



SIBYLS LOGO - ROBYN GOLDEN - HANV 28 MAY 2018

Everyone carries their own true self in their own way, in their own words, and in their own time.

—Cassidy Hall, *Queering Contemplation*

Sibyls Newsletter 116



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Editorial

Dear Sibyls

First let me apologise for the length of this newsletter. Usually I am abjectly begging for contributions but this time I have an embarrassment of riches – many thanks, and apologies to those whose contributions I have had to hold over to the next edition.

Another reason for prolixity is of course the landing of the EHRC Code which at the time of writing looks as if it is going come into effect unchanged by Parliament despite a large number of MPs registering disapproval via an EDM. I have included a lot of discussion about this as it represents a truly shocking attack on the dignity, status and safety of all trans people. It returns us to the legal limbo from which we were rescued by intervention from Europe and the passing of the Gender Recognition Act in 2004. Trans rights in this country have sunk to a point where only countries like Belarus and Russia are below us in European ranking. In the view of the Lemkin Institute, this is nothing other than part of a process that can only be described as trans genocide.

But as trans people – and particularly as Christian trans people – we must never cease to hope. If trans people are following the will of God – as we must surely believe we are – then those opposed to us are, as the teacher Gamaliel said of those opposed to the first Christians, ultimately fighting God. So take heart and let your beautiful trans lives and light shine forth so that all may see your good works and glorify the God who has so wonderfully made and formed you.

Let us remember also with much gratitude those who have gone before us and who never gave up on living their authentic lives despite the adversity and hardship they often experienced. And also let's not forget that we have many allies, friends and supporters. Sibyls would not exist without the help of rev. doctor Malcolm Johnson RIP about whom our founder Jay Walmsley has written below. We owe it to such people to never fail in courage and in hope.

Pauline xx

Mobile 07581553357

Email pauline.fleck@btinternet.com

Introduction to the Sibyls

We are a Christian spirituality group for gender-variant people.

The main source of information about the Sibyls is our website: www.sibyls.co.uk. This includes:

- How to join the Sibyls confidential mailing list.
- Planned events, supportive churches and inclusive faith groups.
- Resources, such as books and signposted web links.
- Recent Sibyls newsletters.
- Our listening service, if you need to talk to someone about being a trans Christian.
- How to contact us.

Sibyls Facebook groups

There are two Facebook groups which enable Sibyls and other trans Christians to communicate and exchange views and news. They are:

- Sibyls Members 'Group – send a request via Facebook to join this confidential group.
- TranschristianUK – an open group, do join up if you are not already a member.

WhatsApp Group

Sibyls has a WhatsApp group and all are welcome to join. Just click this link and an admin will admit you.

<https://chat.whatsapp.com/DIG1NE2eVzaL5BUFW5Q4FR?mode=gi t>

Meetings for personal conversation and sharing

Some of you might appreciate the opportunity for more personal conversation on Zoom, rather than the regular large sessions. We can help arrange meet-ups for e.g. just three Sibyls – this would enable easier direct conversation and sharing (with some ground rules). If you would like this to happen, please email pauline.fleck@btinternet.com and we will see what is possible.

More detailed information about our online activity is available by post if you do not have access to the internet. Please contact Pauline as above.

Services and events in 2026

Online

Sibyls Zoom services and fellowship meetings take place online, usually around the 25th day of the month, beginning at 7.00 pm.. We aim to send out invitations about a week in advance.

London group

Sibyls based in or near London are welcome to take part in our quarterly communion service, at 6.00pm, at St Anne's Church, 55 Dean Street, London W1D 6AF, followed by a meal in a nearby restaurant. Provisional dates for rest of 2026 are: Fri 11 Sept, Tue Nov.

For more information contact Susan Gilchrist at:

susan@crestcons.net

Events in North Wales / West Cheshire

Jenny-Anne Bishop OBE is the Chair of the UNIQUE Transgender Network.

See <https://www.uniquetg.org.uk/>

(there's a lot of interesting information, not just for those lucky enough to live in North Wales):

Jenny-Anne hosts an online service every Sunday at 4.00pm for LGBTQ+ people. Zoom link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88502951623>

Residential Weekend 2026

Our residential weekend will be at Holy Rood House, Thirsk

(<https://www.holyroodhouse.org.uk/>) from Friday 23 October to Sunday 25 October.

Holy Rood House is a delightful retreat centre in the lovely town of Thirsk, easily accessible by rail. The centre is about a 25 minute walk from the station. There is no taxi rank at the station so taxis must be booked in advance – local firms include KA Taxis 07817 858077 and Premier Taxis 07970 304050.

The cost for the weekend is £230 for an ensuite room or £220 for a non-en suite or for people sharing. For those wishing to attend for a day only, the cost is: visit with lunch - £40; visit with lunch and supper - £55.

