

# Written evidence submitted by Green Feminists Women and Girls Declaration [GRA1233]

## Green Feminists Women and Girls Declaration Submission to the Women and Equalities Select Committee Inquiry into GRA Reform

On Wider issues concerning transgender equality and current legislation

### 1. Exec summary

- The reasons for specific protections and rights for women as a sex remain
- Our reproductive role in society disadvantages us through lifelong financial insecurity relative to men; fear of male violence; unequal political representation
- Proposed reforms of the Gender Recognition Act must be subject to robust assessment of their impact on women and girls' safety and opportunities relative to males
- Policies of 'inclusion without exception' of anyone on the basis of self-identified gender should be assessed for risks to safeguarding and sex-based protections in the 2010 Equality Act
- De facto gender self-identification within political parties is already leading to loss of political space for women
- Women raising their concerns about gender self-identification are vastly out-gunned in finance and organisational influence and have not been protected from intimidation and bullying in this or the previous consultation

### 2. Introduction – Green Feminists

The Green movement understands that it is the world's poorest and those in vulnerable situations, especially women and girls, who bear the brunt of environmental, economic and social shocks (UN Women). The aims of the Green Feminists Women and Girls Declaration Working Group is to ensure that Green Party candidates are elected AND to support women's and girl's sex-based rights and protections.

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### 3. Are there challenges in the way the GRA 2004 and the Equality Act 2010 interact?

The reasons behind the creation of specific protections and rights for **women as a sex** have not gone away and should not be de-prioritised in the face of an emerging awareness of the challenges also faced by people identifying as transgender.

We urge the committee to be aware of the possible impacts of conflating the terms 'sex', 'gender' and 'gender identity' and we hope you will resist requests of campaigners (collated here<sup>1</sup>) to replace or de-prioritise 'sex' as a protected characteristic under the 2010 Equality Act.

#### 3.1 Why sex-based rights?

Progressive legislation over the last century has addressed the disadvantages faced by women in a society historically organised and designed around the life experiences of men. There are many intersecting discriminations, but the protected characteristic sex recognises that all women experience a particular set of disadvantages due to the facts of our reproductive role in society. It is:

- only women for whom sexual intercourse can result in pregnancy
- only women who carry, birth and breastfeed children
- women who are disadvantaged in physical conflicts with males

The continuing consequences of the impact of these include: lifelong financial insecurity relative to men; fear of male violence; unequal political representation.

#### 3.2 Lifelong financial insecurity relative to men

The time we take off to birth and raise children, and the part-time work we do while raising children, leads to permanent disparities in the financial security and freedom of men and women<sup>2</sup>. The cumulative effective is shown in this data from the Women's Budget Group<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://womansplaceuk.org/references-to-removal-of-single-sex-exemptions/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.familyandchildcaretrust.org/new-research-highlights-impact-part-time-work-gender->

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- **Women are the majority of people living in poverty and female-headed households are more likely to be poor.** For example, 45% of lone parents (90% of whom are women) are living in poverty.
- **Women are more likely to be low paid and in insecure employment.** 69% of low paid earners are women. 74% of those in part-time employment are women. 54% of those on zero hours contracts are women.

By retirement the child-rearing pay-gap has compounded so that:

- **Women have only 10% of the private pension wealth of men.** Among 65-74 year old median private pension wealth is £164,700 for men and £17,300 for women.<sup>4</sup>

### 3.3 Fear of male violence

The threat of violence to women comes almost entirely from men.

#### 3.3.1 Domestic violence is a gendered crime

- 1.6 million women experienced domestic abuse in the year to March 2019<sup>5</sup>
- Almost one in three women aged 16-59 will experience domestic abuse in her lifetime<sup>6</sup>
- The majority of defendants in domestic abuse-related prosecutions in the year to March 2019 were men (92%), and the majority of victims were female (75%). 16% of victims were male and in 10% of cases the sex of the victim was not recorded.
- Women experience higher rates of repeated victimisation and are much more likely to be seriously hurt<sup>7</sup> or killed than male victims of domestic abuse.
- Women are more likely to experience higher levels of fear and are more likely to be subjected to coercive and controlling behaviours.<sup>8</sup>

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[pay-gap](#)

<sup>3</sup> <https://wbg.org.uk/analysis/reports/crises-collide-women-and-covid-19/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://wbg.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/PENSIONS-2019-1.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> [Office for National Statistics](#) (2019) Domestic abuse victim characteristics, England and Wales: year ending March 2019

