

# SEX MATTERS



MAKING THE EQUALITY ACT CLEAR

THE STORY SO FAR





### CONTENTS

See our journey at a glance on pages 6 and 7, or in more detail from page 8 onwards.

A note from Maya	04
Let's get it done	05
The journey	06
Launch of the petition	80
Campaign briefings	09
Political shift	10
Celebrities sign the petition	11
Writing to the EHRC	12
Networks & groups	13
JKR tweets!	14
EHRC writes	15
Scotland party announced	16
MP briefings	17
The Westminster Hall debate	18
Edinburgh petition party	20
What poyt?	21







### A NOTE FROM MAYA

Sex Matters is campaigning to make the Equality Act clear in order to in order to protect single-sex spaces and freedom of speech.

The Equality Act 2010 is the law that protects everyone in Britain against sex discrimination and protects transgender people against "gender reassignment" discrimination. We are calling on the government to add one line to the law to make clear that when the Equality Act refers to sex discrimination and single-sex services, it really means "sex".

Thanks to thousands of people campaigning, writing, talking about and signing our petition, this is now a public and political debate. The Equality and Human Rights Commission supports the idea. It is being covered in national media. On 12th June there was a debate in Westminster: fourteen MPs spoke on the side of clarifying the law and six on the side of keeping it ambiguous. The MPs on our side stood up, some for the first time in public on this issue, some literally shaking, and said things that have never been said in Parliament before: about fairness and dignity for women, about fair sport, about protecting children, about laws that work and can be understood, and about democracy.

This is the story so far, but it is just the beginning. The next stage in the campaign is to get the government to take action before the election, and get more people to stand up and say "I support single-sex services".

Will you be part of it? We need to scale up the campaign now. Donate £10 help us put our campaign packs into production, and be one of the first to receive one. Donate more and help the next stage of the campaign to take off.

Raya Fortater X



## LET'S GET IT DONE

We are asking the government to change one line in legislation to protect single-sex spaces, services, sports and associations.

It can do this before the next election, but it has to act decisively.

Donate £10 today to help get the next stage of the campaign into production.

#### **DONATE NOW**

(You will be one of the first to get a campaign pack as soon as they are ready.)

If you turn your donation into a regular commitment to <u>support us</u> it will mean even more to us.

If you are already a regular supporter, why not share the story so far with a friend by email, or on social media?











Closed petition

Update the Equality Act to make clear the characteristic "sex" is biological sex

The Government must exercise its power under s.23 of the Gender Recognition Act to modify the operation of the Equality Act 2010 by specifying the terms sex, male, female, man & woman, in the operation of that law, mean biological sex and not "sex as modified by a Gender Recognition Certificate"

November 2022

We launch the petition



**Tuesday 6th December** 

7.30pm to 8.30pm GMT









December 2022

Campaign briefings and webinars



January 2022

We write to the Minister for Women and Equalities

#### seXmatters





66 I've just signed this and would like to say out loud. SEX is REAL.

Daley Thompson

February 2023

Celebrities sign the petition



February 2023

Minister for Women and Equalities writes to EHRC asking about the Equality Act



March 2023

Street campaigning





If you're concerned al right to single sex spa centres and prisons -Act clear.

#InternationalWomer

March 2023

International Women's Day: JKR tweets!



April 2023

EHRC Chair Kishwer Falkner writes to the government



April 2023

Petition closes - Scotland wins!



