

## Written evidence submitted by Dr [GRA 1842]

This is not a trivial issue and requires the most serious consideration. It involves questions that are fundamental to the nature human existence which are philosophical, psychological, medical, sociological and religious. These matters affect the whole of our society, not just persons who experience gender dysphoria and include but are not limited to, educational settings, safety in a variety of female spaces, marriage and our uncertain and incomplete understanding of human development.

Should the requirement of a medical diagnosis be removed?

No, the issue is too serious to be based on a personal whim that may be reversed in time. The decision is not one which should be decided at the level of personal preference. This would trivialise the whole concept of what gender is and it's relation to biological sex. There is ample evidence that many transgender persons later regret their choice. Links with mental problems are common and emphasise the need for greater, not less stringent controls on this decision.

The two-year time period must not be reduced, for reasons already stated: many who transition change their mind with experience. This also emphasises the weighty nature of the decision. The Statutory Declaration is insufficient in itself and should be combined with appropriate medical support. Neither should it prevent someone reverting to their birth sex later in life, as many do. The very word "dysphoria" implies uncertainty and unease about something, not a certain conclusion.

The age limit should not be reduced. I feel more strongly about this than any other question. Teenagers notoriously follow fashions and fads in many social activities. The issue of transgender has had a high degree of exposure in the news and entertainment media. It is highly probable that many young people are following a trend or imitating a fashion for the sake of appearance. The sudden rise in teenage demands for transgender recognition may be in part the result of this, though there has been a failure to date of proper investigation. Young people should not be merely validated when making a transgender request, but expertly counselled and assessed.

In a majority of cases, someone who is already married will destroy their marriage by transitioning. Their choice effects not only themselves, but their husband or wife also. It is essential that a spouse be involved, and the current spousal consent provision should remain.

It is troubling to observe that such a serious issue is approached by some as just a matter of personal choice which should be permitted on request. It is far more complex than that and far more care, not less is required in making these decisions. It should also be remembered that millions of people hold sincerely held religious beliefs on this matter — something that has been virtually ignored in the public debate.

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