<sup>6</sup> [Office for National Statistics](#) (2019) Domestic abuse in England and Wales overview: November 2019

<sup>7</sup> Walby & Towers, 2017; Walby & Allen, 2004

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### 3.3.2 Murder is a male crime - victims and perpetrators

- 94% of people convicted of homicide were male in 2017/18.
- Two women a week are killed by a current or former partner in England and Wales.<sup>9</sup>
- The latest figures for the year 2018-19 show a 10% rise in murders of women to 241, a 14-year high. The number of baby girls and toddlers killed also reached a decade high, with 14 females under the age of one and 13 toddlers aged between one and four.<sup>10</sup>
- While globally homicide is in decline, femicide – the killing of women by men – is rising.<sup>11</sup>

### 3.3.3 Sex offences – victims and perpetrators

- 97% of sexual offences are committed by males and 99% of rapists are male<sup>12</sup>
- 79% of adult victims of sexual offences are women.

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<sup>8</sup> Dobash & Dobash, 2004; Hester, 2013; Myhill, 2015; Myhill, 2017

<sup>9</sup> [Office for National Statistics](#) (2019) Homicide in England and Wales: year ending March 2018

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/feb/13/female-homicide-victims-england-wales>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/nov/22/if-im-not-in-on-friday-i-might-be-dead-chilling-facts-about-uk-femicide>

<sup>12</sup>

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/sexualoffencesinenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2017#sexual-offences-recorded-by-the-police>

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### 3.3.4 Effects of gender identity on male patterns of violence

A long-term follow-up study of sex reassignment surgery patients in Sweden concluded male-to-female transsexuals, “retained a male pattern regarding criminality. The same was true regarding violent crime.”<sup>13</sup>

In England and Wales, a 2018 Freedom of Information request by the BBC to the Ministry of Justice<sup>14</sup>, found a much higher proportion of trans-identified prisoners than other prisoners were serving time for sexual offences (48% compared with 19.4% for other male inmates and 3.95% of female inmates.) According to the data, 60 of 125 transgender inmates in March-April 2017 were serving time for sexual offences.

Of course, not all males and not all trans-identified males are a threat to women. But one of difficulties of balancing the intentions of the GRA with the sex-based protections in the Equality Act is how to maintain protection from male violence for women in real-life situations of vulnerability, if definitions of ‘sex’ are replaced with self-identified gender.

### 3.4 Unequal political representation

The under-representation of women in politics has not gone away. We make up over 50% of the UK population, yet only 35% of local councillors are female<sup>15</sup>, 32% of MPs, and 26% of peers<sup>16</sup>.

Political activity is often organised around the typical patterns of male life experiences, with evening meetings and long hours of un-paid voluntary involvement, unencumbered by caring responsibilities. Politics also favours those confident at public speaking, putting themselves forward, and being able to withstand verbal attack and abuse. These are characteristics still discouraged in women; girls

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<sup>13</sup> <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.001688>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-42221629>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.fawcettsociety.org.uk/news/new-fawcett-data-reveals-that-womens-representation-in-local-government-at-a-standstill>

<sup>16</sup>

[https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/j003\\_women\\_power\\_and\\_politics\\_report\\_digital\\_version.pdf](https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/j003_women_power_and_politics_report_digital_version.pdf)

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are socialised from a young age (partly for reasons of personal safety) NOT to challenge men, NOT to put themselves forward, NOT to speak up.

Recognising this, many political took steps since to improve the representation of women in their decision-making. These include mentoring and training programmes and, in some cases, women-only positions or shortlists.

3.4.1 Impact of political parties operating gender self-identification

Most political parties now operate a de-facto policy of gender self-identification. The policy of gender self-identification and the very broad definition of 'transgender' (see section 4) means males, who have historically enjoyed greater entitlement to political power, now have increased opportunities for political influence.

In the Green Party of England and Wales, membership of Green Party Women, the body within the party that has a mandate to represent women, is open to anyone who identifies as a woman or 'gender variant'. In 2020, a trans-identified male stood for the post of chair of Green Party Women and at the same time ran for the post and male South-West representative on the party's regional council. A non-binary-identified male stood for the post of London women's representative on the party's regional council.

While this may have a beneficial effect for political representation of trans-identifying males, we believe this hinders progress towards equal representation for women.

