

Mediatique

Examining trends in editorial standards in coverage of transgender issues

IPSO

November 2020

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A. Executive summary

1. Introduction and project objectives

In recent years, discussion of transgender-related issues has risen to a more prominent position on the news agenda. While the increase in interest may have been catalysed by high-profile celebrities who have transitioned from the gender assigned to them at birth (such as Caitlyn Jenner, the actress Laverne Cox, Big Brother winner Nadia Almada and former soldier Chelsea Manning), there has been an accompanying discussion of a wide range of transgender-related topics, heightening interest in the subject in the public sphere.

In particular, there has been much commentary surrounding the Government proposals to reform the Gender Recognition Act ('GRA'), including the recently abandoned policy of so-called 'self-identification' for legal gender recognition, and heated and ongoing debates around how trans children should be treated.

Questions have been raised around coverage in the press, with community groups and other interested parties seeking to influence how the subject is covered, including the terms, approaches and definitions that are considered acceptable. While it is normal for parameters that determine acceptable ways of treating a subject to evolve over time in line with changes in social attitudes and behaviours, the goalposts of acceptability have shifted very rapidly for transgender-related discussions.

These issues have inspired fierce debate in public and some individuals or groups representing transgender interests have felt that lines have been crossed, potentially, in terms of accuracy, prejudice, discrimination and privacy. The Independent Press Standards Organisation ('IPSO') released its own guidance on reporting of transgender-related matters in 2016 and, in light of the ongoing debate, invited external consultants to conduct a rigorous assessment of how editorial standards in coverage have evolved over the past 10 years and whether and to what extent editorial standards in coverage have been affected by changes in policy such as those introduced by IPSO.

Strategy consultancy Mediatique, with independent consultant Conrad Roeber and data science consultancy QuantSpark (the 'Project Team'¹), were commissioned by IPSO in May 2019 to deliver this analysis. The project was designed to explore changes in editorial standards in coverage during the past decade, broadly addressing:

- How have standards in coverage of transgender matters changed?
- What factors may have influenced any change and whether (and the degree to which) they were successful in fomenting positive developments?

We have addressed these questions using the following methodologies:

- **Quantitative analysis:** use of data science to examine coverage of transgender issues over the 10-year period May 2009 to May 2019, to produce definitive analysis of occurrences and context for coverage. We created a 'corpus' of over 12,000 articles from a range of representative publications (national dailies and Sunday newspapers, regional titles, magazines and periodicals) and interrogated the resultant database to understand aggregate trends in subject matter and terminology deployed in coverage.
- **Manual textual case study analysis:** detailed textual examination of the coverage of a selection of 11 key events in the 10-year project analysis period, including news reports and comment pieces – approximately 230 articles in total.

¹ See Appendix C for biographies of the companies and individuals involved in preparing and writing this report.

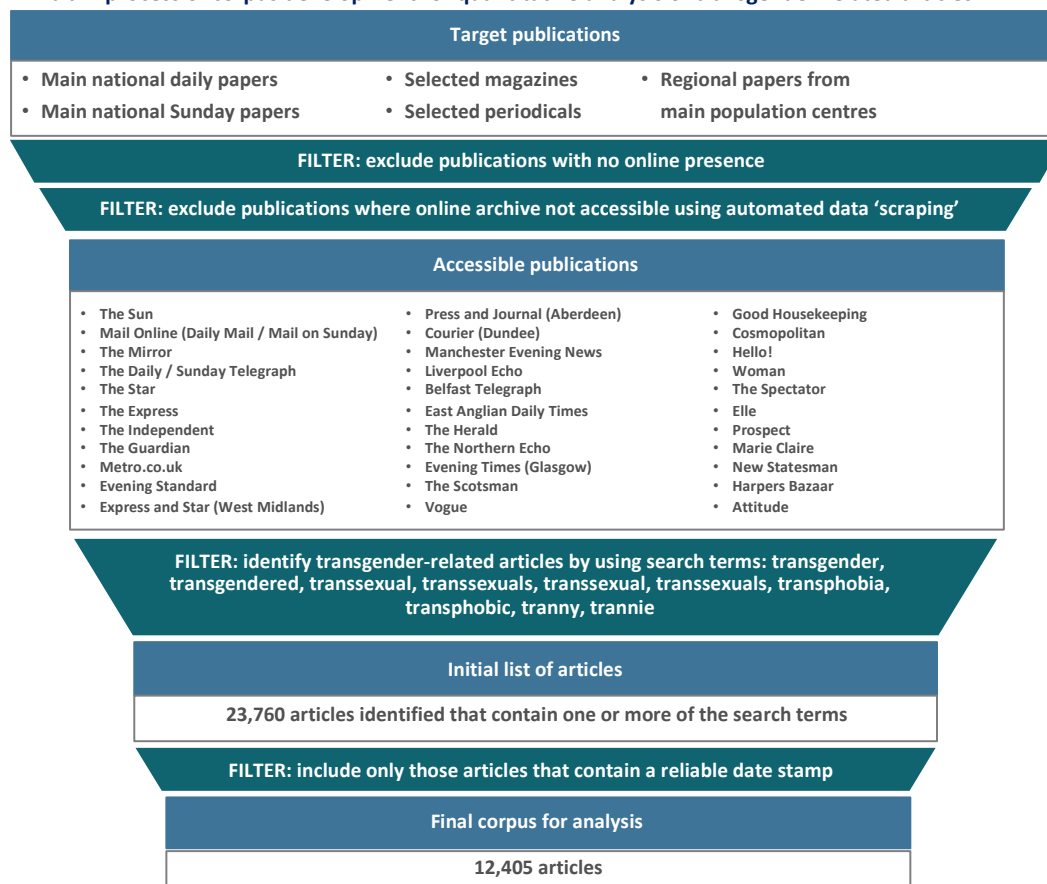
- **Interviews:** we conducted in-depth interviews with 43 people including editorial representatives (editors and journalists) from selected newspapers and other publications; representatives of transgender community, feminist and other groups; and individuals.
- **Secondary research:** into social attitudes and other relevant studies, publications by transgender groups and other interested parties.