May 2023

**Briefing MPs** 



June 2023

Westminster Hall debate



**June 2023** 

Edinburgh petition party

## November 2022

# We launch a petition to make the Equality Act clear



#### **Petitions**

**UK Government and Parliament** 

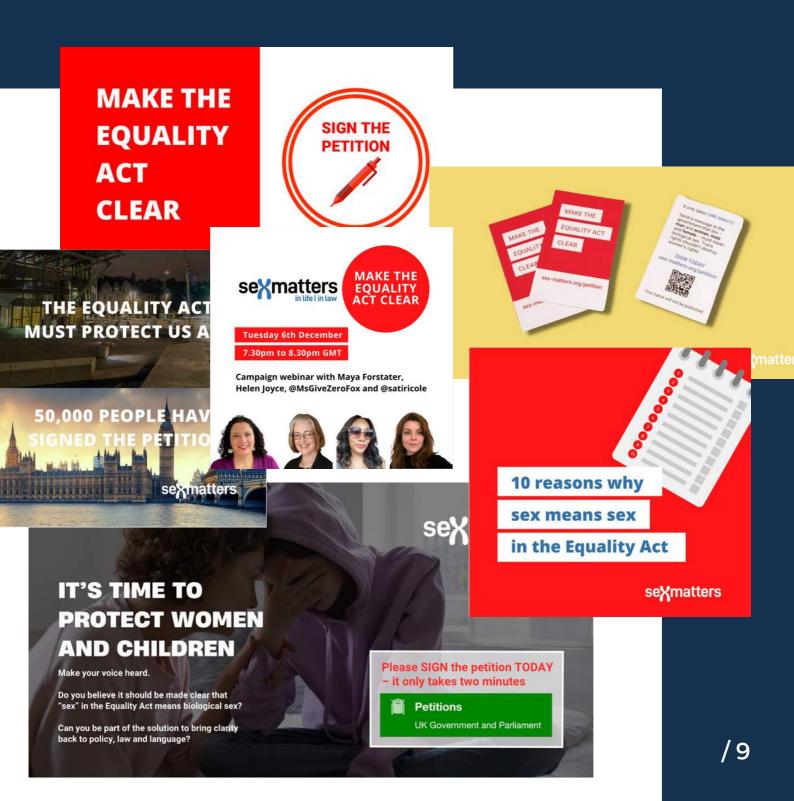
#### Update the Equality Act to make clear the characteristic "sex" is biological sex

The Government must exercise its power under s.23 of the Gender Recognition Act to modify the operation of the Equality Act 2010 by specifying the terms sex, male, female, man & woman, in the operation of that law, mean biological sex and not "sex as modified by a Gender Recognition Certificate"



## December 2022

Campaign briefings and webinars



# January 2023

#### **Political shifts**

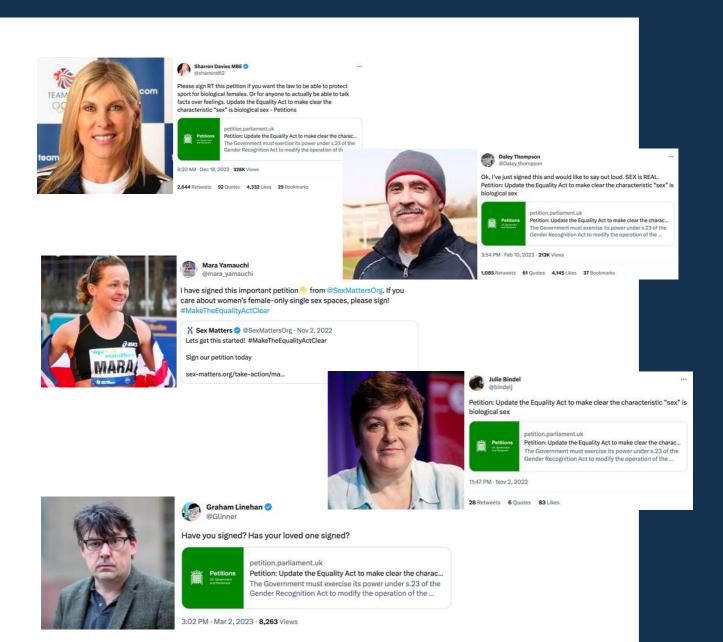


We write to the Minister for Women and Equalities.

The UK government decides to block the Scottish Gender Recognition Reform Bill.