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**4. Why is the number of people applying for GRCs so low compared to the number of people identifying as transgender?**

Since the 2004 legislation, much has changed. People identifying as 'transgender' are more diverse and most have not had medical intervention, but rather seek social acceptance of a range of 'gender identities', which may change for an individual over time.<sup>17</sup> The spectrum of identities covered is illustrated by the 'trans umbrella' used by many LGBT organisations.



Causes of growth in transgender identification may include the rise of post-modernism in universities, social acceptance following the gains of campaigns for equal marriage, the role of the internet and social media in 'social contagion', and the rise of consumer-driven individualism. We would particularly like the committee to consider the following factors.

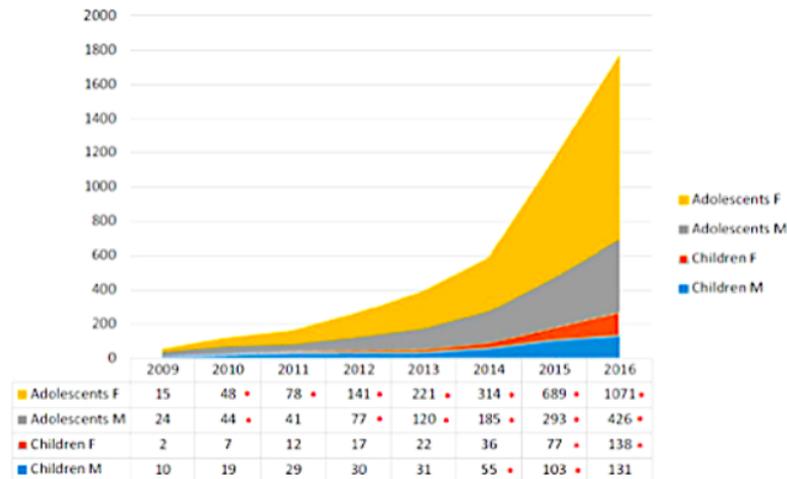
**4.1 The exponential growth in natal girls identifying as transgender**

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.vox.com/identities/2016/5/13/17938114/transgender-people-transitioning-surgery-medical>

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## 11) WHY ARE SO MANY FEMALES COMING OUT AS TRANS/NON-BINARY?

### A. Evidence for large increases in females identifying as trans



"Sex Ratio in Children and Adolescents Referred to the Gender Identity Development Service in the UK (2009–2016)"

We would suggest transgender identification may be a coping mechanism for girls in a culture that is sexualising them at ever younger ages<sup>18,19</sup> and in which a commercially driven promotion of rigid gender categories (pink for girls, blue for boys) is much more constricting than was the case 40 years ago<sup>20</sup>. An independent inquiry into the NHS Gender Identity Development Service includes inquiry into the high number of referrals of natal girls.

### 4.2 Teaching of gender identity in schools

Through LGBT organisations' education, youth and teacher training programmes and resources, many schools now introduce children (alongside positive messages of diversity in families and sexualities) an unproven concept of 'innate gender identity' with biological sex being replaced by a spectrum of genders illustrated here in Mermaids' 'Barbie and Ken' diagram.

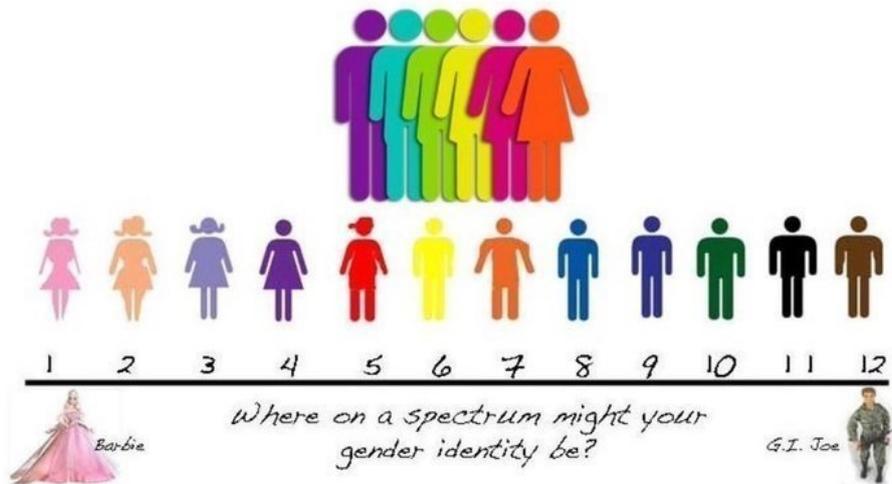
<sup>18</sup> <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/globalassets/documents/information-service/seminars-premature-sexualisation-understanding-risks.pdf>

