

Written evidence submitted by A Member of the Public (GRA0020)

I'm writing this to share my experience as a transgender woman in the UK. I, as well as many of my friends, are **deeply concerned that this call for evidence will be used to “clarify” away our rights and place us in a worse position than before.** This must not be allowed to happen. Transgender people feel deeply failed by Government, especially following the recent dropping of GRA reforms. We are utterly terrified that we will be further demonised and discriminated against.

Please do not publish my name on your website - keep this submission anonymous. Thank you.

Will the Government's proposed changes meet its aim of making the process “kinder and more straight forward”?:

No. The intrusive medical requirements haven't gone. Why is it relevant for a faceless panel of bureaucrats to know exactly what doses of medications you've been prescribed? The proposed changes are seen by trans people as little more than a smokescreen, so Government can pretend they are helping us.

Should a fee for obtaining a Gender Recognition Certificate be removed or retained? Are there other financial burdens on applicants that could be removed or retained?:

It should be reduced to a minimum fee, or removed if possible. I know several friends who are eligible but haven't applied due to the high cost.

Should the requirement for a diagnosis of gender dysphoria be removed?

No - I personally see no reason why the requirement for a diagnosis should be removed.

Should there be changes to the requirement for individuals to have lived in their acquired gender for at least two years?

Yes, I think that this should be shortened to six months to a year. The two-year requirement is a very long period of time and people end up living for all regards as their preferred gender except legally.

What is your view of the statutory declaration and should any changes have been made to it?

I don't see any issues with the Stat Dec.

Does the spousal consent provision in the Act need reforming? If so, how? If it needs reforming or removal, is anything else needed to protect any rights of the spouse or civil partner?

It needs removal. It's a pointless part of the Act - with the current long waiting times it's impossible for your partner to fully transition behind your back and then suddenly spring the surprise of transitioning on you. Furthermore, now that same-sex marriage is legal, it simply isn't relevant to modern British society.

Should the age limit at which people can apply for a Gender Recognition Certificate (GRC) be lowered?

No, 18 is a reasonable age, provided that evidence of social transition before 18 is accepted.

What impact will these proposed changes have on those people applying for a Gender Recognition Certificate, and on trans people more generally?

I am concerned that the consultation has promoted a toxic culture towards transgender people in the UK. It has led to public discussion of stripping back our rights, and has made many people, myself included, feel less safe and part of our society.

What else should the Government have included in its proposals, if anything?

An iron-clad promise that this **will not be used to take away rights from transgender people** by "clarifying" existing regulations.

Does the Scottish Government's proposed Bill offer a more suitable alternative to reforming the Gender Recognition Act 2004?

Yes.

Why is the number of people applying for GRCs so low compared to the number of people identifying as transgender?

Because the requirements are intrusive, the cost is very high, and it's a giant hassle to do so.

Are there challenges in the way the Gender Recognition Act 2004 and the Equality Act 2010 interact? For example, in terms of the different language and terminology used across both pieces of legislation.

I think the GRA should be updated to use more modern terminology. However, I don't see any issues with how they interact. I am, however, concerned that this question will be used to try and push an agenda that trans women shouldn't be allowed into womens spaces before they get a GRC - this would make me and my trans friends feel unsafe going out in public. I am already terrified of public bathrooms due to transphobic attacks and always use the disabled - please please don't let this become an excuse to further harm trans people.

Are the provisions in the Equality Act for the provision of single-sex and separate-sex spaces and facilities in some circumstances clear and useable for service providers and service users? If not, is reform or further guidance needed?

Yes, I feel that for service users they are very clear and I don't see issues with the current system of self-identification for the majority of single-sex spaces. Whilst I understand that some women have concerns, once again this **must not be used to push back on transgender people's rights and make us feel even more unsafe in public single-sex spaces e.g. bathrooms.** **Furthermore, trans people often experience domestic abuse. The committee should reflect on how many transgender people feel unsafe in single-sex refuges and may even be rejected by providers, leaving them with nowhere to go.**

Does the Equality Act adequately protect trans people? If not, what reforms, if any, are needed

I feel the Equality Act protects us adequately

What issues do trans people have in accessing support services, including health and social care services, domestic violence and sexual violence services?

We face long delays in accessing health services, as your previous report on trans people found. Many support professionals don't know anything about trans people, and so treat us as inherently disordered. Domestic and sexual violence services are especially tricky as these are usually single-sex spaces and therefore sometimes exclude trans women, despite us having an incredibly high rate of domestic abuse.

Are legal reforms needed to better support the rights of gender-fluid and non-binary people? If so, how?

The Government should recognise a third non-binary gender.

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