

Written evidence submitted by Miss B Drummond (GRA0088)

I am submitting a written statement as evidence about the gender recognition act 2004 reforms.

Summary

- Ideas from someone with one of the newest GRC's in the UK who has very recently gone through the whole GRA process.
- Minor reforms to the GRA 2004
- A whole new and more helpful system idea to help trans people change gender easier on documents and with companies and to help them live their lives better in public based on the problems that I have encountered whilst transitioning that does not involve reforming the GRA 2004
- Anti-discrimination laws to help trans people live in peace
- Better access to gender identity clinics
- Health care for the trans child
- Liz truss and the Women's and Equalities Commission/Ministry of Freedom (non- trans/GRA related)
- Women and girls in STEM (non-trans/GRA related)
- Transphobia in the UK media and how it's affected me
- Thoughts on yet another GRA reform consultation

I have just acquired my GRC this week. I am a trans woman with a GRC. I believe that I have a unique view as I have just gone through the traditional gender recognition process and have one of the newest GRC's in the country.

I think that you should listen to what people think about the GRA reforms who have already been through the traditional GRA process and how it will impact them and their worries surrounding self-ID

I used to be the biggest supporter for self ID for a GRC and was heartbroken when the reforms were dropped and saw it as yet another big blow to trans rights in the UK and a big win for the transphobes.

As soon as self ID being dropped was announced in the Sunday times. I put my GRC application in the post on the Monday as I was scared that the removal of the GRA2004 would be on the cards so knew I had to work quickly. I find it strange that if self ID wasn't dropped I wouldn't have a GRC now.

However, since acquiring my GRC I have changed my mind on self ID. I didn't actually know what a GRC actually did. I just thought it changed your birth certificate and that was it. I have had problems with my birth certificate 'outing' me to people when I needed to produce it as I didn't have a valid passport as I could not change my gender on the passport without documentation from the gender identity clinic.

When I got my GRC I started to look into what it actually was. I didn't know that it actually changed your legal gender in law. I just thought it changed your birth certificate document like a passport or driving licence and nothing else.

Even though I thought self ID was a good idea upon learning what a GRC actually is I can see that the self ID system can be easily abused by people who have ulterior motives. I believe that this self ID move will put the right of existing GRC holders at risk

I think that we should come up with something completely new and better to help trans people in the UK instead of reforms to the GRA like other countries which basically copied the UK's GRA.

My idea is the 'Gender Declaration Certificate' (GDC). It would be like a deed-poll but for gender or 'self ID lite' but will not be recognised in UK law unlike a GRC. So with a GDC you could easily change your gender in passports, driving licences and in businesses such as banks and doctors as soon as a GDC is issued. It would also be good if you could incorporate a name and title change into the GDC as well to streamline dealing with changing your details at companies and the passport office/DVLA with just 1 simple form and all the changes can be done at the same time. So when you start your transition you can get one of these GDC straight away and change all your details in companies. This will start making getting evidence much easier for the transgender person and would make been 'outed' by documents a thing of the past. However, that gender will not be recognised in law like a gender in a GRC would be. Maybe include non-binary in it as-well to make the non-binary people happy and see how it goes. I think that with a GDC more accurate data could be gathered about trans people to make decisions on how to best help us without throwing open the GRA to everyone as I think self ID will compromise the protections in it for trans people already with a GRC due to 'bad eggs' abusing the self-ID system.

Changing your name and sex with companies is very difficult. Each one is a battle and some are harder than others. An example of mine was when I tried changing my name at my bank. I didn't actually ask to change my sex at the bank just my name. However, because I was going from a male name to a female name they would not implement the change until they saw documentation that I have changed my sex. I ended up having to go to the doctors where they **SOLD** me a document that said that I intended to live as female for the rest of my life. Then when the bank saw this document from the doctors they changed my details on their system. This process took about 2 months and was not a nice thing to go through. They did however offer me £50 compensation but would have just preferred not to have the hassle. Another example was when I wanted to change my sex on the doctors system. I had changed my name on their system about 2.5 years before with no problems but they did not change my sex on the system. After recently learning that for some silly reason the NHS numbers are gendered I asked if I could change my gender of their system and get a new NHS number. The person who I initially was dealing with refused to do this. After making a complaint to the manager of the doctors surgery I eventually got my NHS number changed. (the manager of the doctors surgery was very nice and very helpful and she did a great job for which I am very grateful) however it did take the NHS over 6 weeks to issue a new NHS number that was out of the managers hands.