Accommodation will be allocated in line with the requested choice on a first-come first-served basis. If someone's choice is not available, we will contact them to say what is still available. No payment should be made until the room choice has been agreed. Here is the online booking form:

<https://form.jotform.com/251744334088056>

Programme for the weekend

We are still developing the programme but it will include:

Friday 23 October

4.00 pm arrivals, cake and chat

6.00 pm dinner

7.00 pm Film: "The Prince", written by and starring Abigail Thorn, a trans romp through a Shakespearean multiverse where all the world's a stage and all the men and women (and enbies!) are merely players....

Saturday 24 October

8.00 – 9.30 am breakfast

Tbc: Shanon's report on the annual conference of the European Forum of LGBTI Christian Groups

Discussion on repercussions of the EHRC Code of Practice

1.00pm lunch

2.00 free time for local walks, table tennis (weather permitting!), crafts and games.

4.00 pm back together for reflection and chat

6.00 pm dinner

8.00 pm Entertainments! If you have a talent, sing, play an instrument, write or read poems, tell stories – here's your chance. Strictly not compulsory!

Sunday 25 October

8.00 to 9.30 am breakfast

10.00 am tbc

12.00 Eucharist led by Shanon

1.00 lunch

Report on the European Forum Meeting in Norway 2026

The Norwegian team was led by a trans woman who also preached at our Rainbow Service in the Cathedral. As I looked around I recognised so many people who were trans and there were many more who identified as non-binary which meant we were in excess of 15% of the attendees. This was beautiful to see as it was only 4-5 years ago that there were less than half a dozen. The encouraging thing is also how many of them are under 40 years old.

Since the annual conference in France in 2019 there has been a trans person on the board. The downside of the younger age of the trans participants is their keenness to be considered the same as cis people because they don't have experience of the fights we had in order to gain the benefits and rights that they can enjoy.

This was obvious in the proposal that was submitted requesting a change to the By-laws regarding election to the board. Currently the Forum recognises three gender identities, CIS male, CIS female, and Trans*. Trans* covers all identities that do not fit into the first two categories with all identities being self-identified.

A proposal was submitted to change the categories to include trans men and women within the relevant CIS gender so that Trans* only included those who would identify under the non-binary umbrella.

I objected to this as I felt that whilst there are some people who do not wish to acknowledge their trans history, that is not the case for all and especially for those who find it harder to 'pass' in society. Whilst I appreciate that some people don't want to be 'outed' as trans, I feel that the existing classification can accommodate this as it is decided based on self-identification.

Given the current state of the world where we are seeing rights being taken away, it is important to keep Trans* as the third category so that we remain named and considered in the work that is done by the Forum.

I am pleased to say that the vote was in favour of keeping the existing wording.

There were several workshops being led by trans* people and we were evident in the Rainbow service which was open to the general public.

Shanon

THE REVD DR MALCOLM JOHNSON 1936 - 2026

Sibyls owes its existence to Malcolm Johnson. Without him it would not be.

Sadly Malcolm died on 24 February aged 89 and his funeral service was held at St Martin's-in-the-Fields on May 11. Malcolm was rightly famous for all the work that he did for gays, and gay priests in particular, and also for the homeless. As the parish priest at St Botolph without Aldgate all were welcome and supported and the homeless were fed in the crypt and found shelter. His support was even more valuable when AIDS struck and many gays and gay priests died. All this was achieved with usually the strong disapproval of the church hierarchy. In all that has been published about him since his death there is a lot about his work with gays, with the Terence Higgins Trust and with Stonewall (when it was gay centred) and yet not one word about the Sibyls. Nevertheless his contribution to the Sibyls was huge and arguably just as game changing as his work with gays.

I first met Malcolm in 1993 when I was transitioning and looking for a spiritual director. I wanted to make sure that I wasn't making mistakes and wanted someone in whom I could confide and between us try to get it right. For those unfamiliar with spiritual direction, it is all about finding which way to go and not ever about telling someone what to do. He was somewhat reluctant to take me on as he then knew little about transsexualism but thankfully he was persuaded and we learned a lot from each other.

He encouraged me to train as a spiritual director which I did. I then wondered what to do with it and he suggested forming a support group. Thus in 1996 the idea of a support group for transgendered Christians came into being. It was his idea, I merely put it together. Had it not been for Malcolm Sibyls simply would not have happened. However he did much more than provide the idea.

The initial meeting was held at my house and we resolved to go ahead. Malcolm was then the Master of the Royal Foundation of St Katharine, a monastic establishment in the East End. We held a meeting there, with Malcolm presiding over the communion service. This was a success and Malcolm suggested that we should hold a weekend which we did. St Katherine's offered residential facilities, excellent food, comfort, warmth, peace and security and a splendid chapel. Everyone was accepted just as they were. I based the weekend's programme on monastic routine with talks and this was modified for each succeeding weekend as we learned what people liked and what they wanted, above all services and space to talk through their problems. It should be remembered that at that time, most churches were very hostile to trans and gay issues. The vast majority of our early members were not welcome in their local churches and they found it a great relief to be able to worship and especially as themselves.

