

I am a 51 year old Transgender woman who has been living 'in role' (Female) for a little over 3 years. I am receiving treatment through the West of England Specialist Gender Identity Clinic, following initial diagnosis and HRT treatment sought privately through the London Transgender Clinic. I have not yet applied for GRC but intend to in the near future.

Format of response

My response follows the structure of the call for evidence, with specific questions highlighted in bold, followed by my response in normal type.

Section 1 - The Government's response to the GRA consultation:

Will the Government's proposed changes meet its aim of making the process "kinder and more straight forward"?

I believe it will, to a degree, however as an evidence based process it still relies on people making judgements about individuals, largely based on the judgements of others. Applicants have different experiences, different stories and diverse challenges. In my view a process that, whilst administered online, is liable to and already fails those who do not adequately fit quite a tight definition.

Should a fee for obtaining a Gender Recognition Certificate be removed or retained? Are there other financial burdens on applicants that could be removed or retained?

This is welcome.

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

In my view, yes. The fact that someone is willing to go through the process of transition is evidence enough. To then be refused recognition because an expert hasn't been sufficiently convinced is soul destroying.

Should there be changes to the requirement for individuals to have lived in their acquired gender for at least two years?

So far I've not felt I've had to go through the process as it does not affect my day-to-day life. However, if greater emphasis were to be placed on a GRC then I think 2 years would be too long and it should be no more than, say 3-6 months.

Does the Scottish Government's proposed Bill offer a more suitable alternative to reforming the Gender Recognition Act 2004?

Yes, definitely

Section 2 - Wider issues concerning transgender equality and current legislation:

Why is the number of people applying for GRCs so low compared to the number of people identifying as transgender?

Speaking personally as someone who is transgender, as it stands the only aspect of my life that I have been unable to be recognised as my identified gender is in my pension schemes and associated rights. Had the application process been more straightforward, and cheaper, I would have certainly applied by now.

Are the provisions in the Equality Act for the provision of single-sex and separate-sex spaces and facilities in some circumstances clear and useable for service providers and service users? If not, is reform or further guidance needed?

I feel the balance is about right. Having said that, I have been using ladies toilets now for three years and I am always fearful. I have not visited a gym or swimming pool since I began transition, although I hope to do so again when I have had GRS surgery, which is finally likely to happen next year. Nonetheless it is going to be hard to do.

A diagnosis of Gender Dysphoria, which is required to access any form of legal medical intervention requires a period of living full time 'in role'. This places trans people, especially trans women at huge risk, and understandably can make women feel unsafe if all they can see is a 'man in a dress'. I don't see an easy answer to this. However, a change in the law to provide further protection to women is likely to have a devastating impact on my ability to fully participate in society.

Has anyone on the committee had to plan their day around where they can safely access a toilet? This is already the experience of many non-binary people and could very easily apply to 'binary' trans people if legislation were to change.

Are legal reforms needed to better support the rights of gender-fluid and non-binary people? If so, how?

I know a number of people who would describe themselves as non-binary. I think there needs to be greater awareness and recognition, as often to identify as gender fluid or non-binary is viewed as a 'lifestyle choice'.

Written evidence submitted by Mrs Nicola Burr [GRA1916]

I would like to see legal recognition and requirement for organisations to record a title of an individuals choosing and a non-binary gender marker. In addition the creation of more inclusive spaces that are not just the renaming of a bathroom for disabled people. This should be a requirement for all new government and commercial spaces.

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