

Written evidence submitted by McGowan [GRA1810]

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

The governments proposed changes have not met any aim of making the process "kinder and more Straight forward". Changing the process to an online application is simply progress towards moving into the 21st century technologically. The nominal fee should never have been so high in the 1st place. A UK passport costs less. If the unnecessary GRA panel was not part of the process there is even less justification for the fee. The unrelated & conflated inclusion of "Open at least three new gender clinics this year in order to reduce waiting lists" is irrelevant to the inquiry & serves as nothing but a diversionary tactic by the government and/or shows how unfit for acting on the consultation the minister involved has been in the debate.

- **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 should be no more than a simple administration fee. Other financial burdens include acquiring diagnosis for gender dysphoria (now known as gender incongruence by WHO ICD 11) twice by separate psychiatric reports in the time window required. Even if a psychiatric report has been obtained via a GIC, one more report still has to be paid for privately. When waiting lists can be as long as 4 years many people will have to pay for both reports. These reports can cost upwards of £200 each. In the current GRC application a statutory declaration has to be witnessed by a legal representative. This will also incur a substantial fee. There may be additional fees incurred collating evidence of living in ones gender for the 2 years as imposed by the current system. All in all this is a very expensive process to go through to simply changer their gender marker.

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

In order to obtain a UK passport, driving licence & changes on HMRC documentation with change of gender marker a letter from a patients GP is all that is required. There should be no additional requirement to obtain a GRC.

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

This is hugely problematic as many people will not be able to provide the rigid & outdated evidence required, especially since people are forced to wait many years before they can receive any medical treatment or counselling through the NHS. It should be no more than 3 months as applied by other countries that have successfully made progress without any issues to making it more accessible for people to change their gender on their birth certificates & obtain gender recognition.

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

The statutory declaration which is part of the current UK gender recognition application should not require a legal representative. It should be the same as a statutory declaration in obtaining a deed poll for change of name which is still legally binding.

- **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?**

Spousal consent should not be included in any decision for an individual to change their gender. This is a removal of a persons human right to make a decision of their own life & should not be policed by anyone else.

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

Young adults have rights to make many decisions that can affect their lives far more than applying for a GRC. The age limit should come in line & be at least 16 years of age.

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

The changes the government have proposed will introduce next to nothing to improve the ability for people to obtain a gender recognition certificate.

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- **What else should the Government have included in its proposals, if anything?**
Remove the gender recognition panel that decides whether someone can have a GRC.
 - **Remove the outdated requirements of psychiatric reports for gender dysphoria.**
 - **Remove the requirement for a legal representative as witness to the statutory declaration.**
 - **Make the process solely a statutory declaration.**
 - **Remove the requirement of evidence to have lived in their gender for 2 years.**
 - **Inclusion of non binary identities on gender recognition applications.**
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- **Does the Scottish Government's proposed Bill offer a more suitable alternative to reforming the Gender Recognition Act 2004?**
 - **Yes this would be a real step forward.**

Wider issues concerning transgender equality and current legislation:

- **Why is the number of people applying for GRCs so low compared to the number of people identifying as transgender?**
- As the issues previously mentioned
- **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.**

The issue of the GRA 2004 is how difficult it is for people to obtain GRCs. The Equality Act is more effective if the GRA is reformed.

- 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 equality act should not be changed to the detriment of trans people.

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

The equality act does not protect trans people enough from discrimination in employment.

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

Support services run by religious organisations should be advised that they should not discriminate against trans people seeking their services. Any kind of conversion therapy used in these services should be banned.

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

There should be more rights made clearly in the Equality act for gender-fluid and non-binary people.

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