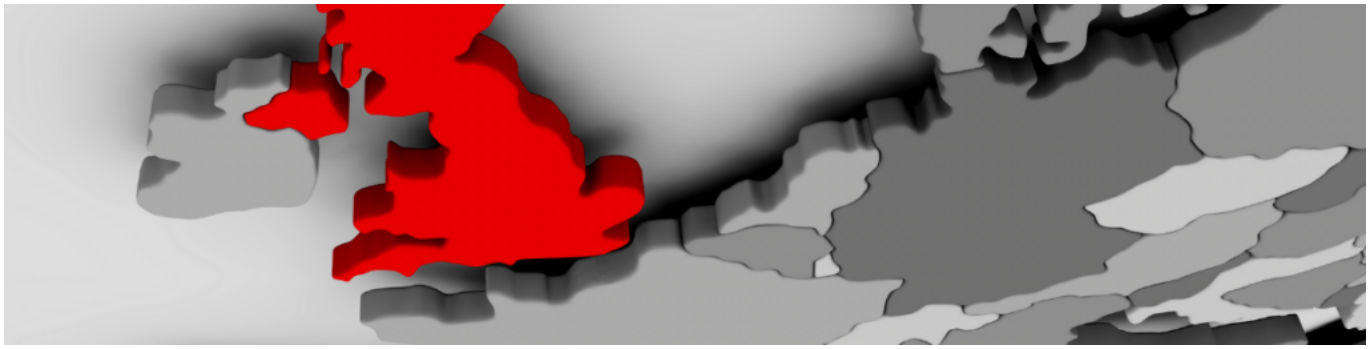
UK Gender Recognition Act Reform Fails To Meet Human Rights Standards

article, legal gender recognition



On 22 September 2020, after a three-year debate and consultation process, the United Kingdom government announced they will not reform the 2004 Gender Recognition Act (GRA), which would have introduced more progressive legal gender recognition (LGR) legislation in line with established human rights standards in England and Wales. We join our members in the call for the UK government's commitment to continue improving the GRA to better meet the trans community's demands.

Background:

In 2018 the British Government conducted an extensive public consultation and survey regarding the experiences of trans people and how the Gender Recognition Act should be reformed. TGEU and several UK member organisations submitted feedback.

According to Mermaids and TGEU member organisation Stonewall, an overwhelming percentage of trans respondents to the survey said the current GRA process was too bureaucratic, time-consuming and expensive, highlighting in particular that the process made them feel dehumanised and stressed. More than 100,000 individuals and organisations responded to the public consultation. A large majority of these submissions favoured the removal of existing barriers to gender recognition, including outdated and pathologising requirements demanding diagnosis of gender dysphoria, a medical report detailing all treatment, evidence of having lived in their 'acquired gender' for a period of time, and consent from the spouse of any married trans person before pursuing legal gender recognition.

"For too long, transgender and non-binary people of all ages have suffered ill-informed 'debate', whilst trying to pursue their education, jobs and personal lives in safety and dignity. […] We believe trans people should be able to change their birth certificates without going through an intrusive and costly medical process to prove who they are," Mermaids writes in their public statement.

Yet, after three years of consultation and public debate, the UK government announced yesterday that they would NOT move forward with meaningful LGR reform, though they would move forward with some improvements to the current process, such as lowering the fee for obtaining an LGR certificate to a nominal amount.

“Legal gender recognition procedures should be quick, transparent, accessible and based on self-determination,” said TGEU Policy Officer Jonas Hamm. “They should also be available to minors and non-binary people. The UK Gender Recognition Act does neither of these things. While it may have been a progressive law at the time, it is now outdated and in need of reform to comply with international human rights standards.”

Read what some of our members in the UK have to say:

- Gendered Intelligence
- Scottish Trans Alliance
- Transgender NI