

CONSULTATION ON GENDER RECOGNITION ACT

I am submitting this in a personal capacity. I am concerned, as a woman and a feminist, that any alteration to the GRA would put women, particularly vulnerable women, at risk, allow children and adolescents to make decisions with lifelong consequences before they are ready or mature enough, undermine the representation of women in business, politics, the arts and other public areas, and make statistics unreliable.

THE GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE TO THE GRA CONSULTATION:

- The current rules should remain unaltered. If someone wants to obtain a Gender Recognition Certificate, they should have a diagnosis of gender dysphoria, have lived as a member of their chosen sex for at least two years, agree to and have hormone treatment and appropriate gender reassignment surgery and if married, obtain either spousal consent or a divorce. The fee is not prohibitive and should be retained. The age at which a GRC is applied for should remain at eighteen.
- These rules are necessary for the protection of women, who may be called on to share women only spaces with natal men, and for the protection of individuals who may be confused and vulnerable.
- Sex is biological. Biology cannot be altered online. Sex is different from gender, which is a social construct. If someone is serious about obtaining a GRC they will be happy to undergo medical examination and medical treatment. To allow an online process would only lead to abuses, and there would be no way of restricting, monitoring or refusing an application.
- I am concerned that so many under-eighteens who don't conform to sex stereotypes are persuaded that they must be 'trans'. Children and adolescents often try out different identities in the process of self discovery. It's a rare adolescent who knows exactly who they are. To make permanent at a young age what may be a temporary identity try-out is just wrong. It is allowing children and young people to make decisions that have lifelong consequences, consequences that many come to regret. Children are allowed only limited autonomy by law, because they are children and lack adult perception. To give a child puberty delaying drugs is surely child abuse. Puberty involves not just sexual maturity. It involves also physical growth of the whole body, along with cognitive and emotional development. To delay puberty is to delay these as well, and can have lifelong consequences. Therefore the age for obtaining a GRC or accessing medication or surgery to allow transition should not be lowered.
- Making a GRC more easily obtainable would put women and girls at risk as it would allow male bodied people access to female-only spaces simply by self ID, without checks or restrictions and without concern for women's privacy and safety.

WIDER ISSUES CONCERNING TRANSGENDER EQUALITY AND CURRENT LEGISLATION

- The number of GRCs applied for is low compared to the numbers claiming to be 'transgender' for a number of reasons. There are comparatively few people with genuine sexual dysphoria, who feel that they have been born in the wrong body. The vast majority of the 'transgender' community are not gender dysphoric. The term 'transgender' is a catch-all word that includes men who occasionally like to dress as women, either for self expression for sexual gratification, drag artists, and people, both men and women, who either don't conform to a traditional gender stereotype or who like to play around with expected gender norms. If they genuinely wanted a GRC, they would be happy to apply under the current rules. But they don't, not because it's too difficult, but because they don't want to undergo the transitioning process. Most 'transwomen' retain their male genitals by choice. They're entitled to that choice, but that should not give them the right to access women's spaces.
- The Equality Act includes both sex and gender reassignment as 'protected characteristics'. It, rightly as far as I am concerned, does not include 'gender identity'. Sex is down to biology,

Written evidence submitted by Sally Richardson [GRA0739]

and it is because of our biology, not some amorphous 'gender identity' that as women we have been discriminated against, excluded from public life and subjected to violence.

- Single sex spaces are often necessary for the privacy of both sexes, and for the safety of women. Lavatories outside the home are single sex for good reasons. Girls and women don't usually want to have to deal with menstruation in the presence of men. I don't suppose many men want women around when they're at the urinals. Few women have any problems with sharing the ladies' with genuinely transsexual women but don't want a free-for-all where any man can demand access by self IDing as a woman. Many women would do all they could to avoid using gender neutral facilities, or women only facilities easily accessible by men self IDing as women, and this would restrict their freedom to go out and about.
- For all the demands of the 'trans' lobby groups that 'trans rights are human rights', in fact people claiming to be 'trans' already have equal rights. They can dress how they please, marry where they please and go about their business as they wish.
- I don't think there are any real issues in the access to health and social care for those claiming to be 'trans'. They are as free to access these as anyone else. But I object to the erasure of the word 'woman' when it comes to services such as cervical screening. Not all women have cervixes, of course, but all those who do are women. So please call us 'women', not 'people with cervixes'! Access to domestic violence services for women would be compromised if they had to share spaces with 'transwomen'. As a group, 'transwomen' exhibit similar patterns of violence to men as a group, and women's safety would be put at risk. Over 40% of 'transwomen' prisoners are sex offenders, while the majority of women prisoners are non-violent and often vulnerable. They should not be housed in prison together.
- Legal reforms are not needed to support the rights of 'gender fluid' or 'non binary' people. People are free to live how they please, dress how they please, call themselves what they please, marry who they please and alter their name by deed poll if they wish. People, including those with sexual development disorders and so called 'intersex' people, are either male or female. The problem lies with the societal gender 'norms' that lead some people who don't conform to them to assume they belong to the opposite sex, or no sex at all. If a girl likes football and wants to be a plumber, that doesn't mean she's really a boy. It is societal attitudes that need to alter, not healthy young people's bodies.
- There are other considerations. There is under-representation of women in public life, including politics, business and the arts. This is for a number of reasons, and is partially addressed by quotas for women. If men are allowed to self ID as women and take places reserved for women, women would be further marginalized. Statistics would become unreliable, misleading or actually downright useless. They would suggest greater participation in public life, and greater criminal activity by women than is actually the case.
- There are other ways in which statistics would be skewed. Medical research and treatment rely on statistics for their effectiveness. Some cancers only occur in men or in women. It would be absurd to classify 'transwomen' as women in cases of prostate cancer, as women do not have prostates. The epidemiology of many diseases, including heart disease and Coronavirus, is different in men and women and these differences need to be understood. If research and treatment are to be effective, reliable statistics are needed. Allowing self ID negates this.

Altogether, the demands of the 'trans' community, that 'transwomen are women and transmen are men', and that people should be allowed to self ID as male, female or 'non binary' do not stand up. Far from making for a freer society, they entrench stereotypical gender norms. Not conforming to traditional stereotypes doesn't mean someone really belongs to the opposite sex. There are many ways of being a girl or a woman, but a male who self IDs as female is not one of them. Equally there are many ways of being a boy or a man, but a female who self IDs as male is not one of them. Instead we should be breaking down these stereotypes and encouraging people to accept their bodies for what they are and be happy in them. There always will be a few with gender dysphoria, and they deserve sympathetic treatment.

Written evidence submitted by Sally Richardson [GRA0739]

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