politics/125975928/deeply-disappointed-young-nats-call-for-national-party-to-support-conversion-therapy-bill) |
|  | 5/08/2021 **...** ... are naturally concerned about being able to make decisions about their children being given **puberty blockers** and hormones,” he said. |
|  | **Older stories** |
|  | [Father takes legal action to block child's gender transition | Stuff.co.nz](https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/79615795/father-takes-legal-action-to-block-childs-gender-transition) US case of NZ divorced parents not known if similar cases are underway in NZ |
|  | [Letting girl live as boy 'the right decision' | Stuff.co.nz](https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/health/9256077/Letting-girl-live-as-boy-the-right-decision) |
|  | [Ben's happier as a boy | Stuff.co.nz](https://www.stuff.co.nz/auckland/local-news/western-leader/10705729/Bens-happier-as-a-boy) |
|  | [Forced through **puberty** in 'wrong body' | Stuff.co.nz](https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/9277106/Forced-through-puberty-in-wrong-body) |
|  | [Welcome to the rainbow world of gender and sexuality | Stuff.co.nz](https://www.stuff.co.nz/life-style/life/81125652/welcome-to-the-rainbow-world-of-gender-and-sexuality) 4 bios various people. |
|  | [Wave of transgender young people will swamp treatment services ...](https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/health/82298767/wave-of-transgender-young-people-will-swamp-treatment-services--experts) |
|  | [Village where girls become boys at **puberty** | Stuff.co.nz](http://www.stuff.co.nz/world/americas/72260801/Vill) |
|  | [Too young to make a life decision | Stuff.co.nz](https://www.stuff.co.nz/taranaki-daily-news/news/9255179/Too-young-to-make-a-life-decision) |
|  | [Editorial: Too young to make a life decision | Stuff.co.nz](https://www.stuff.co.nz/taranaki-daily-news/opinion/9254493/Editorial-Too-young-to-make-a-life-decision) Does not contain the words however is the last article critical of early transition |
|  | [The cost of coming out as transgender | Stuff.co.nz](https://www.stuff.co.nz/life-style/life/67534833/the-cost-of-coming-out-as-transgender) Does not contain the words |
|  | [Born in the wrong body | Stuff.co.nz](https://www.stuff.co.nz/taranaki-daily-news/news/9249857/Born-in-the-wrong-body) Positive but quotes Beyer who is critical |
|  | [Boom in transgender children seeking treatment | Stuff.co.nz](https://www.stuff.co.nz/life-style/parenting/little-kids/99526094/boom-in-transgender-children-seeking-treatment) 100 in favour Australn story |
|  | [Rosemary McLeod on Miley Cyrus | Stuff.co.nz](http://www.stuff.co.nz/dominion-post/comment/columnists/9264881/Rosemary-McLeod-on-Miley-Cyrus) Against – will end in tears |
|  | ['I want control over my body': Aussie transgender kids in landmark ...](https://www.stuff.co.nz/life-style/99426313/i-want-control-over-my-body-aussie-transgender-kids-in-landmark-court-win) |
|  | [The girl who became a boy: Alex Ker tells his story | Stuff.co.nz](https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/health/80127967/the-girl-who-became-a-boy-alex-ker-tells-his-story) !00% positive |
|  | [Transgender children plan for their future by preserving their fertility ...](https://www.stuff.co.nz/life-style/well-good/teach-me/82198829/transgender-children-plan-for-their-future-by-preserving-their-fertility) |
|  | [Model Andrej Pejic changes gender | Stuff.co.nz](https://www.stuff.co.nz/life-style/10316191/Model-Andrej-Pejic-changes-gender) |
|  | [Northern Region DHBs seek to improve access for trans people ...](https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/health/90128626/northern-region-dhbs-seek-to-improve-access-for-trans-people-seeking-healthcare) !00% positive |
|  | [The journey of a transgender child | Stuff.co.nz](https://www.stuff.co.nz/life-style/life/68797129/the-journey-of-a-transgender-child) |