<sup>19</sup>

<https://schools.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/sites/schools/files/folders/folders/documents/healthyschools/SRE%20-%20Sexualisation%20-%20The%20effects%20on%20young%20girls.pdf>

<sup>20</sup> <https://digitalcommons.sacredheart.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1015&context=shusolar>

# The Gender Spectrum



The controversial aspect of this, recognised by the UK Government's new Guidance for Teachers published in September 2020, is that children who do not adhere to strict gender stereotypes of clothes, toys and interests, may be think they must be 'on the wrong body'.<sup>21</sup>

*"You should not reinforce harmful stereotypes, for instance by suggesting that children might be a different gender based on their personality and interests of the clothes they prefer to wear".<sup>22</sup>*

## 4.3 Media coverage of gender identity for children and young people

In a study published in 2020 a 'significant positive correlation' was found between media coverage of transgender issues and referral rates of children to two specialist gender clinics, in the UK and Australia January 2009 – December 2016. Over this time there were 2,194 media items in the UK and 4,684 referrals to the Tavistock GIDS.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> <https://www.womenarehuman.com/mermaids-backpedals-on-wrong-body-narrative-after-uk-government-issues-schools-guidance/>

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/plan-your-relationships-sex-and-health-curriculum>

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The children's output of the BBC and Channel 4 have noticeably shifted since working with the campaigning group All About Trans, which held three workshops in 2011/12 and two events in 2014 for senior people at CBeebies, CBBC, BBC Children's TV<sup>24</sup>.

A detailed analysis of how BBC Children's output now unquestioningly promotes a political aim of replacing 'sex' with gender identity can be found in the paper *The BBC, Impartiality and Children*.<sup>25</sup>

*"D'you know, there are SO many different gender identities! So we know we've got male and female, but there are OVER a hundred, if not more, gender identities..."*<sup>26</sup>

### 5. Gender identity and sex: why now?

Why has the concept of gender identity as significant legal marker replacing sex risen to the forefront of political debate now?

#### 5.1 The campaigning shift from 'gay rights' to 'trans rights'

Since the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act was passed in 2013, most gay rights campaigning organisations have shifted away from LGB and focused predominantly on T, bringing transgender identities to public awareness<sup>27</sup>.

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<sup>23</sup> <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2768726>

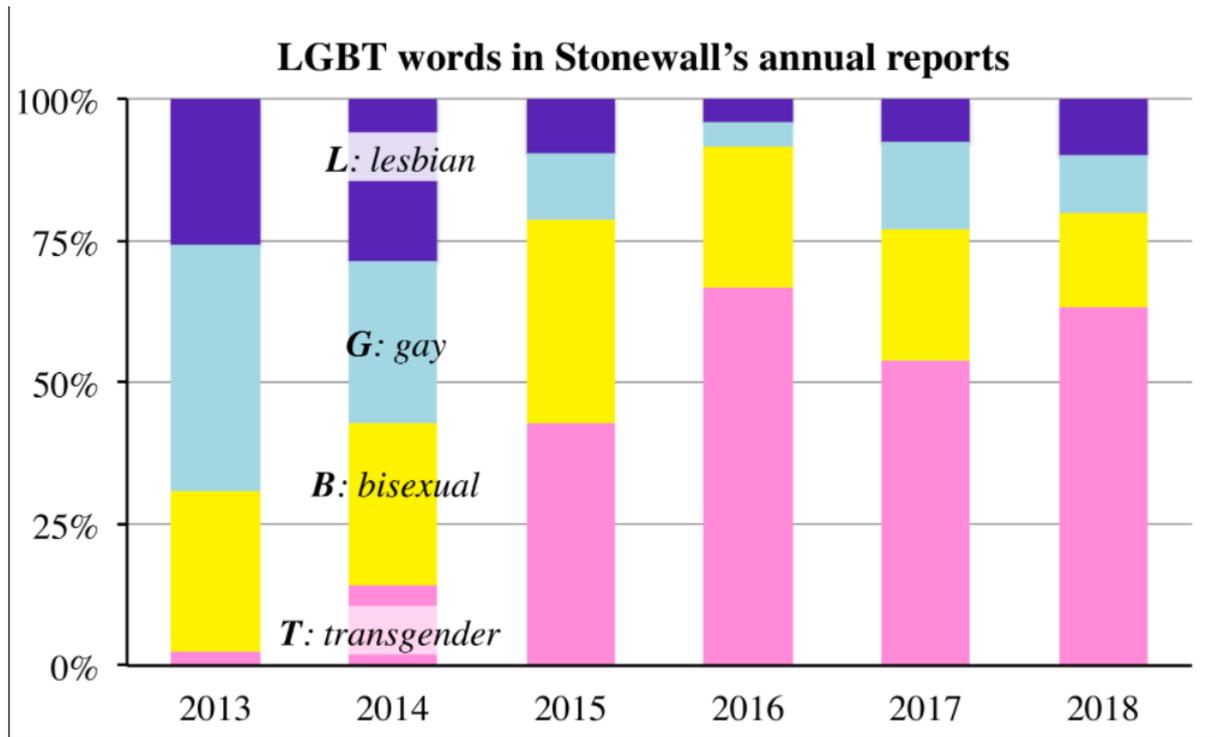
<sup>24</sup> <https://www.allabouttrans.org.uk/about/history/>

