

Dear Committee,

I wish to respond to some of the questions set out in the Terms of Reference. My evidence focuses on the following questions:

- Should the age limit at which people can apply for a Gender Recognition Certificate (GRC) be lowered?
- What else should the Government have included in its proposals, if anything?
- What issues do trans people have in accessing support services, including health and social care services, domestic violence and sexual violence services?

I am particularly concerned about how the proposed changes to the GRA process will impact people, especially young people, who discontinue with a gender transition (detransition). We currently have no reliable data on how many people start a gender transition either legally, socially or medically but later discontinue this process and accept their biological sex. These people sometimes, but not always, refer to themselves as 'desisters' or 'detransitioners'.

Transgender advocacy groups such as Stonewall and Mermaids make claims that detransition rates are negligible but there is no solid evidence upon which they make this claim. However, the significant number who are 'lost to follow up' in studies undertaken by international gender clinics (e.g. 36% lost to follow up in Wiepjes, 2018) could potentially be at least partly explained by detransition.

The legal case brought by James Caspian against Bath Spa University has demonstrated how undertaking research on people who detransition has been deemed controversial and consequently blocked by academic institutions (Caspian, 2019) indicating that ideology rather than science or medical ethics is the current, predominating framework.

In the absence of formal investigation, increasing numbers of largely young people have been coming forward and making public testimonies about their detransition and a number of grassroots support groups, resources and advocacy groups have emerged as these people have found one another (links to these groups are provided in the references). Despite their courage, I have observed that those who tell their detransition stories publicly are often subject to profound scrutiny, criticism and even ridicule on social media.

Anecdotally, detransitioners appear to be largely young females who realised in their early twenties that their wish to masculinise their bodies with testosterone and surgeries in their teenage years was rooted in a complex set of biopsychosocial factors rather than an inherent gender identity. Some detransitioners report that they feel traumatised by their experiences of their gender clinic (including reports of negligence and malpractice) and do not wish to return there for support with their detransition process.

I am aware of several people who legally, socially and medically transitioned as teenagers but have since come to accept that they are female, however, they are stuck with male Gender Recognition Certificates and consequently male birth certificates. The current guidance is for these female people to go through the GRA process again as men with Gender Dysphoria who wish to be female but this is patently absurd and, also, I think deeply wrong to expect these

sometimes very vulnerable people to go through the same process which failed them the first time around.

In light of this evidence I believe that:

- The Committee should not recommend that the government lower the age limit to apply for a GRC
- The Committee should recommend that the government provide a process for people to have their GRC annulled if they accept their biological sex and/or discontinue their gender transition.
- The Committee should recommend that the government ensure that robust, impartial qualitative and quantitative research of people who detransition is undertaken
- The Committee should recommend that the government provide gender clinics that offer comprehensive psychological assessment and psychological therapies to people with Gender Dysphoria
- The Committee should recommend that the government provide a separate clinical service for people who detransition

Peer support groups and resources for detransitioners

<https://post-trans.com/>

<https://www.detransvoices.org/>

<https://www.detransadv.com/>

<https://detranscanada.com/>

<https://www.reddit.com/r/detrans/>

References

Caspian, J (2019) 'My battle with the transgender thought police' <https://www.spiked-online.com/2019/02/22/my-battle-with-the-transgender-thoughtpolice/>

Wiepjes CM, Nota NM, de Blok CJM, et al. The Amsterdam Cohort of GenderDysphoria Study (1972e2015): Trends in Prevalence, Treatment, and Regrets. J Sex Med2018