

## Written evidence submitted by Garrod [GRA1959]

Call for evidence. Gender recognition act

Should the requirement for a diagnosis of gender dysphoria be removed? NO.

A correct medical diagnosis needs to be given by a doctor. When I was 7 years old, I silently was deeply distressed and searching for reasons, questioning, "Who am I?" Perhaps I am adopted like the girl next door? Desperate for comfort I searched the house for food. But I was also searching for an explanation to the deep disquiet within. One day I found my birth certificate and found the evidence that I was not adopted. Fortunately, this was in the 1950's, so that I could not be led astray by suggestions which children and people may accept today, that I HAVE BEEN BORN IN THE WRONG BODY. Please note today people seeing themselves on Zoom are having facial surgery because they dislike their noses or wrinkles, not realising cameras can distort appearances. Sadly, cosmetic work on teeth sometimes damages rather than improves them. It is the same for those with gender dysphoria, the problem is not with the body, but with the mind and emotions which can cause self-hatred. Self-hatred which can develop due to rejection in the womb or as a young child.

It took many years before my mother wrote on my 27<sup>th</sup> birthday postcard that I was the baby that came despite all her attempts to prevent my birth. It may be that many are in distress because they were unwanted, a rejection that causes deep trauma. Another reason is a parental longing for a boy rather than a girl or vice versa. Deep in the identity of the unborn child can be a sense of being a mistake or disappointment which will later possibly cause an identity crisis.

I needed help from the NHS, as after that birthday message, my depression deepened and my cry to God to let me die, turned into self-harm. Young children and teenagers and even adults need to be protected from the pressure to self-declare and legally being able to change sex online without the safety net enabling the NHS to diagnose the true cause of person's gender dysphoria.

However, gender dysphoria clinics need freedom to examine carefully the root of the problem which causes such deep distress that people are willing to take hormone blockers at puberty or pursue invasive surgery. There needs to be the safeguards which are practised as in other areas of the NHS. Hormone blockers should not be given to children at puberty to delay sexual development as all drugs can have serious side effects. In the teens all young people go through a turbulent process as they grow up from child to adulthood. Girls, for instance coping with periods, may not cope at school, or some may consider they cannot cope with the emotional upheaval or pain every month. This may be a contributory factor in desiring to change gender. As in other areas of the NHS, careful diagnosis and other support measures are put in place before any invasive treatment such as drugs or operations are considered. For instance, I was diagnosed with a bowel problem in 2014. Conservative treatment including biofeedback and changes in diet and avoidance of drugs causing constipation was suggested. Although I have a genetic condition EDS causing extra stretchy collagen the consultant refused my request for an operation 2 years ago stating an operation must not be considered as a QUICK FIX. Gender dysphoria clinics also need to follow minimal intervention for children. Hormone blockers, and surgery refused, other treatment considered, and no quick fixes.

**Should the age limit at which people can apply for a Gender Recognition certificate be lowered?**

**No. A QUICK FIX to change gender by applying online for a Gender Recognition certificate for teenagers under the age of 18 must NOT be allowed.**

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Teenagers are often struggling with many challenges, eg self-worth and sometimes with parental separation or divorce and a parent having a new partner. I think any invasive treatment including puberty blockers should be prohibited under 18. Sadly, the breakup of many family relationships means the children can be deeply damaged and often think they have caused the problem. I speak with understanding of the distress of arguing/fighting parents and the fears that caused me. Often there is a lack of support for these children. It may seem to be AN EASY FIX TO SAY – BORN IN THE WRONG BODY—FIX ME PLEASE WITH HORMONES AND OPERATIONS SO I CAN BE A DIFFERENT GENDER. I was a teacher, so I am aware that some children are very challenged in our sometimes broken and dysfunctional society. Freedom to do what I like can end in confusion and poor law.

Then some find having gone down this radical transgender route are still depressed. They still feel rejected. Some of them are seriously concerned that the medics treating them did not investigate or challenge them enough before undertaking gender reassignment surgery. Now they find change of gender was not the answer their identity crisis.

Please ask yourself a question. Why do transgender activists keep pushing for more legislation to increase their rights? If anyone has a different opinion, they sadly consider it is hate crime thinking that people reject them. I only reject their belief system. I had to a lot of help to change my rejection belief system which so sadly affected my life. Some help came from the NHS but it was my caring Christian friends sharing the good news of a Saviour who heals the broken-hearted. It was not easy for me to learn to trust people and relate to people due to the trauma of rejection of my Mother. I believed because my mother did not want me to be born, that God did not want me either. It was a lie. It was only when God's word spoke truth to my rejected/broken heart, that I was born not by the will of man, but by the will of God, that the lie causing me to desire to die was erased. Slowly I realised that although my mother did not want me to be born, God created me and he loves and desires me to know Him and enjoy life. Little by little self-harm, depression, pain and fear were gone, as I received the love and acceptance of God My Father in heaven.

### **There must be no instant self-declaration of change of gender.**

This will open the way for abuse for people with deviant behaviour accessing women only spaces such as toilets and changing rooms. Young ladies with periods and other women need to be safe in shared spaces especially dormitory accommodation. Already some with deviant sexual behaviour try to use a change of gender to enable them to enter women only spaces and sexually abuse others. The transgender lobby push for their rights, ignoring other people's rights to be kept safe.

I am concerned that a strong transgender lobby keeps pushing for more and more changes in the law. I am very concerned because they push their transgender belief- "born in the wrong body" agenda so heavily in schools. Children especially very young ones need to be protected from adults inappropriately desiring to promote a sexual belief system which causes damage to insecure pupils. Children may be unhappy for a myriad of reasons but are now pushed into self-diagnosis by this damaging and incorrect thinking, "I've been born in the wrong body".

I wonder if I as a Christian I can teach the truth of God in schools. The truth I believe is written in the Bible. God created the heavens and the earth and all people on the earth. He created us in the image of God, male and female, and God's design for us for a man to marry a woman. Consider carefully if transgender beliefs, are illustrated by the fairy story, "The Emperor's New Clothes." No one liked to disagree and admired his new clothes as he paraded along the street, except for one little child honestly saying, "He's naked." The weavers had spun the emperor a lie, and everyone agreed, as they were afraid to stand up for the truth.

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