Malcolm strongly urged the Saturday evening entertainment. Everyone was required to do a turn. If they could dance or sing or play an instrument, do stand-up comedy, simply read a bible verse or a favourite poem, all contributions were welcome. I was

dubious about it being compulsory but Malcolm was insistent and he was right. The audience was warm and caring, no-one would be unkind and you couldn't go wrong. It worked wonders in instilling confidence. To stand up as yourself and do something to hold the attention of others - that was achievement and acceptance.

We held two weekends a year at St Katherine's and we owe that to Malcolm. We had somewhere warm, welcoming and safe. Malcolm often took our communion services or else he would help to find another priest. He also found us speakers to take discussion sessions. We met some lovely people that way, perhaps one of the most memorable being Rabbi Lionel Blue.

It was Lionel Blue who declared that Malcolm was the bishop which we never had. He was probably thinking of the gay world but it could very well include us.

Malcolm gave us the idea of Sibyls, gave us a safe meeting space, saw us off to a flying start and was ever the staunchest of supporters. Our debt is immense. Malcolm gave the appearance of being meek. He was sensitive and easily hurt but he was also a tough and doughty fighter, tenacious in holding out for what he thought right. He made things happen and cared for the underdog. He liked his church services to be done properly. With a dry sense of humour, he loved a joke and a gossip. Motivating it all was love. We are fortunate that we got a piece of it.

PS To hear Malcolm's view of the founding of the Sibyls may I suggest you read his book "Diary of a Gay Priest" published in 2013. Whilst the book itself is a great read, if you want the Sibyls highlights simply follow the references to my name.

Jay Walmsley

Mirroring – Retreat for Trans and Non-binary People at Holy Rood House Thirsk

From 12-14 June I had the great pleasure of being back at Holy Rood House where some years ago Sibyls had been splendidly hosted for our residential weekend – and of course we are going back there in October this year.

The retreat was led by rev. Alex Clare-Young and partner rev. Jo Clare-Young who treated us to some inspiring reflections and a moving communion service. We were also richly entertained by the story of "Yde and Olive" taken from a 13th century French text and brilliantly performed by story-teller and academic Daisy Black. King's daughter Yde has to escape from her father's malign intentions by living as a man and taking service as a mercenary soldier where she helps to rescue another kingdom from an invading army and where the king's daughter falls in love with her. The idea that Yde may not be what she seems to be comes to the ear of the king who commands Yde to undress and share his bath. Disaster is averted by the intervention of an angel.

Another highlight was the showing of the film of the play “The Prince” by trans writer and actress Abigail Thorn. The play features two trans characters who find themselves in a Shakespearean multiverse and performances of Henry IV Part One and Hamlet. The play explores how the way in which we perform roles may hide our true identities. However, I’m not going to say any more about it because we intend to show the film at our residential weekend in October. For those unable to attend the weekend or restrain their curiosity further information is available online.

The weekend was a delight and very welcome affirmation at a time it is sorely needed. More to come in October – I can’t wait!

Pauline



Sentenced to be R*ped?

By the Silly Old Moo

Not just content with the Supreme Court victory, the campaign group “For Women Scotland” are now demanding that “biological” sex should determine what prison trans people should be sent to.

A case is ongoing in the Court of Sessions in Edinburgh. Various legal arguments are being presented by all sides.

But it would seem that one factor is not being discussed. Namely, that a proportion of trans women, myself included, have undergone Gender Reassignment Surgery. The male “bits” have all gone. In their place is a surgically created vagina.

So we’re not only physically incapable of committing rape, we’re clearly just as vulnerable as any other woman to actually being raped.

The same considerations equally apply to all those sisters of ours who, for whatever reason, have not undergone such major surgery. More on that later. But our post-op sisters provide the perfect example to any neutral party of just how dangerous and wicked the For Women Scotland campaign really is.

To even suggest that an under-funded, over-crowded, short-staffed and poorly-trained Prison Service is capable of keeping us safe in male prisons is beyond farcical. Sentencing a trans woman to a male prison is exactly the same as sentencing her to be gang-banged by a bunch of thugs. Is that what British Justice is coming to?

And, what kind of woman would gleefully push for someone to be placed in a situation where they’re going to be raped?

Many might be acting out of ignorance. Maybe they think they know all they need to know about trans women from watching a couple of episodes of Ru Paul’s Drag Race. It’s high time they wised-up.

But a few, perhaps the ringleaders, know exactly what they’re doing. Inexcusable evil, blinded by sheer hatred, in the guise of making things “better” for women.

When faced with incarcerating a trans person the Scottish Government currently uses a risk-based approach. There is no way someone with a record of violence to women would be placed in a women’s jail, despite any claims they may make about their gender identity.

There may be points of detail in their approach that, if changed, could further improve safeguards. I cannot say, but I can say that they’re already pretty much on the right track. I for one would argue that anyone with a Gender Recognition Certificate should automatically be waved through their risk-based approach. All such people, be they pre-op or post-op, have signed a legal undertaking to live the rest of their lives in their “chosen” gender (not that you get much “choice” about it, in my experience). What business does society have in breaking that undertaking by sending them to a prison of the opposite gender?

