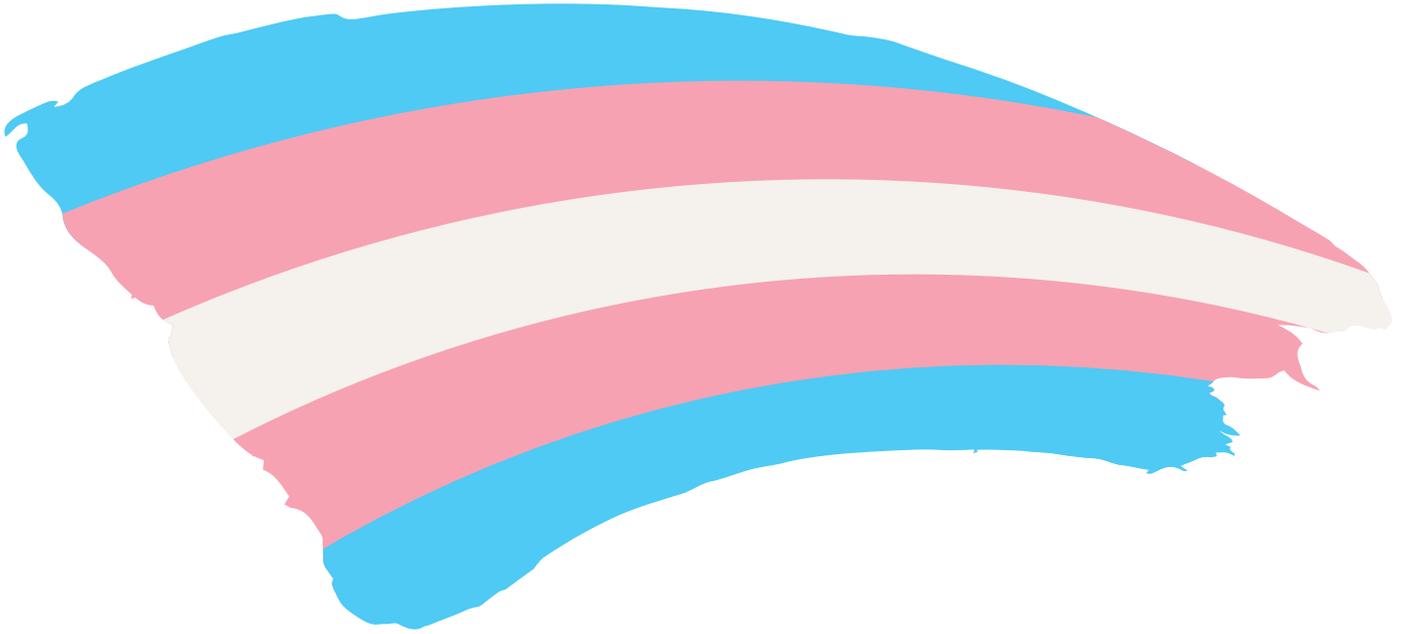


Go and meet your MSP to speak up for trans equality!



Why should I meet my MSP?

The Gender Recognition Act (GRA) needs to be reformed and trans people's existing rights need to be upheld. **We need your help to make this happen.**

Lots of MSPs have still never knowingly met a trans person!

They may not understand what the current debates about trans equality feel like for you, or why reforming the GRA is important.

MSPs tell us that face-to-face meetings with constituents have a big effect on their opinions.

Meeting someone affected by what they debate in Parliament, and hearing how it has a real impact on their life can really change MSPs' minds, and how they vote.

Remember: A fifteen-minute meeting with your MSP can make a huge difference.

Who is my MSP?

Everyone in Scotland has eight MSPs: one constituency MSP, and seven regional MSPs. You can find your MSPs, at:

parliament.scot/mspfinder/index.html

Once you've got them on the map, click on their name, then [View Profile Page](#). This takes you to their page on the Scottish Parliament website, where you select [Contact details](#) on the menu on the left hand side to find out how to get in touch with them.

How do I make an appointment to see my MSP?

You can call or email your MSPs' constituency office to make an appointment to see them. Most MSPs have meeting times or "surgeries" available for constituents, usually on Fridays. They will have details of where and when on their website.

Remember: If you are only able to visit one MSP, visit your constituency MSP.

What should I do during the meeting?