2. Quantitative analysis of coverage

Our quantitative analysis of a large sample of coverage of transgender-related issues shows a dramatic rise in the number of articles published concerning transgender-related stories, a measurable evolution in terminology deployed during the analysis period and a marked change in subjects addressed.

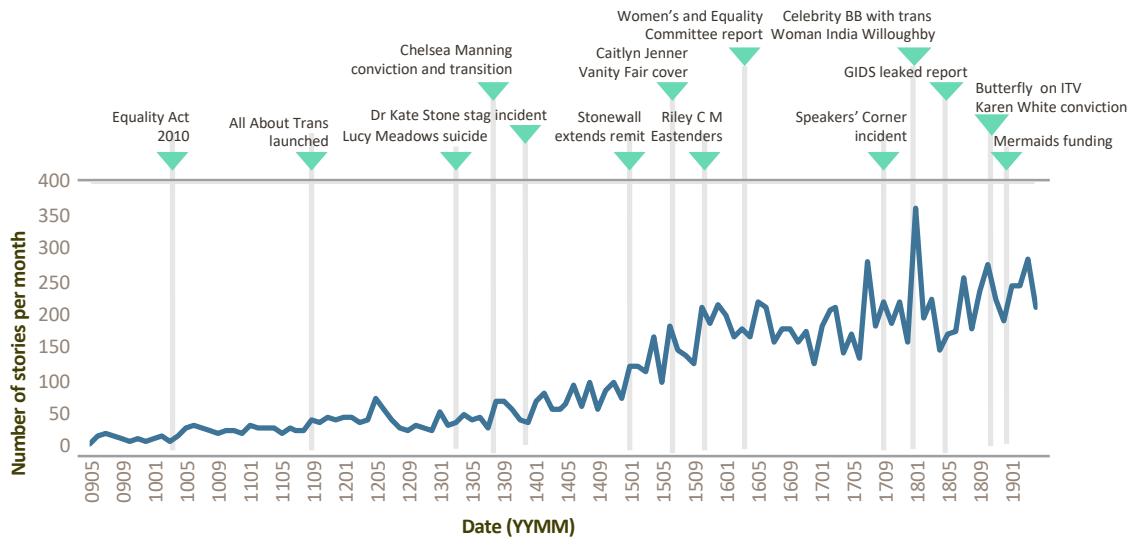
In order to develop this objective perspective on coverage volume, subjects and language, QuantSpark created a ‘corpus’ of some 12,000 articles published in newspapers, magazines and journals during the period May 2009 to May 2019. Though the sample is not representative of all publications and there are discrepancies between online and print versions, we believe that the publications included represent a good and comprehensive sample of coverage types during this period.

Exhibit 1: process of corpus development for quantitative analysis of transgender-related articles



Our analysis of these articles indicated significant growth in the number of transgender-related stories published in all areas of the UK press, growth that is particularly marked during the past five years.

