

Deputations

City of Edinburgh Council

10.00 am Thursday, 9th February, 2023

Main Council Chamber, City Chambers

Deputations

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THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL

9 FEBRUARY 2023

DEPUTATION REQUESTS

Subject	Deputation
3.1 In relation to Item 7.8 on the agenda – Drum Brae Care Home Status Report	UNISON
3.2 In relation to Item 8.2 on the agenda – Motion by Councillor Jenkinson – National Care Service	UNISON
3.3 In relation to Item 8.5 on the agenda – Motion by Councillor Nicolson – Stolperstein	Edinburgh Interfaith Association (EIFA) (submission attached)
3.4 In relation to Item 8.6 on the agenda – Motion by Councillor McVey – UK Government Attack on Devolution	The Sovereignty Research Group
3.5 In relation to Item 8.7 on the agenda – Motion by Councillor Campbell – Coillesdene House Lifts	Coillesdene House Residents Association (submission attached)
3.6 In relation to Item 8.12 on the agenda – Motion by Councillor Mumford - Gender Recognition Reform	a) The Sovereignty Research Group b) Evidence Based Social Work Alliance (EBSWA) (submission attached) c) Concerned Adults talking openly about gender identity ideology (submission attached) d) Scottish Trans (written submission attached)

THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL

9 FEBRUARY 2023

DEPUTATION REQUESTS

Subject	Deputation
3.7 In relation to Item 8.15 on the agenda – Motion by Councillor Younie – Muirhouse Millenium Centre	LIFT @ Muirhouse Millenium Centre (Low Income Families Together)



Deputation by Professor Joe Goldblatt, Chair

Lord Provost, distinguished members of the City of Edinburgh Council, and dear friends of my beloved adopted city.

I have been invited by Ward 5 Councillor Vicky Nicolson to add my voice to those of many others in supporting the Stolperstein commemorative stone and plaque in honour of Jane Haining.

As a Jewish person who has the honour and privilege of serving as chair of the oldest interfaith association in Scotland, I feel as though it is my duty to unreservedly share with you why this recognition will mean so much to so many for so long in our city.

Perhaps the best way to illustrate the importance of this commemoration of a noble life is to share with you a story from one of our Edinburgh schools.

This past week a group of ten S2 students performed a play about the Jewish refugees in Shanghai, China. When country's all over the world shut their doors to the Jews during the outbreak of World War II, Shanghai welcomed these poor souls and many of them were children.

One of the student actors asked me if she could speak to me privately. She then told me that she had told her grandfather that she was in a play about the Jewish people. The grandfather then told his granddaughter for the first time that his mother was born Jewish in Germany, however, to protect her family, she hid her Judaism and later converted to Christianity. He had kept this secret

for three generations. He then hugged his granddaughter and told her how proud he was that she was telling this story of the Jewish people.

The student then looked at me with tears in her eyes and said, "I am so proud to know that I have Jewish heritage and this play has helped me discover my pride."

I hope that in the years to come when children and others pass the Solperstein stone and plaque they too will feel pride because of this daughter of Edinburgh whose courage and bravery saved so many Jewish lives.

Therefore, on behalf of myself and the Edinburgh Interfaith Association, I urge you, with all my heart, to approve this motion by acclaim as a sign of the unity of our city regarding important matters such as this one.

Sincerely

Professor Joe Goldblatt

Chair

Edinburgh Interfaith Association

Item No 3.5

Edinburgh, 09th of February 2023

Dear Sir/Madam,

COILLESDENE HOUSE LIFTS

We live in a ten-storey block containing 41 flats located in Edinburgh East.

There are two lifts in the building. One for the even floors and one serving the odd floors. These lifts are sixty years old and have been having to have more frequent call outs in recent months culminating in the evens lift breaking down completely on the 6th of December. Intermittently between that date and January both lifts were out of commission.

The evens lift is still broken and although the odds lift is working now, residents are feeling very vulnerable if going out in case they cannot access their flats on their return. It has been suggested that the lifts are needing replaced as parts are so difficult, if not impossible to source. There are many older people and people with mobility issues within the block and some have been trapped in their homes since the 6th of December. Surely this is totally unacceptable and is made more frustrating by the Council's reluctance to communicate with us.

A deputation from the Resident's Association is attending the Council meeting on Thursday 9th February when hopefully some resolution can be reached.

