**Shadow Report to**

**International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights**

**from women’s sector organisations in the UK**

**January 2020**



**Acknowledgements**

WRC has collated these responses to the ICCPR’s report. The submissions are written by (1) Cris McCurley and Rosie Lewis, and (2) Woman’s Place UK.

This is a short submission and we hope in future to provide a more comprehensive submission

**About the Women’s Resource Centre (WRC)**

WRC is a unique charity which supports women’s organisations to be more effective and sustainable. We provide training, information, resources and one-to-one support on a range of organisational development issues. We also try to educate decision makers on behalf of the women’s not-for-profit sector for improved representation and funding. Our members work in a wide range of fields including health, prevention of violence against women, employment, education, rights and equality, the criminal justice system and the environment. They deliver services to and campaign on behalf of some of the most marginalised communities of women. There are approximately 20,000 women’s organisations working across the country serving millions of women each year

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**Submission of issues by Cris McCurley & Rosie Lewis:**

**Harming Our Democracy: Redressing the Treatment of Women MP’s in Political Life and its Impact on Democracy in the UK**

There is a significant problem in the UK with its persistent failure to comply with not only the (International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights) ICCPR obligations, but also articles of the Human Rights Act (HRA)and CEDAW that guarantee equality in public and political life. MP Rushanara Ali stated in the Guardian, commenting on the political climate in UK in 2019 in the run up to the recent election that[[1]](#footnote-1) ”the Politics of hate has been allowed to take centre stage’. This ‘centre staging’ of hate has had a serious impact on how our democratic processes are electively represented, leading to 18 female serving MPs stepping down from public life pre the December 2019 election[[2]](#footnote-2). In the same article, Tulip Siddiq MP cited that ‘abuse is directed pretty much at all petitions. But if you are also female and from an ethnic minority, the abuse has a different Angle. And it has become worse since the (Brexit) referendum. You are not just a traitor, you are a coloured traitor’, outlining the further intersecting issues and discrimination that women MP’s of colour may face. Siddiq also describes the language used in Brexit debates in the chamber and the use of inflamed words such as ‘traitors, surrendering, and betrayal’ as influencing public opinion which has already been affected by the language used outside of Parliament by MP’s as being just as disturbing in reference to Boris Johnsons racialized referral to Muslim women’s appearance and thus ‘painting the referendum as a proxy vote on immigration ‘. Not surprisingly, many Female MPs have opted out of the political arena as a result of this recent reframing of language and political opinion in a way that directly discriminates against marginalised constituents and women MP’s alike.

The day before the election, the Evening standard newspaper listed 18 cross party female MPs who were planning to stand down in December 2019, whilst the BBC had already, in October 2019, reported on the increase in abuse women MP’s faced[[3]](#footnote-3). In this article, senior political correspondent, Jennifer Scott reported a number of senior female politicians who felt that they had no alternative but to stand down from their democratic duty due to the constant abuse they were having to endure. The women MP’s who were targeted represented both opposition parties and included former Tory cabinet members Nicky Morgan, Amber Rudd and Heidi Allen. With Morgan and Allen receiving such high levels of abuse that men in their constituencies are now serving prison sentences for death threats against them. Heidi Allen is quoted as saying ‘Nobody In any job should have to put up with threats, being shouted at in the streets, threats on social media, or having to put a panic alarm in their house’. Morgan states the abuse has ‘changed enormously’ in the past decade ‘because of how strongly people feel about the current political situation’. Allen described it as ‘utterly dehumanising. Former Home Secretary, Amber Rudd is quoted as saying the Prime Minister’s Brexit rhetoric ‘legitimises violence’. Scott also goes on to relate that Luciana Berger ‘has several people in prison for threats against her and her family’ and that Labours Lucy Cooper has had ‘actual plots to murder her ‘

These women are not alone in the mainstream media reports and articles that evidence a rise in the public abuse of women MP’s. Since the EU Referendum serious death threats that have been investigated by the police, against female MP’s has increased. MP Rushanara Ali received a suspicious package with what she describes as a ‘punish a Muslim’ letter, containing an unknown substance, leading her to call the Parliamentary Police. In November, The Guardian newspaper reported[[4]](#footnote-4) on Richard Hayes, who was described as “a man with a grudge against women” and was subsequently sentenced to 5 years in prison for targeting 15 female politicians, to whom he sent envelopes containing white powder marked ‘Anthrax’.

