

## Written evidence submitted by Mr Sam Taylor [GRA1528]

I am not involved in any LGBT organizations but wanted to put my voice forward in the inquiry.

I believe any fees for obtaining a Gender Recognition Certificate should be removed or reduced, as there are several trans people who struggle to afford them alongside the finances they already have to deal with. The process is incredibly complex, requires years of paperwork and still requires a huge monetary sum on top of it. Then you have to wait several months for approval from a panel who may not be qualified to determine who is or who is not trans, and can reject your claim without offering an explanation why.

People should not need to evidence two years of their gender before they can apply, as transition is often an incredibly complicated process. Gathering papers from the course of two whole years is unnecessary and can often be impacted by difficult circumstances, such as difficult home situations, employment concerns, and long clinic waiting lists.

The requirement of a diagnosis of gender dysphoria should be removed. The process of coming out as trans should be demedicalised, as has been done with homosexuality. You should not need a medical diagnosis to prove that you know who you are.

The statutory declaration can be very limiting for less binary identities. While it can be useful for some binary trans people, I believe it is unnecessary.

In order to ensure the Gender Recognition Act is not abused, it could be possible to put a limit on changes. Once per year or similar would be possible. While this ensures it is not a lifetime commitment, which is a narrow view of what being transgender can be, this would ensure it is not a process that is undertaken without proper thought.

The Spousal Veto does need reforming. Your spouse should not be able to veto your transition.

A reason the number of people applying for GRC's is low compared to the number of people identifying as trans is because the process is far too bureaucratic and complex. It can be stretched over the course of years, involve countless amounts of paperwork, and you can be denied during the process anyway. It is exhausting and disheartening to go through.

An issue that trans people have in accessing support services is the interpretation by transphobic members of the public and media that the language in the Equalities Act can mean "trans women can be refused from women's spaces with reason". This wide ranging transphobia means that trans women can be refused from support services.

Legal reforms are needed to better support the rights of gender-fluid and non-binary people. Legal recognition should be given for non-binary people on official paperwork, to protect their identities under the law.

The GRA process should be changed to allow people who may not medically transition to still get a GRA. Even without a medical transition, they are still valid trans and non-binary people. They should be given more assistance in getting through the system, even without surgery.

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