

Written evidence submitted by Mx Orson Slowe (GRA0128)

My name is Orson and I am a non-binary person. I am responding with the knowledge I have gained interacting with the UK trans community and my own experiences as a trans person. I will try and answer the questions in the call for evidence though there are some beyond my scope of knowledge and experience so I have omitted them

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"?

No I do not believe they will. Putting the process of referral online is a good step but the rest of the process has largely been kept the same

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?

There should be no fee for this process. This is an essential step in a person becoming their true self and should not be subject to financial concerns. Even the so-called nominal fee may be too much for many people

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

The WHO have said what trans folk have known for a long time. You do not need to have dysphoria to be trans. Not only will removing this requirement have a good impact on the mental well-being of trans folk, but it will take a burden from the NHS

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

This requirement is rooted in harmful gender stereotypes. How does one "live as a man" or "live as a woman"? My knowledge of the process from the people I know tells me that it enforces gender stereotypes on folk, such as requiring men to grow facial hair.

Since there is no way to "correctly" be one gender or another, this requirement is simply gatekeeping

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?

Spousal consent is barbaric and outdated. How someone lives their life should never be governed by the person they are married to. They are not property, they are two people who have chosen to share their lives. There are no "rights" for the spouse in this. If they feel they cannot continue to be married to the person who is changing their legal gender, then they can file for divorce. Perhaps offering counselling to couples going through these issues would be helpful to some

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

The age at which you can change your gender legally should be, at the most, 16. At this age people are usually very well informed, and it will prevent them from applying to colleges, universities etc. being forced to use an incorrect gender.

Written evidence submitted by Mx Orson Slowe (GRA0128)

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

Other than lessening the financial impact (not removing it) I don't believe these changes will have much substantive impact at all. What it has done is made the community as a whole feel unheard, unseen, and completely disregarded

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

Protection of people's ability to use spaces designated for their gender without fear of harassment.

Legal Recognition and protection of Non-binary folk should be brought in. There are a lot of people who do not fall in to the traditional male/female binary and they should be able to go through life without having to put themselves in to one of these boxes

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

Since this bill has not been announced after the consultation, this is a hard question to answer. I support their approach to bringing in Self ID, although the 3 month waiting periods are patronising, unnecessary, and altogether harmful. It implies people will not have already spent a good deal of time in exploration and reflection

Also they are not bringing in Non-binary recognition, which needs to be addressed

The rest of this I'm not qualified to talk about

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?

This is likely to be a result of the financial, emotional, and social burden that applying for a GRC entails. The dehumanising process of persuading a faceless panel of people you will never meet to recognise your true identity is harmful to mental health and many trans folk will take the lesser evil of having the wrong legal gender. Also the lack of ability to ID as non-binary or something outside of the male/female binary will stop many trans folk

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?

I am not a legal expert but from what I know of this there are some situations where people are allowed to refuse access to people based solely on their Assigned Gender at Birth. This is, in my opinion, degrading to trans folk as it tells them that their true gender doesn't matter. It disproportionately affects those Assigned Male at Birth, and tells them that no matter their true gender, they will always be viewed as Male and, therefore, dangerous

An instance where this is particularly bad is in prisons, where a lot of trans women are incarcerated in male prisons. They should always be placed in facilities that correspond to their gender, and if there is a provable danger to other inmates for whatever reason then measures should be taken to protect them. For instance, a cisgender gay man who rapes other men would not be housed in a women's prison so why should a trans woman be housed in a men's prison.

Written evidence submitted by Mx Orson Slowe (GRA0128)

The rest of the questions are outside the scope of my knowledge.

I truly believe that **true** reform of the GRA will help everyone, trans and cis folk alike, and will not put people in danger (as anti-trans groups like to say it will). It will in fact reduce the danger and the stigma that trans people face on a daily basis and help people to come to understand trans issues better

November 2020