

Gender Identity

The Equality Bill & Gender Identity

The impact of the Equality Bill re gender identity includes:

- Putting a new Equality Duty on public bodies. The new Equality Duty will require public authorities to advance equality of opportunity for transsexual people. For example, a local authority notices that there are no support groups for people undergoing gender reassignment in their area, and decides to fund a charity to help reach out to the transsexual community.
- Revising the definition of 'gender reassignment' to make it clear that a person does not have to be under medical supervision to be protected from discrimination.
- Protecting people who face discrimination because of their association with transsexual people, for example, as their partner.
- Ensuring private members' clubs do not discriminate against transsexual people. For example, a woman who is a member of a golf club, or visiting as a guest cannot be refused entry to the bar or be prevented from playing when others are allowed to because she has undergone gender reassignment.

http://www.equalities.gov.uk/PDF/GEO_A%20Fairer%20Future-

Gender Specific Clothes

Guidance to public bodies from the Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) warned that requiring pupils to wear "gender-specific clothes" is "potentially unlawful". Gender equality and human rights rules which currently apply to public authorities are set to be extended to schools under the Equality Bill. The EHRC guidance said research had shown that pupils born female but with gender dysphoria experienced "great discomfort" when forced to wear "stereotypical girls' clothes" such as skirts. "Uniform is a key issue for young trans people at schools," it said. However Equality Minister Harriet Harman has played down suggestions that skirts might be banned in schools because they discriminate against transsexuals.

<http://www.pressassociation.com/>

Latest Trans Research Review - EHRC/National Centre for Social Research

- Trans people are more likely than others to experience difficulty in finding work or retaining it if their background becomes known to others. High numbers report feeling obliged to change jobs because of workplace harassment and abuse.
- Upon revealing their gender issues people are at high risk of being shunned by family and friends.
- Many experience violent intimidation on the streets or outside their homes.
- Trans people are more susceptible to depression and at risk of suicide.

Education: Trans people faced problems similar to those they may encounter within the workplace: respondents 'felt isolated and needed to stay "in the closet"; they

experienced harassment from teachers and other students; they had been prohibited from using or expelled for using the "wrong" toilet facilities, and their institutions did not have trans acceptance policies'. There appear to be differences according to

whether trans people are male to female (MtF) or female to male (FtM). 64% of FtM people had experienced harassment or bullying and 44% of MtF people had experienced harassment or bullying from staff or pupils.

Hate Crime: Trans people appear to experience high levels of hate crime and hate incidents. Morton (2008) found that 62 per cent of respondents had experienced transphobic harassment from strangers in public places who perceived them to be trans: mostly this had taken the form of verbal abuse but 40 per cent had experienced transphobic threatening behaviour, 17 per cent had been physically assaulted and 4 per cent had been sexually assaulted. Those not bullied mostly said it being due to their 'convincing appearance' in their acquired gender.

Health: Trans people can experience long delays in access to gender reassignment treatment through the NHS. Some GPs have been reluctant to treat trans people or have refused to do so. Trans people may also be at greater risk of isolation, alcohol abuse, suicide, self-harm, substance abuse and HIV infection.

Housing: Trans people may be particularly at risk of housing crisis and homelessness arising from transphobic reactions and harassment by family, neighbours and members of their local community. Research in 2008 reported that 25.4 per cent of respondents had to move out of their home due to transphobic reactions. There were no housing services specifically addressing the needs of trans people and access to housing services was not monitored in relation to trans status or gender identity. Trans people fear disclosing their identity to housing officers for fear that they will not be treated with dignity and respect. The result can be that they do not receive the housing services that they need or receive a service inappropriate to their needs.

Leisure & Sport: There were particular problems for trans people in accessing changing facilities that are appropriate to their gender identity in sports and leisure facilities and in shops. Many trans people did not use these facilities in order to avoid discrimination, thereby restricting their leisure opportunities.

Martin Mitchell and Charlie Howarth <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/fairer-britain/trans-inequalities-reviewed/>

Research indicates that there are up to 300,000 Trans people in the UK. - Gires

Terminology: Gender Identity

Gender Identity describes the psychological identification of oneself as a boy/man or as a girl/woman. There is a presumption that this sense of identity will evolve along binary lines and be consistent with the sex appearance.

The gender role is the social role - the interaction with others which both gives expression to the inner gender identity and reinforces it. Despite the greater gender equality in modern Western culture in terms of: the subjects studied in school and at university; the choice of friends; work and domestic arrangements; dress and leisure pursuits, there is still a presumption of conformity with society's 'rules' about what is appropriate for a man or a woman, a boy or a girl, especially in terms of appearance.

The National Centre for social research trans report says the terms 'trans people' and 'transgender people' are both often used as umbrella terms for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from their birth sex, including transsexual people (those who intend to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process of gender reassignment to live permanently in their acquired gender),

transvestite/cross-dressing people (those who wear clothing traditionally associated with the other gender either occasionally or more regularly), androgyne/polygender people (those who have non-binary gender identities and do not identify as male or female), and others who define as gender variant.

Gender Dysphoria: 1 in 10,000 people suffer from the recognised medical condition known as gender dysphoria, generally referred to as being transgender or transsexual. Whilst most of us are perfectly comfortable with our self-image as male or female, those with gender dysphoria feel they were born in the wrong body - men feel they should have been born women and vice versa. Public bodies interact with transgender people and are required to understand and address their needs.

Transgender: This is an umbrella term for people whose gender identity and / or gender expression differs from their birth sex. The term may include but is not limited to Transsexual people and others who define as gender-variant. Many Transgender people can identify as female-to-male (FtM) or male-to-female (MtF). Transgender people may or may not choose to alter their bodies hormonally and / or surgically. Some people have not, and do not intend to, undergo gender reassignment, and are not covered by the gender reassignment provisions in the Sex Discrimination Act. However, they are still protected from discrimination on the basis of their birth sex by the Sex Discrimination Act.

Transsexual: This term is used to describe a person who intends to undergo, is undergoing or has in the past undergone gender reassignment (which may or may not involve hormone therapy or surgery). Transsexual people feel the deep conviction to present themselves in the appearance of the opposite sex. They may change their name and identity to live in the acquired gender. Some take hormones and cosmetic treatments to alter their appearance and physical characteristics. Some undergo surgery to change their bodies to approximate more closely to their acquired gender.

Intersex or polygendered: The distinction between 'intersex' and 'polygender' appears to be the same as the distinction between 'sex' and 'gender'. The former refers to the type of genitalia one possesses, while the latter refers to the social processes through which one's gender identity is constructed. Intersex people are born with genitalia or physiology which deviates from what are perceived to be 'normal' characteristics of male and female. They may have the biological characteristics of both male and female, or otherwise have features which mean that their sex is ambiguous. There may also be non-visible, internal variations from what constitutes 'normal' male or female characteristics. The sex differentiation of the brain may also be affected and may be inconsistent with other sex characteristics.

<http://www.gires.org.uk/glossary.php?yearID=2009&monthID=7#x1-60002>