

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE GRA

The GRA is a piece of legislation that currently allows a trans person to change the Gender on their birth certificate by applying for a Gender Recognition Certificate. At the moment there are many steps involved in a trans person obtaining a Gender Recognition Certificate and for many trans people it is a lengthy process that often proves too expensive.

The government are currently looking to reform the GRA, and a public consultation is taking place that will advise the government on what changes to make, if any.

Because of this, some people rightly have concerns about how any changes could affect them. These large scale changes to something as fundamentally important as Gender rights means that there will be a lot of discussion around finding the best outcome for everyone.

Unfortunately some groups are taking advantage of the concerns of some people to push their narrative that is harmful to trans people and not based in fact.

So we're here to help explain what's going on!

MYTH: SELF-ID ALLOWS MEN INTO WOMEN'S SPACES

Fact: The introduction of a system of self-identification will result in no change in the day to day lives of most people. Introducing self-id into the Gender Recognition Act means it will be easier for trans people to change the gender on their birth certificate without having to go through such a lengthy and costly process. In fact, self-id is already used, as under the current system trans people have to prove that they have been "living in role" (including accessing gendered spaces) for two years before being able to obtain a GRC.

Trans people already change their gender marker on their passport or driver's licence with a letter from their doctor. Trans people already use gendered spaces that match their gender identity. Nothing about this will change with changes to the GRA.

When the GRA was first introduced, there was a short period where trans people self-identified to obtain a GRC to make sure there was not a backlog of applications. There have been no issues as a result of this. Other countries also use a system of self-identification and there have been no issues reported either.

MYTH: MALE PRISONERS WILL "SELF-ID" AS WOMEN TO ACCESS WOMENS PRISONS

Fact: It is already difficult for trans people to access the prison that is representative of their gender. Moving prisoners in this way is done on a case-by-case basis, and not usually in a trans person's favour. It would be even more difficult for a cis person to do this using any new GRA changes.

MYTH: PEOPLE WILL IDENTIFY AS A DIFFERENT GENDER ON ANY DAY OF THE WEEK

Fact: GRCs are only for people who permanently identify as a gender different from the one they were assigned at birth.

MYTH: MEN WILL “SELF-ID” AS WOMEN TO ACCESS WOMEN'S SHELTERS

Fact: Women's shelters do not allow men access to their services. They do however allow trans women to use their services. Changes in the GRA will not affect this.

MYTH: MEN WILL “SELF-ID” AS WOMEN TO WIN AT SPORTS AGAINST WOMEN

Fact: Access to gendered sports is decided on a sport-by-sport basis by National and International governing bodies. Changes in the GRA will not affect this.

MYTH: PUBERTY BLOCKERS GIVEN TO CHILDREN ARE BAD

Fact: Puberty Blockers are given to some adolescents to temporarily halt some of the effects of puberty. This gives the young person time to consider their options without going through some physical changes to the body that could cause them severe distress. If a young person decides to continue with puberty they can simply stop taking the blockers and puberty resumes.

MYTH: TRANS PEOPLE ARE MENTALLY ILL

The World Health Organisation has stated categorically that being transgender is not a mental illness. Many trans people suffer with dysphoria, which is a state of emotional distress due to a conflict between their gender identity and their body or their perceived gender.

MYTH: TRANSGENDER PEOPLE CAN'T CHANGE GENDER

Fact: It is a widely held view that gender is a social construct. As such, the barriers and interpretations that we put around what gender is and can be, is only governed by our own prejudices. Previous binary interpretations of gender fixed to assigned biological sex only serve to perpetuate the patriarchy. Our preconceptions and biases around sexuality, sex, race, and disability are also social constructs. That doesn't mean they are not real, nor serve a function, nor hold importance.

The proposed changes to the GRA will not affect the sex status of anyone not seeking a gender recognition certificate, and as such, will have little to no bearing on the lives of most people.

For more information or to fill in the consultation visit:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/reform-of-the-gender-recognition-act-2004>

For guidance on filling it in from an LGBTIQ+ Greens perspective, see our model response at:

<https://lgbtiqa.greenparty.org.uk/campaigns/gra-consultation-response.html>



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