

## Written evidence submitted by Mx Randall [GRA1674]

I am a nonbinary adult, born and currently living in the UK, and as such I am moved to supply evidence to the Parliamentary Select Committee, based on my lived experience and views therein.

### Section 1 - Government's response to the GRA consultation

*Point 1 - Will the Government's proposed changes meet its aim of making the process "kinder and more straight forward"?*

The proposed changes would be a good start to improving access to services. Increasing online availability will improve convenience for the wider population, though this should not be done to the elimination of other routes of contact, to provide for those less technologically literate. As for opening more clinics, this would be a massive help. Not only would this reduce waiting times thanks to expanded workload, this would improve local availability around the country, as well as invest in the field of research. This would help the creation and tailoring of treatments as a whole, allowing for better outcomes overall.

*Point 2 - Should a fee for obtaining a Gender Recognition Certificate be removed or retained? Are there other financial burdens on applicants that could be removed or retained?*

I can appreciate financial pressures involved on services, and as such can abide by small fee to reflect administrative costs in this situation. Reducing fees to be more in line with the basic administrative costs would also go a long way to reduce any perceived "penalty" on behalf of the applicant. I would suggest a cost of around £20-30.

*Point 3 - Should the requirement for a diagnosis of gender dysphoria be removed?*

Gender dysphoria is, by its nature, a difficult and subjective thing to diagnose. Removing the requirement of a diagnosis for gender recognition would ultimately relieve a huge pressure off already stretched services and save money overall, as well as alleviate stress and distrust of the system. For many individuals, a medical diagnosis is simply unnecessary, as they would otherwise not seek any medical intervention. As a nonbinary person (someone who identifies somewhere outside of the traditional genders of Male or Female), I am personally physically comfortable with what body I have, though that does not diminish my altered experience of gender. I perhaps would be more inclined to seek legal recognition, if the law allowed recognition of non-binary genders and it was less of an ordeal both medically and legally, but as things stand it simply is not worth it.

*Point 4 - Should there be changes to the requirement for individuals to have lived in their acquired gender for at least two years?*

As society stands, it is simply cruel and unreasonable to require people to survive two years being publicly "out" without at least some legal recognition and protection. To have constantly present as one gender and then, in cases of legal identity such as employment, be forced to contradict yourself is not only distressing for the individual involved, but also opens them up for discrimination and exclusion. Truthfully, I am reminded of witch trials, in

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their contradictions and “damned-if-you-do” construction. For something which is ultimately about the individual’s mental wellbeing, to deliberately put them in a situation of mental distress is unconscionable.

( Points 5 & 6 - Not answered )

*Point 7 - Should the age limit at which people can apply for a Gender Recognition Certificate (GRC) be lowered?*

Aside from any arguments about the safety of medical transition in childhood, legal classifications can ultimately be changed at any time, and as such there is no need for undue concern should the child wish to identify as another gender later. I would propose that the age limit be lowered to at least 16, possibly 13 with parental advocacy. I think the benefit any younger would be limited as there is little legal involvement at that age, and this would allow for some maturation of personal identity.

*Point 8 - What impact will these proposed changes have on those people applying for a Gender Recognition Certificate, and on trans people more generally?*

Ultimately, the changes would be an affirmation that we exist. I know that there are some legal provisions currently, but they are limited and, frankly, outdated. There would be a little less distrust of the government and associated services, and it would alleviate the stress and anxiety of the community in general, and in particular those that do choose to pursue legal recognition.

( Points 9 & 10 - Not answered )

## **Section 2 - Wider issues concerning transgender equality and current legislation**

*Point 1 - Why is the number of people applying for GRCs so low compared to the number of people identifying as transgender?*

As mentioned in the above section, Point 3, in my own experience it is simply not worth it as it stands. The arduous requirements are prohibitive to all but the most acute cases, and the wider malignment of the transgender community also means that in many cases, it is safer to have plausible deniability. In short, you live as your desired gender amongst friends and wherever possible, and when asked by others you deny it. Though this causes mental distress in the short term, it is perceived as the long term better option, compared to discrimination and medical interrogation.

( Point 2 - not answered )

*Point 3 - 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?*

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There are currently many flaws at present in guidance for single-sex spaces. Truthfully, I don't have an easy answer or solution. There is no way to force individuals uncomfortable with transgender persons to be so, and honestly, I think many if not most transgender people would not want to be around such individuals. Maybe if an organisation would choose to exclude transgender individuals, they should explicitly, publically say so. This does raise the possibility of a wave of public discrimination against transgender persons, but at the same time, we would know where we stand. Ultimately however, the moral panic over "predators" using transgender identities to enter single sex spaces is kneejerk. Anyone could have untoward motives, and people can only respond to such instances as they have reason to. Quite frankly, to assume someone is a predator because they (in most instances of the argument) have a penis, is reductive and insulting to essentially everyone in the argument, transgender or not, as it assumes that they are incapable of being responsible individuals by nature of their anatomy.

*( Point 4 & 5 - not answered )*

*Point 6 - Are legal reforms needed to better support the rights of gender-fluid and non-binary people? If so, how?*

Currently there is next to no legal recognition of non-binary identities. There may be a non gendered title that may be used in some instances (Mx), but on passports and many other identification documents, you are forced to state a binary gender. It has been argued before that any change would have insignificant benefit, but as I have mentioned before in Section 1, Point 3 and Section 2, Point 1, as a nonbinary person myself, I would not pursue recognition under the current system. As I am not legally known as nonbinary, it is easy to dismiss my existence and that of others, and it becomes a "catch-22". Ultimately, this is extremely dehumanising. It might cost money to amend certain systems, but this is to be expected when systems become inadequate in the face of the modern world.

Thank you for your time and attention.

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