

Written evidence submitted by Williams [GRA1873]

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

As a medical doctor and a parent, I have significant concerns about the dramatic increase in teenagers experiencing gender dysphoria over the last decade, particularly teenage girls. The cause of this increase has not been fully explained and I feel there should be more research into the underlying issues before young people are allowed to make life changing decisions, and the current age limit should not be lowered. This is particularly important for young people as the long term impact of hormonal treatments has not been adequately researched. For many young people, these feelings develop at around the time of puberty, rather than much earlier in childhood. Something appears to have changed significantly over the last decade and this needs further research and exploration and young people should be protected in the meantime.

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

Young people can be particularly vulnerable to external pressures from peers and social media, and I am concerned that there could be some form of societal pressure on young women. A significant proportion of these young people presenting with gender dysphoria have developmental disorders or psychological problems. They need appropriate care and support, and therefore I would be concerned if the requirement for a diagnosis of gender dysphoria was removed and people were simply allowed to self-identify as the basis for a GRC. The current safeguard of a formal diagnosis ensures that people considering a very serious action with potentially life changing consequences are protected and they are assessed for treatable mental health disorders and psychological problems that could be the basis for their distress.

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