

## **Covenant Fellowship Scotland**

### **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.:**

Understanding of the realities of living in another gender with a thought to the longer term as well as the immediate, and with consideration of the effect on every aspect of life including relationships and beliefs as well as purely practical considerations really cannot be achieved by a period as short as 3 months. There is no guidance within the proposed legislation as to what “living in their acquired gender” actually means and therefore criteria for determining if this has happened cannot be effectively applied.

**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.:**

Reflection on the reasons for wishing to pursue such a gender change must be meaningful and include the opportunity to receive advice on the mental health aspects of such a change. This is a decision which should not be made purely because someone “feels” like it and without careful discussion with medical and mental health professionals who should have a responsibility to present both sides of the case. This is essential to guard against undue influence from campaign groups or through social media.

Understanding the significance of any programme of medical or surgical intervention and the potential difficulties of trying to reverse such interventions must be a part of any reflection. If, as happens in some cases, the individual decides at a future point that the decision to change gender was a mistake, then lack of such meaningful and informed reflection will leave them in a worse position.

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

No

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

Cognisance to be taken of the age and maturity of any individual wishing to pursue gender change – the proposal to lower the age for this to 16 and to give a very

free path of “self-declaration” is one which removes necessary safeguards of having their ideas and wishes tested to ascertain real understanding and well thought through intentions. Lowering the age would further heighten the risk of undue and adverse influences from campaign groups and social media

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

Yes

#### **If yes, please outline these comments.:**

Covenant Fellowship Scotland, as an organisation seeking to follow the teachings of God as expressed in the Bible and orthodox Christian beliefs, has great difficulties with the proposed changes to the law around gender recognition. The rise in interest in this topic has been fuelled by those with an agenda aimed at seeking to change the fundamental fact that the human race has been created man and woman.

Those holding such a viewpoint are entitled to do so but the proposed changes in the law give far too much credence to their views and indeed seek to promote these views in a way which is not balanced and which will potentially lead to continued and even increased mental health issues among those for whom the idea of a gender change is seen as a “silver bullet” for existing difficulties. The current requirements for medical assessment and a 2-year waiting period give the opportunity to address mental health issues and, if at the end of this process the individual still wishes to go ahead, then well-planned intervention and treatment can take place.

In summary, therefore, we believe that the proposed changes to the Gender Recognition Act are ill founded and wrong and that such changes should not be passed into law.

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

No

#### **If yes, please outline these comments.:**