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Gender Dysphoria Treatment and NHS Policies on Facial Feminisation

I am writing to seek clarification and further information regarding the provision of treatments for gender dysphoria within the NHS, specifically facial feminisation procedures. It is my understanding that tracheal shave (reduction of the Adam's apple) is the only facial feminisation surgery routinely provided by the NHS. The justification for this appears to be that the tracheal prominence is a distinctly male anatomical feature, and addressing it can help alleviate gender dysphoria. However, I would like to highlight that the supraorbital ridge—or brow ridge—is another distinctly male characteristic frequently used in both forensic anthropology and clinical contexts as a primary indicator of male skeletal identity. To underscore the importance of the supraorbital ridge in gender perception:

1. **Forensic Identification:** The brow ridge is a key feature used by forensic anthropologists to determine sex from skeletal remains. Its prominence in males versus females is well-documented in anthropological and medical literature.
2. **Psychological and Social Impact:** Numerous studies have shown that facial features strongly influence gender recognition. The brow ridge plays a substantial role in subconscious gender perception.
3. **Clinical Recognition:** Leading maxillofacial and plastic surgeons have identified the prominence of the brow ridge as a significant factor in gender dysphoria cases.

If the rationale for tracheal shave being funded by the NHS is that it addresses a predominantly male characteristic, why is the same reasoning not applied to brow contouring? The absence of this procedure as an available treatment denies individuals the opportunity to alleviate significant psychological distress. I understand that the NHS is under significant financial and operational pressures, and I deeply respect the challenges faced by the healthcare system. However, I would greatly appreciate any clarification regarding the decision-making process for offering tracheal shave, while excluding other critical facial feminisation procedures, such as brow contouring. Please let me know if there are any further steps, I could take to advocate for this procedure or any alternative routes I might explore.

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust can advise that a Tracheal Shave (surgical procedure to reduce the Adam's apple) is not included in NHS England's service specification for "Gender Identity Services Surgical Interventions". This service specification describes the specialist surgical procedures that are commissioned by NHS England for the treatment of gender dysphoria.

Reasoning behind the specification should be sought from Commissioners, NHS England.