Exhibit 2: transgender-related stories published each month vs some key events

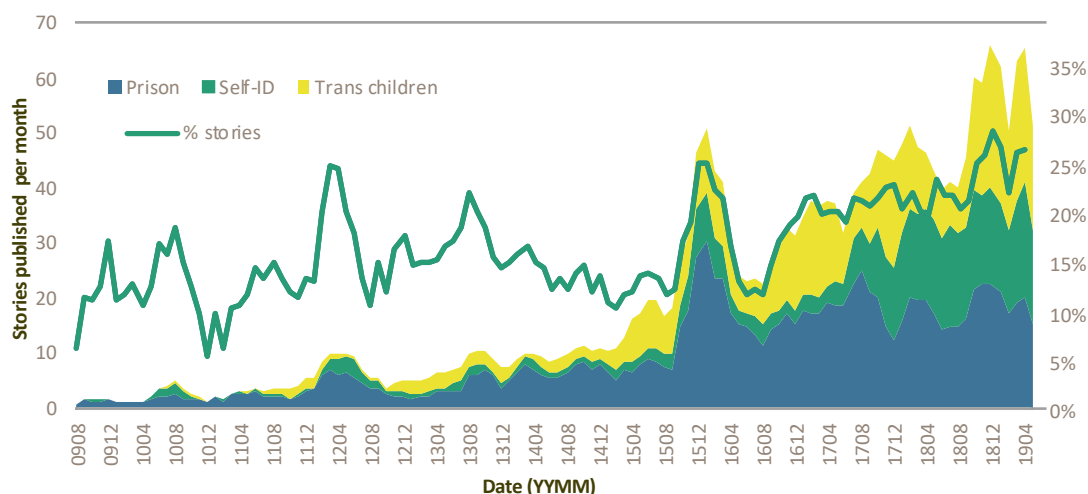


Sources: QuantSpark, Mediatique analysis

A vast range of subjects (detailed in our timeline and in the case studies) has been treated in these articles and while it is clear that some coverage spikes correspond to celebrity events (such as Caitlyn Jenner’s coming out as a trans woman or the release of *The Danish Girl*) there also appears to be a rise in stories that cover a full range of ‘adjacent’ subjects (such as those relating to general policy towards transgender adults and children) when these spikes are experienced.

The crescendo in story growth seen in later years comes during a period during which proposals for reform of the GRA have been grasped and fully debated in a way that the issues around transgender rights and policies had not been when relevant laws were last introduced (the 2004 GRA and the 2010 Equality Act). Indeed, while it is not possible to attribute causality to the changes in coverage witnessed during this period, there has been in recent years a marked increase in the number of articles concerning subjects relating to policy rather than personalities, both in absolute terms and as a proportion of all transgender-related stories, as shown in the exhibit below.

Exhibit 3: number of stories relating to selected transgender-related issues published per month

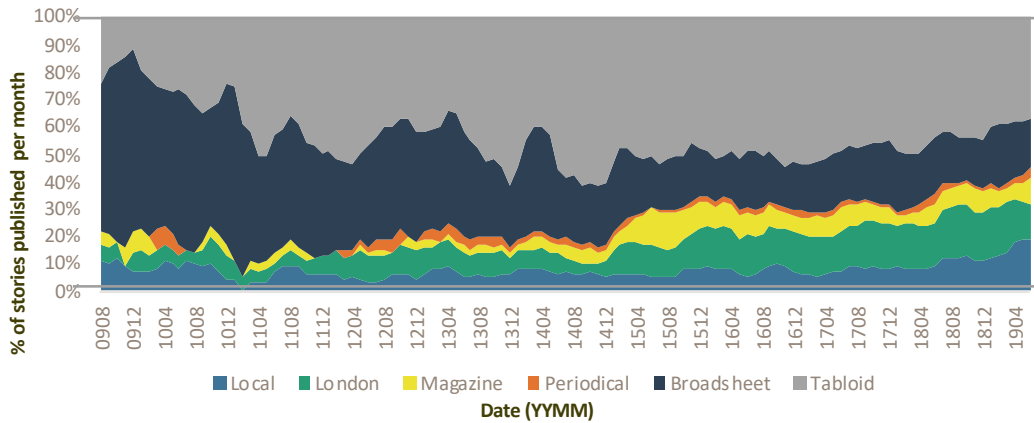


Source: QuantSpark, Mediatique analysis

Notes: 4-month rolling average of the number of stories published on each topic. Stories identified using a range of search terms. % stories: Notes: Stories containing references to trans children, prisons or self-ID as a % of total transgender-related stories.

