Comment BBC News 31 July 2017

Stephanie Davies-Arai founded the Transgender Trend website - a group for parents to discuss transgender issues.

"Men could in effect identify their way into the protected category for women," she said.

What this means for women, Stephanie argues, is that the female sex would no longer have a protected category or political representation.

"Women are oppressed on the basis of their biological sex, not their gender identity," she added. "There has to be a place for the female sex as a distinct group."

This argument - the distinction between sex and gender - is refuted by some, including trans activist and feminist author Julia Serano, who argues there are more than two discrete mutually exclusive sexes.

Instead, she argues sex is made up of a number of variable dimorphic traits - like chromosomes and reproductive organs - that sometimes align in a person, and sometimes don't.

Both Sarah and Stephanie have stressed their support for trans rights, but that hasn't stopped criticism being directed at them.

"There's a climate that if you challenge this - you are a trans-phobic, bigoted hater," Stephanie says.

Full article here

Comment Mail on Sunday 30 July 2017

Stephanie Davies-Arai, of Transgender Trend, a parent group concerned about the rise of children identifying as the opposite sex, added: ‘These kids are not old enough to make life-changing decisions that will affect them for the rest of their lives. It’s unethical to pursue this line of treatment with children who cannot possibly understand what they’re doing.’

Full article here

Interview LBC Radio 24 July 2017

Audio here
Comment The Sun 24 July 2017

The Sun online article here

Interview LBC Radio 23 July 2017

Audio here

Interview Channel 4 News 23 July 2017

View here

Comment, Daily Mail Online 23 July 2017

Stephanie Davies-Arai of Transgender Trend, a parents' group, told the Sunday Times: 'This has huge implications for women. There will be legal cases. The most worrying thing is if any man can identify as a woman with no tests and gain access to spaces where women might be getting undressed or feel vulnerable — like women's hospital wards, refuges and rape crisis centres — women will just stop going to these facilities.'

Full article here
Transgender reforms for birth certificates

Tim Shipman and Jason Allardyce

Adults will be able to change their gender legally without a doctor’s diagnosis under government plans that will transform British society.

Men will be able to identify themselves as women – and women as men – and have their birth certificates altered to record their new gender.

Ministers plan to tear up the existing rules which mean that people have to live for two years as their desired gender before they can officially change sex.

A consultation on the Gender Recognition Bill, to be published in the autumn, will also include proposals to scrap the requirement that people get a formal medical diagnosis of “gender dysphoria” before applying to switch gender.

Critics warned that allowing people to effectively “self-identify” as a member of the opposite sex, while maintaining the anatomy of their birthgender, would unleash a firestorm of legal cases over access to women-only hospital wards, prisons, lavatories, changing rooms and competitive sports.

Justine Greening, the minister for women and equality, called the move to give more rights to transgender people the third great “step forward” after equality for women and the legalisation of same-sex marriage in 2013.

The announcement is timed to coincide with the 50th anniversary of the partial decriminalisation of homosexuality in 1967. Greening said ministers want to “streamline and de-medicalise” gender change to make it easier for people to switch their identity legally.

In future people are expected to be required only to make a statutory declaration that they intend to live in the acquired gender until death – in line with arrangements already adopted in Ireland.

The consultation will address whether those whose gender is “non-binary” should also be able to define themselves as “X” on their birth certificates.

A separate consultation in Scotland will go further than England and Wales by recommending that “non-binary” people should also be able to define themselves as “X” on passports as well. It will also propose a reduction in the age at which people can change their gender from 18 to 16.

The plans will be highly controversial. Prominent feminists including Germaine Greer and Jenni Murray, the presenter of Radio 4’s Woman’s Hour, have questioned whether men can become women even if they undergo a sex-change operation.

Stephanie Davies-Arai of Transgender Trend, a group of parents concerned about the growing diagnosis of children as transgender, said: “This has huge implications for women. Therewill be legal cases.

“The most worrying thing is if any man can identify as a woman with no tests and gain access to spaces where women might be getting undressed or where they feel vulnerable – like women’s hospital wards, refuges and rape crisis centres – then women will just stop going to these facilities.”