I think that a 'Gender Declaration Certificate' (GDC) should have laws in place that when a company or organisation is presented with a GDC they should have a time window that they have to meet for the changes to be made otherwise they could be fined. This is to make it

easier for the person with a GDC to change their details and hopefully will not result in a battle with each company. I also believe that the GDC should come with a new NHS number for the person to make changing name and sex easier at the doctors as changing my details at the doctors was one of my hardest and longest battles. I also think that the GDC should come with anti-discrimination laws in place to help the person with a GDC live a better life and be free from discrimination.

Applying for a GRC isn't as hard as its made out to be. I got one without knowing what it actually did. I have actually transitioned so had all the medical documents ready. But did have to wait about just over a year to build up a good body of evidence. The thing that would help trans people is getting the waiting lists down at the gender identity clinic. I think that within two years of referral from the doctor you should have a gender dysphoria appointment and a hormones appointment. I say 2 years because it will give the transgender person the time to get the evidence to apply for a GRC and then you get all the medical paperwork. Then they are ready for a GRC application if they are ready to proceed further with their transition. I started my social transition back in April 2015 after a 7 yearlong battle with my family to let me transition. I didn't legally change my name till January 2018 as my family was against a name change but when was told to change my name legally by the GIC I did straight away. Then I learnt of a GRC in the middle of 2019. I was told to wait for self-ID but with all the newspapers complaining about it I thought it would get dropped (like it did). I was planning for self ID to be passed and then I would apply through the old system to prove to myself how trans I am and own the newest GRC from the old system so when I'm older I could say 'back in my day'.

I don't think that the biggest problem with a GRC is the application. I believe that it is with everything surrounding the application such as changing your details with companies that makes gathering evidence harder. The long wait times with the gender identity clinic getting a gender dysphoria diagnosis and long wait times with access to hormones. Getting hormones to trans people quickly is important as I knew a trans woman who died because she was taking way too many hormones she bought off the internet and died of a heart attack which was most likely due to the excessive hormones.

I think that the reason which some fully transitioned people don't apply for GRC is maybe because they may find it hard to get their medical reports from the doctors. If they have already fully transitioned then they should already have the medical reports but may not have easy access to them. They might also not want the very personal information that is in a gender dysphoria diagnosis being disclosed to a panel of strangers. So maybe have a gender dysphoria diagnosis letter that says you have gender dysphoria but does not include all the personal things that has happened in your life. Another reason why they might not apply for a GRC is because they find it hard to get the evidence due to the massive battles with companies that you have to go through to get that evidence that hopefully a GDC would solve. I also think a reason why they don't apply is because they just simply don't know it actually exists. I only learnt about it just over a year ago due to all the transphobia in the media about the reforms to it. If it wasn't for the reforms I would not know about it to this day.

Also I think that the statutory declaration isn't really needed. I found the whole statutory declaration rather silly and also it confuses solicitors on how to fill it in. In my case they found the part about marriage confusing so my statutory declaration was sent back to be amended as it was filled out wrong. I also believe that a person applying for a GRC should

not have to get their partners approval to get one. I see the statutory declaration for a partner as a remnant of needing a divorce before gay marriage was introduced as a married person who acquired a GRC while still married would mean they would be in a gay marriage before gay marriage was made legal in law .

The main issue for me with self ID GRC is prisons. A woman with a GRC will go to a women's prison. I believe if a woman with a GRC is going to prison and has a history of harm to women like sexual assault or domestic violence then she should be put into a bespoke unit in a women's prison for the other woman's protection whilst also protecting her from a male prison that will result in bullying to suicide. However if the woman with a GRC had no history like that towards women such as drug possession or fraud then she should be placed in the general population of a woman's prison. I also believe that if a trans woman with a GRC is placed with women in general population then she should be either chemically or physically castrated such as hormone blockers or sex reassignment surgery (this will be the norm anyway for many trans women with a GRC). However if they refuse then they should be placed in the bespoke unit in the women's prison which hold trans women with GRC who are a threat to other women. Prison is scary idea when your trans gender. My plan if I ever got arrested was to kill myself as soon as I was in a cell. I even had rehearsals of how to make a noose out of the clothes I'm wearing and tie them to something then hang myself. I would have to do this quickly as in prisons cells they have cameras and as soon as I'm hanging they would be straight in there. That's why I have done rehearsals so I can do it quickly so they don't get to me in time to save me. When I learned about the protections for trans women with a GRC in prison. I actually hugged my GRC while crying for hours with utter relief. For the first time in a long time I actually felt safer in the UK.