All publication types are publishing more transgender-related stories but most notable has been the rise in the proportion of transgender-related stories published by the tabloid press. At the start of the decade, most of the stories were published in the broadsheets but over half of the stories published now are in tabloids (insofar as represented by our corpus).

Exhibit 4: share of the corpus of transgender-related stories published, by publication type

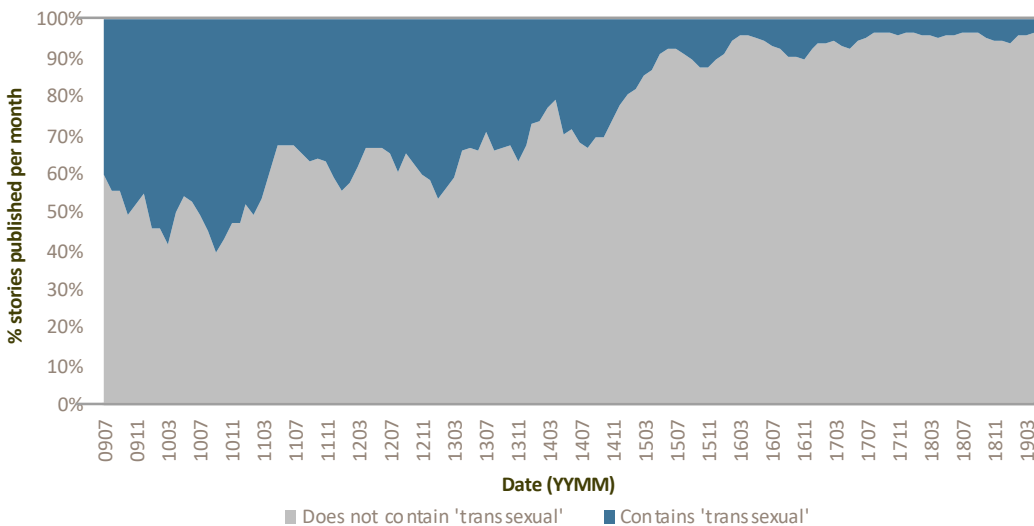


Source: QuantSpark, Mediatique analysis

In terms of language, during the ten-year analysis period there has been a widespread adoption of language that generally indicates acceptance of the underlying concepts used to describe and understand transgender issues. Some terms have had greater acceptance than others.

- The term ‘gender identity’ appears in roughly the same proportion of stories throughout the analysis period (~20%)
- Terms such as ‘tranny’ or ‘gender-bender’, which are considered offensive, while never particularly prevalent in coverage during the analysis period, now appear in only a tiny proportion (less than 1% in 2018-19, compared to 10% in 2009-10) of transgender-related stories.
- The proportion of stories which contain ‘transsexual’ has fallen dramatically in the analysis period (see exhibit below).

Exhibit 5: stories published per month containing ‘transsexual’ as a proportion of total transgender-related stories



Notes: 4-month rolling average of the number of stories published that contain ‘transsexual’ at least once expressed as a % of total transgender-related stories.

Source: QuantSpark, Mediatique analysis

- While in our interviews editors expressed some resistance to the use of language that they believe readers will find hard to grasp, including preferred plural pronouns (‘they’, ‘them’) relating to ‘non-binary’ gender identities, the number of stories that mention ‘non-binary’ has increased from zero for the whole period before 2013 to around 25 per month during the last year of analysis (2018-19), indicating that the concept is becoming prominent in coverage of transgender-related issues.

- ‘Gender reassignment’ is the expression preferred by transgender community groups in place of ‘sex change’ and around 70% of relevant articles now use it as opposed to ~30% that use ‘sex change’, an almost exact reversal of the proportions in 2008-09.
- The construction to denote sex at birth preferred by many transgender community groups is ‘assigned gender or sex at birth’ in place of ‘born male / female’. Our analysis shows only a slight increase in the use of this term during the analysis period. Prior to 2013 there were virtually no articles that contained ‘assigned gender’ and in 2018-19 approximately 25 mentions only.
- There is some sensitivity within the transgender community around the terms ‘pre-op’ or ‘post-op’ and ‘male-bodied’ or ‘female-bodied’ but our analysis indicates very low usage of these expressions in absolute and relative terms throughout the analysis period.
- Use of the terms ‘lobby’ or ‘activist’ when attached to ‘trans’ or ‘transgender’ is considered pejorative by some when used to describe transgender individuals or community groups. Our analysis indicates that the proportion of stories using at least one of these terms has increased, but from a very low 2% in 2014-15 to around 9% in 2018-19.

