

Consultation on Gender Recognition Act 2004

As a cisgender woman and sister of a transgender woman currently undergoing the complex and distressing process of transitioning, I would like to make the following observations in relation to the GRA:

I believe that any adult who has come to the point of recognising their gender dysphoria should be free to self-certificate without further diagnosis and at any time they think appropriate rather than having to live in their understood gender for two years. They should also be allowed to decide which toilets they can use. Transgender women are no more of a threat to other women than cisgender women are.

The financial burdens on those undergoing transition are potentially considerable and include private support and treatment, eg counselling, as well as other major and minor expenditure ranging from buying new clothes to dealing with being divorced by a married partner. It is therefore critical that the process should be as free from additional financial burden as possible (eg a fee for obtaining a Gender Recognition Certificate).

Another major concern is the waiting time for trans people to receive medical attention and treatment. This can be anything up to four years, as far as we can gather, which is completely unacceptable given the fragile nature of their constitution at this point. Trans people should be able to see their GP for immediate advice and specialist services as soon as required, as you would expect for any other disorder.

In addition to the paucity of capacity for specialised treatment and consultation, it is clear that a program is required to improve GPs' ability to deal with transgender patients with confidence, rather than, as currently, avoiding the issue and trying to pass this on to other colleagues. They should also be in a position to administer any hormones necessary for the transitioning process. It is not clear to us that the proposals will put sufficient resources behind this program to make sufficient and effective change.

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