

IMPRESS Code Review: Call for Evidence  
Joan Grant Submission

The law on “gender identity” is relatively clear and straightforward in this country. Someone over the age of 18 is entitled to obtain a Gender Recognition Certificate. This entitles them to become a member of the opposite sex for most, but not all purposes. There are exceptions laid down in the Equality Act 2010. Someone without a Gender Recognition Certificate should be treated as a member of their biological sex.

I am well aware that organisations are not meant to ask if someone has a GRC. It therefore requires some self-responsibility on holders not to seek to claim rights which they are not entitled to.

It is not the law of this country that someone can self-declare that they are for example female, if they were born a male. In the past 10 or so years a movement has grown up which seeks to persuade us that someone can be born a male but have a female mind. Such a person has therefore been born in the wrong body.

Notions of non-binary gender identity have also developed. Despite what those who claim this identity may think, they remain biologically male or female and they are legally male or female.

Successive Conservative Governments have been consulting on the issue of allowing self identification of gender. This is the law in some other European countries. It basically does what it says – it allows people to self declare that they are male or female despite having been born into the opposite sex.

An announcement on this was expected at the end of July. That has now been postponed to the Autumn. The issues are controversial.

As a member of the public who reads a newspaper, I expect the journalists to comply with the law of this country. The law is as I have set out above. We are waiting to find out if the Government has plans to change the law on these issues.

I expect journalists and editors to comply with the law on these issues. The law is relatively straightforward. In many instances the transgender people

who are reported upon have committed a crime. In many cases it is a sexual offence.

The IMPRESS Standards Code tells us that publishers must take all reasonable steps to ensure accuracy. I fail to see how biological sex is anything other than a fact. It is a fact whether someone was born male or female. It is a fact whether someone has a GRC or not. It is a matter of law whether some one is legally entitled to be treated as a male or female. Reporting someone who does not have a GRC in the gender that they claim means that the publisher has decided to support the person's internal narrative, which has no legal significance.

It is worth making the point that the entire public sector has adopted a policy of self identification. There are a couple of judicial review cases taking place in order to challenge this.

Some elements of the press seems to have its own agenda on these issues. Many newspapers (and the BBC) are Stonewall Diversity Champions. The scheme requires the champions to advocate for "trans inclusion". George Soros' Open Society Foundation made a grant of £250,000 to the Guardian to campaign/advocate on transgender issues.

As far as I am concerned, newspapers – the Editor and the Journalists should comply with the law of this country, the same as the rest of us have to. I don't accept that the newspapers are entitled to have a Standards Code or an Editorial Policy which entitles them to do something other than comply with the law.

I am not sure whether IMPRESS is a public sector body and as such amenable to judicial review. The same applies to IPSO. I know that OfCom and the BBC are. We are waiting to see what Ms Truss, Secretary of State for Women and Equalities will announce. If self identification of gender becomes the law, then you will hear no more from me on this issue. If however, the law remains roughly as it is, then I intend to pursue this matter further.