Those protections **MUST REMAIN** in place at all costs as I don't want to have any more 'suicide in custody' rehearsals. I believe that self ID would weaken these protections. So with self ID I would lose rights that I have just received to accommodate the people with self ID GRC who might use it to attack women in prison or go to a woman prison for an easy time. This is my biggest fear of self ID. If I was put in a male prison I would be raped and bullied into suicide because luckily/unluckily I 'pass' which means I don't get hassle on the street but means that I will be very attractive in a male prison. Chances are I will never go to prison anyway because I'm a bit of a goody two shoes and have never been in trouble with the police, but you never know what will happen in the future.

When it comes to trans people with a Gender Declaration Certificate (GDC) and prison then maybe have a separate unit for trans women with a GDC and trans men with a GDC. So they do not attend a women's prison while also being protected from the bullying that would occur in a male prison. If a non-binary person is going to attend prison then maybe they will be housed in the GDC unit according to their legal gender e.g. non-binary male will be housed with the trans women and a non-binary female will be housed with the trans men. However, trans men when on hormones can get very sexually aggressive so maybe better people who know the system better than I do would be better making those decisions about where to place prisoners with a GDC. I am no expert of prisons However the trans prisoner's safety should be considered as well as the safety of others without using such things a solitary confinement.

Access to trans health care for children must remain in place at all costs and must not be removed. The medical experts in gender identity clinics know what is best for the trans child. The medical experts I have encountered at my gender identity clinic have helped me very much and my life is vastly better now thanks to the help they have given me and they know

more about being transgender than I do and how to best help me. Currently in the media we have seen an attack on child trans health care where one or two people who worked at the children's gender identity clinic are against it and has gone to the media and then given a massive platform. These so called medical personals seem to work very closely with transphobic organisations and say transphobic myths which leads me to believe that they don't actually care about the child and that they just don't like transgenderism. I have heard about the Cass review into children's gender identity clinics which is going to be led by Dr Cass. Luckily from my research of Dr Cass she doesn't seem that she is transphobic or works with transphobic organisations so hopefully bias is not going to be present in this review. There is currently a myth that if a child boy likes dolls or a child girl likes football. They are being dragged to the GIC where they will be given hormones and a sex change operation immediately on entrance.

Myths like this and also the many other myths surrounding transgender people need to be addressed and fixed if we are ever going to be accepted. Good realistic media representation of real trans people might be a start instead of the drag queens that I see a lot at present. I am also not happy about the sexualisation of trans women and women in general in the media. It makes people think that we are doing this because of a fetish which is massively incorrect as the transgender feelings still remain after we have been castrated and have no more sexual feelings.

When it comes to the equality act 2010 and the gender recognition act 2004. I have never actually read them. The only time when I have had contact with the equality act 2010 is when I have revealed my transgender identity to an organisation and they start telling me my rights and I have never had any contact like that with the GRA 2004. I just live my life now as any other law abiding woman and have never had any problems. I don't think I'm breaking the law due to my transgender status but honestly I don't know.

