

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

No

The Government's own Equalities Minister in 2018 acknowledged the rapid rise in referrals for gender dysphoria, particularly among girls. Such a significant rise, especially within a particular age group in a short time period should raise significant concerns. Rather than changing the GR Act, the government should investigate the reason why such a rise, especially in young people has taken place. This should include the influence of social media and the promotion of transgender issues in schools. The concerns that sex-changes are being offered without serious diagnosis are raised by a broad spectrum of parents, doctors, academics and MPs. The current requirement for a diagnosis means that there is medical scrutiny before a legal sex-change can take place. The recent abandonment of this proposal in September 2020 by the Government raises that it has recognised the issues. Medical scrutiny gives a chance for alternative or additional diagnoses to be reached. It is well documented that those diagnosed with gender dysphoria often have other mental health issues. A 'de-medicalised' system is also dramatically new approach that says a man can be a woman on the basis of nothing at all. This makes the very idea of men and women meaningless.

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

No

For such a significant and life-changing legal process, the requirement of two years living in their acquired gender is vital. These are issues which require great thought, within the context of discussions with family, community and the medical profession. They can lead to significant, and even irrevocable impacts on the body. These must be worked through carefully first. A proportion of those experiencing dysphoria have found that those experienced for some time, that the desire to live as the opposite sex is not permanent. Often detransitioners took years to finally decide to reverse their sex-change. Some have regretted the action, feeling they were affirmed to quickly in the transition process. It is an act of care for a person not to affirm a change at such a speed without the time for help to work through a range of issues first.

What is your view of the statutory declaration and should any changes have been made to it?

A statutory decision is essential to help an individual to understand and reflect on the enormity of the decision, and legally state the intended purpose of their actions. Changing legal sex is so significant, that to remove such a permanent statement trivialises a person's sex as something that is fluid and open to frequent change. The declaration should be reversible to allow for those who later regret their transitioning to be able to detransition to their biological sex.

Does the spousal consent provision in the Act need reforming?

No

The current spousal consent provision is good and beneficial. It recognises that marriage (civil or religious) is formed of public, binding promises between two people. The breaking of these promises has numerous negative impacts on those involved, as well as children, the wider family and community. One party should not have the unilateral right to alter the legal nature of the marriage. The introduction of same-sex marriage

Written evidence submitted by Revd Paul Bye [GRA1421]

was something that a substantial proportion of the population opposed. The removal of the spousal consent could force individuals into a legal arrangement they morally oppose.

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

No

As a father of three girls, recognising the pressures and changes they will face in the coming years, I do not believe lower age limit should be lowered from 18.

The UK's Gender Identity Development Service reporting of a nearly 3,000% increase in young people referred for gender dysphoria in the last decade is deeply worrying. While some of this rise may be an increase awareness of issues, this rate increase needs serious investigation. In one study, 90% of girls with gender dysphoria had another mental health diagnosis, 80% had two or more, 45% engaged in self harm and 20% had autism. To reduce the age limit would do great harm for many young people who are already at times confused by changes through puberty, unhelpful stereotypes and other mental health issues. To reduce the age threshold and allow self-identification will lead to many young people whose gender dysphoria is triggered by wider issues to be affirmed as transgender without being properly assessed. This would not be the government exercising its duty of care to these young people.

Are legal reforms needed to better support the rights of gender-fluid and non-binary people?

The legal foundation of our identity has to be based on the biological reality of our sexes. There is no scientific basis for a 'third sex'. Biologically, we are either male or female. So much in our society is based on that biological reality. To have a legal definition, based on something which has no objective basis is not something which can suffice for a society to operate on.

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