This abuse also extended to political concerns in other parts of the UK. Walthamstow politician and feminist, Stella Creasy publicly campaigned for abortion rights in Northern Ireland only to see a campaign of hate waged against her in her own constituency when 20 foot billboards appeared overnight showing her photo next to a bloody and aborted foetus and a 24 week old foetus in the womb with visible fingers and toes above the text “Your MP is working hard to make this a Human Right’. [[5]](#endnote-1) Creasy was pregnant herself at the time, and has publicly discussed the personal distress this caused her whilst pregnant.

Over the last three years in the House of Commons, the political debate has been dominated by Brexit, with arguably the last election being fought on similar grounds to Trump’s rhetorical slogan to make the UK as a sovereign state ‘great again’. This call to a nostalgic era of British politics that never existed (and a time when there were incidentally considerably fewer women MP’s) was echoed by the ‘Leave’ parties and MP’s who could also be seen to be aggressive in their language about women and about minority communities. Former member of the Conservative Government, Amber Rudd said that she was ‘disappointed and stunned’ by Boris Johnson’s comments about the 2016 murder of labour MP Jo Cox in her constituency. During this particular debate, Johnson had been asked to moderate the language he was using by MP Paula Sherriff in the light of the constant abuse and threats being directed at female MPs, during which she referenced Ms Cox’s murder. Mr Johnson countered that her comments were ‘Humbug’ and stated that the best way to honour Ms Cox’s memory was to ‘Get Brexit done’. This was seen as both disrespecting the memory of Jo Cox (who campaigned to remain in the EU), and minimising the threat faced by female MPs.

**The growth of the hostile environment in Political High office**

Brexit has fuelled political and social division, frustration and anger resulting in a palpable rise in hatred and polarisation both in Parliament as well as in our communities, which has emanated from the highest offices. Misogyny, racism, homophobia and xenophobia have noticeably increased and are often being publicly sanctioned by UK leaders, some parts of the media and high ranking institutional figures.

The Labour party has been openly criticised over anti-Semitism in the media, both within the party and without, whilst the Conservatives have been called to account on Islamophobia, from within their own party by Baroness Warsi, amongst others, who described being in the party as like ‘ being in an abusive relationship’ [[6]](#footnote-5). The ‘hostile environment’ for Migrants, best highlighted amongst other things by the Windrush Scandal, and the language of Brexit politics have all contributed to a very toxic and dangerous environment for women in public life and in Politics, and even more so for women of colour. In parallel the continuing hostility that another woman of colour in a position of power, Meghan Markel-Duchess of Sussex faced from both the press as well as political figures and officials, has also led to her recent decision to step down from Royal Life if not entirely, at least partially. She has publicly described the impact of the often racialized misogyny she faced and the abuse and hate directed towards her in the press and on social media: It has been made clear that as a woman of colour, she ‘doesn’t fit in’ with what is expected of a ‘Royal’.

The election of Trump to the US presidency in 2016, the result of the EU referendum the same year added fuel to an already very flammable political atmosphere, and as a result both endangered women and minimised their abuse. A clear message being sent from both Trump and Johnson in 2018-19 was that if you were rich or powerful enough you could openly (sexually) abuse any woman you want, without redress or that being a bar to the highest public office. One could affect a clear correlation between political abuses of power, where misogyny is normalised and the abused are gaslighted and the lowest rape conviction that the UK has seen in years, with rape threats now commonplace on social media, many of them directed at female MPs on social media. President Trump’s public support of Boris Johnson in the recent election naming him, ‘Britain’s Trump’ signifies a shift in political rhetoric with an increase in violent or aggressively charged language. The Conservative Party’s current stance to couch Brexit as a battle between the people of the UK, and a ‘remain minded Parliament’, mirrors Trump’s aggressive polarisation of communities in America.

Boris Johnson himself has a long history as both a journalist and a politician, of using highly divisive and racist language. He has described veiled Muslim women as looking like ‘letter boxes’ and ‘bank robbers’, he has described Black people as having ‘pickaninny’ smiles or being like tribal warriors, has stated that a group of young black men together would frighten him and described Gay men as being ‘tank topped bum-boys’ . When he was accused of ‘inciting rampant racism’, in a recent BBC Question Time in November 2019, Johnson defended his comments as a right to ‘free speech’, acrimoniously using the language of human rights to defend his blatantly discriminatory and hate fuelled language.