Originally, that was the finish of this piece. I even sent it to our lovely Lady Editor, who does a magnificent job on our behalf. Wisely, she hung onto it for a later edition of the Newsletter.

I'm delighted that she did that. Why? Because I used most of the above text in an email to my MP.

I was surprised to get a reply from her saying she had taken the matter up with the Ministry of Justice on my behalf. Some time later I was astonished to receive a further email from her enclosing the MoJ's reply.

Was it worth my MP's and my efforts? Judge for yourselves. Here's what they said:

"I am sorry to read of your constituent's concerns about transgender prisoner policy. We are reviewing transgender prisoner policy following the For Women Scotland Supreme Court ruling, and will say more about this in due course. An underlying principle of this review is that we recognise the vulnerability of many transgender prisoners, and we are committed to supporting them to live in their gender regardless of where they are held.

On how they are allocated to prisons, our approach is that transgender women who have a history of violent and/or sexual offences, or who retain their birth genitalia, are initially allocated to the men's prison estate. However, there is a multidisciplinary risk assessment panel known as a Complex Case Board (CCB) which can consider their suitability for being held in the women's estate, and CCBs can also be held prior to sentencing. Where they are not, they will be convened urgently for transgender women allocated to the men's estate.

In recognition of the importance of ensuring their safety, arrangements are made to keep them, and other prisoners, safe ahead of CCBs.

Where a CCB assesses a transgender woman as posing a low risk to other prisoners and where there is a compelling reason (such as safety concerns) to hold them in the general women's estate, an exemption can be granted which means that transgender prisoners who meet the criteria above can still be allocated to the women's estate on an exceptional basis.

Recognising the vulnerability of some transgender prisoners, separate provision for transgender women also exists in a discrete unit at HMP Downview, a women's prison. This enables us to manage transgender women who both pose too much risk to be held in the general women's estate, but who are too vulnerable to be held in the men's estate.

For more information on how we manage and support transgender prisoners, please see our published policy framework at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-care-and-Management-of-individuals-who-are-transgender>".

Back to my own words now.

First of all, my sincere apologies to all our members of Sybils who are trans men for not taking up the cudgels on your behalf. It's not that I don't love and admire you. It's simply that I don't feel qualified to write on your behalf.

Does anyone feel much reassurance from all this? I somehow doubt it.

I usually like to put something upbeat into things that I write. I'm struggling this time. Again, my apologies.

God's Greatest Gift?

By the Silly Old Moo

I would like to say it's being trans. It's certainly a massive privilege, not given to many. At an inter-faith meeting I once heard a Rabbi say, "Thank you God for making us Jews your chosen people. But next time, please do us a favour. Choose someone else".

That pretty well sums things up for me too. The biggest gift I've always thanked God for is my sense of humour. Oh, have I needed it? As a grey-haired old lady, quietly going about my business, getting "read" isn't something I come across too often anymore. Like most pensioners, I'm nowadays practically invisible. But that wasn't always the case. Particularly in the first few years following transition.

To get to work in London I had no choice but to travel on buses and the underground. Burying myself in a book or newspaper seemed to work pretty well in terms of avoiding attention. But getting "read" was still a fairly frequent occurrence. Where's the humour in that? It's always unpleasant. Thankfully, it never resulted in violence.

I didn't have the confidence to challenge people in those circumstances. I always just did my best to walk away. But, occasionally, I'd hear final remarks like, "Nice tits though". Once I heard them say, "Lovely arse". The best I ever heard was when a rather drunken man turned around to face me on an escalator and said, "I can't work out whether you're a man or a woman. But you're bloody gorgeous darling".

I would have much preferred that these things didn't happen. But they did make me chuckle.

So I do look for the funny side, even when things get dark. And things for trans people are looking very dark right now. Take the women celebrating outside of the Supreme Court. Take a really good look at them. If they ever get their way and businesses are forced to station "Toilet Police", then some of their numbers are going to be amongst the first to be challenged.

Am I being cruel? Probably. Will I laugh when it happens? No. You reap what you sow, that's all. I always say be careful what you pray for. You might actually get it, but it seldom turns out like you expected. God definitely does have a sense of humour!

I'm not a great rugby fan, but I'm very proud of England's Red Roses and what they've achieved. And, bless them, they're supportive of us trans people. So too are many Lionesses. As a "Toilet Policewoman", would you have the confidence to challenge a big, strapping Red Rose? I think not. I pity any poor soul who dares to try. If it ever happens, the "Toilet Police" won't last very long. They'll make too many mistakes. There will be a big outcry, many complaints, and soon they'll be standing there not daring to challenge anyone. Perhaps then people will see how ridiculous the anti-trans brigade really are.

Our lovely lady Editor is always keen to hear from you. Perhaps drop her a note with some of the funny things that have happened to you? Humour is the best medicine. A wonderful gift from God. And an effective antidote in these dark times.