Self-identifying was recommended by a parliamentary committee last year chaired by the former cabinet minister Maria Miller and it has the backing of Theresa May and Jeremy Corbyn.

Greening also announced that the government will make it easier for gay men to give blood. At the moment men who have had sexual contact with other men are barred from donating for 12 months. That will be reduced to three months.

Ministers will launch a national survey of Britain’s estimated 1.5m LGBT people to share their views to help inform policy.

Greening, who is in a relationship with a woman, said: “This government is committed to building an inclusive society that works for everyone, no matter what their gender or sexuality.

“We will build on the significant progress we have made over the

Continued on page 2

Full article here (behind paywall) Republished here in the Australian Times

BBC TV News London Today 3 May 2017

Interview on the increase in referral rates to the Tavistock gender clinic.

BBC Radio Ulster The Nolan Show 20 April 2017

Debate about labeling children 'transgender'

Available for download here
BBC Radio Sussex Breakfast Show 28 March 2017

Interview about the case of a man who claims to be a woman being refused entry to the ladies toilet at his local pub.

BBC TV News: South East Today 27 March 2017

News item: Comment on the subject of women's established right to single-sex facilities.

Comment Daily Mail 7 March 2017

Last night a group which aims to promote 'balanced' debate on transgender issues said Dame Jenni was being 'silenced'.

Stephanie Davies-Arai, founder of Transgender Trend, said: 'The trans-activist campaign is so powerful that if anyone speaks out of line, in their opinion, they are getting threats.'

Full article here

Sunday Times Magazine 5 March 2017

There's a lot of fear, though. Numerous professionals in the field refused to talk to me, often quoting the experience of Kenneth Zucker, a Canadian psychologist who specialised in helping children and their families make their decisions about whether the child should transition or not. He was accused of employing the therapeutic tactics once used to persuade gay men that they were not homosexual. He has denied that this was the case. Nevertheless, he lost his job.

Stephanie Davies-Arai was prepared to talk. She is qualified to train teachers and parents in communication skills and runs a website called Transgender Trend. Her concerns centre on the power of the trans activists to shut down debate on the gender question. She mentions a line she hears often from parents, “I want a happy daughter, not a dead son,” inspired by a widely misinterpreted survey carried out in 2014 by the mental-health charity Pace. In its survey of more than 2,000 people in England, Pace had found that 59% of trans people aged 26 or under had considered suicide, 48% had actually attempted to kill themselves and 59% had self-harmed. The suicide risk was mentioned eight times in the House of Commons debate on transgender equality last December.

One charity, Mermaids, claimed that the Pace survey had been of 2,000 trans people — and this was widely shared on Twitter. But in fact Pace had surveyed 2,078 people of all sexualities and genders, — and only 27 of them were young people who identified as trans. So although the percentages were accurate — and, of course, it’s tragic that any young person should consider suicide — the number of young trans people surveyed was far smaller than many people realised.
LBC Lunchtime Show 20 February 2017

Debate with the Head teacher at St. Paul's Girls School about their policy to 'allow girls to choose their gender.'

BBC Radio 4 Woman's Hour 30 January 2017

Interview about the British Medical Journal changing the language from 'expectant mothers' to 'pregnant people.'

Here from about 36.00 Full transcript here, recording here

LBC Radio Breakfast Show 30 January 2017

Interview about a school's reluctance to 'affirm' an adolescent girl's new identity as a 'boy.'

Scottish Daily Mail 16 January 2017

Clinic doubles referrals of transgender children

A SOAKING number of Scottish children are identifying as transgender, with those receiving treatment for gender identity issues at one centre doubling in the past three years. From January to October last year, 188 under-18s were referred to Scotland’s largest gender identity clinic – the Sandyford in Glasgow.

In comparison, only 96 children and adolescents were referred in 2014, a figure that rose to 137 in 2015, figures obtained under the Freedom of Information Act reveal.

The Sandyford clinic offers specialist treatment to people with gender dysphoria, a condition caused by the mismatch between biological sex and gender identity.

