**From:** Anna Fifield <xx @stuff.co.nz>
**Sent:** Tuesday, 27 September 2022 2:31 p.m.
**To:** jan@XX

 **Subject:** Re: Official media complaint about an article on Stuff

Jan -- I've had a chance now to talk to the reporter and go through your email/this story properly. I am comfortable with our reporting on this issue both in its entirety and in relation to this particular story.

Family First [describes itself](https://familyfirst.org.nz/familyfirst-tv/) as a conservative organisation. Speak up For Women's [definition of men and women](https://www.speakupforwomen.nz/terminology) are taken [from a group](https://www.transgendertrend.com/) that states "no child is born in the wrong body".  As that definition seeks to erase the existence of transgender people, Stuff is comfortable with the anti-trans reference. Highly reputable organisations such as the [Mayo Clinic state gender dysphoria is real](https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/gender-dysphoria/symptoms-causes/syc-20475255).

On this issue, the decision was made that commentary from these groups, on this occasion, would represent false balance. Family First drew a conclusion about the change in wording without asking the Ministry and that conclusion turned out to be a fallacy. In situations where there's a potential for misinformation, Stuff seeks to clarify the correct information, not amplify misinformation by repeating it.

We accept that historically the approach to a story like this may have been different, **but just as media used to approach climate change deniers for stories on climate change, accepted science offers a more useful approach for readers, (emphasis added)** and while the story recognised "the field of gender-affirming healthcare was rapidly evolving", accepted science at the time is as the Ministry says: *“While puberty blockers are currently considered safe, all treatments have risks and benefits."*

And: *We endorse the*[*PATHA guidelines*](https://patha.nz/Guidelines)*, which do state: “Puberty blockers are considered to be fully reversible and allow the adolescent time prior to making a decision on starting hormone therapy”*(This was paraphrased in the story)

The British High Court Tavistock ruling was part of our reporter's research for this piece  but[given it was overturned](https://www.theguardian.com/society/2021/sep/17/appeal-court-overturns-uk-puberty-blockers-ruling-for-under-16s-tavistock-keira-bell) and as you say - the Court acknowledged clinicians should be making this recommendation (which our MOH now states online), it was considered a moot point.

Stuff is always open to further reporting on issues that are in the interests of readers, as there is limited scope in every story to cover the history and background of every issue**. And again, as the topic of gender-affirming healthcare is evolving, we will certainly be covering more on this issue in future.(emphasis added).** I also note that we have a letter from Jill Abigail that will be printed in the paper tomorrow.

If you are not happy with this response, I would direct you to the Media Council.

Best

Anna Fifield