

A Transgender Manifesto

What Do We Really Want?

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Introduction

This document is a **FIRST** draft of a 'Transgender Manifesto'. Its contents reflect MY ideas, and no one else's. It is in the manner of an experiment and perhaps a provocation that will encourage readers to truly think about what a better world for trans' people would look like. It is not the final word on this topic and probably never will be.

Bear this in mind when reading.

1. Self-Identification Legally Recognised, With the Assistance of the State

The Demand

The law should allow every person to change the gender marker on their birth certificate through a simple, administrative process of self-declaration — without requiring a medical diagnosis of gender dysphoria, medical intervention of any kind, or assessment by a panel of strangers.

The Explanation

The current Gender Recognition Act 2004 requires applicants to provide two medical reports, evidence of having lived in their acquired gender for at least two years, and a formal diagnosis of gender dysphoria. This process is not merely cumbersome. It is designed on the assumption that transgender identities require psychiatric authorisation. That you cannot know who you are until a panel of doctors has confirmed it.

This is not how civilised societies treat other aspects of personal identity. No one requires a psychological assessment before changing their name by deed poll. Marriage does not require a doctor's confirmation of genuine love. The requirement for medical gatekeeping in gender recognition is unique to this area of law, and it exists for one reason: because transgender people have historically been treated as mentally disordered, and the law has reflected that prejudice.

The process is also, for many people, genuinely degrading. Applicants must compile intimate details of their lives (relationships, medical history, personal circumstances, etc.) and submit them to an unseen panel. They must prove, in effect, that they have suffered enough to deserve legal recognition. The Nottinghamshire University analysis of the 2018 consultation on GRA reform found that 80 per cent of respondents who had been through the process described it as **humiliating** (King, Paechter and Ridgway, 2018).

The Evidence

The United Nations has repeatedly called on the UK to move to a system of gender self-determination. Ireland passed the Gender Recognition Act 2015 allowing self-declaration for adults, with no medical requirement. Denmark introduced a similar system in 2014, Norway in 2016, and Belgium in 2018. Malta's 2015 Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Sex Characteristics Act is widely regarded as the international gold standard. In every case where self-determination has been introduced, there has been no evidence of misuse (a fact acknowledged even by critics of the reform). The argument that self-determination will be exploited by predators has simply not materialised anywhere it has been implemented.

In February 2026, the UK Supreme Court ruled in *For Women Scotland Ltd v The Scottish Ministers* [2025] UKSC 16 that "woman" in the Equality Act 2010 means biological sex. This ruling does not address the question of gender recognition certificates, but it has been used to justify further restrictions on the legal status of transgender people. Whatever one's view of the ruling, it makes the case for simpler, clearer self-determination law more urgent — not less. If the law is going to distinguish between sex and gender, then changing one's gender should not require the Kafkaesque apparatus currently in place.

2) Far Better Protection From In-Person and Online Bullying, Harassment and Abuse

The Demand

The state must take seriously the physical and verbal violence directed at transgender people — in the street, in the workplace, in schools,

and online — and treat it as what it is: hate crime.

The Explanation

The language of "bullying" in this demand is deliberate. Much of what transgender people experience is not dramatic violence but constant, grinding hostility: being stared at, commented on, followed, mocked, deliberately misgendered, and excluded. This is the background radiation of trans life in Britain in 2026, and it is exhausting in ways that people who have not lived it struggle to understand.

But it is not only background noise. The Home Office hate crime statistics for the year ending March 2025 recorded **4,120 police-reported hate crimes with a transgender identity strand** in England and Wales (Home Office, 2025). This figure, while shocking, almost certainly understates the true scale of the problem: police recording practices vary enormously, many victims do not report, and the threshold for what counts as a hate crime is contested. The Crime Survey for England and Wales estimates 176,000 hate crime incidents per year across all monitored strands, but transgender people in particular are reluctant to involve the police, both because of distrust of institutions and because many have had negative experiences when they have tried to report.