"Treatment includes the prescription of puberty blockers to children under the age to prevent puberty – the first stage of a sex change. Teenagers are offered cross-sex hormone therapy from the age of 16 and sex change operations are available to adults over the age of 18.

In a BBC documentary that aired last week, Dr Kenneth Hunter, an expert in childhood gender dysphoria, said youths diagnosed as transgender could in fact be suffering from anxiety, depression or gender dysphoria.

He said: "I’ll mention kids who have a tendency to cross-dress or who have something else that points them to gender.

Just because kids are wearing something doesn’t necessarily mean you accept it, or that’s true, or that it could be in the best interests of the child."

Figures also reveal a substantial increase in the number of adults being referred to gender identity clinics in Scotland, with referrals increased from 213 in 2014 to 424 in the first ten months of 2016. At the Chalmers Gender Identity Clinic in Edinburgh, the number of adult patients has almost tripled in the past three years, from 90 in 2013 to 276 in 2015.

James Morton, of the Scottish Transgender Alliance, said changing societal attitudes meant more people than ever were coming out as transgender. He added: "There has definitely been a downward shift in the age that people are coming out as trans.

"The increasing number of schoolchildren identifying as transgender has led to calls for politicians to tackle the toxic environment of prejudice, physical and verbal abuse facing transgender pupils.

"Last week, Nicola Sturgeon pledged support for the Time for Inclusive Education campaign, which lobbies for LGBT-inclusive education in schools. The campaign is also backed by SNP councillor Ross Rarmboll, who revealed last year her 15-year-old son Wessy was starting a new life as a schoolgirl called Charlie.

A spokesman for NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde said: "An increase in referrals was being reported in England and Scotland, with cross-gender rights and greater social acceptability may be behind the trend.

"An increase in referrals was being reported in England and Scotland, with cross-gender rights and greater social acceptability may be behind the trend."
Comment Daily Mail 26 November 2016

Stephanie Davies-Arai, head of Transgender Trend, an organisation concerned about the rising number of children being referred to transgender clinics, agrees: ‘We are setting off children on a path towards sterilisation and medical dependency. It is an experiment that has no precedent. It is an idea, a theory, and has no scientific basis.’

She worries it is now ‘cool’ to be ‘trans’, fashionable for parents to embrace their ‘diverse’ child, and says anyone questioning this orthodoxy is slammed as ‘transphobic’.

She has heard of clusters of girls binding their breasts and saying they are boys. She has listened to parents who complain their children come home from school and say to them: ‘I’m not sure if I am a boy or a girl,’ after a class talk about transgender. Above all, Transgender Trend believes the mid-20s should be the earliest age to make a decision about changing sex.

‘Living as the opposite sex at a young age means that you are changing that child’s brain, you are building a new identity, and by the time you are 12, puberty is the enemy,’ says Ms Davies-Arai. ‘We do not know what the future holds for these children.’

Full article here

Comment Reuters 17 November 2016

Campaigner Stephanie Davies-Arai said labeling children who do not fit into conventional gender stereotypes as transgender was too simplistic.

"It's presented as if it's a very progressive view ... but it's restricting us into thinking that boys and girls are gender stereotypes," said Davies-Arai, who runs the Transgender Trend website, and struggled with her female identity as a child.

Full article here and NBC News article here
'THERE’S NOBODY ASKING, WHY DO SO MANY TEENAGE GIRLS NOT WANT TO BECOME WOMEN?'

still checks on Mai through the night because she is worried he might hurt himself. She has got rid of anything that could cause harm – the cords on a blind, dressing-gown ties.

In the documentary we watch Rachel weighing up the pros and cons of hormone blockers. "My concern is that it suppresses things. Maybe if she did go through puberty, she'd click into girl mode and be actually, 'I want to be a girl now.' I don't think that will happen, but my worry is that I really am interfering. Now this isn't nature, it is nurture. On the other hand being able to press the pause button could be a good thing."

What does Tills/Matt think? "Tills thinks the rest of the world has gone mad. Just leave me alone. What's wrong with me? I'm just me."

