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What a difference a year makes – especially if you are in Scotland. The GRR bill passed on 22 December last year despite the strenuous efforts of many campaign groups, including Fair Play For Women, working together with women in Scotland. We knew Holyrood was almost certainly a lost cause for us but it was still a dark day when the bill passed and the MSPs applauded the trans activists in the gallery.

As you know, the UK government was persuaded to use its powers to block the bill. This didn't come out of nowhere. Knowing the bill would probably be passed, for the past year we'd been [warning the UK government of its effects](#), and that they'd have only four weeks to act. It was not enough that the bill was against UK government policy, or that many of us found it objectionable and problematic. We had to demonstrate that [the bill would impact the working of the Equality Act](#). It was a collaborative effort over Christmas and New Year to get the job done.

Here we are a year on from the Holyrood vote, and the UK government's decision to block the bill has been ruled lawful and reasonable in a Scottish court. One step at a time, it's how we will protect and regain our rights, on behalf of all women and girls.

The pool legal action

We said last year that if sports bodies did not reinstate fairness for women and girls, we would consider legal action. Now a group of thirty female players is doing that, with our support. Read their story on their [CrowdJustice page](#). Having raised enough money for the first stage, the crowdfunder is paused. Their solicitor will now send a letter before action to the pool authorities setting out the case.

This could be a game-changer.


Let women play pool!

by A group of women pool players who want fairness

Pool player who refused to play final against transgender rival says walk-out was about 'not being silenced', as her son hails her as 'the champ': 'I don't care about money, it means nothing without fairness'

• Legend Pocher withdrew of a final after refusing to face transgender opponent
 • Hermit Hayes was awarded the victory to losing Pocher's decision to sit out
 • Pocher can't have appealed to mother's decision and dub over the 'champ'

Supported by



Legal campaign Lawyers: Doyle Clayton England, United Kingdom

A group of women pool players who want fairness

Case Detail



We are a group of female players from across the UK and abroad, ranging from young to old with a passion for playing pool, striving to regain fairness for female-born players in the women's category.

Funded
on 08th December 2023

£20,050

pledged of £50,000 stretch target from 852 pledges

Share on Facebook

Policy change in sport

A year of progress, as [this timeline](#) shows. The decision by World Athletics provided a lead which other sports can choose to follow. We are finding that many still need persuading, so it is an ongoing task.

Things are moving in the right direction, and there are more policy changes in the works. But it can take multiple emails to get a meeting, and two or three meetings to get to a policy change, so you can see how much time and patience is needed.

This is not about trans inclusion, it's about female inclusion, as shown in our film, [The Inclusion Delusion](#). Deciding who is eligible for the female category must be separated from deciding how to accommodate people who deny their sex. As Serena Partrick recently tweeted, At every stage of the transgender madness, law makers & policy writers have asked "can we do this for men?" not "should we do this to women?".

Part of the challenge is that the scale of the problem has been hidden. But without a protected female category, women and girls are edged out of sport. We will be publishing a report on this in January.

Some highlights in sport

Jan – ours was the only voice for protecting women's sport at Westminster Insights Women's Sport conference

March – World Athletics announcement; speaking at Spain women's sport conference

May – 'The Inclusion Delusion' film launched; female category protected by British Cycling

July – speaking at ICONS conference USA; female category protected by UCI world cycling

September – [sea shore angling again!](#)

November – problems in football exposed; [pool legal action launched](#) and stage one funded; speaking at the Battle of Ideas

Feb – media coverage on how girls in cricket are missing out because of trans players; here's our [opinion column](#)

April – speaking at WDI conference, London

June – the first story on [women's sea shore angling](#) hits the press

August – female category protected by British Rowing and Badminton England

October – hosting a sport panel for four women's groups at FiLiA

December – female sport defended in House of Lords safeguarding debate



Fiona speaking on the international sports panel at the ICONS conference in Denver, July 2023

Influencing law-makers in the UK

We submitted evidence to [eight UK consultations](#), on topics including data recording, sport integrity, human rights at work, women's reproductive health, and toilets. We met with politicians from both the Conservative and Labour parties. We wrote to, and met with, senior civil servants across several areas of government. We do not generally publicise these meetings as we feel we can accomplish more by enabling open conversations. Different groups work in different ways, all of it adding up to pressure for change.

One obvious change was the announcement in the House of Commons on 6 December by the Minister for Women and Equalities, Kemi Badenoch, of revisions to the approved countries list. This was the end of a year's work, in which Fair Play For Women identified that there was a problem with this list, alerted the government to it and lobbied for change. The Gender Recognition Act, passed by a Labour government in 2004, included automatic acceptance of Gender Recognition Certificates from other countries whose approach was at least as rigorous as ours. This list of 'approved countries' was to be reviewed regularly, so that countries which changed their policy could be added or taken off the list as appropriate. Since the last update in 2011, some countries, US states and Australian states have adopted self-identification, removing all medical gatekeeping. They have now been taken off the list, since the UK does not accept self-identification as the basis for changing legally-registered sex.



Minister for women and equalities, Kemi Badenoch

Our work on data collection in the UK, with the Census cases and lobbying both the Office for National Statistics and the Office for Statistical Regulation (OSR), has also produced some concrete results. In the summer we managed to pause the 'sex harmonisation project' underway at the Government Statistical Service (GSS) just weeks before it was to be published. We argued that no decisions should be made until lessons had been learned from the Census. It seems that people did not understand the gender identity question in the Census and may have answered incorrectly. We and others have recently met with the OSR to discuss what we need to see in their revised guidance on recording sex and gender. More good news is that Professor Alice Sullivan has been appointed to lead an academic review for the government on guidance on collecting and reporting data on sex, for which we will be consulted. Meetings with the OSR are continuing.