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.transgendertrend.com/the-bbc-impartiality-children/>

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/class-clips-video/rse-ks2-identity-understanding-sexual-and-gender-identities/zfqrhbk>

<sup>27</sup> [http://users.ox.ac.uk/~sfos0060/LGBT\\_figures.shtml](http://users.ox.ac.uk/~sfos0060/LGBT_figures.shtml)

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This shift has been controversial, with gay, lesbian and bisexual people, including the original founders of Stonewall, expressing concerns that the shift to 'T' and an unproven concept of innate 'gender identity' erases the concept of **same-sex attraction**.

Lesbians, in particular, are now subject to online coercion to accept trans-identified males as lesbian sexual partners. Alternative campaigning organisations such as LGB Alliance have formed in a number of countries.

## 5.2 The billions of dollar funding for the 'T'

The call for legal gender self-identification has not arisen spontaneously. It is the result of a concerted campaigning effort globally benefiting from huge private and public funding.

For example, the first campaigning goal of Transgender Europe, which received US \$500,000 from Open Society Foundation in 2016-17 and US \$1,072,000 from Arcus Foundation 2010 to 2017<sup>28</sup> is to:

<sup>28</sup> <https://4thwavenow.com/2018/05/25/the-open-society-foundations-the-transgender-movement/>

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*“ensure that every person in Europe can change their name and/or gender in official documents without interference based on self-determination”<sup>29</sup>.*

Funding of this size enables a campaign to bring its narrative of innate gender identity to the attention of media and decision-makers on a massive scale. Here are a few examples of the funding of campaigning groups in the UK:

- Stonewall’s income has grown from £5.4m to £8.7m since its change of focus to gender self-identification in 2014, while its staff team has more than doubled to 160 people.<sup>30</sup>
- Pink News received £266,665 for advocacy from Google in 2018.<sup>31</sup>
- Mermaids’ annual income rose from almost nothing to over £700,000 in the three years to 2018.<sup>32</sup>

As women, we notice that, globally, some very wealthy men are backing gender self-identification campaigns.

The point we make is not that philanthropic giving to LGBT causes is wrong, but that ‘innate gender identity’ as an idea and legal gender self-identification as a policy have received massive financial backing, enabling it to achieve mainstream awareness very quickly.

### 5.3 Strategies used to win gender self-identification

#### 5.3.1 Hiding proposed legal changes from public scrutiny

A report by legal firm Dentons for International LGBTIQI Youth and Student Organisations in 2019 advised avoiding press exposure; influencing political parties by infiltrating their youth organisations; hiding gender self-ID among more popular reforms such as equal marriage; and being wary of compromise.<sup>33</sup> In the UK, the report says:

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<sup>29</sup> [https://tgeu.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/TGEUstrategicPlan\\_2014\\_2020.pdf](https://tgeu.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/TGEUstrategicPlan_2014_2020.pdf)

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.thirdsector.co.uk/ruth-hunt-leave-stonewall-august/management/article/1526375>

