

East Dunbartonshire Catholic Schools Group

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.:

We believe this time scale is too short and does not allow for adequate support to be provided for the individuals.

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.:

This time period is too short to ensure that the appropriate checks and balances are in place to assess the capacity of the person wishing the changes. It does not give time to assess the difference between a Sexual Health issue and/or Mental Health conditions which may impact a person's decision making process.

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.:

Under the Convention on the Rights of the Child defines a child as those 18 and under. The UNCRC is there to protect all children, recognising that they do not have the capacity to give informed consent to processes which are irreversible. As Primary Head Teachers we are acutely aware that children are vulnerable to many forces; peer pressure, unconscious bias, the significant influence of media and social media in providing information and misinformation to name but a few.

Most young people of the age of 16 years do not have the capacity to understand what a 'lifetime' means and make choices thinking things will never happen to them. That is why we as adults need to be there to protect them.

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

Yes

If yes, please outline these comments.:

Consider this bill to be an inappropriate amendment to current legislation and out of step with other areas such as the legal system proposals that young people may not be criminally responsible until the age of 25yrs due to a lack of maturity and clear judgement.

There is nothing in the bill which appears to support vulnerable adults. The process outlined should never degrade or demean an individual. However, it should be challenging and thorough to ensure we protect vulnerable citizens and of a length of time that gives the individual a chance to change their mind should they wish too. Expending the process potentially risks causing further distress to those who may be unsure or have not considered fully the implications of changing gender.

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

Yes

If yes, please outline these comments.:

In terms of the Equalities Act it would appear that some protected characteristics are more 'equal' than others. The genuine concern for many people of faith/religious belief is ensuring that all citizens, regardless of gender are treated equally. We welcome debate but often, as would appear from the consultation process, the views of faith groups is side-lined.