The rise in online abuse is particularly acute. Transgender people (and transgender women in particular) are subjected to coordinated campaigns of harassment that would, in many cases, meet the threshold for stalking or threatening behaviour if the target were not transgender. The platforms that enable this abuse have shown no serious inclination to prevent it.

The Evidence

The 2024-25 Hate Crime Statistics show that while the overall number of recorded trans-related hate crimes fell by 11 per cent compared with the previous year (from 4,778 to 4,120), this figure is complicated by a change in the Metropolitan Police's crime recording system, which had previously been overcounting hate crime offences. Experts have cautioned against interpreting the apparent reduction as evidence that the problem is diminishing (Home Office, 2025). Meanwhile, a report by Amnesty International published in May 2026 found that UK media coverage of transgender issues was "*disproportionately negative*," contributing to an environment in which online abuse of transgender people is normalised and largely unchallenged (Tom Hutt-Dixon for PinkNews, May 2026).

The legal framework already provides tools to address hate crime. What is missing is the political will to use them, and the institutional commitment to take transgender people's safety seriously.

3) An End to 'Conversion Therapies' of All Types

The Demand

All forms of conversion therapy targeting transgender people — including efforts to suppress gender identity, deter transition, or persuade someone that their gender identity is a disorder to be treated rather than an identity to be respected — must be prohibited by law.

The Explanation

The word "therapy" in "conversion therapy" is a misnomer. Therapy heals. **Conversion practices damage.** The Gov.uk evidence assessment published in 2021, drawing on a rapid evidence review of 46 published studies and qualitative interviews with 30 people who had undergone conversion therapy, found that:

- There is no robust evidence that conversion therapy is effective at changing sexual orientation or gender identity.
- The evidence of harm associated with conversion therapy outweighs any reported benefits.
- Exposure to conversion therapy is statistically associated with poor mental health outcomes, including suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts.
- The majority of people interviewed in the qualitative study described their experience as harmful.

These findings are consistent with everything we know about the psychology of identity formation, the ethics of informed consent, and the lived experience of LGBTQ+ people who have been through conversion practices. The attempt to change someone's gender identity is not a neutral therapeutic endeavour. It is an assertion that the person's internal sense of who they are is wrong — and that assertion, when made by a family member, a faith leader, or a therapist, causes profound damage.

The Evidence

The UK government published a draft Conversion Practices Bill in June 2026, following a commitment in the 2024 Labour Party manifesto. The bill, published by the Office for Equality and Opportunity, covers both sexual orientation and gender identity change efforts. Humanists UK, in its briefing to the UN Human Rights Council in March 2024, noted that conversion therapy continues to be practised in the UK "*in healthcare, religious and other settings*," and that existing legal protections are inadequate (LGBT Humanists, 2024).

The evidence from other jurisdictions is clear: where conversion therapy has been banned, the ban has been enforceable, proportionate, and has not resulted in the criminalisation of ordinary pastoral care or theological discussion. Where bans have been challenged in court (including in the United States), no ban has been overturned on the grounds that it infringes free expression or religious liberty (Gov.uk, 2021).

The demand here is not complicated. No form of conversion therapy has been shown to work. All forms have been shown to cause harm. **They should be prohibited.**

4) Strong Representation Within Parliament That Speaks For and Defends Transgender Legal and Moral Protections

The Demand

Transgender people need elected representatives who will speak for them — not as a marginal interest group to be accommodated, but as full citizens whose rights are non-negotiable.

The Explanation

This is not, at its core, a demand for special representation. It is a demand for adequate representation. At the time of writing, there are no openly transgender MPs in the House of Commons, and the number of openly transgender parliamentarians at all levels of government remains vanishingly small. This is not for lack of transgender people willing to serve — it is for lack of political parties willing to select them and, in many cases, for lack of a political environment in which transgender candidates feel safe.

The consequence of this representational vacuum is that transgender rights are debated in parliament by people who have no lived experience of being transgender and, in many cases, no direct contact with transgender people. Policy is decided upon in ways that would be immediately recognisable as inadequate if applied to any other minority group.

