

Written evidence submitted by Lara Vecchi [GRA1930]

I am a cis member of the LGBTQ+ community, and a trans ally who is concerned by the lack of amendments brought forward by the GRA reform despite all the overwhelming evidence in favour of a reform that supports trans people and their ability to self-identify as their gender. Trans people, whether binary or non-binary, should be able to have the same rights as every cis person in the UK, and they should be able to apply to a straightforward process where they are able to self-identify as their correct gender.

- The proposed changes.

The proposed changes do not make the process “kinder and more straight forward”. Trans and non-binary individuals are attacked and discriminated on a daily basis in the UK and the proposed changes are not enough for ensuring the rights for trans people to be themselves. The proposed changes to the GRA do not even make a dent in simplifying the process for trans people. The proposed changes to the GRA will not have a great impact on trans people. Any amount that people applying to the GRC will have to pay will prevent people from applying to it. In order for the GRC to be accessible, the GRC’s fee needs to be removed. In addition, the GRC process needs to be changed to an administration process of self-identification, where people can self-identify as their correct gender without providing any evidence of their transition. The process should be demedicalised as being trans is not an illness, but simply indicates that someone identifies with a different gender than the one assigned at birth.

- The ‘nominal’ fee.

The fee should be removed. Cis people are not made to pay to have their gender legally recognised, yet trans people have to pay to have theirs recognised by the government. Not only is this discriminatory to trans people, but it prevents many trans people from applying for the GRC because of their financial situation. More trans people than cis people have trouble accessing paid work as trans communities are more often excluded from workplaces, and therefore the fee of the Gender Recognition Certificate is an added burden to people who may already be in difficult financial situations.

- Gender Dysphoria and Demedicalisation of the Process.

The diagnosis of gender dysphoria should be removed. Being trans is not a medical condition, and all trans people should be able to self-identify independent from the fact whether they feel dysphoria or not. The UK should like themselves with many other countries in demedicalising the gender recognition process, and stop treating transness as a medical condition, rather than simply identifying with a different gender than the one assigned at birth.

- Amount of time

This should definitely be lowered. Transitioning and living as their true gender is not something that can be quantified. There are questions that need to be raised to what this means on a practical level, as it creates a hierarchy of transitioning and living in an ‘acquired’ gender. In addition, it does not clarify to what this means for people who do not identify as a man or a woman as non-binary people, who are a large percentage of the trans community, and who cannot prove their real gender identity as it is currently impossible in the UK.

- Statutory Declaration

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A statutory declaration should be the process by which trans people should be able to change their gender on their birth certificate. This is a process which is already established for changing other documents such as passports and driving licences and therefore, it should be the established system for the Gender Recognition Certificate. The statutory declaration should remove all medical requirements and simply change the process to self-identification, as already established for other documents.

- Spousal Consent

This should absolutely be removed as no one's spouse should be able to decide whether someone is allowed to change their gender and apply for the GRC. This is a decision that should remain solely in the power and agency of the trans person. In addition, no one's gender should be used against them as a reason of divorce, as the person's gender simply concerns themselves.

- Age limit

The age limit should be lowered to 16 years old. Many people transition before 18 years old and therefore the age should be lowered to 16 years old, as under 18s can change their gender on other documents such as passports and driving licence. The GRC should have the same standards as other legal requirements.

- Inclusion of non-binary individuals

The GRA should include the ability for non-binary individuals to be legally recognised as their actual gender. Non-binary people need to have the choice of being recognised in their gender through all legal requirements and documents, as they should have all the same rights as any other person in the UK. It is necessary for the GRC to include non-binary individuals.

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