Yours faithfully,

Coillesdene House Residents Association

EVIDENCE-BASED SOCIAL WORK ALLIANCE**CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL MEETING 9 FEBRUARY 2023****Deputation to speak against Motions 8.6 and 8.12**

We represent an alliance of social work practitioners and academics from across the UK. We have asked to speak to you today to ask you not to support Motion 8.12 which supports the Gender Recognition Reform Bill passed by the Scottish Parliament in December 2022. The Bill is now subject to a S35 Scotland Act order by the Westminster Government which prevents its implementation.

THE GENDER RECOGNITION REFORM BILL

The motions you are asked to support today condemn this action by Westminster and to commit to giving Edinburgh citizens' support to the Bill, and to recommit and extend strategy and actions based on belief in gender identity across all departments and areas. The Bill's weaknesses have been exposed in recent weeks, revealing that its supporters in government are unable to defend it in the face of mounting public anger and incredulity. The purpose of the GRR Bill is to allow any person to acquire a certificate that changes their legal sex for almost all purposes. The GRC entitlement to the rights and protections of the opposite sex was confirmed by Lady Haldane in her Court of Session Judgement last year. The Bill's supporters in Parliament insisted that their proposal to give GRCs to anyone who wants one would entail no risk at all to the public. They voted down any amendments which sought to impose restrictions. The Parliament instead agreed that Gender Recognition Certificate should be offered by right to everyone including convicted sex offenders and to those accused and awaiting trial. Within a matter of weeks there has been convincing public proof that there are risks and harms in accepting claims about "gender identity" rather than biological sex in determining whether someone is a man or a woman.

Westminster's block on implementation of the Bill has therefore been very publicly proven to be a sensible precaution.

LACK OF EVIDENCE

We are concerned that claims about the existence in every one of an innate gender identity have a harmful influence on work with children, vulnerable adults, and offenders. Practices of automatic acceptance and affirmation are out of step with any known evidence and have not been subjected to. The claims that "transwomen are women", or that children may be born into the wrong body are not supported by evidence. On the contrary, they fail basic tests of logic and consistency. If a transwoman is a woman, what is a woman?

Despite the failure to provide any testable definition for sex, gender, insistence by lobby groups and activists that claims about a person's claimed "gender identity" must be accepted to show support for "trans rights" has led to a silencing of debate and discussion.

"NO DEBATE" IS HARMFUL AND DANGEROUS

Everything we know about the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults tells us that claims that any belief or any person is above challenge are a red flag. The demand that we must accept gender identity as a reality or face professional and personal persecution has led to a silencing of professional and public discussion. Accusations of transphobia and claims about the victimhood and vulnerability of anyone who claims to be "transgender" have created conditions of fear among adults and of risk for children and vulnerable adults. Claims of victimhood and vulnerability have been used to enforce acceptance and compliance with policies which pose obvious risks. Meetings to discuss the impact on women and children's and lesbian and gay rights have been cancelled or disrupted because of intimidation and harassment.

www.ebswa.org

correspondence to info@ebswa.org

EVIDENCE-BASED SOCIAL WORK ALLIANCE

In social work, in education, in housing, in all areas, it is important that everyone is empowered and held responsible for the protection of children and vulnerable adults. This is impossible in conditions where acknowledging the reality and importance of sex is forbidden under threat of disciplinary action.

CHILDREN

Gender Identity is being taught as fact in our schools. Guidance issued by LGBTYS and Stonewall Scotland advocating automatic “affirmation” and consequent changes of pronouns and names as standard. This includes not informing or seeking the consent of parents. Parents have been advised that not accepting their child is “transgender” may be investigated as child abuse.

The Interim Report of the Cass Review of NHS treatment for children in England found no evidence to support the existence of gender identity or of practices of automatic affirmation. The Review commented that that even the social transitioning of children is not a neutral act. Such “transitioning” necessarily involves disrupting the normal course of the child’s development.

We do know that children can be confused or questioning or even rejecting of what it means to be a boy or a girl. We believe that telling children that they may be in the wrong body is dangerous and leads to children believing that if they do not conform to what are often rigid sexist stereotypes about how they should feel or behave that they need to change something about themselves.

Instead of being supported to accept the reality of their sexed bodies, children and their parents are being encouraged to believe that their identities and bodies should and can be changed in accord with their anxieties. This is harmful to all children but particularly to the minority who are vulnerable by reason of autism, being looked after, having suffered trauma or abuse. Children should not be recruited to the ranks of the severely gender dysphoric by the practice of affirmation and transition, no matter how benign the intention may be.

SAFE CARE OF CHILDREN AND ADULTS

We are also concerned that belief in “gender identity” has led to unsafe practices being adopted in many care settings. It is essential for the safe care of children and vulnerable adults that the sex of the provider and of the recipient are known and respected. If male persons are employed as females, it is impossible to provide single sex care which is essential for dignity and safety.

