

Statement from Ms Robyn A Irvine to the Committee call for evidence

re: Gender Recognition Act 2004

My aim is to provide you with information to help you to decide how to improve the GRA 2004 for the benefit of true Transgender people.

- To speed up the initial steps to Gender diagnosis
- To speed up the non-surgical steps to Gender Recognition
- To understand the difference between desire, need and fantasy
- To then speed up real as against fantasy applications for Gender recognition
- To simplify and accelerate the Gender Recognition Certificate Procedure
- To Accept the need for speedy recognition to change a Birth Certificate
- To revoke the spousal veto unless there are exceptional reasons not to
- To complete physical surgery on the more mature candidates more expeditiously

I have always desired to be female from the age of six and a half however that was in 1954. In those days such a thing was virtually impossible and the stigma was so great that life would have been intolerable. Over the intervening years I had to deny and bury my instincts but they kept returning. My early teenage years were difficult as I tried being male and “macho”. I wished I could just wake up as female. In my late teens I decided to join the Royal Navy to put my desires behind me, I tried soccer, boxing, rugby and athletics and was reasonably good at them all. During the 13 years I spent in the RN I could not reveal any tendency toward femininity such was the Armed Forces enforced opprobrium to such desires, especially with regard to national security. This would have resulted in being kicked out of the RN in disgrace and with much publicity.

As a civilian I continued to work in the defence industry, again they were also hidebound by fears of security breaches. As you now know these fears were driven by the possibility of a person being blackmailed if discovered by the wrong people. This has now been alleviated by being able to be open and honest about ones gender (not sexuality). I finished working in the defence industry in 2016 and at last had the chance to tell my family about my desire (they had already decided that this was the case) apart from my estranged wife who, by her church upbringing would not accept this.

In 2017 I decided to transition physically to be what I had wanted to be for 64 years and felt that it was now possible to be that without the backlash previously feared so I consulted my GP. My is most supportive and helpful as well as prescribing hormone patches for me and I have had a preliminary telephone interview from the Leeds GIC

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in July 2018. The problem now is that I am older (72) and still waiting, not only for official recognition, but also for physical surgery. I have been on hormones for nearly 3 years, my body has changed dramatically, I have paid for laser hair removal treatment and deed poll change of name.

If I return to the bullet points, I believe that a lot of time is wasted mainly because of those that treat being transgender as just wearing the opposite gender's clothes (transvestites) and therefore put a strain on the time and resources of the GIC.

- The initial steps are mainly paperwork and interview and surely this could be carried out in more locations than that of the GIC offices
- The interviews and the history of the applicant together with a GPs recommendation should be the main plank of recognition for a GRC complimented by interview with the GIC
- The GP should be able to understand the difference between fantasy and reality, allied to the GIC first interview
- When a "real" application is made then the paperwork should be able to be completed rather more swiftly than is the case now
- The GRC should now be able to be produced in short time
- The Birth Certificate in the UK should now be a formality after the above have been completed
- A spousal veto is something that can be used as a blackmail tool to keep one controlled and should not be subject to one person's religious convictions.
- An older person may not have many years to be the person that they have wanted to be for many years and these swifter processes would give them time to live as they have desired, sometimes for many years

I trust I have expressed my feelings and thoughts comprehensively however if there any questions or queries you have the please e-mail or telephone me at any time.

My best regards

Robyn A Irvine

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