Poem by Rev Elijah Anthony

Radically pro transgender
I want to hear trans people laugh and
Celebrate. I want to call someone
By their new name and see their face
Fill with delight. I want to bring
A trans person to the thrift store
And help them find the clothes
That they only ever dared to
Wear behind closed doors.
I want to call someone by the
Pronouns that their soul
Has been longing to hear.
I want trans people in my churches,
In my classrooms, in my grocery stores.
I want trans people in nature.
I want trans people in my life.
I want to shout in the streets
How much I love trans people
how much each trans person
I've known has taught me something
About love and beauty and becoming
How each trans person taught me
Something I didn't even know
That I didn't know.
How each trans person gave me language
To step into a new shape of myself
I love trans people
I love how I can look into the eyes
Of someone who is trans
And understand there is a different
kind of knowing
A different kind of belonging
A way of being seen and loved
That is beyond words.
I love trans people
I love trans people
I love trans people
And I will never be quiet about it.

The Hermit Crab



Cillian

Loving Tides · 11h

I wish I was a hermit crab,
Then I could wear a shell.
For all the pain of tenderness,
I know it oh so well.

And if I were a hermit crab,
I probably would find,
That even if I wear a shell,
Protect my soft behind,
There'll come a day when I will grow,
The shell will now cause pain.
I'd prospect for a bigger one,
Which may delay, and even so,
The problem would remain.

So since I'm not a hermit crab,
Perhaps I'll skip the shell.
I might get hurt, but I'll be free.
And trust all will be well.



Hilda's good news stories

A neighbour of mine recently lost his wife after some 60 years of marriage. He tended to be a somewhat querulous fellow at the best of times, had worked as a building site foreman so was quite a tough character used to getting his own way, Fellow residents felt sorry for him but were reluctant to approach him fearing ‘getting their heads bitten off’. I saw that there was a large package from Amazon left outside his flat and decided to take the plunge and rang the bell. When he answered the door I said, “I’ve got this package here for you Mick, shall I bring it in?” To my surprise he was quite affable and said, “Yes please mate, put it over there.” I complied and then he said ‘I’m sorry, Hilda, I shouldn’t call you mate.’ I said, “Mick, you’ve been calling people ‘mate’ all your working life so I’m not going to take offence.” He said, “That’s good of you Hilda and can I say I think you look very nice today.” All I could do was smile. A couple of weeks later I was sitting out on our communal patio having lunch when Mick came out to sit outside his flat. He waved at me and said, “Hi there Hilda, see I’m getting better at remembering.”

Out of the blue, two weeks ago I got a text from my eldest granddaughter, Ruth, inviting me to a family celebration of her 18th birthday. This was a great surprise as she had taken umbrage when I transitioned socially five years ago at my choice of Ruth as my middle name - after my mother whose middle name was also Ruth. Although I’d kept the channels of communication open - Christmas and Birthday cards and newsletters - she had completely ignored me. The celebration was to take place in Brighton so that her uncle Nathan and his wife, Lydia, and daughter Sylvie, could also attend as they live fairly nearby. I was tasked with finding possible restaurants from which Ruth could choose which she did, and I made the booking. So, Ruth, her younger sister Eve, her dad, my eldest son Tom, his girlfriend Sam and her daughter Jess drove up from Milton Keynes and were able to park in the carpark where I live. After a loo break, we could all get the bus into town and meet up with Nat and family at the restaurant. This all went according to plan but was complicated by the fact that Tom has always found me as Hilda difficult and although we are in very regular contact by phone, text and email and the occasional Facetime, he’s never met me as Hilda in the flesh. So, it was a big moment for both of us. Long story short, after the meal we ended up back at my flat for a pre-drive home pit stop. We all had a great chat together including about Ruth getting a tattoo and discussing what she should wear at her school leaving do and me giving Jess advice on what to wear for her graduation which resulted in me showing her my sunflower dress which she rather liked. Plus, a long discussion on what was the best way to shave your legs. Then we had a great photo session and Ruth opened her birthday card from me, was smiley grateful for the dosh and vowed to spend it on a tattoo! Then they drove off with a hug for me from Tom and Sam.

Couldn't really have gone much better!

And some good news from *Pauline* – a message I received from someone in the Tolkien Society:

“There has been a lot of negative news about Trans Women, I want you to know that during 24 years of my service in the Army I vowed to stand up for ALL British people, no-one will demonize you in my presence, I believe many people feel like I do, you are a beautiful human being, please continue to glow.”

Sibyls member's letter to her MP

Dear Fleur Anderson MP,

Sorry, but it's me again. [...]

The other day, at a golf driving range where I have been having lessons for several years, I decided to explore what my life will be like should the current EHRC Guidance be passed by Parliament.

I decided not to use the ladies loo where I have never encountered any issues. Instead I took a few more steps along the corridor to the disabled toilet.

I was met with the following sight and took this photograph.



Imagine my dilemma. Do I now try to hold my full bladder and queue up at reception?

Once at the head of the queue, do I speak to the young lady staffing the desk and either:

- Lie to her and tell her I'm disabled? I'm a long time "regular" at this range. She knows me well. We have chatted on many occasions.

Or, do I:

- "Out" myself to her and ask for the key because I'm a trans woman? See the shock on her face and hear the sniggers from all the others behind me in the queue.

