

## Written evidence submitted by Helen Bunter (GRA0054)

My name is Helen Bunter. I live in the Scottish Borders. I used to work for the NHS in the areas of sexual health and then as an Equalities Manager.

### The Government's response to the GRA consultation:

- Will the Government's proposed changes meet its aim of making the process "kinder and more straight forward"? **Yes**
- 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? **Retained. It must cover the administrative costs although these will be less if it is moving on line.**
- Should the requirement for a diagnosis of gender dysphoria be removed? **Absolutely not. In any other case of body dysphoria, the patient is supported to resolve their issues through therapeutic means. We do not encourage anorexics to have lipo suction. We do not encourage people who think their body is wrong if they have both legs to have an amputation so that their body meets their mental image. It is vital that people who similarly view their breasts/penis as 'wrong' are supported through therapy and a diagnosis of gender dysphoria is essential.**
- Should there be changes to the requirement for individuals to have lived in their acquired gender for at least two years? **Absolutely not. There are more and more people coming forward as detransitioners who regret their decision to transition and it is imperative that the process should give an adequate amount of time for people to thoroughly consider what they are doing with the support of mental health practitioners.**
- What is your view of the statutory declaration and should any changes have been made to it? **People should not be allowed to simply 'self declare' that they are the opposite sex. They must go through the current process.**
- 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? **We should never be in a position where a person finds themselves still in a marriage or civil partnership where their partner has changed sex**
- Should the age limit at which people can apply for a Gender Recognition Certificate (GRC) be lowered? **Absolutely not. As I have mentioned above, the increasing number of detransitioners should make us even more cautious.**
- What impact will these proposed changes have on those people applying for a Gender Recognition Certificate, and on trans people more generally?
- What else should the Government have included in its proposals, if anything?
- Does the Scottish Government's proposed Bill offer a more suitable alternative to reforming the Gender Recognition Act 2004? **Thankfully this has currently been put on hold thanks to women like me campaigning against it.**

## **Wider issues concerning transgender equality and current legislation:**

Why is the number of people applying for GRCs so low compared to the number of people identifying as transgender? **Because they can't be bothered? Also, they can change bank details, driving licence etc without a GRC so why bother? And, since no one can ask to see their GRC what point is there in having one really?**

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. **Of course there are! The fact that the EHRC is being taken to court demonstrates this. Also, the Scottish Government is being taken to a judicial review up here for changing the definition of woman. Over the past dozen or so years, the term 'gender' has been slowly replacing 'sex' and the protection of women's single sex spaces and exemptions to the EA2010 have been stomped over and ignored. If I want to be treated by a female doctor then I have a right to that doctor to be, in fact, female, not some man who thinks that he's a woman even though he still has a penis. The mess with men being let into female prisons (including a case in Ireland, which is constantly being held up as a shing example) and attacking women is shameful. The number of cases of men, dressed as women, attacking women and girls in so called 'unisex' spaces demonstrates clearly why we need to have women only spaces. When the GRA was originally written it was expected that everyone who was trans would want to have surgery and would only not have surgery if they had a medical condition which meant that they were unfit to have surgery. Now we have bearded men in skirts calling themselves women and we're not allowed to challenging them coming into our toilets or we're bigots and transphobes.**

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? **Further guidance is needed. For instance, at the moment organisations are supposed to consider on a case by case basis whether men who say they are women are allowed to enter women only spaces. ALL males should be banned from women only spaces. At the moment in Scotland we have a man who lied to get a job as the manager of a rape crisis centre who is standing on an all women shortlist. This is what is happening now, before you make any changes.**

Does the Equality Act adequately protect trans people? If not, what reforms, if any, are needed **I am tired of the call for 'trans rights'. What rights exactly do they not have? They have protection under the law from discrimination in employment and if they are attacked their attacker will be charged with a hate crime (unlike crimes against women, which aren't hate crimes apparently). The 'rights' they seem to want is to access women only spaces.**

What issues do trans people have in accessing support services, including health and social care services, domestic violence and sexual violence services? **Other than the waiting time to see a GID service I can't see that they have any issues accessing services as long as they declare who they are. I have read a report in the last year of a trans man dying**

**because he didn't tell his health care provider that he was trans – they're not mind readers. As far as DV and sexual violence services are concerned – women spent years campaigning for these services and put their hands in their own pockets to support them. Let the trans people do the same,**

Are legal reforms needed to better support the rights of gender-fluid and non-binary people? If so, how? **Oh FFS. Gender is NOT a protected characteristic. We do not make laws for the feelings that people have in their heads. They can dress how they like but I'm not playing the pronoun game.**

**You haven't asked this, but let's take a step back and consider whether or not we actually NEED the GRA. When it was developed it was in a completely different time when we didn't have same sex marriage for instance. If you go back to the discussions in Hansard you will see that the rationale for brining it in no longer exists but the concerns that some politicians had about the nightmare we might end up living in have.**

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