With this kind of language and rhetoric being defended by elected officials, the mood in the UK has simultaneously become aggressive and polarised with women in public life being seen by many as legitimate, even deserving targets for abuse, including death and rape threats. It is therefore not surprising that in this current political climate we have seen many women indicate that hatred and fear is driving them out of public life.

**Protection and Redress**

The House of Commons and Lords are governed by the Parliamentary conduct rules, and overseen by the Standards Committee and the Parliamentary Standards Commissioner. Labour MP Jess Phillips, after being on the receiving end of ongoing threats and abuse, gave an interview for this to the Committee and Commissioner about her ordeal (which is reproduced in full as an appendix to this report).[[7]](#endnote-2) She described the redress available to women MPs as being wholly ineffective, giving an example of supporting a female Jewish MP to complain about anti- Semitic abuse which occurred during an event in Parliament, after following a standard Parliamentary complaints procedure, the victim of anti-Semitism was offered her counselling rather than the offenders of this hate crime being tackled. As a result of the lack of action the MP targeted by anti- Semitism gave up her complaint.

Phillips has herself also tried to complain to the Independent standards Committee in the House of Lords and was told that what she asked them to address was ‘not in their line of duty, nor was it their problem’. In her interview with the Parliamentary Standards Committee she stated that there is ‘Still a huge amount of degrading and incitement that parliament can do to you’ and that as a woman MP or victim.’ You have no recourse. ‘She went on to say that she worries about the young women working in Parliament such as her own PA, and particularly about young BME women. She stated “All staff get a ‘be careful’ warning but there is nothing to make sure that people get home safely”, she also has no confidence that that young women will not be sexually or verbally harassed in Parliament. Whereas she accepts there is a system in place for redress, she notes ‘the system is not in any way proactive: There is nothing to help staff organise, no union’

When Jess Phillips was campaigning for election in May 2019, UKIP prospective MP Carl Benjamin tweeted abuse on social media direct to Phillips saying, “I wouldn’t even rape you”. Later in a video interview he said that ‘I might consider raping her if I was drunk enough”, but added, “no one has that much beer”. Phillips had a meeting with the electoral college about the abuse, but nothing was done, and Phillips said “Had he (Benjamin) won, he would still be an MEP and I would have no recourse in British electoral law to challenge him”

Phillips has also received death threats, and her constituency Office Birmingham Yardley was attacked[[8]](#endnote-3) in September 2019 by a man who said he wanted to “speak to the fascist MP Jess Phillips”. Although he was arrested, she chose not to prosecute him, opting for restorative justice instead as she refused to believe that they cloud not find common ground. This incident and similar have had consequences: “There has been infringement on my liberty, my staff’s liberty and the worst effect is on my constituents as I no longer have an open office that they can come to “.

Like many serving women MPs Phillips has suffered abuse on the streets, and has been advised to install bullet proof glass in her constituency home. She points out that there is nothing in party or house rules to prevent abuse although it is privately acknowledged that women MPs attract the bulk of the abuse. The day after Mr Johnson was criticised for his aggressive language in the house of commons, Phillips received two further threats: “ one on the phone, one outside my office “ She challenged Johnson, saying “I’ve had death threats citing your name and words, said to me saying I am going to die. I’ve had them delivered to my constituency office “. The PM’s response she said “was just a shrug and a harrumph”. Colleagues from all parties have offered Phillips their support in private, but she says there must be a real effective recourse in place, which offers real redress and protection.

**Recommendations for change to ensure compliance:**

In conclusion to the mounting evidence of the impact and harm that the ‘centre staging’ of hate has had disproportionately on women MP’s who already face an increase in harassment, racism and discrimination, I recommend the following using CEDAW as a framework to implement change and reform where needed:

1. Make misogyny a hate crime to prevent the abuse of women MPs and women in general;
2. There must be an effective behaviour code for MPs with independent scrutiny of the behaviour of elected officials to prevent aggressive language, and incitement to any kind of hatred and violence;
3. There must be active redress when political conduct rules are broken;
4. The Electoral College rules need to be tightened to prevent prospective elected officials from behaving abusively towards other candidates, and sanctions must include being declared unfit for public office;
5. Elections should be independently monitored with sanctions for use of abusive and threatening rhetoric directed against women and protected groups.