## February 2023

# Celebrity "I've signed" social-media posts



## February 2023

## Minister for Women and Equalities writes to EHRC



Rt Hon Kemi Badenoch MP Minister for Women and Equalities Secretary of State for Business and Trade Sanctuary Buildings Great Smith Street London SW1P 3BT

Baroness Kishwer Falkner
By email at: kishwer.falkner@equalityhumanrights.com

21st February 2023

Dear Kishwer,

#### Clarifying the definition of sex for the effective operation of the Equality Act 2010

In our meeting on 12 January, we discussed the increasing contestation of how the term sex in understood in law and in practice. Recent cases in both the English and Scottish Courts, such as Fair Play for Women Ltd. v UK Statistics Authority [2021] EWHC 940 and For Women Scotland Ltd [2022] CSOH 90, have raised legitimate questions about the definition of sex in the Equality Act 2010.

Further, the Scottish Parliament's passing of the Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill, and subsequent Order made by the Secretary of State for Scotland under section 35 of the Scotland Act 1998, and the related discussions have led to questions being raised about the operation of the Equality Act 2010.

Among these is the consideration about whether the definition of 'sex' is sufficiently clear and strikes the appropriate balance of interests between different protected characteristics. The Women and Equalities Select Committee discussed this in a recent evidence taking session and the matter has been the subject of a petition to Parliament advocating an update to the Equality Act to make clear that the characteristic of 'sex' refers to 'biological sex'.

As the independent regulator, under Section 11 of the Equality Act 2006, the Equality and Human Rights Commission has a duty to monitor the effectiveness of the equality and human rights enactments, and under sub-section 11(2)(a)-(c)) the power to advise government about the effectiveness of the current law and the likely effect of any proposed change of law, as well as to recommend amendments to existing legislation.

On this basis, and mindful of the need to appropriately balance rights to gain clarity in what is a technical and contested area of law, I would like your considered advice of the benefits or otherwise of an amendment to the 2010 Act on the current definition of 'sex', along with any connected or consequential enactments, bearing in mind the advantages and disadvantages that such a change might entail for affected groups.

Yours sincerely,

The Rt Hon Kemi Badenoch MP Minister for Women and Equalities

## March 2023

Networks and groups get people signing





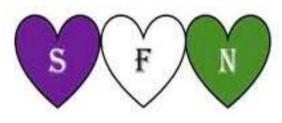












## March 2023

# JKR tweets and we hit 100,000 signatures!



If you're concerned about the erosion of women's rights in the UK - the right to single sex spaces like domestic violence refuges, rape crisis centres and prisons - sign the Sex Matters petition to make the Equality Act clear.

#InternationalWomensDay2023

On 8th March 2023, JK Rowling tweets about the petition.

A couple of days later, we hit the 100k mark.

...



# April 2023

# EHRC Chair Kishwer Falkner writes to the government



## Clarifying the definition of 'sex' in the Equality Act



On 21 February 2023, the Minister for Women and Equalities asked for our advice on the definition of the protected characteristic of sex in the Equality Act 2010.

Section 11 of the Equality Act 2006 allows the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) to advise the UK Government on the effectiveness of equality law.

The EHRC's initial response to this request is set out in a letter sent to the Minister on 3 April 2023.

Baroness Kishwer Falkner, Chairwoman of the Equality and Human Rights Commission, said:

"A change to the Equality Act 2010, so that the protected characteristic of 'sex' means biological sex, could bring clarity in a number of areas, but potential ambiguity in others.

"Our response to the Minister's request for advice suggests that the UK Government carefully identify and consider the potential implications of this change.

"Should they wish to pursue work in this area, we recommend detailed policy and legal analysis be undertaken, in compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty and with due regard to any possible disadvantages for trans men and trans women.

"There is a clear need to move the public debate on issues of sex and gender to a more informed and constructive basis. This would be welcomed by the many who do not take the polarised positions currently driving public debate.

"We look forward to working with the government and others to find a way forward on these important issues, but recognise that these decisions sit with the UK Government and UK Parliament."



## April 2023

# Petition closes - 109,462 people signed our petition



The top five constituencies are all in Edinburgh.