I believe that what I have said above will make it easier for trans people to apply for a GRC while having checks in place and will also help trans people live better lives in public who do not have a GRC. I believe that GRA reforms won't really help trans people that much anyway as they will still have all the same battles changing their details with company's and I think that a new approach is needed to help trans people in the UK and will help them better than reforms to the GRA. An approach such as a Gender Declaration Certificate (GDC) and getting the waiting times down at the gender identity clinics will help trans people greatly. I believe that a GDC will make the people happy who wanted self-ID, as it is like a 'self ID lite', whilst also make the people happy who don't want self-ID as it is not full self ID in law. It's kind of an in-between system and I believe that it can actually drastically improve trans people's lives in many ways more than reforms to the GRA ever could whilst keeping the majority happy. I believe that medical report A, medical report B and 2 years evidence must remain in the GRC application. I believe that these reports and the evidence are the most important part as they are the checks needed. I don't now want to see these medical reports removed just so maybe the conservative party save a bit of money that will actually put women (cis and trans) in danger due to yet more skimping on the NHS

This is not GRA related but I am against Liz Truss changing the Woman and Equalities Committees into the Ministry of Freedom. Freedom is such a vague term and could mean freedom to discriminate against women and trans people. I hear people who I have to call 'gender critical' due to political correctness moaning about the word woman not been used on mensural products but are totally silent about the Woman and Equalities Committees being

removed. What a backwards world we live in. They are so blinded by transphobia they are willing to bin the women's rights committee just so they can attack trans people and remove our rights even if it removes theirs.

Again this is not GRA related but people who I have to call 'gender critical' due to political correctness complain that trans women had privilege growing up male. Although this is actually true I do not believe that it should be used to discriminate against trans women. Instead I think that we should look at this to improve the lives of young girls to gain better and more well paid careers mainly in STEM jobs. I am a very big supporter of getting women and girls interested in STEM. When I was growing up I was a very creative child and although many of the creative toys that I used to play with, and enjoyed playing with, were stereotypically male such as wood work, trainsets and air fix models. I also very much enjoyed creative toys that were stereotypically female such as cross stitch, sewing and knitting. Anything creative I loved to do. Young girls are usually 'not allowed' to play with creative stereotypically male toys due to stereotypes been forced on them by their parents. I believe this needs to change if we want to get more women and girls interested in STEM jobs. I see that very slight improvements have been made in recent years with such toys like 'the science of make-up' however this move still makes the girl think that she has to look pretty instead of thinking about taking up science as a hobby that could lead to a profession in a well-paid STEM discipline. I am an engineer and I owe my career success to the very toys I used to play with as a child which are typically denied to young girls. I really would really like to see this change in the near future so young girls are awarded the same chance as boys when it comes to access STEM toys and hopefully a well-paid career in a STEM discipline.

The transphobia in the media needs to stop. It's just too much. Transphobic hate crimes are at an all-time high, transgender acceptance is at an all-time low and it's all because of the news. I read everything transgender related in the British press + comments and it's made me have full on breakdowns because of it. It's even made me think of just killing myself because I just can't take it. Please fix the media. I hate the news, it fills me with such rage because of what it's doing to us. I don't even know what's going on with lock down or the virus because I just only look at transphobia in the news and nothing else.

I am really fed up of everything that has happened to trans people in the past few years in the UK. I used to be very patriotic because being trans in the UK was great. Now it sucks. I have bought a poppy every year since I can remember. But now I am refusing to because my ancestors fought a war so I could be treated like total and utter rubbish in the UK. When I didn't need to wear my poppy anymore I would bury it in the garden as I felt that sticking it in the bin was disrespectful. I now wish I haven't bothered.

I have just graduated from a top UK University with a 2:1 master's degree in engineering. I applied for an engineering job at the RAF but turned it down because I'm not helping a country that has done this to me. The RAF really wanted me to join. I even told them I was trans to get them to leave me alone but they still wouldn't let it go because they really need engineers like me. I'm not helping a country to oppress me anymore. I refuse to take part in the UK after what the UK has done to me. I'm trying to get out of the UK as quickly as possible. I really think that being transgender will be a crime in the near future with the way things are going and will result in a male prison, conversion therapy or even execution for me. I need to get out ASAP before that happens. I'm really scared about living in the UK at the moment and what the future holds for me.

Now that you have yet again opened a new consultation about reforms to the GRA2004. I fear that the media is just going to start up again with the transphobia surrounding it and things are just going to get even worse for us. These endless consultations that last many years are driving trans people to suicide and an increase in hate crimes against us. I would prefer it if you just leave us alone and let us live our lives in peace. We have done nothing wrong and our only crime is being transgender. We can't deal with another 3 years been dragged through the mud like we have just gone through. Please understand how you are hurting trans people with what you are doing here again.

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