Putting subjective claims about a person’s sex above their actual sex creates obvious harms and risks for both service users and service providers. Currently, asking for single sex care is often characterised as bigotry and transphobia. Staff fear being subject to disciplinary action for questioning the proposition that a man is a woman if he says he is. Service users fear being denied the right to single sex care and of being excluded from service for asking.

NEED FOR PAUSE AND REFLECTION

Claims about gender identity and the denial of the reality of sex must be open to challenge in the Council Chamber and properly exposed to professional and public discussion and debate. The motions before you today demand continued unevicenced acceptance of belief. We are asking councillors of all parties to show leadership and to press pause on the calls made in motions 8.6 and 8.12.

Maggie Mellon M.Sc., CQSW, Dip. Child Protection

On behalf of the Evidence Based Social Work Alliance

8 February 2023

SUBMISSION BY Concerned Adults talking openly about gender identity ideology'

Dear Committee Services

Written submission from Portobello group 'Concerned Adults talking openly about gender identity ideology' - Motion 8.12.

We ask that the council reject the motion on the following grounds:

1. Point 8.12.1 is absurd. Since the GRRB progress into law was halted by the UK government, there has been a public outcry about Scottish Prison Services current approach to inclusion of trans prisoners (males) in the female estate. It is clear the SPS adopted principles for trans inclusion which prioritised the needs of males who identify as trans with more weight than the safety (including psychological safety) and dignity of female prisoners. This came about due to SPS partnering in 2014 with the Scottish Trans Alliance who drafted policies which anticipated the direction of travel of Scottish Gov legislation, which in turn ignored all pleas from Women's groups who asked for policies that prioritised women first. Now it is clear this approach is not popular and that the majority of the public share the concerns of groups like us. We are concerned that the same anticipatory approach that has been taken by SPS will be taken (and is being taken) by education establishments and other institutions that work and are responsible for children. The GRRB makes it impossible for institutions such as the council and schools, to be confident about creating policies and rules that the public will support and understand.

The idea that the rights of young people are being supported by enabling them to transition is highly contested and not at all settled as a social matter. There are small but powerful lobby groups, many of which are now discredited such as Mermaids, which have insisted that so-called "affirmative" support for "trans young people" should be adopted, despite most people holding reservations about the wisdom of endorsing such potentially life changing and permanent measures as transition in children. The Cass Report (2022) made clear that in therapeutic settings, affirmation should be carefully approached and that the issues behind why children identify differently to their sex are extremely complicated and sensitive. The only available studies suggest most children desist from identifying as opposite to their sex if left alone (ie not affirmed or socially transitioned). Schools and other institutions should equally take care when thinking about the rights of young people in this context - young people have the right to a healthy future, one in which they have not been guided by adults towards irreversible medical pathways.

On single sex spaces - prior to the GRRB passing stage 3 of Scottish Parliament process, Lady Haldane issued a judgement which we are sure the Council will be aware of already and which the councils legal officers will be able to give advice on, to the effect that in the context of all-female political shortlists (but with potential wider application) a gender recognition certificate changes the legal sex of the individual to that of their chosen sex. The implications of this, should the GRRB pass are staggering, given the ease with which anybody can obtain one. This case alone should have caused the Scottish government to pause the progress of the GRRB for legal analysis.

8.12.2 as above

8.12.3 we don't disagree with but we maintain the entire motion should be rejected.

8.12.4 we don't disagree with but we maintain the entire motion should be rejected.

8.12.5 the council should reject this motion. Instead the council should begin a review of current strategy in relation to the services currently in place and how these impact both women and trans identifying males. We also think the needs of trans identifying females (especially how to protect these females) should be specifically reviewed with the needs of this group taken account. We would argue the council should ensure engagement with lobby groups and interest groups is approached with great caution, given the problems there have been with some groups (such as Stonewall) having provided organisations with inaccurate representations of the law. The council should ensure a balanced and diverse set of views are canvassed including parents and families and educators, social workers. This should specifically include views of people who have transitioned and then de-transitioned thereafter. **The council should lead a public debate about the issue.**

2. We think the council should pass these new motions:

A) Council recognises that parental involvement in education is essential for confidence of families in school system. Council supports curriculum resources which promote pro-scientific, non-ideological, clear and simple, truthful lessons that pupils understand. Curriculum resources should avoid contested ideology being introduced into schools without any discussion with parents. Council recognises that holding the view that sex is immutable is established in law as "worthy of respect in a democratic society". The councils legal advisers will be able to confirm the judgement in the case of Forstater is clear on this issue.