There is no gender neutral toilet available, as is the case in so many places I regularly visit.

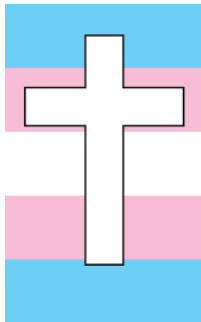
I'm not going to tell you what I actually did.

This is just a simple example of what things will be like for me should the current EHRC guidance be allowed through Parliament.

Any advice you actually can give will be much appreciated.

Your sincerely,

Trans Faith



Malcolm Johnson RIP:

<https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2026/1-may/gazette/obituaries/obituary-the-revd-dr-malcolm-johnson>

A trans Catholic reflects on the feast of Corpus Christi:

<https://www.newwaysministry.org/2026/06/09/dubious-homilies-and-ambiguous-bodies/>

Trans Law and Politics



It's here: EHRC Code of Practice:

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2026/may/21/single-sex-toilets-exclude-transgender-people-england-wales-scotland-code-of-practice>

<https://goodlawproject.org/the-code-of-practice-what-you-need-to-know>

See here for best analysis of the Code I have seen:

<https://iandunt.substack.com/p/the-ehrc-trans-code-explained>

"You can see the end result in front of you. A minority group which is attacked daily by the massed forces of the press, with barely any defenders in government to stand by their side. Business owners and managers left with no certainty about how they can avoid a ruinous legal challenge. And the very principle of certainty in law dissolving under our feet, corroded by the failure of a political class to show basic leadership."

Nadia Whittome MP

"While it appears that the government has successfully pushed back on some particularly harmful elements in the previous draft, the new Code of Practice will still lead to the exclusion of trans people from services and facilities that they have used without issue for a very long time.

This will do nothing to improve women's lives and the many struggles we face, but it will put trans people (and anyone perceived as trans) at increased risk of discrimination, harassment and violence. The Code unfortunately still represents the culmination of years of anti-trans campaigning from a small, well-funded minority who have had outsized influence in the media and in politics, and have weaponised the courts for their own ends.

The legal situation for trans people is now deeply incoherent and means that it is untenable for them to be able live their lives with dignity. This is completely out of line with the values of equality that a Labour government is meant to champion. Instead of making this Code statutory, the government should be legislating to clarify and protect trans people's rights, privacy and inclusion."

Stephen Whittle is not going to change where he pees (neither am I). But Alice is going to leave the country:

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2026/may/22/kind-of-humiliating-trans-community-responds-to-ehrcs-new-code-of-practice>

Dr Mike Hill:

<https://drmikeyhill.substack.com/p/is-the-uk-on-course-to-breach-human>

Under the EqA, discrimination has to involve actual detriment, not just subjective discomfort. So the Code's assertion that inclusion of trans people in gendered spaces is discriminatory against cis people is legally highly questionable and open to legal challenge. Much litigation may follow.

Gendered Intelligence's summary:

<https://genderedintelligence.co.uk/news/33-updated-ehrc-code-of-practice-gis-response>

Alex Clare-Young's open letter to their MP:

Dear Marie Goldman,

I am writing as a new constituent, having recently moved to Chelmsford, to raise urgent concerns about the EHRC's updated Statutory Code of Practice for Services, Public Functions and Associations, laid before Parliament on 21 May 2026. As the Liberal Democrat Women and Equalities Spokesperson, I hope you will consider raising these matters before the 40-day scrutiny window closes.

I write not only as a constituent but as a theologian and trans person who has published on trans and non-binary lives and Christian ethics - most recently in "Trans Formations: Grounding Theology in Trans and Non-Binary Lives" (SCM Press, 2024). I am a minister of the United Reformed Church and work for the Methodist Church.

My primary concern is that the updated Code renders the Gender Recognition Certificate effectively meaningless. A trans person who has undergone the full legal process of gender recognition still retains their birth sex for the purposes of the Equality Act 2010 - a legal erasure of our recognised identity, and a statement that what Parliament granted us is not, in practice, real. This poses significant risks to our human rights, including potential breaches of articles 1, 2, 6, 7, 12, 18, 19, 20, 23, 24, 25 and 27.

From a theological perspective, my concern is grounded in the concept of the imago Dei (the image of God): the conviction that each person, in the particularity of our embodied life, reflects something of the divine. Legislation that strips away our legal recognition and licenses exclusion on the basis of birth sex does not only cause practical harm - it communicates that our identity is not legitimate, not fully human. That is a theological wrong, as well as a legal one.

As a trans person, my concern is rooted in over 15 years of struggle to be myself in a country where trans personhood has long been threatened. I have experienced verbal, sexual and physical abuse, lack of privacy and dignity, lack of equal access to healthcare, difficulties around employability and more. Since the Supreme Court

ruling which initiated the recent round of culture wars I have experienced unprecedented difficulties accessing healthcare and public spaces. I am worried that this will only get worse.