The moral case here is straightforward. **Democratic institutions are meant to represent the people they serve.** When a minority group is systematically absent from the rooms where decisions are made about their lives, that is not democracy. It is oligarchy with a democratic veneer.

5) The Right to Be Ourselves Publicly, With Access to Public Resources and Facilities That Match Our Gender

The Demand

Transgender people have the right to exist in public life (to use public facilities, access public services, and participate in public life) in accordance with their gender identity, without being required to justify that identity to strangers.

The Explanation

This demand is resisted with a violence that reveals its opponents' true concerns. The objection to transgender women using women's lavatories, for example, is not, in practice, based on evidence of harm. The claim that allowing trans women access to women's facilities puts cisgender women at risk has been investigated repeatedly, and no credible evidence has emerged to support it. What the objection reflects is discomfort with the presence of visibly gender-nonconforming people in spaces that opponents believe should not include them — an objection rooted in prejudice, not safety.

The Equality Act 2010 already provides exemptions allowing service providers to restrict access to single-sex spaces in certain circumstances where a proxy for biological sex is deemed relevant. These exemptions are interpreted broadly by some providers and narrowly by others, creating a patchwork of access that is confusing, inconsistent, and demeaning. The EHRC Code of Practice updated in May 2026, which requires single-sex toilets and changing rooms to exclude transgender people, goes further than the Equality Act requires and has been criticised by Scottish Trans and other organisations as both legally questionable and harmful in practice.

The Evidence

The UCL rapid evidence review published in January 2025, *The Impact of Policy and Practice in Education Settings on the Wellbeing and Educational Outcomes of Trans Children and Young People*, found that trans children and young people who were supported in their gender identity at school (including being allowed to use facilities matching their gender) showed significantly better mental health and educational outcomes than those who were not (Rapid Research Evaluation and Appraisal Lab, UCL, January 2025). Conversely, forcing trans children to use facilities that do not match their identity is associated with increased rates of anxiety, depression, and school avoidance. The evidence on what supports trans people's wellbeing is not ambiguous.

6) Revision of the Gender Recognition Process, Making the Achievement of a GRC Far Less Brutally Humiliating

The Demand

The current Gender Recognition Act process must be reformed to remove unnecessary medical requirements, reduce the humiliating bureaucratic apparatus, and treat gender identity with the same respect the law accords to other aspects of personal status.

The Explanation

The existing process for obtaining a Gender Recognition Certificate requires two medical reports, a formal diagnosis, and two years of living in the acquired gender — requirements that were criticised as disproportionate when the Act was passed and whose inadequacies have

become only more apparent as understanding of gender identity has developed.

The 2018 consultation on GRA reform attracted over 100,000 responses, the vast majority in favour of moving to a system of self-declaration. The then-government's response was to announce reform and then to abandon it under pressure from a small but vocal anti-trans lobby. The current state of play is that the 2004 Act remains in force, the reform process has stalled, and transgender people continue to be subjected to a process that treats them as medical curiosities rather than adult citizens capable of knowing their own minds.

The humiliation of the current process is not incidental. **It is structural.** It is designed to make applicants prove their genuineness — as though there were such a thing as a fraudulent gender identity, or as though the state had legitimate authority to adjudicate on inner experience.

The Evidence

The House of Commons Library briefing on GRA reform notes that the 2018 consultation found overwhelming support for reform, with 80 per cent of respondents expressing the view that the process should be simplified (Commons Library, 2024). Tribunal statistics show that the number of GRC applications processed annually is relatively small — partly because the process is daunting, partly because many trans people do not see the GRC as relevant to their daily lives, and partly because the legal effect of a GRC (primarily relevant to birth, marriage and death certificates) is narrower than often assumed.

The Supreme Court's April 2025 ruling in *For Women Scotland* has added urgency to calls for GRA reform, though its implications for the interaction between gender recognition and sex-based rights remain contested. What is clear is that the current system — slow, invasive, and demeaning — is **not fit for purpose**.