We announce a party in Edinburgh featuring special guests:

Joanna Cherry MP Marion Calder Elaine Miller

Money Charles of the Company of the

# May 2023

MP briefings



# June 2023 The Westminster Hall debate

10 June 2023 - Parliamentary debate about the definition of sex

"There is nothing more destabilising to society than to dismantle the legal, social and cultural guardrails that protect women and children by pretending that males become females and vice versa, and allowing that to creep into our law." Miriam Cates

"[Employers and service providers] need to be able to explain their rules on their signs and websites, on the phone and to staff. That means being clear about where there are sex-based rules and where a service is provided for both sexes together." Joanna Cherry

"The majority of victims of domestic violence are women, and they are much more likely to be seriously hurt or killed. We must be really careful to protect our intricate and finely balanced services for women." **Angela Richardson** 

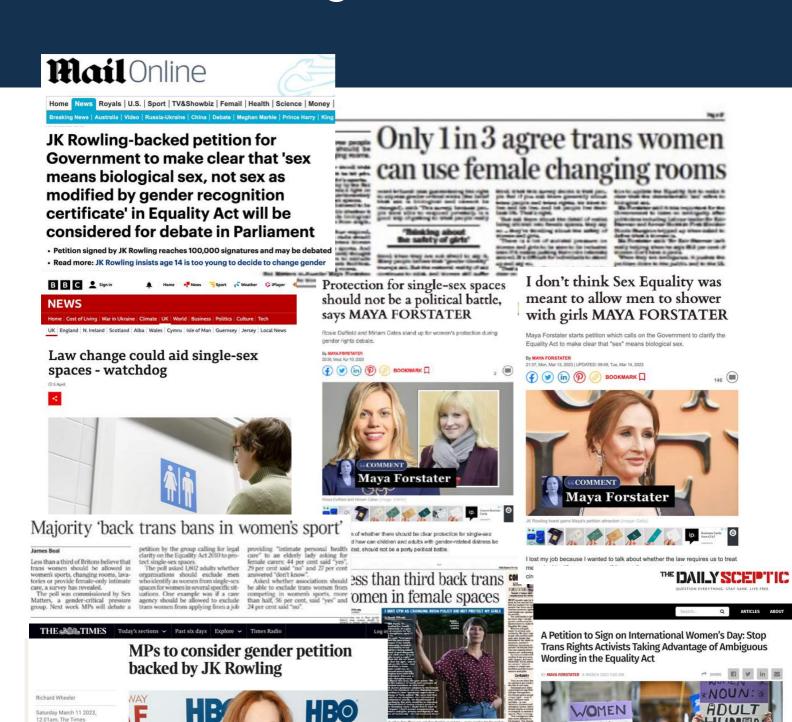
"Because of those and other differences in men's and women's lives, we need to be able to monitor sex discrimination and provide for the needs of women and girls, particularly when they are most vulnerable.

The Equality Act is the law that allows for that." Jess Philips

"Without a stable, codified language, the whole meaning of protected characteristics, hitherto based on sex, comes tumbling down." Rosie Duffield

## **June 2023**

#### Media coverage



NDING THE WAY

FINDIN

## **June 2023**

Edinburgh petition party





### WHAT NEXT?

We are asking the government to add one line to legislation. This will make all the difference.

It must do this quickly. Time is running out before the next election, and it will need to consult before it can make the change.

It can do this quickly. This is a simple change and it can be made using secondary legislation (there is a specific power provided for this in Section 23 of the Gender Recognition Act).

We can make it happen. Government will act if more people speak up. You don't need to understand the detail of the law - you just need to say "I support single-sex services".

#### We will:

- develop the technical proposal and legal analysis and brief ministers and officials
- work with grass-roots campaigners to demonstrate public support for single-sex services
- get stories and comment into the media
- get experts talking about the legislative proposal and the human rights involved.

Your support is crucial. It will make a difference.

# Be part of the next stage of the campaign

Nearly 110,000 people supported the petition. Millions use single-sex services everyday.

The government only needs to change one line in legislation and it has the power to do it.

Will you work with us to make that happen?

Add your name

Sign letter

Help us get the campaign pack into production

Donate £10

Become a regular supporter

Support

# If you already support us, please share the story so far with a friend by email or on social media.



@SexMattersOrg



@SexMattersOrg



@SexMattersOrg



Sex matters in life and in law.

It shouldn't take courage to say so.