I recognise, however, that I have significant privilege and that many trans people in the UK are experiencing significantly worse conditions. I am a white, masculine presenting trans person who has had intermittent access to HRT for the past 16 years. By contrast femme/female, Black and young trans people experience more significant harm. A recent FOI request found that the trans youth suicide rate has surged as a result of changes in healthcare provision. This tragedy only adds to the sense of uncertainty, fear and isolation that trans people are feeling.

I am therefore asking that you use your platform to call for Parliament to debate and scrutinise this Code before it comes into force. Trans people in Chelmsford and across the country deserve to know our elected representatives will stand up for our dignity and legal protection. Your record in this area is encouraging, but we need urgent action at this time.

I would be glad to speak with you further. I am contactable at clare-younga@methodistchurch.org.uk or alex@1227.co.uk. I am regularly in London, as well as living in Chelmsford, and would be very happy to meet to discuss constructive ways to support trans people's human rights.

Yours sincerely,
Revd Dr Alex Clare-Young

Commons debate on EHRC Code:

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2026-06-01/debates/CE610C68-7093-454F-B897-AF008EE7E7A0/EqualityAct2010CodeOfPractice>

<https://kierkegaardslunch.blogspot.com/2026/06/normalising-hate-liberal-democrat-mp.html?>

156 MPs (and counting) support EDM objecting to the EHRC Code:

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2026/jun/16/labour-mps-ehrc-guidance-biological-sex-ruling-transgender-commons-motion>

“A number of [Labour](#) MPs are increasingly doubtful that the guidance on how organisations should implement the supreme court ruling on sex as it applies in the Equality Act is workable in the real world, with some predicting it will unleash a wave of competing legal claims.”

Lemkin Institute condemns Code:

“The Lemkin Institute is disgusted by the use of equality law and the cloak of “women’s rights” to cause harm to the trans and intersex communities. The existence of trans and intersex people in no way threatens women’s rights. Harming the trans and intersex communities is in fact counterproductive to the furtherance of the feminist cause, as it is rooted in the normative imposition of a strict gender and sex binary, with all of the bigoted, ignorant, and narrow-minded assumptions that come with both.”

<https://www.lemkininstitute.com/statements-new-page/statement-on-the-anti-trans-and-anti-intersex-ehrc-code-of-practice-in-the-united-kingdom>

Alex Clare-Young's reflections on the Conversion Ban Bill: "At last, but not enough."
<https://transfiguredmission.uk/2026/06/26/at-last-but-not-enough-trans-people-and-the-draft-conversion-practices-bill/>

Scottish court rules prisoners must be housed in prisons according to biological sex:
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cz7502eq5lro>

University of Sussex "freedom of speech" fine overturned by the High Court:
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cp8pnwyy0zjo>

Caroline Litman, mother of trans daughter Alice who committed suicide, meets Wes Streeting:
<https://www.wearequeer.af.com/wes-streeting-insists-hes-not-god-botherer-who-has-issues-with-trans-people-in-meeting-with-bereaved-mother-caroline-litman/>

Caroline's Blog:
<https://www.carolinelitman.com/blog?ref=wearequeer.af.com>

From her letter to Streeting:

I lie awake at night wondering if tomorrow I'll hear that another mother now walks my path. For the current situation for trans youth is so dire, more suicides are inevitable. Being a teenager is hard, being trans is harder, being trans and denied care, being othered and denied access to public spaces for fear of attack or perhaps arrest, is harder still. This effects a person's mental health. You don't need to be a psychiatrist or read it in a medical journal to know this must be true.

Two trans MSPs elected to Scottish Parliament:
<https://www.upday.com/uk/politics/scotland-elects-first-trans-msps-i-am-everything-the-hateful-despise/1d8bzrq>

James Murray's (new health secretary, who is gay) views on trans people. Doesn't look too promising:

<https://www.thepinknews.com/2026/05/15/james-murray-health-secretary-trans-rights/>

Tribunal orders Darlington NHS Trust to pay damages to nurses supported by Christian Concern over use of facilities by trans woman:
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c39yr3078z7o>



Staying Healthy After Transition: Don't Miss Out on Screening

Regular health screening can save lives. For many trans and gender-diverse people, important screening invitations can be missed because NHS systems are often based on the sex marker registered with a GP rather than the organs a person has. This short guide explains **why screening matters**, **who it is for**, and **how to make sure you are not overlooked**.

Why screening is important

Screening aims to **detect disease early**, before symptoms appear. Early detection means:

- Treatment can be started sooner
 - Better health outcomes and survival
 - Simpler, less invasive treatments
-

Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA) Screening

What is an AAA?

An abdominal aortic aneurysm is a swelling of the main blood vessel in the abdomen. It often has no symptoms but can be life-threatening if it ruptures.

Who benefits from screening?

- AAA risk is higher in people assigned male at birth, regardless of gender identity.
- Particularly important from **age 65 onwards**

Why trans people may miss out

AAA screening invitations are automatically sent to people registered as **male** with their GP. Trans women (male-to-female) who are registered as female may **not be invited**, even though they may still be at risk.