This quantitative analysis component of our research is descriptive and does not seek to capture observations beyond volume and language. Accordingly, we also conducted a qualitative analysis of coverage of a range of representative news events as case studies of how coverage has evolved during the analysis period.

3. Qualitative case study analysis

This analysis focused on a series of news events that we consider to be representative of the full range of stories in transgender-related coverage during the analysis period. It was aimed at examining how and whether editorial standards may have been met or compromised in the coverage of these stories. We have selected news events based on the number of articles published and their availability (details of these news events are provided in full in Appendix A).

Exhibit 6: transgender timeline events selected for manual analysis

09-10	10-11	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19
			Miss Universe dis-qualification						
			Chelsea Manning conviction and transition						
				Caitlyn Jenner Vanity Fair cover					
				Riley Carter Millington first trans actor cast in EastEnders					
				Women and Equalities Select Committee report					
							Speaker’s Corner incident		
							Tavistock GIDS rise in referrals / resignations over approach to trans children		
								ITV show about a trans child Butterfly is broadcast	
								Rachel McKinnon first trans woman track cycling record	
								Trans woman prisoner Karen White conviction	
								Mermaids Lottery Fund award confirmation	

Our aim has been to look at the coverage of these events in detail, in order to ascertain whether and how they meet the editorial standards implied by the Code and whether they align with the Guidance issued by IPSO in 2016.

Our aim is not to identify formal breaches of the Code but to examine whether there are any areas that might indicate Code or Guidance issues.

a. Coverage types

The people we spoke to acknowledged the dramatic changes in coverage of transgender-related issues that have occurred over the past 10 to 20 years. Editors, writers, transgender community groups and individuals, and feminist groups all broadly align on there being three types of coverage approach (also corresponding to three consecutive phases in time):

- Type I: Transgender status as ‘anomaly’: during the 1980s, 1990s and early 2000s (mostly prior to the analysis period for this project) when the idea of being trans was relatively new to the public, terms such as ‘tranny’ or ‘gender-bender’ were used and the subject was treated with a prurient tone. The Lucy Meadows case, beyond the tail end of the period in which this coverage type was typically published (early 2013) was understood to be the last of this type of coverage approach, seen to epitomise the harm that could be done by such stories.
- Type II: Human interest: as society’s attitudes began to change, coverage shifted: pejorative terms largely disappeared, and coverage usually focused on the human interest in a story, typically surrounding a celebrity or societal first (e.g., Laverne Cox, Caitlyn Jenner).
- Type III: Policy, rights and children: as policy issues, rather than human stories, became the focus, the tone of coverage changed as it moved away from individuals to addressing how institutions should deal with the rights and treatment of both transgender adults and children.

Our interlocutors disagreed on the extent to which they considered this final type of coverage remains within the editorial standards expected of the UK press. Most (though not all) of the transgender community groups and individuals we spoke to accepted that language had changed in a positive way but they argued that the undercurrents in coverage of policy (in the third type of coverage) were aggressive and damaging to transgender individuals, almost as if – in their view – certain publications and writers were waging a vendetta against trans people and organisations.

In contrast, most of the writers, publishers and feminist groups we spoke to argued that it was the duty of the press to explore and challenge where they believed the public interest was involved, particularly if the extension of rights for one group may have an impact on those of another or where vulnerable children were being offered treatment pathways that were not fully tested. They maintained that in questioning proposed changes to policy and legislation they nevertheless maintained a respectful treatment of transgender individuals and groups.

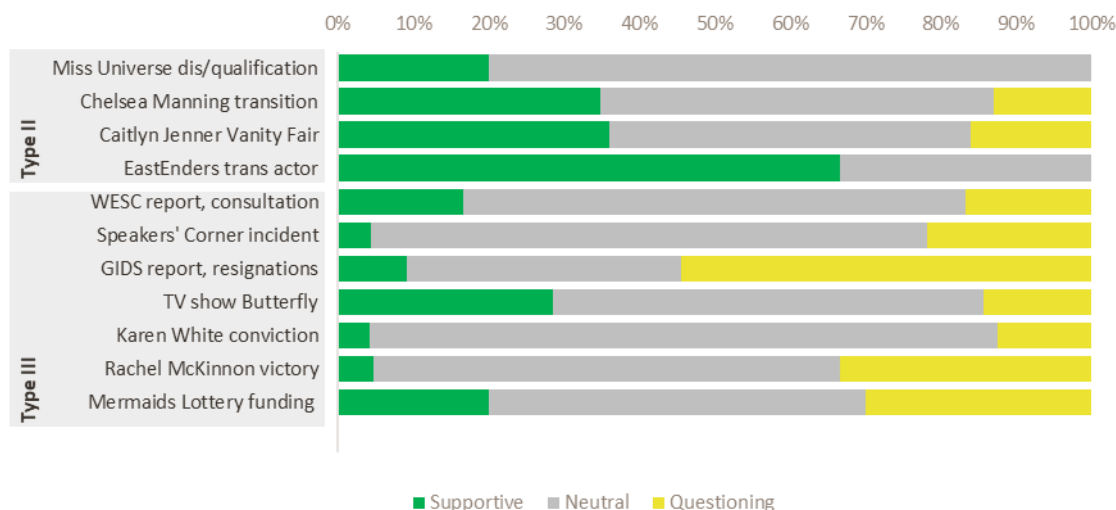
In conducting our analysis, we have been mindful of this major difference in perspective. However, our objective has not been to adjudicate on the arguments themselves but to explore whether editorial standards (*albeit* evolving during this period) have been maintained as the debates have been conducted.

