Dear Prime Minister,

The British Medical Association (BMA) is a non-partisan professional association and independent trade union, representing doctors and medical students from all branches of medicine across the UK and supporting them to deliver the highest standards of patient care. We write to you in support of Finnish medical student Sakris Kupila and his call for reform of Finland’s gender recognition procedures.

The BMA’s committees for public health and medical students have long held policy advocating the support of transgender students and doctors, and we continue to value and respect diversity within our profession and the patient population. Given that Mr Kupila is a trans medical student, we are conscious that his treatment, as highlighted by Amnesty International, is significant to the doctors and students we represent in the UK, especially those originating from the EEA.

Considering this, we have grave concerns about the current provisions of the Finland Trans Act. Amnesty International has recommended the revision of the Act, a position which we would strongly support following the Finnish parliamentary debate on enforced sterilisation of trans people. The Finnish Medical Association (FMA) have written to us in support of abolishing this provision from the Act.

As the UK and Finland are both signatories to the Yogyakarta Principles and recognise Resolution 2048 of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, we are bound to ensure that our laws and regulations do not compel trans people to undergo forced sterilisation or other forced medical treatment. As a professional association for doctors, we are implacably opposed to medical involvement in the violation of fundamental human rights. Medical involvement in sterilisation where there is no direct clinical justification, and in circumstances that are tantamount to coercion, violates both professional and human rights norms. Medical involvement in such a process is unconscionable.

We are supportive of measures and revisions that improve the treatment of trans people in Finland, especially regarding the process for legal recognition. We believe an ideal process is transparent and based on the right of individuals to self-determine their gender. We support those who defend the rights of trans people and welcome greater protections for them.
We hope that the Finnish government will open dialogue with us and the FMA on the protection and support of trans people’s health and rights, and hope that international discourse on gender identity will continue to progress and amplify the voices of trans people.

Yours sincerely,

Dr John Chisholm CBE  Harrison Carter and Mita Dhullipala
BMA medical ethics committee chair  BMA medical student committee chairs