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.pressgazette.co.uk/telegraph-chatbot-pink-news-lgbt-advocacy-platform-and-hyperlocal-news-revenue-tool-all-receive-google-funding/>

<sup>32</sup> [http://users.ox.ac.uk/~sfos0060/LGBT\\_figures.shtml](http://users.ox.ac.uk/~sfos0060/LGBT_figures.shtml)

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.womenarehuman.com/revealed-the-tactics-used-to-advance-gender-self->

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*“public campaigning has been detrimental to progress”. Instead, “a technique which has been used to great effect” in countries such as Ireland, “is the limitation of press coverage and exposure”<sup>34</sup>.*

*“In Ireland, Denmark and Norway, changes to the law on legal gender recognition were put through at the same time as other more popular reforms such as marriage equality legislation. This provided a veil of protection... where marriage equality was strongly supported, but gender identity remained a more difficult issue to win public support for.”<sup>35</sup>*

### 5.3.2 Training and Accreditation Programmes

Stonewall raised £3,269,477 and significant influence through 870 members of its Diversity Champions Scheme in 2019. These organisations include:

*“some of the world's biggest brands, the uniformed and security services, public services and the third sector... Their reputation and economic power influences change among their suppliers and partners, driving LGBT equality in the UK and around the world.”<sup>36</sup>*

A central message of Stonewall’s training since shifting its focus to self-identification, is **‘inclusion without exception’**.<sup>37</sup> While this sounds positive, we argue it poses challenges to safeguarding and single-sex service provisions under the 2010 Equality Act and funding by public bodies should be contingent on robust scrutiny of its impact of women and girls.

### 5.3.3 Calling out ‘transphobia’

identification-on-the-quiet/

<sup>34</sup> [https://www.iglyo.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/IGLYO\\_v3-1.pdf](https://www.iglyo.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/IGLYO_v3-1.pdf)

<sup>35</sup> [https://www.iglyo.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/IGLYO\\_v3-1.pdf](https://www.iglyo.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/IGLYO_v3-1.pdf)

<sup>36</sup> [https://www.stonewall.org.uk/sites/default/files/signed\\_accounts\\_ye\\_30\\_september\\_2019.pdf](https://www.stonewall.org.uk/sites/default/files/signed_accounts_ye_30_september_2019.pdf)

<sup>37</sup> [https://www.stonewall.org.uk/system/files/a\\_vision\\_for\\_change.pdf](https://www.stonewall.org.uk/system/files/a_vision_for_change.pdf)

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Stonewall's strategy 2017-2022 includes a vision of "society where transphobia is unacceptable and is challenged by everyone. To achieve this, it's vital to have a greater range of allies listening to, and speaking alongside, trans people, and challenging transphobia when they see it and hear it."

While this sounds positive, accusations of 'transphobia' are now used constantly as weapons against women who raise concerns or questions.

Women in public and private life have been subjected to what amounts to a bullying campaign through mechanisms such as political party disciplinary processes and widespread threats and intimidation on social media. See the archive of social media posts targeting women *Terf is a Slur*<sup>38</sup>.

Female politicians who have suffered abuse for their defence of sex-based rights include Labour's Marsha de Cordova MP and Rosie Duffield MP, Conservatives Liz Truss MP and Baroness Emma Nicholson, Green Party Baroness Jenny Jones and councillors of various parties.

### **6. Conclusion**

Since the UK government ran its 2018 consultation on proposals to reform the GRA, political parties, women's groups, friendships and even families have been driven apart by this issue. From the perspective of the women who have tried to voice concerns about legal self-identification, it has felt like a David and Goliath battle against men who vastly overpower them in finance and influence.

Women still struggle to get our voices heard, and in this debate we have encountered abuse, withdrawal of work, no-platforming and threats of violence for talking about our lives.

#### **6.1 Recommended Actions**

The purpose of pointing out these facts is not to refuse any reform of the GRA, but to make a heartfelt plea that:

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<sup>38</sup> <https://terfisaslur.com/>

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- any proposal must be subject to robust assessment of its impact on women and girls' safety and opportunities relative to males
- public body funding to campaigning organisations should not be made without robust assessment of its policies' impact on women and girls
- women's rights to meet, share and organise politically as a sex should be maintained
- statutory bodies must be able to continue to gather accurate data on sex and reflect this in their policy making.

**November 2020**