



Rt Hon Liz Truss MP  
Minister for Women & Equalities  
Cabinet Office  
Room 405  
70 Whitehall  
London  
SW1A 2AS

11<sup>th</sup> August 2020

Dear Minister,

We are writing on behalf of GMB union in regards to the Prime Minister's recent remarks that your Department plans to halt reform of the Gender Recognition Act which would have allowed people to change their legal gender by self-identifying. Whilst waiting to see the detail of those plans, we write to ask that you reconsider, as these remarks run counter to your Department's commitment to LGBT+ rights.

As a trade union we represent all workers, including many trans workers. We know the levels of discrimination and abuse trans and non-binary people face in the workplace as well as wider society: many employers do not adequately understand trans issues, nor do a large number of service providers that trans people rely on. We know from TUC research in 2017 that almost half of all trans workers have experienced bullying or harassment at work, with under a third having their status revealed without their consent.

The barriers, as it stands, for people to get a Gender Identification Certificate in order to legally reassign their gender are significant. Under the current process there are significant financial, emotional and medical barriers to legal recognition because those going through the process must provide evidence of a gender dysphoria diagnosis and demonstrate they have been living in their gender for two years. Further to that, access to health care is inadequate with waiting lists for initial appointments, between 1 and 2 years and with only seven such clinics in the UK.

Since July 2017, the Government has been committed to reviewing the Gender Recognition Act to examine "options to streamline and demedicalise the gender recognition process". The government committed to consulting on reforming the GRA and launched its consultation in 2018, closing in October 2018 saying that "trans and non-binary people are members of our society and should be treated with respect". The public response we gather from reports was 70 per cent in favour of changes and further to that, [opinion surveys of the public but also of women in this country has recently shown that the majority support the principle of self-declaration](#). Self-declaration is already the law in many countries such as in Ireland where a person over the age of 18 can change their gender by way of a 'statutory declaration'. Other examples can be found in Malta, Norway, Portugal and Belgium.

We welcomed your words in Parliament (on 22 July 2020) that there would be no roll back on trans people's rights. We were concerned about press reports that the Government was looking at restricting trans people's access to single-sex facilities and services. This



would be a seriously regressive and discriminatory step against expert advice. It would force trans women to use male facilities despite strong evidence that this puts them at risk of violence. Since the Equality Act, trans people have been able to access facilities that match their gender for over a decade. [Studies have shown for example that domestic and sexual violence support services across Britain are already allowing transwomen access to women only services.](#) We are not aware of any provisions used within the Act which has led to the abuse of systems in this country or in any country where self-identification has been adopted.

In line with your commitments with LGBT+ equality and medical best practise, we ask the Government to reform the Gender Recognition Act based on self-declaration. We urge you to put forward policies that would tackle discrimination against trans and non-binary people and not expose them to harm in particular by denying them access to safe spaces. Going back on the commitment to reform the GRA for the better will have a detrimental impact of the safety and lives of trans and non-binary people.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'John Phillips'.

John Phillips  
Acting General Secretary  
GMB Union

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Barbara Plant'.

Barbara Plant  
President  
GMB Union

Angela Gilraine  
National LGBT+ Strand Lead  
GMB Shout