- Try not to feel too nervous. You are the expert about your own life.
- You will probably **only have ten to fifteen minutes**, so stay focussed.
- Tell your MSP about your life as a trans person. This can include difficulties you've experienced, as well as positive things.
- Talk about why it's important to have ID that reflects who you are - and why it's unfair that your birth certificate is so much harder to change than other identity document. You want the law to recognise how you live your life.
- Focus on you, rather than the law. MSPs meet lots of policy organisations – hearing why it matters to you will have more impact!
- Tell your MSP about how the current media coverage and conversations about trans people and trans equality have made you feel.
- If your MSP is unsure about reforming the GRA, remind them that it is just about trans people's birth certificates. It helps protect your privacy but it doesn't affect how you use toilets or single-sex services.
- If the meeting is going well, ask your MSP to commit to supporting trans equality, and the current proposals for reforming the GRA
- If they ask you a question you don't know the answer to, be honest! You can suggest they get in touch with an LGBT organisation to ask.

Remember: You might not agree on everything. Try to focus on the things you do agree on, and stay polite and positive – this will be most persuasive.

What should I do before the meeting?

It can be good to think about what you want to say to your MSP beforehand. You will probably **only have ten to fifteen minutes**, so you can't talk about everything!

All of the political parties supported GRA reform in their last manifestos, but many MSPs are currently nervous about trans equality. You can make a vital positive difference by sharing your experiences with them.

If you'd like some support to prepare for meeting an MSP, or you're worried one of your MSPs might oppose trans equality, you can contact the Scottish Trans Alliance, or if you're aged 13-25, you can contact LGBT Youth Scotland. See contact details at the end of this leaflet.

Remember: It's ok to take a friend, partner, or parent with you for moral support!

What about after the meeting?

Please let us know how your meeting went! It is **so important** that we know what MSPs are each thinking about trans equality.

This helps us campaign much more effectively. If your MSP sends you an email after the meeting, please consider forwarding that to us as well!

Contact Scottish Trans Alliance – ring **0131 467 6039** to tell us all about how it went, or email info@scottishtrans.org

It can also be a good idea to send an email to your MSP after your meeting. Thank them for meeting you, and make sure to include anything they agreed to do for trans equality! This will help remind them to keep their promise.

So what do I need to know about the GRA?

The GRA is the law that lets trans people change the sex recorded on birth certificates, which changes your gender legally. Even though lots of other identity documents can be updated quite easily, changing a birth certificate is hard.

Receiving legal gender recognition is important because it helps protect your privacy about your transition and determines your legal sex for marriage or civil partnership. You need to have received legal gender recognition to ensure your death certificate will match how you lived your life.

The current process to change a birth certificate is offensive, difficult, and

unfair. You need a detailed psychiatric report confirming diagnosis of 'gender dysphoria', medical evidence about any hormone treatment or surgeries you've undergone (although you don't need to undergo any), and two years of administrative evidence of how you've been living (such as bank statements and utility bills).

This is all judged by a panel who never meet you, yet they decide if your birth certificate can be changed.

Remember: Find more information about the current GRA and how it needs to change before meeting your MSP at equalrecognition.scot

How might the GRA change?

The Scottish Government has announced that later this year it is going to consult on a draft Bill to reform the GRA. This Bill would introduce a new system of 'self-declaration' for changing your birth certificate.

Lots of people don't understand what a self-declaration system means. The most important things to know are: »

- You would still be required to sign a statutory declaration (a legal oath) in front of a notary public (such as a solicitor or a Justice of the Peace)
- You would still be required to already be living as a man or a woman
- Making a false application to change your birth certificate would still be a criminal offence
- Many countries around the world already have this system, such as: Ireland, Denmark, Norway, Malta, Belgium and others

Just because the Government is publishing a draft Bill, doesn't mean the law will be changed! We need to make sure MSPs know why the change is important, so that they will vote for it when the time comes.



Scottish Trans Alliance

0131 467 6039 | info@scottishtrans.org



LGBT Youth Scotland 0141 552 7425 |
deva.macginty@lgbtyouth.org.uk

What about single-sex services and sports competitions?

Improving how trans people change our birth certificates doesn't affect which single-sex spaces we can use, like toilets and hospital wards.

It has always been lawful for trans women to use women only services and for trans men to use men only services, regardless of whether or not we have changed our birth certificates.

The Equality Act 2010 only allows single-sex services to treat trans people differently from other people if a complex situation means that's necessary and proportionate. A service provider can exclude any person (trans or not) if they behave badly.

The GRA will continue to allow sports bodies to restrict trans people's participation if necessary for safe and fair competition.

What about non-binary people?

Unfortunately, at this time, the Scottish Government is not proposing to legally recognise non-binary people when they change the GRA. If you're non-binary, you might want to tell your MSP at the meeting how this makes you feel.

What about trans children and young people?

Unfortunately, at this time, the Scottish Government is not proposing to lower the age at which trans people can change their birth certificates from 18. You may want to tell your MSP why you feel it's important to recognise trans children and young people.