b. Our analysis of the articles

Our observations from this case study analysis confirmed the perspectives of most of our interlocutors: that the nature of coverage changed quite dramatically as the public became more familiar with transgender-related stories, typically focused on celebrities, but then the tone changed again as the relevant real-world events became more focused on policy and legislation.

We considered the ‘editorial position’ of each article examined (classified as Supportive, Neutral and Questioning) and, as a percentage of stories we reviewed for this analysis, there was a greater number of Questioning stories for events that could be characterised as Type III type coverage than Type II coverage, as follows:

Exhibit 7: Editorial position of articles surveyed as % of total for each case study



Source: Analysis by Mediatique and QuantSpark

- The transgender Miss Universe contestant (2012), Caitlyn Jenner’s ‘coming out’ and the casting of a transgender actor in *EastEnders* (both in 2015) typify the more sympathetic human interest-focused coverage of transgender individuals associated with Type II. Coverage of Chelsea Manning’s transition (2013) is complicated by the serious nature of her criminal conviction but the coverage of her transition is broadly sympathetic.
- Amongst Type II articles (78 in total) we identified only 12 cases where there may have been minor editorial standards issues. Of these:
 - Nine were matters of accuracy
 - Two were matters of potential prejudice / discrimination²
 - One was a matter of potential privacy intrusion
- Type III coverage events appear mainly in the second part of the decade and saw, in addition to continued human interest stories, an increasing number of stories related to debate around various policies on treatments and individual rights and the implications of these for transgender and non-transgender individuals and groups.
- The turning point in coverage tone and content came with the Women and Equalities Committee (‘WEC’) report on transgender equality, which set out proposals to de-medicalise the process of obtaining a Gender Recognition Certificate (‘GRC’) and make it a matter of what became to be called ‘self-identification’ (or ‘self-ID’).
- As would be expected, there was a greater polarisation of editorial position represented in this Type III coverage: 40 of the articles (out of a total of 155) we reviewed for these seven events we categorised as Questioning, 19 we categorised as Supportive, the rest being Neutral.
- Amongst the Type III articles we identified 36 cases where there may have been editorial standards issues, most of which were related to coverage of the WEC report, the Speakers’ Corner incident and the GIDS controversies, which clearly encapsulate the central issues in this debate. Of these:
 - 34 were potential issues around accuracy
 - Two were potential issues around privacy

² We use our judgement to determine whether points made in the article raise issues around the Codes or Guidance. Use of pre-transition pronouns is identified as an issue in IPSO’s Guidance which editors and journalists should consider. Use of statistics without support raises accuracy issues. Use of pejorative terms would raise issues around discrimination.

- Most of the accuracy issues relate to the use of suicide statistics or proportion of transgender people within the population, which we mention in e. Accuracy (statistics) below.
- Generally, it is our perspective that most of the debate around these serious and contentious issues, while heated at times, is conducted broadly within the parameters set by the Codes and Guidance.

Our analysis of coverage, summarised here and expanded in Section E, is contained in full in Appendix A.

c. Terminology

Terminology functions in an article only if the reader understands what is being described. The language used to describe gender identity and transition is evolving and changing. Some of our interlocutors identified key terms that they would like editors and journalists to use when reporting on these subjects. However, editors and journalists have indicated that they do not believe that all of those terms are yet widely understood. We outline some of these points of difference below:

