

Written evidence submitted by Mr Andrew Walsh [GRA1730]

My reason for submitting evidence is concern for society and the effects that some changes can have on it.

My answers to some of the consultation questions:

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

*No; I think that a sex change is a radical, life changing step, which requires substantial medical procedures (possibly irreversible). Such that it should not be done with no formal medical basis. What if a person changes their mind or decides they were incorrect? There **are** cases of this happening. It has also been shown, in many cases, that gender dysphoria presents with other mental health issues, so other diagnoses might be possible.*

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

This should not be changed. As above, a sex change is a dramatic, life changing procedure. It has been pointed out that, in some cases, the desire to become the opposite sex is temporary; is it not reasonable, then, to allow time to ensure that a person's desire is permanent and unchanging?

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

The enormity of a sex change means that there should be affirmation that a person understands the ramifications of the step they are taking. It should, however, be possible for it to be changed, in case they change their mind.

Does the spousal consent provision in the Act need reforming? If so, how? If it needs reforming or removal, is anything else needed to protect any rights of the spouse or civil partner?

No; it would be grossly unfair to have a contractual relationship (such as a marriage), between two people, and unilaterally change the fundamental nature of it (e.g. from an opposite sex to a same sex marriage). Taking myself as an example, since I am married, I no longer consider myself entirely my own – I belong to my wife as much as myself – it is right and proper that she has a say in any major decisions that I might make. This is a relationship that I chose willingly and knowingly, making vows to that effect, and I think this applies to the vast majority of married couples.

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

No; younger people (the age limit is currently 18) frequently have undeveloped and, as yet, unsettled feelings; it would be quite harmful to allow them to make life-changing decisions, like this, at an early age. It would be better for them to wait until adulthood, to ensure that their beliefs about their gender are solid. Children are prevented from doing other things which may cause them harm, and this should not be any different.

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

I think the law can only be based on biological realities; there is currently no scientific evidence, whatsoever, that there is anything more than two sexes.

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