

Written evidence submitted by A Member of the Public [GRA1871]

I would like to raise concerns on Self Identification. In the UK, increasingly questions are being asked about access to women's spaces - and it does go much further than bathrooms.

1) Specifically, what is the factor or transition point that gives access to women's spaces? (The wearing of certain clothes? A certain medical intervention? Is it a full time commitment? Is a Gender Recognition Certificate required? etc) Particularly if we are saying as below 'many may not appear to be trans' and 'identity is fluid and can change over time'.

2) If we are giving some males access to female spaces, what is the impact on females?

If we think about the reality of any male bodied person being able to simply identify as a woman in relation to all women's spaces we need to consider:

- Mixed age spaces - the feelings and safeguarding of lone teenage girls in swimming pool changing rooms, dorms in boarding schools/overnight trips/children's homes, women's hospital wards and mental health units. Women with young children. Some have noted that young people are unable to raise issues for fear of being labelled as bigoted
- Women's prisons, homeless shelters and army barracks where it is difficult to leave and there are power imbalances.
In the UK we already have prisoners (without gender recognition certificates) that have been moved into the women's estate to be confined with females and guarded by female guards. We know statistically in the UK that 95% of our prison population are male, 98% of convicted sex offenders are male, 90% of sex abuse victims are female (statistics which suggest that a robust gender recognition certificate program might be sensible) .
- Sports - Questions are being asked about the effect of male puberty (and the height and weight differences) on safety in women's sports including contact sports (boxing, rugby, martial arts) elite sports (Olympic teams) and professional sports (tennis, football). There are questions on safety for transmen in male sport.
- Religious people such as orthodox Jews and Muslims or Jehovah's Witnesses' whose beliefs may exclude them from mixed sex toilets, showers, groups, dorms etc.
- Lesbian Groups - homosexual/same sex attracted
- Single sex recruitment and preference - if you ask for a woman doctor, teacher, personal carer, therapist etc.
- Women's only shortlists, board quota's, awards - We have these lists to try to address the imbalance that comes from sexed bodies (ie females birthing children, periods, menopause, being statistically smaller etc) and socialisation (females are still socialised to take more of the home workload etc). Some have raised that while those identifying as women will certainly face huge challenges, but they do not face the same sex based issues that females face.
- Vulnerable and suicidal females - Sadly these are terms that apply to females in very real terms.
- Gender identity - We know that gender stereotypes are harmful and outdated. We have many people that do not conform to gender norms which has up to now been seen as part of a personality. Some are questioning whether the idea of a gender identity is actually *reinforcing* gender stereotypes and extremes of masculinity and femininity rather than reducing them. (ie if a girl wears baggy clothes and likes maths and climbing trees it shouldn't mean they want to be a boy (which would reinforce the stereotypes) - it would be healthier to assume that girls can do these activities as girls (reduce the stereotypes).

If anyone can pick a space on the basis of gender identity, we are making all spaces mixed sex. We are removing our ability to even raise questions.

I am confident there are ways to support the needs of the transgender community, but I don't think self ID is the best way to do this.

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