Gibbons K: The Times 8.10.19

**Submission of issues by Woman’s Place UK**

Woman’s Place UK (WPUK) is a grassroots feminist campaign which was formed by a group of women in the labour and trade union movement to uphold women’s sex-based rights and protections in the UK. Since September 2017, WPUK has held 26 public meetings across the UK which have been attended by over 3,500 people.

WPUK contends that the civil and political rights enshrined in the ICCPR have been undermined in recent years, particularly in relation to women’s freedom of expression and freedom of assembly. The relevant government bodies, such as the Government Equalities Office, the Equality and Human Rights Commission, have failed to take action to defend women’s civil and political rights. In some cases, the police have been overzealous in policing feminist and ‘gender critical’[[9]](#footnote-6) users of online platforms such as Twitter.

***Article 17***

***1. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to unlawful attacks on his honour and reputation.***

***2. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.***

Many gender critical feminists have been subject to unlawful attacks on their personal and professional reputations as a result of articulating gender critical views publicly. Several feminist academics have faced protests on campus, defamatory statements online, and institutions they work for coming under pressure to dismiss them.

Professor Kathleen Stock of Sussex University reports that she has had her office door defaced twice with stickers saying that “TERFs[[10]](#footnote-7) are not welcome here”, as well as having defamatory (later retracted) articles published in student newspapers, a spurious GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation[[11]](#footnote-8)) complaint against her (later found to be unsubstantiated) and Freedom of Information requests for disclosure of her emails.

***Article 18***

***1. Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right shall include freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice, and freedom, either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching.***

***2. No one shall be subject to coercion which would impair his freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice.***

***3. Freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs may be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary to protect public safety, order, health, or morals or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others.***

***4. The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to have respect for the liberty of parents and, when applicable, legal guardians to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions.***

The right to freedom of thought, conscience and belief has been subject to extreme pressure in relation to gender critical feminists in the UK. Several high-profile cases of women losing their jobs or membership of professional organisations as a result of their beliefs have been reported in the UK press in recent years. A recent employment tribunal case (Forstater v CGD Europe[[12]](#footnote-9)) highlighted the tension that exists between gender critical perspectives and the perspective of those who believe that gender identity is innate, and that people can be born in a body that does not match their gender identity. The claimant, who had lost her job as a result of expressing the view that biological sex cannot change, argued that her views were legitimate beliefs grounded in science and rational thought and that she had been discriminated against because of her beliefs. The claimant lost the tribunal as the judge ruled that her beliefs did not meet the test of philosophical beliefs and were therefore not protected by the Equality Act 2010. The case attracted significant media attention. The claimant was supported by high profile figures such as Martina Navratilova and J K Rowling who were in turn subject to online abuse and calls for their careers to be “cancelled” due to their support for the claimant[[13]](#footnote-10).

***Article 19***

***1. Everyone shall have the right to hold opinions without interference.***

***2. Everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of his choice.***

***3. The exercise of the rights provided for in paragraph 2 of this article carries with it special duties and responsibilities. It may therefore be subject to certain restrictions, but these shall only be such as are provided by law and are necessary:***

***(a) For respect of the rights or reputations of others;***

***(b) For the protection of national security or of public order (ordre public), or of public health or morals.***

The current orthodoxy in the UK regarding gender and sex, as promoted by a range of lobby groups and trans rights campaign organisations, is undermining the right enshrined in article 19 to hold opinions without interference, to freedom of expression. Article 19 states that the right to freedom of expression includes the freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of his choice. Yet in academia and in the media there are numerous examples of this right being infringed.

A recent House of Commons Library report noted that “Concerns have also been raised that there has been intimidation of those organising and attending meetings to consider the Government’s proposals, and that debate has been stifled”[[14]](#footnote-11).

