

To provide my relevant personal background before tackling the questions

I am a trans person

I was born in late 1950s

It was observed at birth that I am male & noted on my birth certificate

From at least the age of 5, probably about 3 yrs old, I was gender dysphoric.

I desperately wanted to be a girl and spent much of childhood struggling with this, tho in secret. I guess because I was told as a child I was not allowed to dress in women's clothes because I'm a boy. I also believed that apart from me, boys didn't like girls and v.v. so I was terrified I would lose all my friends if anyone discovered I wished to be a girl.

By adulthood I had come to realise I could never be a woman, that surgery and hormones could not achieve this tho I still wished to be a women. I had tho learnt a lot more of what it is to be a woman which as a 5yr old I could not grasp. I knew nothing of menstruation, of where babies came from and much more.

I began many years of therapy from about the age of 25yrs. The man points learnt from this are that many women will not, in a deep, profound, humanistic sense, accept me as a women; tho more (not all) will accept that I am trans and enjoy playing dress-up. Also that by acknowledging the boundaries between men and women, women paradoxically become more accepting of me. By relinquishing the fight to break down the walls, women come more to trust me.

These were very important in accepting my dysphoria. Growing up too, with the changes made by Boy George, David Bowie etc in issues of gender acceptance again

allowed me to come to terms with wanting to grasp a degree of femininity whilst still remaining a man.

I have been married twice - 1st at about age 30. I only told my first wife after we were married. Whilst she could accept it to a degree, I could understand that any surgical or hormonal changes I might make would be unacceptable. Tho I toyed with the idea - I never truly believed these would deal with my issues.

These were issues I resolved in my late 20s - I don't think I had the maturity to do so before. I was told I was not allowed to 'be a girl' when a child; and I believed this authority. If I had been told as a child that I was really a girl in a boy's body I'm sure I would have believed the adults in this. Whilst I don't think it was healthy to suppress my feelings; I'm glad I was not encouraged along the pathway of surgical transition, which I'm sure I would have come to regret.

Later still in life I came to appreciate the unequal struggles women have, and only recently just how much demands men make can impinge on their rights

Given this:-

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

No, if anything I feel it should be more rigorous
Should there be changes to the requirement for individuals to have lived in their acquired gender for at least two years?

Absolutely as a minimum

Does the spousal consent provision in the Act need reforming?

From my first marriage I would say it does not
Should the age limit at which people can apply for a Gender Recognition Certificate (GRC) be lowered?

Again No. If anything - higher
Why is the number of people applying for GRCs so low compared to the number of people identifying as transgender?

Probably because the issue is complex and is not easily resolved early in life

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?

No. It needs to be much clearer that women have a right to safe spaces in matters of hygiene and of sport - were men are rightly excluded whether trans or not. The voices of women, if they feel threatened, uncomfortable etc should come before male urges to cross the boundary

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