

The Gathering Space

Questions

1 Do you have any comments on the proposal that applicants must live in their acquired gender for at least 3 months before applying for a GRC?

Yes

If yes, please outline these comments.:

It's not a feminist or egalitarian principle to suggest that there is only one way to present as a man or as a woman. The existing principles suggest that someone is only a certain gender if they present in a stereotypical way for a given time. It also doesn't account for non-binary people. The suggested reforms would allow people to self-define without needing to fit a stereotype. It's also very common for trans people to have already waited many years before beginning to transition; there's no good reason for extending this artificially.

2 Do you have any comments on the proposal that applicants must go through a period of reflection for at least 3 months before obtaining a GRC?

Yes

If yes, please outline these comments.:

The only use of a three months waiting period in practice is to allay fears that the process may be abused - though I suspect the fears are ungrounded, it causes little actual harm to have a slight delay. Be under no illusion though, to a person who has waited years for their recognition, every delay feels like an added insult.

3 Should the minimum age at which a person can apply for legal gender recognition be reduced from 18 to 16?

Yes

If you wish, please give reasons for your view.:

If it's legal to get married, consent to medical treatment and have sex at 16, it should be legal to have your gender recognised also.

4 Do you have any other comments on the provisions of the draft Bill?

Yes

If yes, please outline these comments.:

It doesn't make sufficient provision for non-binary people currently - and particularly younger trans people are far more likely to identify as non-binary than older ones.

5 Do you have any comments on the draft Impact Assessments?

Yes

If yes, please outline these comments.:

Just to say that most of the impacts I've heard people complaining about are totally unrelated to this legislation. This is literally about birth certificates and legal documents, and makes no difference to access to single-sex spaces, individuals' rights or toilets. But it matters, for example in the case of my friend who's transitioned and keeps having problems accessing NHS services because his legal identity's unclear, or another friend who's had to travel to a country where being transgender is dangerous using a passport in his incorrect gender, and so on. Where legal documents matter, accuracy matters.