

## Meeting your MP – crib sheet

### Preparing for your meeting

It's helpful to know where your MP stands on the issue of single-sex services (or if they have said something helpful about women's rights). Have a look at their election website (google their name and "manifesto") and their social media posts. Don't worry if you don't know, or think they may disagree with your position. It is their job to listen to constituents and to represent you and the things that concern you.

Direct your MP to our campaign website [www.standupforsinglesexservices.org](http://www.standupforsinglesexservices.org) where there is lots of useful information, including our booklet *Stand up for single-sex services* (found at [www.sex-matters.org/stand-up](http://www.sex-matters.org/stand-up)) – if you emailed your MP from the Sex Matters website, a PDF of this was attached.

### What do you want from the meeting?

You want your MP to understand that you, a constituent, are concerned that single-sex spaces, services and sports are being lost, and that something must be done about this.

Your simple "ask" for the meeting is for your MP to commit to contacting the Sex Matters team for a meeting to discuss what needs to be and can be done to clarify sex in the Equality Act.

### What to say

**You can say anything you like. You might say something like this, and then see what they say:**

I am worried about how female-only spaces and services are being lost.

Women and girls need female-only services, spaces, sports and associations for privacy, dignity, fairness and safety. But in practice single-sex provision is being eroded or becoming unavailable.

**It is not your responsibility to come up with all the answers, but if you feel confident to talk about the Equality Act you could say something like:**

The Equality Act 2010 allows for single-sex provision but right now service providers and employers are afraid to uphold clear rules. This harms women's rights, inclusion and safety.

The government needs to make the Equality Act clear so that it properly protects everyone's rights. This means being clear that the terms male, female, man and woman refer to people's sex.

**Before you leave, ask your MP to commit to meeting Sex Matters:**

I would like you to meet the human-rights charity Sex Matters to discuss what needs to be done to protect everyone's rights without compromising women and girls.

### What else to say

**It's useful to have one or two examples ready.** It is really good if these can be from your own personal or local experience. If not, examples that you have heard about also work well.

You don't need to know how to solve it and you don't have to be an expert in the Equality Act.

**If they want to talk about trans people** and their rights, tell them you believe everyone has rights, and you are here to talk about women and women's rights.

**Keep bringing the conversation back** to your personal experiences and the importance of clarifying the Equality Act.

**Keep it friendly** even if they disagree or seem uninformed. You're not there to change their mind. You're there to tell them what you, a constituent, want them to know, and what you would like them to do.

**If you have a Labour MP** who points to their manifesto or says the Party will protect single-sex services, ask them how the government plans to do this, and **if** and **how** they will clarify the Equality Act.

Don't worry if your MP asks you a question you don't know the answer to. Say you will come back to them, take a note and use this as an opportunity to continue the conversation later.

### What if they say...?

**Single sex-services are already protected in the Equality Act OR**

**The law is clear, we can just make the guidance clearer**

It isn't working. That's why I'm here. Many service providers think they must allow anyone who says they are a woman into women's changing rooms or toilets. That is why we need the Equality Act to be made clearer, that sex means the sex you were born, not how you identify.

**This implies that all transwomen are predators**

Not at all. This isn't about transwomen – it's about allowing women and girls to have male-free spaces and services. Most men are not predators but no one knows which ones might be. Any man can identify as a transwoman. Female-only means no one male, no matter how they identify.

**There are bigger problems than this, cost of living, jobs and homes... My constituents want me to focus on those and not on culture wars**

This isn't a culture war. It's about making sure the Equality Act works for everyone. Don't you agree that women's and girls' rights matter? We are half the population.

### Remember

- This is about women's rights, and the rights of same-sex attracted people – it is not anti-trans.
- The changes we want are about everyone's rights to privacy and dignity.
- It's not a "culture war" issue (if they bring that up).

### Key facts and statistics

- 57% of the UK population support the proposal to clarify that "male" and "female" in the Equality Act mean biological sex, with just 10% opposing, in a poll run on behalf of Sex Matters in July this year.
- 53% of the population oppose making it easier for people to change their sex on their birth certificate – just 20% support it.
- Both these results are reported in full at [www.sex-matters.org/new-equality-act-poll](http://www.sex-matters.org/new-equality-act-poll).

But don't worry about statistics. It's just as good to share stories and examples that put human faces on the issue and get your MP emotionally involved.

### Following up

Ask your MP if they are happy to have a photo with you for you to share on social media. Use the hashtags **#StandUpforSingleSexServices** and **#SexMatters**.

Let us know how your meeting went using the brief form at [www.sex-matters.org/mp-meeting-feedback](http://www.sex-matters.org/mp-meeting-feedback)

For more information contact Laura Pascal at Sex Matters: [PublicAffairs@sex-matters.org](mailto:PublicAffairs@sex-matters.org)