

Reform of the Gender Recognition Act consultation response.

We must keep the definition of sex to mean the biological reality of being either female or male. We must be scientific, and evidence based.

I am a gay man in my 40's with significant concerns about proposals to reform the Gender Recognition Act. I have been active in the LGBT "community" for many years and support transgender people living their life in whichever way they chose, provided that (as with anyone else) that this doesn't infringe on other people's rights.

However, recently there has been an increase in the blurring of boundaries and definitions, in particular a move to focus on gender rather than sex, and to in effect replace sex with gender, and gender identity.

As someone who is homosexual, ie attracted to the same sex, it concerns me greatly that those campaigning to reform the Gender Recognition Act are seeking to move to self ID, where someone can just say they are the opposite gender (sex).

There is already a great deal of homophobia towards gay men who state that they are not attracted to trans men (ie females), and towards lesbians who state they are not attracted to trans women (ie males). People can identify however they want to, but this erasure of sex and attraction based on same-sex orientation will be further perpetuated by any move to either replace the notion of biological sex (female or male) with one of gender or gender identity.

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

No. In my experience with LGBT groups and charities, going through transition to the degree required for a GRC signifies how serious people are about this journey in their life. If someone is transitioning for any reason other than having gender dysphoria then it is down to a fetish, and preference, or some other choice of identity, and not necessarily permanent. It also opens up the risk of any male identifying as a woman to gain access to female only spaces.

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

No. There is a great risk to children and teenagers who are gender dysphoric making life altering decisions before they have fully developed, and in particular gay and lesbian young people growing out of their dysphoria and just being homosexual. Lowering the age people can apply for a GRC will result in lowering the age people seek out medical interventions and will compound the issue of people regretting transition and then needing to de-transition, and either way be medically dependant for life.

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?

The provision to maintain a space as single-sex, ie to exclude people on the basis of their biological sex rather than their gender identity, need to be made clearer and enhanced. Organisations such as Stonewall have been giving advice that is not in keeping with the legislation. It needs to be made clear that people can be excluded for a range of legitimate reasons, primarily safety, on the basis of their sex, and also on the basis of infringement of other protected characteristics, namely sexual orientation.

Does the Equality Act adequately protect trans people? If not, what reforms, if any, are needed

Yes. The protected characteristic of having a GRC is enough to protect transgender people. Anything short of this is not a significant aspect of someone's life and being to warrant being a protected characteristic (such as the innate characteristics of your sex, race, sexual orientation, or the permanent characteristic of a disability).

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

No. Gender-fluid and non-binary are personality presentations, and not characteristics such as your sex, race, sexual orientation or permanently transitioning to the opposite gender. People who claim a non-binary identity are saying they don't "feel" completely one sex or the other, or feel some combination, or none at all. This doesn't change the fact that they are biologically one sex or the other. To introduce legal reform to support or protect gender-fluid or non-binary people would be like introducing protections for people based on their star sign or the colour they've dyed their hair.

November 2020