The screening itself

- A simple, painless ultrasound scan
- Takes only a few minutes
- Performed with dignity and respect

If you think you may be eligible but have not received an invitation, you can **self-refer to your local AAA screening programme**.

Breast Screening

Breast screening saves lives by detecting breast cancer early.

Who may need breast screening?

- Trans women who have taken oestrogen
- Trans men and non-binary people who still have breast tissue
- Anyone with a personal or family history of breast cancer

Why invitations can be missed

Breast screening is usually triggered by being registered as not male. This means anyone who is female, or indeterminant will be invited. The only people who are not invited are male. Trans men registered as male may not receive routine invitations, even if they still have breast tissue or a past history of breast cancer.

If you have breast tissue, **breast screening remains important**, regardless of your gender marker.

Cervical Screening

Cervical screening prevents cervical cancer by detecting early changes before cancer develops.

Who needs cervical screening?

- Anyone with a cervix, including trans men and non-binary people

Common barriers

- Automatic recalls may stop if registered as male
- Anxiety or previous negative experiences

It is important to remember that **cervical screening is about anatomy, not gender identity**. Supportive, respectful care is available, and alternative appointment arrangements can often be made.

What you can do

- Talk to your GP or practice nurse about **which organs you have** and which screenings you need
- Ask your GP to add **screening reminders** to your record if invitations stop. We cannot screen anyone who is male in the breast screening programme. You will need to ask your GP to refer you for a mammogram.
- Self-refer to screening programmes if needed
- Bring an advocate or ask about reasonable adjustments

You have a right to **safe, respectful and inclusive healthcare**.

A final message

No one should miss life-saving screening because of how they are registered on a computer system. If you are unsure whether you should be having AAA, breast or cervical screening, **please ask**. Early detection really does save lives. For further information or support, speak to your GP practice or local screening service.

Open letter to Wes Streeting by trans groups about health care for young trans people:

<https://transactual.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Letter-from-LGBTQ-Organisations-Regarding-Healthcare.pdf>

BMA drops opposition to Cass Report – but still opposes ban on puberty blockers:
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2026/may/07/doctors-union-cass-review-nhs-gender-healthcare>

WPATH express concern over ban on hormone treatment for under 18s:

https://epath.eu/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/NHS_Response_07-06-2026.pdf?

Trans Life



Policing of boundaries of womanhood:

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2026/apr/21/olympics-trans-policy-ioc>

Julia Serano on how male socialisation actually works:

<https://juliaserano.medium.com/on-male-socialization-and-the-trans-masc-versus-trans-fem-discourse-14bccb196a63>

Parent sues all-girls school for admitting trans girl:

<https://www.thepinknews.com/2026/05/18/east-yorkshire-all-girls-school-trans-student/>

Amnesty report on trans reporting in media and influence of anti-trans organisations:

<https://www.amnesty.org.uk/latest/new-uk-analysis-reveals--anti-trans-influence-media-politics/>

14 year old trans girl wins race and faces cruel abuse:

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2026/jun/17/trans-athlete-no-one-should-face-vicious-attacks>

Trans World



Trans Scotland:

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2026/apr/15/how-scotland-landmark-ruling-single-sex-spaces-changed-lives>

Trans India:

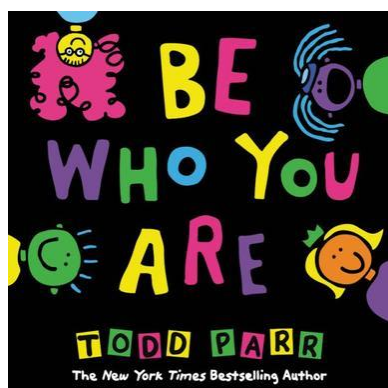
<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2026/may/12/koovagam-india-festival-transgender-women-recognition-law>

The annual festival at Koovagam that honours the story of Aravan from the Mahabharata where the God Krishna becomes female to wed the about to be sacrificed Aravan. “.. one of India’s most distinctive festivals. Trans women from across India, arrive in bright silk saris and gold temple jewellery, their hair oiled and braided with flowers.” There is also concern about a recent legal change for trans people, perceived as regressive.

Trans Iceland: top country in Europe for trans people (UK languishes far down the list):

<https://www.thepinknews.com/2026/05/26/trans-rights-europe-iceland-2026/>

Trans Books and Media



Laverne Cox memoir “Transcendent”:

<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2026/jun/15/free-from-shame-laverne-cox-trans-woman-in-trump-america>

“People’s rights are being taken away, people are losing their jobs, people are losing healthcare, people are being detransitioned in prison, gender-affirming care is being attacked, not just for children but also for adults. It’s never been about protecting women – it’s always been about creating a permission structure to scapegoat trans people, to dehumanise trans people, to take away our rights and to eliminate us from public life.” Cox on being trans in Trump’s US. We are currently heading in the same direction.

Amnesty report highlights anti-trans bias in media:

<https://www.thebureauinvestigates.com/stories/2026-06-17/amnesty-international-exposed-years-of-anti-trans-reporting-at-four-uk-newspapers-they-ignored-it>