Stephanie Davies-Arai is a parent coach behind a website called Transgender Trend, concerned about the rise in the number of children referred to gender clinics. She argues that, "We are setting children off on a path towards sterilisation and medicalisation. It is an experiment that has no precedent. Are we really willing to so readily accept that a child is the 'wrong' sex at this age, rather than address the bullying and the culture that tells him so?" It's a view, she says, that has lost her friends - "There's a feeling that if you don't go along with current trends you are transphobic."

At first I presumed Transgender Trend was religiously or politically motivated, but that doesn't seem to be the case when we meet. Her view, thoughtfully argued, is that when she was a teenager she, too, would have questioned her gender. "I would have been trans. Because I was not only a tomboy; in my head I was a boy. My sister and I went through our pre-pubescence calling each other Mike and Bill. Until my mid twenties, I didn't want to be a woman. I was a rebel. I look at what is going on and think, I would have gone for this." She doesn't think children can make a decision about gender until their mid twenties when the brain has reached maturity, and that living as the opposite sex at a young age means "you are changing that child's brain, you are building a new identity and by the time you are 12, puberty is the enemy."

Her concern is that, with the help of social media, there might be more awareness around trans, but we're ignoring the issue of social contagion. Davies-Arai argues that it's become cool to be "trans", more accepted than being a lesbian, for example, which is one possible reason why referrals of teenage girls have increased so dramatically. She has heard of clusters of girls binding their breasts and saying they are boys; that parents complain their children are coming home saying, "I'm not sure if I am a boy or a girl," after a class talk about transgender. "Any kid who is like I was – outside the crowd, a bit awkward, the ones who don't fit in – all 'gender non-conforming' kids are included under the trans umbrella now and they are being given no alternative way of understanding their feelings of distress."

But what would she do if her traumatised seven-year-old child announced he/she wanted to change sex? "I would say, be quite casual about it. Don't make a big fuss. Take it away from gender. Parents are advised now to take it very seriously – and I think that is the last thing you do. Address the bullying instead."

If Davies-Arai does have an agenda, it is a feminist one. Almost 1,000 natal females were referred to the Tavistock last year. Might this be more about girls struggling with puberty and their bodies? "There's nobody asking, why do so many teenage girls not want to become women? I think that's what we should be asking. Rather than accepting the least likely answer, that they are really boys. It seems a way for us not to seriously look at the culture we are bringing our girls up in."

To some degree, Carmichael might have sympathy with this last argument. What she and her team try to figure out, over months and years, is, "How far are the physical changes one seeks motivated more around feeling that you fit in and are accepted by others?"

“You might think, gosh, what are we doing?” says Carmichael. “But there isn’t a right and a wrong. No one has the answers. It is an evolving picture with many voices contributing. All we can go on is that people who have taken this route feel this was the right thing to do."

In the documentary, Beard, the director, says to Ash, "Some people change their minds …" "Some people. Not me,” she responds. Do you think you’ll be a girl for ever, he asks. "Yes,” she replies. And turns a cartwheel.

Channel 4's series about the Tavistock, Kids on the Edge, starts on November 16 at 10pm
Newsnight BBC2 31 October 2016

[link to video]

Panel debate: BBC Radio 4 Bringing Up Britain 20 July 2016

[link to listen]

BBC Radio Sussex 20 April 2016

Interview about Brighton & Hove Council's school registration form asking parents to help their children 'choose their gender.'

BBC 5Live 20 April 2016

Interview about Brighton & Hove Council's school registration form asking parents to help their children 'choose their gender.'

Sky News 20 April 2016

Comment The Sun 19 April 2016

The council's move came just months after it sent pupils at Blatchington Mill School in Hove a gender survey with 25 options to choose from.

As well as girl and boy, answers included "genderqueer", "tri-gender" and "gender fluid".

Author Stephanie Davies-Arai, an expert on child communication skills, said: "If you say the word 'gender' to a child they would have no idea what it means.

"If you tell a child they are the opposite gender then they will think you mean the opposite sex. It's very confusing and it leads to emotional problems for children."

[full article here] and [here in the Daily Telegraph]