



# SPEAK OUT FOR SAFETY AND DIGNITY

## What has happened?

Liz Truss MP, the Minister for Women and Equalities, recently made some troubling statements that could have a huge impact on trans people living in the UK. Trans people are concerned that the government may make changes to the law that will pose a threat to trans people's dignity and safety by denying trans people access to single sex spaces, such as toilets and changing rooms.

## What does the law currently say?

The Equality Act (2010) includes a number of protected characteristics, including gender reassignment. The characteristic of gender reassignment applies to “a person has the protected characteristic of gender reassignment if the person is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning the person's sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex.” The characteristic applies to trans people regardless of them having started any medical transition or having been granted a gender recognition certificate.

Trans people have used single-sex facilities since long before 2010, but the Equality Act (2010) makes it clear that trans men are entitled to be treated the same as any other man and to access men-only spaces and services. Similarly, trans women are entitled to be treated the same as any other woman and to access women-only spaces. Under the law, exceptions to this may be applied on a case by case basis if it is shown to be proportionate and justifiable to do so. The legal bar for what is proportionate and justifiable is set very high and is rarely challenged.

#FactsAboutTrans

[www.transactual.org.uk](http://www.transactual.org.uk)

## What's the issue?

Some people express concern that men with nefarious intent may seek to gain access to women's facilities by pretending to be trans. However, there are no documented cases of this having happened. Trans women using the same toilets as other women poses no threat to anybody. If trans people are not able to access public toilets in line with their gender, this poses a real threat to their dignity and safety.

## What would be the impact of denying trans people access to single-sex spaces?

Denying trans people's access to single-sex services could have the following impacts:

- Any woman that does not fit the stereotyped view of what a woman should look like would find themselves questioned upon trying to access single-sex spaces. People would find their gender presentations being policed by others.
- Trans women will be unable to use public toilets, as using men's toilets will single them out as trans and place them in danger of transphobic harassment and assault.
- Any trans men that choose to use women's toilets are likely to be forced to "out" themselves as trans every time they want to use the toilet, as the presence of a man in women's toilets will inevitably raise questions. Being outed as trans can put people at risk of transphobic harassment and assault.
- Without the ability to use gendered toilets or use single-sex changing rooms to try on clothes, trans people will be limited in how far and how long they can travel away from their homes, and will be significantly disadvantaged in simple tasks like shopping, let alone any form of participation in public life.

## What do trans people want?

Trans people want to live their lives safely, in dignity and to be treated fairly. Being prevented from accessing public toilets would deny them this safety and dignity and would also deny them the opportunity to take part in public life.

## What can I do?

1. E-mail Boris Johnson asking him not to take forward any of Liz Truss' proposals: [www.email.number10.gov.uk](http://www.email.number10.gov.uk)
2. Write to your MP and call on them to challenge the proposals.
3. We're encouraging organisations to write to Liz Truss on behalf of their employees. Talk to the senior leadership team at your workplace and ask them to write to Boris Johnson. Ask them to:
  - Clarify that they support trans people and that trans people in their organisation are valued and important members of the team.
  - Express their concerns about Liz Truss' statements.
  - Explain that trans people don't pose a threat to others in single-sex spaces.
  - Reiterate the importance of trans people being able to live their lives safely and with dignity.
  - Explain that women who don't conform to gender stereotypes would also be impacted by any change in the regulations regarding access to single-sex spaces.
  - Ask Liz to ensure that trans people are able to play a part in our society, our economy and in public life.
4. Share this information sheet and ask your friends and family members to write to Boris Johnson and your MP too.

# Template letter for employers

Feel free to adapt and use our template letter when you write to Boris Johnson.

Dear Boris,

I am writing to you as the {enter job title} of {organisation name} with regards to what I understand to be the Government's direction on women's safe spaces, as reported in the press.

As an inclusive employer, I have serious concerns that this Government may make life harder for every woman in the UK as well as for trans men and non-binary people. At {name of organisation} we seek to ensure that all of employees are able to live their lives in dignity and safety. These proposed changes would impact our trans and non-binary employees as well as women who don't conform to gender stereotypes. I'm particularly anxious about how these potential changes would be policed. How would any of the women working at {name of organisation} be expected to prove their right to use the women's toilets? Which facilities would trans men and non-binary people be expected to use?

I recognise the need for safe spaces for women, but am unsure why the proposal singles out trans people for exceptional treatment if the problem is cisgender men.

On behalf of {organisation name} I urge you to halt this discriminatory proposal in its tracks.

#FactsAboutTrans

# Template letter for individuals

Feel free to adapt and use our template letter when you write to your MP or to Boris Johnson. It is helpful to add some personal examples.

Dear {name},

I am writing to you with regards to what I understand to be the Government's direction on women's safe spaces, as reported in the press.

I have serious concerns that this Government may make life harder for every woman in the UK as well as for trans men and non-binary people. As {a trans person/a woman/an ally} I want everyone to be able to live their lives in dignity and safety. These proposed changes would impact trans and non-binary people as well as women who don't conform to gender stereotypes. I'm particularly anxious about how these potential changes would be policed. How would {I as a trans person/I as a cis woman} or any of the women in my life be expected to prove their right to use the women's toilets? Which facilities would trans men and non-binary people be expected to use?

I recognise the need for safe spaces for women, but am unsure why the proposal singles out trans people for exceptional treatment if the problem is cisgender men.

I urge you to halt this discriminatory proposal in its tracks.