- Sex change / gender reassignment: the phrase ‘sex change’ is prevalent in several of our cases whereas the transgender community has a preference for ‘gender reassignment’. The use of ‘sex change’ vs ‘gender reassignment’ is not a trivial one, because each denotes a different way of looking at the issue. In our case studies, both terms are used at levels that depend on the story and date. At the time of the Miss Universe story, the concept of gender reassignment was new, so ‘sex change’ was used almost exclusively. The use of terms containing ‘gender reassign’ in our case studies broadly grows during the analysis period, while ‘sex change’ declines.
- Born sex / assigned gender. The use of the expression ‘assigned male / female at birth’ in place of ‘born male / female’ is amongst the preferred usages promoted by some transgender community groups but it appears that the conceptual framework around ‘assigned...’ is not yet widely understood.
- Non-binary and gender identity. The WEC report recommended both adding an X category to the sex marker on British passports and exploring legal protections for non-binary people. The use of ‘non-binary’ responds to the underlying concept of ‘gender identity’ as an ‘internal feeling of one’s gender’, which proposals state can be male, female, something in between, or fluid.

d. Accuracy (rights and legislation)

The laws and rights around sex and gender reassignment – mainly those enshrined in the Equality Act and the Gender Recognition Act (‘GRA’) – are complex. However, there are examples in our analysis of writers who have not described with clarity where access and rights are already afforded according to self-ID and where the GRA proposals would have extended such rights if implemented. This is not to say that arguments that express concerns about self-ID overall do not meet editorial standards, but there is an accuracy issue where the writers do not clearly identify what is possible now *versus* what may be possible in the future.

e. Accuracy (statistics)

There are two main areas of potential concern regarding accuracy in the use of statistics:

- Suicidality of young trans people. The statistic that “48% of young transgender people have attempted suicide” is used frequently by columnists, lobbyists and politicians to reinforce the urgency of ensuring therapeutic support to children who are presenting as transgender. However, this is based on a survey by mental health charity PACE³ of only 27 young transgender people, which undermines its unqualified applicability (a sample that size would imply a wide margin of error). While the Mermaids charity has said its experience points to high levels of suicidality, the NHS’s Tavistock GIDS has suggested that suicidality

³ http://www.queerfutures.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/RARE_Research_Report_PACE_2015.pdf, p. 6.

amongst those who are referred to the service is “extremely rare.”⁴ The use of the specific 48% statistic from the PACE survey highlights potential editorial standards issues relating accuracy.

- Proportion of transgender people in population. Another frequently cited statistic – the number of people who are in some way ‘gender non-conforming’ in society as a whole – is given as being between 600,000 and 650,000 or 1% of the population, and is quoted in the WEC report. This derives from a trial survey conducted by the Equality and Human Rights Commission⁵ which indicates only 25 respondents of the sample of 10,000 identified as trans man, trans woman or transsexual. This small number of respondents (at 0.25%) undermines conclusions about proportion of transgender people in the population at large. The use or repetition of this statistic highlights potential editorial standards issues.

f. Pronouns

For the most part, writers use the preferred pronouns of the transgender subject in the article (a trans man is referred to as ‘he’ and a trans woman is referred to as ‘she’) regardless of whether he or she possesses a GRC.

- For members of the transgender community, using people’s preferred pronouns is part of recognising their gender identity.
- The majority of writers choose to use the person’s preferred pronouns. IPSO’s guidance identifies the use of pronouns as an area of consideration for journalists and editors.
- However, some of our interlocutors raised concerns that this presents problems for the reporting of crimes committed by transgender women, such as the reporting of the trial of Karen White (a transgender woman who was admitted to the female prison estate and sexually assaulted inmates).

Our analysis involved close reading of approximately 230 articles covering our 11 case study events. Bar a few opinion pieces that allow passionate views to cross over into the rare use of disrespectful language, the debates surrounding these contentious events and issues are generally conducted within the bounds of the editorial standards implied by IPSO’s Guidance and the Editors’ Code. Nevertheless, there are areas in terms of accuracy around statistics and laws, the use of pronouns (described above) – perhaps partly due to the fundamental complexity surrounding transgender-related issues – where we have identified some potential editorial standards concerns.

4. Drivers of change

A number of interrelated factors has acted on the editors and writers of transgender-related stories to produce the evolution in tone and content that we have witnessed over the past decade. Amongst these we identify five leading drivers:

- the evolving news agenda
- social media pressure
- notable news events that directly forced publications to examine their approach⁶
- the influence of specific groups which aimed to educate publications about the subject
- the introduction of specific guidelines around coverage.

The positions of our interlocutors are summarised in the table overleaf.

⁴ See first page of <http://gids.nhs.uk/evidence-base>.

⁵ <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/technical-note-measuring-gender-identity>.