The parliamentary briefing paper goes on to note that some MPs have complained of the stifling of debate in parliament:

*“In November 2018, there was a Westminster Hall debate on self-identification of gender, led by David Davies (Conservative). David Davies expressed concern about the consequences of self-identification:*

*“People who might outwardly appear to be male and possess a male body would, if they legally redefined their gender, suddenly gain access to women’s toilets, hospital wards, changing rooms, refuges and prisons. They would have the right to undertake roles that people would normally expect to be done by someone of the same sex as those the service is being offered to, such as nurses or carers conducting intimate procedures, prison or police officers carrying out searches or staff working in refuges for victims of domestic violence.””*

The briefing paper goes to quote David Davies MP again on the issue of debate being stifled:

*“Women’s rights activists who have met to discuss the impact of the changes have faced verbal and physical harassment. Those who have resisted... have been subject to ludicrous, vexatious legal action and dragged into court to defend themselves for speaking freely about their concerns.*

*I arranged a meeting in Parliament for a women’s group after a venue in London ... had been cancelled. Numerous complaints were made to the House of Commons authorities before the meeting, and I was called into a meeting with the Serjeant at Arms. As the Minister knows, I have been an MP for 13 years and, like most MPs, I have organised numerous meetings for numerous groups. I have never before had to go and spend an hour with the Serjeant at Arms explaining myself. I have no problem with the conversation that we had, but it is very unusual for that to happen.*

*I tried to organise another meeting afterwards. Again, I was contacted by the Serjeant at Arms’ office. After the meeting took place, numerous complaints were made, mostly vexatious, but they resulted in a three-month investigation by the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards. Again, I have no problem with that and with the conclusion that she reached, but such investigations are very unusual. I was even told by another Member of Parliament that I could face police action because of what had taken place, because of the potential that a public order offence had been committed. This matter is one for debate, such as the one we are having now. We have a right to discuss these issues. If people know that meetings will result in investigations and legal action against them, even if it amounts to nothing, they will obviously be far less inclined to hold them.”*

In the context of the obstacles to getting gender critical research articles published in academic journals and in accessing grant funding, Professor Kathleen Stock, University of Sussex, explains by way of example:

*“Reports I have received from others include: i) that a paper on female sexual dysfunction was rejected from an academic journal well-known in her field, by both reviewers, on the grounds that the paper “assumed that only women can suffer from vaginismus”; ii) that a Professor prominent in the field of Human Rights received a rejection for their book proposal on humanism - of which one aspect of a single chapter was on “new ideas about transgender people” - on the grounds that this book proposal was “materially dangerous” to trans people and denied the “validity of trans women’s identities and existence”; iii) that a Philosophy Professor, on submitting a paper to a leading UK journal, part of which took up the issue of whether trans women are women, received a report as follows: “Without even mentioning the topic of the paper, let alone any of my arguments, the report basically said that the paper was terrible and should not be accepted. I have never seen a more unprofessional referee’s report in my life. The fact that a fellow professional philosopher would engage in such blatant sabotage was very disturbing.”*

A recent High Court case, Miller v College of Policing and Humberside Constabulary, provides another example of how freedom of expression is being restricted in the UK[[15]](#footnote-12). The claimant, Mr Miller, a former policeman, was visited at home by the police and accused of a “hate incident” because of a satirical rhyme he had posted on Twitter relating to trans people. The claimant’s legal team argue that the College of Policing’s guidance on “hate incidents” and the Humberside Constabulary’s heavy-handed approach to policing comments on Twitter are incompatible with the right to freedom of expression. There have been other media reports of citizens being visited at home by the police as a result of comments made on Twitter[[16]](#footnote-13).

***Article 21***

***The right of peaceful assembly shall be recognized. No restrictions may be placed on the exercise of this right other than those imposed in conformity with the law and which are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security or public safety, public order (ordre public), the protection of public health or morals or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.***

Woman’s Place UK has direct experience of the right to peaceful assembly being undermined and failure of the police to defend the right of women to free assembly. Article 21 is clear that no restrictions may be placed on the exercise of this right other than those imposed in conformity with the law and which are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security or public safety, public order, the protection of public health or morals or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.

Woman’s Place has been organising meetings around the country since November 2017. The meetings are open to both men and women and respectful dialogue and debate are encouraged. Speakers have included academics, writers, lawyers, journalists, sportswomen, and trade unionists. The attempts to suppress these meetings are documented in a blog[[17]](#footnote-14), including physical attacks, masked protesters making noise outside the venue to intimidate participants and drown out discussion, pressure on venues to cancel, and even a bomb threat. As a party state that has ratified ICCPR, the UK government has a duty to uphold Article 21 rights, including the right to meet, and the right to protest outside a meeting, but not in such a way that involves physical violence, intimidation or that prevents the meeting from taking place. By way of example of how the state has failed to act to ensure Article 21 rights are upheld, at a meeting in Brighton on 23 September, one of many held as fringe meetings around the Labour Party Conference, the police were observed standing by as a baying mob surrounded the building where the meeting was being held, shouting, beating and kicking the windows. Woman’s Place has submitted a formal complaint to Sussex Police constabulary as they refused to act to protect meeting participants entering and leaving the building.