Working with the Equality and Human Rights Commission

We have made [numerous reports to the EHRC showing employers misrepresenting the Equality Act](#). The 'genuine occupational requirements' in Schedule 9 of the Act allow some jobs to be restricted to women, like in the domestic violence sector or in healthcare. But it is not unusual to see a job being advertised as 'open to anyone who identifies as a woman'. There is no basis for this in law. We fully expect the EHRC to put a stop to this soon.

Engaging with the United Nations

We have taken part in [four United Nations consultations](#), on the rights of women and children and on same-sex attraction. With other groups, we demanded to meet with the Independent Expert on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, Victor Madrigal-Borloz, when he visited the UK in the spring. Madrigal-Borloz was a leading proponent of self-identification, with a total disregard for the impact on women and girls. Despite his best efforts to fend us off, we succeeded in getting [a meeting in which we were able to state our concerns and provide evidence](#), supported by a written pre-briefing. We didn't change his mind, but the alternative is to let these moments pass without registering that there are serious concerns. These are now on the record. It's a start.



Victor refused to line up with us for the conventional friendly group photo

The International Consortium on Female Sport ([ICFS](#)) launched in January 2023, with Fair Play For Women as a founding member. We work together across a dozen countries to keep the issues in the public eye, and to lobby international sport federations for change.

We have also engaged with the UN as the ICFS. Madrigal-Borloz was one of several UN 'independent experts' who issued a statement on how sport transgender people must be allowed to play sport in their gender identity. We disagreed strongly, [writing to the issuing group](#) as well as to various UN committees, like that for Human Rights Committee and for the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). We wrote to UN senior staff too.

It is increasingly clear that international bodies like the UN have been hearing more from trans lobby groups than from those defending the needs and rights of women and girls. This is an area where we and others will do further work in 2024.

Speaking at events

We look for opportunities to raise awareness, to speak to decision-makers who haven't yet understood or addressed the problems their policies create for women and girls.

This year we were invited to speak at several feminist and activist conferences, and we gave [a briefing to the Spanish Senate](#). This is a great way to share what we have learned about the issues and how best to address them. We also attend relevant events and speak from the floor.

Most audiences were welcoming and supportive. Some were mixed or naïve, and one was borderline hostile – but it's all good!



2023 International Women's Sports Summit
Dorset Marriott Hotel, Dorset, UK, 27-28, 2023



- Home
- Courses
- Research
- News
- Events

Education for Women's Liberation

04 February 2023, 10:00 am-9:00 pm



Press and media enquiries



Media reporting

The main media regulator, IPSO, finally published draft new guidelines on reporting sex and gender identity. [Baby steps, but better](#). We are starting to see a few brave media outlets daring to call a man 'he' when they think they can get away with it. The Scottish double rapist Adam Graham aka Isla Bryson in January was one, though it is shocking how many other criminal males are accorded their preferred pronouns. This is misleading and inaccurate reporting which is not in the interests of women and girls.



Prisons

In March 2023 a revised [policy on the care and management of transgender prisoners](#) for England and Wales was published by the Ministry of Justice. While there is still the possibility that a male could be transferred to a women's prison, this policy is a significant step forward, taking a more balanced approach to the conflicting needs of women and trans-identifying males. It also applies retrospectively, meaning that past decisions to allow male offenders into women's prisons can be reviewed. This is the official version of a policy announcement made in 2022 by the then Justice Secretary, Dominic Raab. Recent [changes to Scottish prison policy](#) still show a reflexive willingness to recognise claimed gender identity, despite the Isla Bryson case. There is more to do in prisons across the UK.



What's coming in 2024?

The possibility of a conversion therapy bill still hasn't gone away. The issue is not that we want conversion therapy, of course we don't – though fortunately there is no evidence that it is happening in the UK. The issue is that including 'gender identity' in such a bill makes it even more difficult, possibly a criminal act, for parents, teachers and therapists to explore why someone thinks they are trans. It really matters that adults supporting young people are allowed to keep an open mind rather than having to affirm a trans identity. Most young people reconcile with their birth sex if not affirmed, and almost all who are affirmed and put on puberty blockers go on to cross-sex hormones. This is not a neutral outcome given the health complications that follow. We will continue to work with other campaign groups to protect people, especially same-sex attracted youngsters.

We are still waiting for football at UK and world level to reinstate fairness and safety for female players. The [Sheffield and Hallamshire league story](#) garnered huge media attention. We were in dialogue with these players and team managers before the story broke. That prompted [a letter to the Football Association from around 70 parliamentarians](#) demanding change. Given the scale of football – two million people play regularly in England alone, of whom 10% are female – we can expect to hear more about this.

Getting the word out

2023 has been the year when the UK media really developed an appetite for stories about how transgender inclusion was making a mockery of sport. Not all media, of course. Highlights were the series of [cricket stories](#) in the spring; then three on [sea angling](#) culminating in [a win for women](#); several on football and most recently the [pool stories](#). There's even been a story about [a male women's world champion in croquet](#). (Some of these reports are paywalled.) This story of [British Cycling telling women they couldn't say man or male](#) is particularly shocking. In December we published [this definitive account of the trans colonisation of women's sport](#).

What you can do

We know it is hard to speak up. 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](#). Please keep speaking up, in person informally as well as by contacting decision-makers and elected representatives. Awareness is growing but a lot of people still don't understand what's going on and why it matters. When they do, they are almost always on the side of protecting privacy, dignity, safety and fairness for women and girls.

[You can support us here](#)

