

Written evidence submitted by Ms Deborah Taylor (GRA0045)

Given the nature of the enquiry, the following is personal information as this is all I have to offer.

One of my earliest memories is being six years old and crying at a dance competition because I couldn't wear dresses like the other girls. That was 1975. I very quickly learned that I had to conform, hide who I was. Over the years, this has caused mental issues. When puberty hit, I became a troubled teen, desperate to fit in. I ran away from home and was in trouble with the law, but somehow, I came through that. Throughout it all, despite the outward appearance I knew I was putting on a front. At fourteen, a child psychiatrist diagnosed it as disassociate personality disorder, which meant he knew the person he was talking to wasn't me.

I went to university, I fell in love, I married and I had children. Eventually, the façade broke too much to be fixed. It's hard to maintain. As I approached forty I became anorexic and withdrawn. Eventually, after therapy, I told my wife what the reasons were. I'd finally come to understand myself who I was. Pre-internet I had zero access to information, between 1995 and 2005 I didn't dare look, for fear of what I'd find. Before 2010, it was still sordid. And then we got the first glimpses of being accepted. I finally could admit to myself first and others after, who and what I was. This wasn't a perversion. I started the process of transitioning in 2012 and this process turned a dour, dark, depressed individual into somebody who was finally happy inside and out. I'm accepted for who I am at work and with friends.

The recent furore over the gender recognition certificate has turned the UK back into a toxic environment for trans people. I can't go back. I've been in the light, a return to darkness would kill me. A gender recognition certificate is a tiny part of our identity. Its main benefit to me would be to allow me to die in my gender and not be put back to who I am not after I can no longer fight. The fears projected by a minority are imagined. Several countries have made this step, and those fears have not materialised. The main benefit of reforming the GRC would be to tell society that the UK government supports the right for trans people to exist. We've always been here, we always will be. The government can either treat us as equals, or join the oppressors.

This is what the GRC has become a symbol for, well beyond its legal ramifications.

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