

## Written evidence submitted by Mr Philip Smith [GRA1924]

The terms of reference cannot be considered in isolation from the underlying issue of identity, which is fundamental in discussing transgenderism.

Sex is a biological category, rather than a social construct, and is determined according to the genetic constitution of the person. Therefore, the sex of the person is no more changeable than their genetics. A person suffering from gender dysphoria ought to be treated with respect and with compassion, and encouraging a person to build an identity in conflict with biological reality is not compassionate. It is not surprising to read of experiences that reflect this (see for example “Transition caused more problems than it solved”, John McFadden, *The Guardian*, 16<sup>th</sup> Sept. 2017).

Therefore, to look at just two of the terms of reference, there should be no lowering of the age limit for applying for a GRC, and the requirement for a diagnosis of gender dysphoria should not be removed. It is too easy for a child or young person to find themselves in an environment which encourages them towards a decision they later regret. Likewise, the requirement for a diagnosis introduces an element of interaction with a medical professional, which offers the chance of making a more informed decision.

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