

In a year of huge progress, we've flexed our legal muscle and grown our political influence.

The High Court win against the ONS was undoubtedly the highlight of the year. We've been flat out since then. We've connected with politicians and power-brokers. We've been invited to speak at political events and cross-party parliamentary briefings. In December, we threatened and wrapped up another legal challenge to the UK government in the space of a week. We end the year with another court case pending, this time against the Scottish government.



In March this year we took on the Office for National Statistics and the Cabinet Office in the High Court, and we won. Facing the might of the Government Legal Department, the government represented by an eminent QC, and with time against us, we forced the ONS to amend their guidance, to ensure that the question 'What is your sex?' could only be answered according to legally-registered sex. [The full story is here.](#)

This was important not just for the census but to re-establish the principle that asking for someone's sex is perfectly reasonable and lawful, and that there are only two possible answers. It was also a major setback for those who had thought they could influence policy by stealth and get away with it.

That rather shocking story was [revealed by Professor Alice Sullivan](#). All of this means people in power will think more carefully before taking the advice of activist groups who tell them they can ignore women's needs.

Winning this case was inspiring – and it left us with [a fighting fund to explore further legal challenges](#). It's not enough to fund a case all the way to court, but it enables us to move fast and get legal advice when we see the need, like [the action we took](#) against the rushed conversion therapy consultation, which forced a government rethink.

There's no sign so far of a Scottish government rethink on their unlawful approach to the census, so [we've invited them to meet us in court](#) in early 2022.



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## Speaking to law-makers

We are always looking for opportunities to focus law-makers and policy-makers on the threats to women's rights. This year we submitted [evidence to over a dozen consultations](#) where relevant points could be raised.

We sent written evidence to the Women and Equalities Committee inquiry into the GRA, and in June [Dr Williams gave evidence in person](#).

Fair Play For Women has been mentioned in debates in the House of Lords. In the autumn, Dr Williams took part in a Westminster briefing on healthcare data issues, [explaining how data collection had gone wrong](#). She was an invited speaker at a well-attended meeting at the Conservative party conference in October, where she pointed out the risks of making policy based on [the simple mantra that transwomen are women](#). In November, she briefed MPs and Lords on the wider issues in a face-to-face meeting at Westminster.

We remain apolitical. We speak to, and listen to, politicians from all sides. This year more politicians have dared to express their support for women, and for us, and for that we are grateful. We know that public opinion is on our side, so we hope more politicians will find the courage to speak up.

We've also met with the Equality and Human Rights Commission and flagged multiple issues including the NHS replacing sex with gender identity in its records, and the Census in Scotland.



Dr Williams at the Conservative Party conference

## Non-binary: the next threat

In our [analysis of WESC submissions by trans activist groups](#), we saw claims that non-binary should also be a protected identity, that people should be able to opt out of being either male or female. We see this as a major threat to women's sex-based rights, [as explained here](#). It's the reason [we sought to intervene in the Elan-Cane case](#) in the Supreme Court. We will not allow this to be shoe-horned into legislation or public policy without a fight.



### 3.

## Sport

In 2021 the UK sports establishment took a bold step towards restoring fairness for women and girls, while international sports bodies headed in the opposite direction.

During 2020 the Sports Councils appointed independent consultants to review their trans inclusion guidance to sports bodies in the UK. We were one of many groups interviewed as part of the work. The long-awaited Sports Councils Equality Group guidance was launched on 30 September 2021. As expected, [it clearly states what we've always known](#): testosterone suppression doesn't make it fair for males to play and compete with females.



Women who missed out on going to Tokyo, and the males who took their place.

The [real route to making sport more inclusive](#) is Open and Female. We've launched a campaign to talk to every national governing body we can, to ensure they properly consider the new guidance. So far we have contacted over fifty national governing bodies in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. We've met with half a dozen, and have more meetings planned.



But only a few weeks later, the IOC published its [long-awaited statement](#), for which we'd also been consulted. [It's a miserable failure](#) and was widely derided. International federations are now looking at their own policies.

In December the UK group Sport Resolutions hosted a discussion with Dr Williams and Joanna Harper, [as reported here](#). There is a long way to go, but the UK has taken a stand and given us something positive to build on.

In the summer, we used the Tokyo Olympics to generate media coverage, like these articles in the National Review, a widely-read American publication, about [Laurel Hubbard qualifying for Tokyo](#), and about how [women's sports are under attack](#). Our [analysis shows just how unfair this policy is for women](#). While some media were celebrating the inclusion of trans athletes, we wrote [about the women who'd been excluded](#).

Earlier in the year we responded to consultations by [British Cycling](#) and the [Rugby Football Union](#), and to [World Athletics](#), among others. We will now press for them to properly consider the new SCEG guidance.



