

Written evidence submitted by Dr Pauline Pollard [GRA1773]

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

Overall I ask the committee to consider the evidence of detransitioners, lesbians unable to assert same sex attraction, trans widows, etc. I would like the committee to weigh up the rights of trans people against those with other protected characteristics. This necessary debate is being shut down by claims of transphobia when women seek to protect their rights. This is kind to genuine trans people. People believing in gender ideology are using the trans issue as a means to push their ideology - if there is a backlash these same activists will fade away leaving trans people vulnerable. Rights have to be debated when they impose on the right of others. This is kindness.

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?

The fee is low and comparable to fees for obtaining a driving licence, passport, immigration status, etc. Consideration of costs should be compared to those encountered by others e.g. disabled people providing evidence or people applying for citizenship (£1,206).

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

No, the requirement should not be removed as it provides some safeguard, however limited, for women to be protected from abuse of single sex spaces by people who could self-id as a means to access women and girls. Self-id means a violent sex offender can say they are women and be assigned to a female prison based solely on this claim. Already this is a problem for the prison authorities. However, it is necessary that single sex spaces regardless of how easy it is to claim to be the other sex and freedom of speech should be protected from gender ideology which seeks to compel speech.

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

What does living in their acquired gender mean? If it means performing a gender stereotype this is enshrining sexism into law. However, given the change of sex is a legal fiction created by the GRA 2004 (much in the same way as a limited company is treated as a person) the requirement is there to demonstrate a degree of sincerity. It

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seems appropriate to have a period of reflection to enable trans people who want to legally make this life time change the opportunity to assess their decision and consider if they want to desist.

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

A statutory declaration is a legally binding agreement, and in this case, people are legally binding themselves to a gender for life. This is there to demonstrate sincerity but people do desist and the law should enable people to desist and change their birth certificate back to their sex. Not to allow this is to treat desisters as a more disadvantaged marginalised group than trans people themselves. Further safeguarding measures need to be in place to allow withdrawal or withholding of a GRC on the grounds of improper purposes and for those convicted of violent or sexual offences. This is in addition to the current provision to rescind a GRC on the grounds of fraud.

6. 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 is such a significant change to the marriage contract it is reasonable to allow the partner to choose to annul the marriage rather than divorce. This is also important for people with religious convictions with regard divorce. During the process of divorce the partner of the trans person or the trans person themselves may experience domestic abuse - verbal or physical. It should not be called the spousal veto.

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

No. Puberty is a time of significant change in which many teenagers desist. Schools allow young people to perform in their acquired gender and this contributes to the two years of reflection. Children can not obtain a tattoo until they are 18.

There is a risk currently of children who are gay being encouraged to transition rather than acknowledge their homosexuality. There is also a need to examine other mental health issues e.g. eating disorders. It is noted that many children who are autistic seek to transition.

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

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9. What else should the Government have included in its proposals, if anything?

The focus is only on transgender rights and entitlements and not on how these rights might impact on others with protected characteristics. People should be able to opt to be medically treated or have intimate bodily care by someone of the same biological sex so they need to be able to say this without offence being taken. Not to allow this is to insist on enforced belief that a man can literally become a woman and vice versa. Self-identify as currently practiced is already impacting on people's privacy, dignity. It is particularly concerning that allowing men to identify as women is impacting on women's representation politically, women in sports, etc. To wish to organise based on biological sex is not transphobic. Trans people have their own history but it is not the same. The amount of abuse women receive for saying this merely proves the point.

The expectations on people not to misgender are unrealistic and is compelled speech. I will use the biological sex of a man who claims to be a woman if they disrespect the rights of women and will go to prison if necessary. I will, and have out of politeness, used a preferred pronoun where the person addressing me treats me with respect. There are transsexuals who don't agree with the gender ideology and I believe these people are genuine in their dysphoria. I will respect people who respect women's rights. It is misguided to demand preferred pronouns of vulnerable groups and children, and risks expectations of enforced speech.

10. Does the Scottish Government's proposed Bill offer a more suitable alternative to reforming the Gender Recognition Act 2004?

I do not agree with the proposed bill reducing the time lived in one's acquired gender from two years to three months - this provides too little time for reflection. I don't agree with lowering the minimum age from 18 to 16 as the evidence is that most teenagers learn to manage gender dysphoria without transition (which is of course impossible) and without committing suicide - watchful waiting is best. I understand the fear of medical gatekeeping and the ease with which a determined person can get round it. But given the enormity of what is being suggested - the legal right to change sex - then gatekeeping is essential to minimise the risk to vulnerable women and girls of dangerous men (claiming a sex identity merely to gain access). This would be less worrying if there was genuine protection of women and girls spaces but instead we are bullied as transphobic just for suggesting there may be risks. This worldwide gender movement is placing women and girls low on the equality agenda despite being 50% of the population.

Wider Issues Concerning Transgender Equality and Current Legislation

11. Why is the number of people applying for GRCs so low compared to the number of people identifying as transgender

That there is this disparity possibly suggests it is relatively easy to live claiming to be the other sex without obtaining a GRC.

12. Are there challenges in the way the Gender Recognition Act 2004 and the Equality Act 2010 interact? For example, in terms of the different language and terminology used across both pieces of legislation.

Please do not propose changes to the equality act to allow men into women's spaces. I include in this people with a GRC. Please protect women and girls - who have a right to privacy, dignity, their own sport, and freedom from fear. People say that trans people are not a threat - but single sex spaces were designed to protect women from all men (predator or not). Men who claim to be women display more violence than women and remain physically stronger. MPs are middle class and comfortable - they should not use their privilege to give away the rights of women and girls - just because they believe it progressive. Ask the women in prison, in refuges, in sports. For clarity in the document when I say women I mean who are biological women.

13. 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?

It is right that barriers are faced by trans and non-binary people who wish to access services that are single sex as these barriers are there for a reason.

The incidence of Males id-ing as women in prison: Across the UK 0.03% of the adult female population; 0.4% of the adult male population; 0.7% of the transwomen population will be in prison at any one time.

In terms of Sexual Offences, Howard League research on the rate of males identifying as women in prison along with information obtained by WPUK & verified by the BBC, 'Transwomen' commit sexual offences at up to 100 times the rate of women and 3 times the rate of other men. There needs to be an understanding that service providers have a duty of care towards female prisoners whether in the female or male estate.

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

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You might talk about the exemptions that single sex spaces give, and how these affect trans people. You might talk about the hate crime, abuse and discrimination experienced by trans people, and how easy or difficult it is for trans people to get support.

15. What issues do trans people have in accessing support services, including health and social care services, domestic violence and sexual violence services?

Trans people do need to be able to access support services to meet their particular needs and these services need to co-exist rather than replace services provided for women as a sex class -which should not be pressured into opening their doors to men who identify as women. These separate services would be additional and not need to be only provided to trans groups.

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

The committee has not defined these terms and they have no observed reality in the way that biological sex, age, race has. Respondents will give answers based on their subjective understanding. The following definition of non-binary 'individuals who may experience a gender identity that is neither exclusively male or female or is in between or beyond both genders' describes anyone who doesn't conform to gender stereotypes but may not choose to put a label on this nonconformity. As a woman who is gender non-conforming the rights I want are rights to equal treatment in the workplace (statistically monitored based on biological sex) the rights for the female sex to single sex spaces, the right to talk about my own body using the language women relate to. It is the loss of these rights that make me feel threatened. I feel that it is not kind to me, as a woman, to deny me sex-based rights in order to promote an ideology based on gender which has no basis in scientific fact.

November 2020