7) Better Initiatives Around Educational Programmes That Demythologise the Lives of Trans People

The Demand

Schools, colleges, and universities must deliver accurate, affirmative education about transgender people — not as a political project, but as part of the basic work of preparing young people to live in a highly diverse world.

The Explanation

The word "demythologise" is precise. What is currently taught in most British schools about transgender people, where anything is taught at all, is a mixture of myths, stereotypes, and (occasionally) deliberate misinformation. This is not an accident. It is the product of decades of anti-trans campaigning that has successfully embedded misconceptions in public discourse and of a political class that has treated transgender equality as a controversy to be avoided rather than a self-determinising right to be upheld.

The consequences of this educational vacuum are visible in the mental health statistics for transgender young people. The UCL evidence review found that trans young people who experienced gender-affirming support in schools showed measurably better wellbeing outcomes (Rapid Research Evaluation and Appraisal Lab, UCL, January 2025). Conversely, young people who have grown up consuming a media diet of trans-negative coverage and who have received no countervailing education are more likely to hold hostile views — and more likely to bully.

The Scottish Government's revised guidance on Supporting Transgender Pupils in Schools, published in September 2025, represents the kind of evidence-based, affirming approach that is needed. English schools, by contrast, face a vacuum of authoritative guidance, compounded by the EHRC Code 2026, which has been described by trans advocacy organisations as actively harmful to trans young people.

The Evidence

Stonewall's 2022 school survey found that almost **half** of trans pupils had experienced bullying at school, and that trans pupils who were supported by their schools reported significantly better mental health and educational outcomes than those who were not. The UCL review, published in January 2025 and drawing on a systematic assessment of the evidence base, found consistent evidence that gender-affirming policies and practices in schools are associated with improved wellbeing and educational outcomes for trans students (Rapid Research Evaluation and Appraisal Lab, 2025).

The evidence on what works is not in doubt. What is in doubt, in the current political climate, is whether politicians have the courage to act on it.

8) Action to Improve the Public Image of Trans People in the Media

The Demand

Media organisations must be held accountable for the quality and balance of their coverage of transgender issues, and the state must take active steps to ensure that the media environment does not continue to function as a machine for the production of transphobia.

The Explanation

This demand does not call for censorship. It calls for accountability. The press operates under codes of conduct that require accuracy, balance, and fairness. Those codes have been applied with remarkable laxity when it comes to transgender people.

The academic evidence on this is unambiguous. A 2022 study published in *Feminist Media Studies* by Camila Montiel-McCann, titled "*It's like we are not human*": *discourses of humanisation and otherness in the representation of trans identity in British broadsheet newspapers*, found that British newspapers systematically represented trans identity through frameworks of otherness, pathologisation, and threat — even in ostensibly neutral reporting. A study of press coverage of Brianna Ghey, a trans teenager murdered in 2023, found that even sympathetic coverage frequently centred trans people's transness in ways that treated it as a source of vulnerability rather than noting, with appropriate condemnation, that she was a child who was murdered (Rayner, 2025, SOAS).

More recently, Amnesty International's report on UK media coverage of transgender issues found "*disproportionate negative coverage*" across national newspapers, with certain titles routinely publishing stories that misgendered trans people, presented trans existence as a social problem, and platformed anti-trans advocates without adequate challenge (Tom Hutt-Dixon for PinkNews, May 2026).

The press regulators — IPSO and IMPRESS — have shown no inclination to treat this pattern as a standards issue. Until they do, the demand for media accountability remains urgent.

The Evidence

In addition to the academic studies cited above, the EHRC's own guidance and the government's response to anti-trans rhetoric in public discourse have, in the view of many trans advocates, **legitimised** media hostility. The normalisation of transphobic language in mainstream political discourse — language that would not be tolerated in relation to any other minority group — is directly connected to the failure of media regulators and political leaders to push back against it.

9) Complete Scrapping of the EHRC Code 2026

The Demand

The Equality and Human Rights Commission's Code of Practice issued in May 2026, and in particular its provisions on single-sex spaces and the treatment of transgender people in schools, must be withdrawn.

