

Written evidence submitted by Mx Alex Wilford [GRA1917]

I am nonbinary and transgender. The moment I became aware that I was allowed to feel and label myself this way, was life changing. Suddenly everything made sense. My lifelong dysphoria. I was suddenly euphoric. I changed my name, told my family and friends, and came out at work. And I joined the waiting list for the London Charing Cross GIC. My mental health has improved and I have been happier and more myself ever since. That was five years ago.

I have been very lucky. I work for a large corporate company in London who looks after their staff and has a strong, caring LGBT community. My family and friends have also (mostly) been very accepting, and I live in Brighton, where I am accepted and not intimidated in the street. I am happy and healthy and privileged (white, middle class) and earn a good wage as a full-time software engineer. I know how lucky I am, and I know this is not the case for the majority of trans people, and it makes my heart break for them.

If I could get a Gender Recognition Certificate, to recognise that I am nonbinary, I would do that tomorrow. It would mean the absolute world to me for the government to recognise my gender.

But more than that I wish that every trans person could be as accepted as I have been. And allowing individuals greater access to a GRC would be a step towards that. Currently life is cruel and cold and hard and relentless for most trans people. Why the additional barriers?

I believe:

- There should be no large financial burden as a barrier to access. People who are excluded from jobs and housing and relationships due to cruel prejudice do not have a lot of money.
- The diagnosis of gender dysphoria should be removed. It can manifest in less recognised ways, such as a lifelong feeling of depression, anxiety, and feeling different and excluded. And then suddenly, on recognition and self-acceptance, manifest in gender euphoria. Not all trans people are able to provide the stereotypical/clichéd life story required by GICs to receive the diagnosis of gender dysphoria in order to get basic help.
- Given the current climate of prejudice, an increase in hate-crimes towards LGBT people, and a mainstream media which is openly hostile to trans people, the requirement for individuals to have lived in their 'acquired gender' for two years before they can get a diagnosis of dysphoria - is cruel and barbaric.
- Furthermore I would like the the trans parents of children to be recognised as the gender they are - mother or father. This would directly affect me.

Please look at what is working well in other countries. The UK should not be so far behind.

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