

Caroline Nokes MP
Chair
Women and Equalities Committee
House of Commons
Westminster
London
SW1A 0AA

Mayor Philip Glanville
Mayor of Hackney
Cllr Carole Williams,
Cabinet Member for Equalities
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18 January 2021
MCO210104-01

Dear Ms Nokes,

Trans, Non-binary and gender diverse inclusion

We welcome the work the Women and Equalities Committee is undertaking to examine the reform of the Gender Recognition Act 2004 and we have followed your recent evidence session with particular interest.

While the Gender Recognition Act 2004 was considered ground-breaking back in 2004, it is very clear that it has now become outdated and is in urgent need of reform.

As you will be aware, in the Government's own 2018 consultation, respondents said that they found the process of applying for a Gender Recognition Certificate unnecessary bureaucratic, stressful and stated that it made them feel dehumanised. However despite these overwhelming number of calls for change and your own committee's calls back in your 2015-16 report into Transgender Equality, it is deeply disappointing that only minimal and non-legislative changes have been proposed by Government Ministers.

This is a missed opportunity that lets down our trans community. The Government's minimal proposals fail to meaningfully reform the Gender Reform Act and achieve the



Government's intention to make the process "kinder and more straightforward" for applicants.

Far from being a country that leads in trans and non-binary equality, the Government's failure to make significant and progressive reforms, in particular the failure to implement a system of self-declaration, not only lets down our residents who identify as trans but also sets us back as an inclusive society.

We would strongly urge the Government to adopt a system of self-declaration, including a statutory declaration, in line with international best practice.

Alongside the important issue of reform of the Gender Recognition Act, we would also encourage your committee to consider a separate and broader inquiry to the improvement of trans, non-binary and gender diverse inclusion in public services, learning from some of the challenge that arose during, and as a result of, the 2018 consultation on the Gender Recognition Act which produced a significant backlash to trans and non binary genders. Given that there has been a significant rise in the reporting of both Transphobic and Homophobic hate crimes since 2014, it is vital that any further work does not risk furthering the notion that some aspects of human rights are negotiable, or open to debate.

Hackney is proud to be a diverse borough in which people of different genders, nationalities, ethnicities and sexualities are proud to call their home. However, we also recognise that we can never afford to be complacent, especially with the national rise in transphobic and other hate crimes, if we are to maintain a reputation for an open, inclusive and tolerant borough.

As part of our wider Access and Inclusion strategy, Hackney is currently auditing all our service areas - leisure, parks, recreation, adult services, customer services, schools, children and families, housing, community safety, housing and employment - to try and enhance and embed trans, non-binary and gender diverse inclusion across all our areas of work. Fundamental to the Access and Inclusion work is an approach which doesn't just seek to be inclusive, but actively celebrates and values diversity.

This work also includes embedding awareness of gender diversity in training to staff and holding focus groups with our gender diverse staff and service users.

We are also acutely aware that many individual experience multiple discrimination for example because of gender identity, race and ethnicity combined with socio-economic disadvantage. As part of our broader work on equalities, we are also focusing on issues of intersectionality.

This work is still in its early stages but we would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss it, alongside our officers, in more detail.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you would like any further information or if we can be of any assistance.

Yours sincerely,

The image shows two handwritten signatures in blue ink. The signature on the left is 'Philip Glanville' and the signature on the right is 'Carole Williams'.

Philip Glanville
Mayor of Hackney

Carole Williams
Cabinet Member for Equalities

CC Meg Hillier MP, Member of Parliament for Hackney South and Shoreditch
Diane Abbott MP, Member of Parliament for Hackney North and Stoke
Newington
Clerks, Women and Equalities Committee