The Explanation

The EHRC was established by the Equality Act 2006 as an independent body tasked with upholding equality and human rights law. Its code of practice carries significant legal weight: courts and tribunals must take it into account when interpreting the Equality Act.

The Code issued in May 2026 goes beyond what the Equality Act requires, and in doing so, actively harms transgender people. Its requirement that single-sex toilets and changing rooms exclude transgender people (including those who have obtained a Gender Recognition Certificate) is more restrictive than the Equality Act's own provisions, which allow for exemptions on a case-by-case basis where a provider can demonstrate proportionate justification.

The Code has been criticised by the Scottish Government, which noted that it conflicts with Scotland's own equality protections; by trans advocacy organisations, including Scottish Trans; and by legal scholars who have questioned whether the EHRC has exceeded its statutory remit. Attitude magazine reported in 2026 that the guidance would officially come into force on 5 August 2026, restricting trans people's access to facilities matching their gender identity (Attitude, 2026).

The EHRC was created to protect equality. The 2026 Code performs the opposite function.

The Evidence

The EHRC's own published guidance on single-sex spaces, confirmed by BBC News, states that toilets and changing rooms must be used on the basis of biological sex (BBC News, 2026). This goes further than the Equality Act, which allows service providers to restrict access where they can demonstrate a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. The Scottish Government's response noted that the guidance conflicted with Scottish equality law and would be reviewed (Scottish Trans, 2026).

The For Women Scotland case, decided by the UK Supreme Court in April 2025, confirmed that "woman" in the Equality Act means biological sex. This is a significant legal development. But it does not automatically authorise the EHRC to interpret the Act as requiring the exclusion of all trans people from all single-sex spaces. The Code of Practice goes beyond the judicial interpretation of the Act, and in doing so, exceeds the EHRC's proper function as an interpreter of the law.

10) No Policy, Either Local or National, That Affects Trans People to Be Pursued Without Extensive Consultation With Trans People Themselves

The Demand

Transgender people are the experts on their own lives. No policy that affects them should be made without their direct and meaningful participation in its development.

The Explanation

This demand is, at one level, simply a restatement of what good policymaking requires. The public sector equality duty under the Equality Act 2010 already requires public authorities to have "*due regard*" to the need to eliminate discrimination and advance equality of opportunity. In practice, this requirement has been honoured in the breach. Transgender people have been consulted on policies that affect them and then ignored. They have submitted evidence to reviews and watched those reviews reach predetermined conclusions. They have raised concerns and been told that those concerns were not compatible with the government's preferred direction of travel.

The result is a profound democratic deficit. Transgender people in Britain are subject to laws, regulations, guidance, and institutional practices that have been designed without their meaningful involvement and that systematically disadvantage them. This is not merely bad policymaking. **It is a denial of the basic democratic principle** that those who are affected by decisions should have a voice in making them.

The demand here is not for a veto. It is for consultation that is genuine — that begins with listening to the people most affected, that takes their evidence seriously, and that is willing to change course when the evidence and the experience of those consulted point in a different direction from what politicians have already decided.

Conclusion

These ten demands are not radical. In most cases, they call for the UK to catch up with what other countries have already achieved or to implement its own stated commitments. They call for the minimum necessary to bring British law and practice into line with the European Convention on Human Rights, which the UK incorporated into domestic law via the Human Rights Act 1998. They call for the government to do what it has repeatedly promised to do, and repeatedly failed to deliver.

They are made by people who have, in many cases, spent years trying to engage with the political process in good faith, only to be told that now is not the right time, that the political climate is difficult, and that there are other priorities. The political climate will always be difficult. There will always be other priorities. The question is whether transgender people in Britain are to be treated as citizens whose rights are real, or as supplicants whose concerns can be set aside whenever they become inconvenient.

The answer to that question, in 2026, is not encouraging. But the answer has never been given by those who give up. It is given by those who keep demanding, keep stating the evidence, and refuse to accept that the way things are is the way things must remain.

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