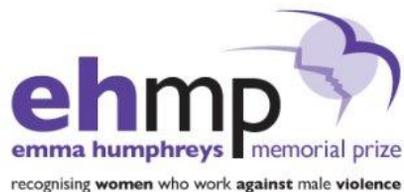
## Prisons

Prisoner FDJ's legal challenge against the Ministry of Justice was finally heard in March, and the ruling given in July. Our research formed part of the evidence in her case. While the court decided that the policy was lawful, [there were positives to be taken from the case and the judgement.](#)

One consequence appears to be that the prison service is starting to consult more carefully. We were invited to a discussion about policy for who searches trans-identifying prisoners.

There is also a change in data collection, following the humiliating comments by the judge when counsel for the MoJ was unable to say how many trans-identifying prisoners there were in the system. The case was not won but the scrutiny has undoubtedly made a difference for the better. After the case was heard, we were able to reveal our evidence.

We'd discovered through Freedom of Information requests that the policy had been developed in part [to give trans-identifying males access to female company.](#) You couldn't make it up. Undoing this mess will be a long slow process, as [this timeline](#) shows. We will keep pressing, along with other groups, to get this shameful policy reversed.



Nicola was honoured to be [shortlisted for both the Emma Humphreys Memorial Prize](#) and the Centre for Women's Justice Award, announced at FiLiA in October.

## Protecting our words

Last year, along with our core focus on prisons, sport and legal reform, we said we would work to protect the meaning of the words “woman” and “female” in the media and in data collection. All of our sex-based rights depend on this. If men can be counted as women, in crime statistics for example, and if male crimes are reported as being by women, then the truth disappears.

Sexual and violent crimes are overwhelmingly committed by males and rarely by females. Accurate reporting by sex – not by gender identity – is central to the public understanding of such criminal activity and the vastly greater threat posed by males as compared to females. This underpins the worldwide recognition of the value of sex segregation in certain circumstances. We’ve written about how this understanding is being distorted in the UK both by [crime data](#) and by [media reporting](#). We also made the case in [our submission to the Home Office](#) consultation on its strategy for prevention of violence against women and girls.

## Keeping the media honest

We challenge media reports where male crimes are reported as being by women. Here’s [a review of just a few of the complaints](#) we’ve made. [Sometimes we win](#) and [get a correction](#).

We’ve had several meetings with IPSO, the media regulator, about their transgender reporting guidelines, including with the chairman. We will keep talking to them until we get the change that’s needed.

THE TIMES

Mike Wade

Monday December 06 2021, 12:01am,  
The Times

## Feminists challenge gender choice on census



Nicola Williams, of Fair Play for Women, called the guidance “unlawful”

Coverage of our current legal action against the Scottish government

## Keeping data true

The national census is a big deal because it is seen as the gold standard for data collection in the UK. But there is already considerable damage elsewhere. We revealed the shocking story of [how activists worked to replace sex with gender identity in healthcare data](#), and then in personal healthcare records. This means people of both sexes, including trans-identifying people, may be missing out on healthcare screening, because NHS systems have misrecorded their sex. This benefits no one. All this has happened over the past ten years or so, under the radar. We are finally getting it out into the light. We’ve also raised these issues with the EHRC.

## Raising awareness

There's been plenty of radio and TV coverage. There's been good coverage in the Times and Daily Telegraph, plus coverage on the sport issues in the Guardian, including this [opinion piece by Nicola](#) herself. The conversion therapy case and the census case were both covered in the Daily Mail/ Mail on Sunday.

Here's Nicola explaining the issues around the GRA [on GB News](#); on [the BBC talking about sport](#); and on [Sky News talking about the new UK Sports Councils](#) guidance.

You can see more of Nicola's media appearances on [our Facebook page](#). She also made a memorable appearance in the BBC documentary, 'Womanhood', facing a hostile panel, as described in [this Twitter thread](#)

We're seeing website traffic growing all the time, with visitors from government departments in the UK and elsewhere, from local and regional government, national and international law firms, schools and universities, print and broadcast media. The appearance of Laurel Hubbard at the Tokyo Olympics on 2 August prompted almost 20,000 visits to our website on one day.

If you missed the impressive "Nolan investigates" podcast series, we've got [transcripts of all ten episodes](#) on our website.

We began 2021 with 30,000 Twitter followers, hit 40,000 in June, and have just passed 50,000.

## What next?

This past year was about building influence and credibility, and changing minds. Our focus for 2022 is to convert that strong base into change on the ground, the delivery of actual policies that restore our sex-based rights in practice. We must also work together with Scottish women to oppose self-identification in the Gender Recognition Act there, which would be disastrous for women in Scotland with knock-on effects right across the UK.



Dr Nicola Williams

## What can you do?

We know it's hard to speak up. Our [analysis of responses to our crowdfunders](#) shows how women are still afraid to do so.

At the same time, people regularly contact us asking how they can help. So we put together [this page of resources](#) to make it easy to take action in defence of our rights.