B) council will ensure provision of single sex spaces in schools in particular for girls. This includes competitive and team sports segregated by sex category. The council should commission a report which confirms that schools are currently providing this.

C) Council recognises the risks of social transitioning of children - clearly described by Dr Cass (same report, as above) as "not a neutral act". Council agrees that children should not be socially transitioned by schools (including use of different pronouns) without involvement of parents. Council recognises that parents need reassurance that schools practice on this issue at present is transparent.

3. We finally invite the council to reflect on the experience we have had as a group of concerned local parents/adults in the city. Having sought to engage rationally on these issues and invite others with concerns to do so as well, we have been trying to hold a public meeting in portobello. Parents and adults are looking for a space to share concerns - and hopefully be reassured -about how the concept of gender identity is being managed in schools.

Instead of enabling reassurance, our meeting at The Wash House in January 2023 was cancelled after having been set up and ticketed, we were only told "due to significant negative attention" received. We have sought a discussion with the venue to understand what the negative attention was (especially whether our group were threatened in any way), but we have been met with a wall of silence. We have support from some local councillors and MSPs and there is significant local interest in holding a meeting. We've had support from one local councillor who is helping us to hold the meeting at the library, but it has been difficult to find availability and the earliest date is now March, some five months since we first asked.

Given this unacceptable situation, we also ask the council to pass this motion:

The council requests that provision is made available for services to ensure that all parents who wish to meet to discuss issues relating to children at schools (not only on this issue) have access to space

in a local venue to meet, in a reasonable time frame. Parents should not have to wait for extended periods to meet for this purpose.

Thank you for considering this written submission.



8th February 2022

Dear Provost and members of Edinburgh City Council,

I am writing in support of motion 8.12. [Scottish Trans](#) is a project of the Equality Network, an LGBTI equality and human rights charity. Our project focuses on improving the equality, human rights and inclusion of trans people across Scotland.

Trans people, communities, organisations and allies have campaigned for many years in Scotland to reform the Gender Recognition Act 2004. This is the law that allows trans men and women to update the sex recorded on their birth certificate so it reflects who they truly are. [Currently, the process for doing so is invasive, distressing, dehumanising, lengthy, and expensive.](#)

The Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill passed by a significant majority of the Scottish Parliament by MSPs from every political party would have seen the process become much simpler and fairer, and seen Scotland join many countries and territories across Europe and the world in moving to a self-declaration model. This model best upholds trans people's human rights, and is supported by the [Scottish Human Rights Commission](#), the [Council of Europe](#) and the [UN](#).

It is therefore incredibly disappointing that the bill has been blocked by the UK Government, through their unprecedented use of a Section 35 order. This disappointment has been further compounded by the [lack of clarity from the UK Government](#) on if and how the Scottish Government could make changes to the bill for reconsideration at the Scottish Parliament that might be mutually acceptable.

Trans people are also facing an increasingly negative public and media environment. One result of this has been a significant increase of experiences of transphobic hate crime, as outlined in Councillor Mumford's motion. Recent coverage of individual trans people who have committed appalling crimes has seen increasingly hostile conversations about all trans lives and rights. In a community of any size, there will be some people who commit appalling crimes – that does not and should not reflect on the majority of that community.

Questions around prison policy and the placement of trans people have also been inaccurately and unfairly connected to the Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill when the two are entirely unrelated. This was confirmed by the [Scottish Prison Service](#) when giving evidence on the Bill as it went through parliamentary scrutiny. [It is important that decisions taken by SPS on the placement of trans people in custody are based on individualised risk assessment, and consider the safety of everyone.](#)

This environment further contributes to negative experiences and barriers that trans people may face in our daily lives. These barriers can include being unable to [access timely and appropriate healthcare](#), [discrimination in the workplace](#), [bullying at school](#), and [poorer mental health and wellbeing](#) than the general population.

Trans people are not an ideology. We are your colleagues, friends, family members and neighbours. We want to be able to go to work, or to school, and be supported and accepted as who we truly are. We want to be able to access services that understand our lives and experiences, and are able to provide us with the care and support we need.

During a time at which trans people and communities are being increasingly stigmatised, reiterating your support for gender recognition reform would send a positive message to trans people living in Edinburgh.

But even more importantly, supporting the motion and agreeing to work with organisations and communities to ensure that Edinburgh is a safe and welcoming place for trans people to live, work in, and visit, will make a real and meaningful impact.

Yours sincerely,

Vic Valentine

Scottish Trans Manager