



Government
Equalities Office

Rt Hon Penny Mordaunt MP
Minister for Women and Equalities

Rt Hon George Howarth MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Our ref

COGEO-000338

30 June 2018

Dear George,

Thank you for your letter of 6 June, enclosing correspondence from a number of your constituents, about the Gender Recognition Act 2004 (GRA). I am responding as the Minister for Women and Equalities.

The GRA sets out the process by which a person can change their legal gender through obtaining a gender recognition certificate. On 3 July 2018, the Government launched its consultation on reforming the GRA. The consultation ran for an extended period of 16 weeks, closing on 22 October.

The consultation was conducted in accordance with the principles of openness and objectivity. The Government made a commitment to listen to all voices and to understand and address the legitimate concerns that were raised from all sides of the debate. We did not put forward any specific proposals for how we wanted to see the system change. This is because we entered this process with an open mind and did not want to pre-empt the findings of the consultation.

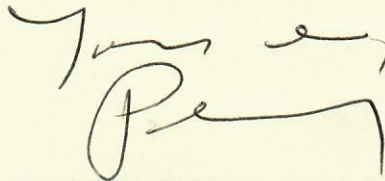
During the consultation and our pre-consultation engagement work, we made a particular effort to reach out to a diverse range of voices. We wanted to understand how any changes to the GRA might affect the rights and responsibilities of, amongst others, transgender people themselves, women, providers of single- and separate-sex services and religious groups. To that end, the Government Equalities Office met with over 100 organisations before and during the consultation period, including LGBT groups, women's groups, faith groups, other Government departments, foreign governments and other civil society organisations. We have worked hard to hear all perspectives, and we are grateful to everyone who has contributed their views to this consultation.

We have had an exceptional 100,000 responses to the consultation, which indicates a real desire to engage with the issues and contribute to the Government's understanding. As a government, we therefore have a responsibility to carefully consider all the contributions we have received and determine how, in our response, we will properly address all the views expressed and concerns raised. This includes considering the effects that any reform may have in specific contexts, such as single-sex spaces, prisons or schools.

Considering all of these responses will not be a swift process, and we think it is important that we take some time to ensure that we get this right. We therefore do not anticipate publishing any response until later this year.

It is important that we have healthy and constructive debate on this topic. This is a complex issue that has generated strong views. It is vital that debate on reform of the GRA is conducted in an environment of respect, empathy and pragmatism as there has been much misinformation on the issues. Ensuring that we can have a safe and tolerant discussion, based on the facts, is paramount.

I hope you find this information helpful.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Penny Mordaunt', written in a cursive style.

Rt Hon Penny Mordaunt MP
Minister for Women and Equalities