The attempts to prevent women from meeting to discuss their rights extends beyond intimidation and includes physical assaults. Maria MacLachan, a woman in her 60s, was physically assaulted by a trans activist at a feminist meeting at Hyde Park corner in 2017[[18]](#footnote-15). In June 2019, feminist journalist and author, Julie Bindel, was assaulted as she left a meeting at Edinburgh University to discuss women’s rights[[19]](#footnote-16). Both Ms MacLachan and Ms Bindel have taken legal action against their assailants.

Universities have been at the centre of several recent attacks on freedom of assembly. Professor Stock has noted that one of the reasons is “a reluctance of University managers to be seen to endorse any such event or activity, since they fear both reprisal from students, and negative publicity from a public to whom the central issues at stake have yet to be clearly explained (see below). Indeed, in April 2019, a conference on prison abolitionism was cancelled by the Open University after receiving complaints that a co-organiser of the conference, Richard Garside (the Director of the Centre for Crime and Justice) had argued, in print, against the inclusion of male trans women in female prisons.” There are many examples of permission for meetings being withdrawn at the last minute due to threats of violence or because transpeople complain that the prospect of even academic discussion of a possible conflict between women’s rights and trans rights makes them feel unsafe.

***Conclusion***

We note that the Concluding Observations of the Human Rights Committee’s VII Periodic Report in 2015 did not touch upon the Articles referred to in the above list of issues. We welcome the Committee’s recommendations in relation to Violence Against Women and Girls and access to abortion in Northern Ireland and urge the Committee to also consider the issues set out above when preparing the list of issues for the VIII Periodic examination.

1. The Guardian: 27.9.19 : Abuse is virtually constant : Female MPs speak out about the threats they face

   Fitzpatrick K, Grierson J: The Guardian 26.9.19 : How serious are the threats to UK MPs [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Walker, P. The Guardian . 27.9.19 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. .Scott, J. ‘Women MPs say abuse forcing them from politics ‘ published 31.10.2019 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Author? The Guardian: 28.11.19 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
6. Murphy. Simon. The Guardian 27.1.1.19 Seyeeda Warsi on Islamaphobia [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
7. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
8. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
9. ‘Gender critical’ denotes the feminist perspective that biological sex is immutable, that humans do not have an innate sense of “gender identity”, rather that humans are conditioned by society to conform to gendered stereotypes. This view is not exclusive to feminists. Gender critical feminists believe that ‘gender’ is a social construct that usually manifests as an oppressive, externally imposed hierarchy, with women being accorded fewer rights than men on the basis of their sex; this is harmful to both women and men. The objective should be to liberate ourselves from gender stereotypes rather than reinforce them. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
10. Trans Exclusionary Radical Feminist. A derogatory term used to describe gender critical feminists. On social media the term is often accompanied by threats of violence or violent imagery. https://terfisaslur.com/ [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
11. The legislation governing data protection in the UK. An unfounded complaint was made accusing Professor Stock of breaching the data protection regulations. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
12. https://www.scribd.com/document/440301628/Forstater-v-CGD-Judgement-2019 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
13. https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/maya-forstater-ive-been-abused-for-my-beliefs-about-trans-people-90pzqs7tw [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
14. <https://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/CBP-8746> 8th January 2020 [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
15. https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2019/11/20/right-offended-does-not-exist-judge-says-court-hears-police/ [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
16. https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2019/03/20/second-woman-investigated-police-transphobic-comments/ [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
17. https://womansplaceuk.org/a-record-of-womans-place-uk-meetings/?fbclid=IwAR3kAdQrGcE9nf-KE4EzvVivaCrWKyJgbqsXGKFUkEP8F2Pvb92gaGluScg [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
18. https://www.peaktrans.org/when-vicious-entitled-thugs-attack-i-fight-back/ [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
19. https://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/police-investigate-after-feminist-almost-punched-after-women-s-talk-in-edinburgh-1-4948212 [↑](#footnote-ref-16)