⁶ Section C contains a timeline of key transgender-related events

Exhibit 8: Summary of drivers of change in coverage of transgender-related issues

Factor	Perspectives	Mediatique comments on impact
Evolving news agenda	Editors: papers followed (and led) evolving social mores towards transgender issues. More respectful. The news agenda dictates a more serious debate about policy implications that is their duty to conduct. Trans groups: the change in coverage driven by a vendetta against groups and transgender individuals.	High impact. Change in tone coincides with changes in subject matter over the years and changes in society's treatment of the subjects. Respectful tone coincides with society's attitudes evolving. More recent coverage tone and content triggered by GRA report and consultation and GIDS controversies.
Social media pressure	Magazines: editors identify social media pressure on their writers as driving more 'politically correct' approach. Newspapers: editors acknowledge pressure put on writers on social media.	Medium / high impact. Constant factor in coverage. Social media is where groups exert most direct pressure, where the debate is most ferocious. Some individual writers claiming pressure on them might have an impact on willingness to embrace debate.
Notable news events	Shocking events such as Lucy Meadows' suicide, Kate Stone's goring and others were identified by editorial staff at newspapers as instrumental in changing editorial approach. For example, Kate Stone used the coverage of her accident as a means of enlightening editors to the harm done by their approach to coverage. All About Trans was set up after disrespectful coverage of a trans woman pushed onto the tube tracks.	High impact (depending on publication / individual). Acknowledged impact at individual level.
Transgender group action	Some groups have developed engagement strategies for influencing coverage and educating writers at key publications. Some national publications acknowledge that these have been helpful.	Medium impact (depending on publication). Most editors welcome interaction with community groups though, and language has changed in the period of group action.
Publishing guidelines	Regional press indicated that guidance was followed quite slavishly due to inexperience of the issues it addresses. National press did not attribute coverage approach to Guidance on transgender coverage. Some trans community groups indicated that the Guidance was helpful.	Medium impact (depending on publication). Despite not explicitly valuing the IPSO Guidance on transgender coverage, national editors and writers confirmed their default approach towards transgender issues coincides with Guidance areas. Only in the matter of using preferred pronouns was there expression of dissent, with some saying that non-binary pronouns would be hard to use without misleading readers and writers and groups expressing concern about misleading coverage of sexual crimes by trans women that use female pronouns.

Source: Mediatique interviews and analysis

According to editorial staff, foremost amongst the factors identified is the evolving news agenda, twinned with the publications' duty to reflect how society views and discusses a particular subject, its duty to lead, to be socially responsible and treat all subjects with a respect that many admit was lacking in their earlier coverage of transgender subjects.

Some national publications acknowledge that their interactions with groups and individuals who have invested time and effort in engaging with them have also helped develop their appreciation of what respectful coverage looks like. The publications we spoke to are clear that this does not prevent them from debating the issues fully or from being able to disagree but to do so in a manner that respects editorial standards. Exceptions to this are voiced by individual writers, who describe pressure from transgender community individuals and groups as one factor that may encourage them or their editors to stand back from addressing some of the issues, and magazine and newspaper editors who describe the power of social media to pressurise their writers towards a particular perspective.

IPSO guidance on pronouns is identified as problematic for certain types of coverage where clarity is difficult to achieve without recourse to gender-specific pronouns; however, the IPSO guidance on reporting

transgender issues is also singled out by both regional groups and transgender groups as a useful benchmark towards establishing editorial standards in this area.

B. Background materials

1. A note on language

The language used to discuss transgender matters is sensitive, contested and constantly evolving. While it is unlikely, in these circumstances, that any set of terminology will meet with universal approval, we have tried to use neutral and generally accepted language. We have provided a glossary of the terms used within this research report, available in Appendix D. Some terms used herein may be less preferred, or even considered offensive by some. We have sought to limit use of such terms to the extent necessary to communicate the research findings.

In this report we have used the terms ‘transgender community’ and ‘feminist community’. Clearly, there is no well-defined transgender or feminist ‘community’ as such. We have used the term ‘transgender community’ to encompass those groups and individuals working explicitly towards expanding the rights and consideration of transgender people. We use the term ‘feminist community’ to represent those taking a broadly questioning approach to the expansion of transgender rights and of the application of the gender identity framework and treatment pathways to children and more broadly. Neither of these phrases does justice to the complexity of the positions taken on the many difficult issues addressed in these arguments, particularly given that some of the feminist community representatives would argue that they also have the interests of transgender people at the centre of their concerns. Indeed, there are some within the ‘transgender community’ who are opposed to some of the policy liberalisations being debated.

At points in this report we reference the views of the transgender community specifically. While as noted above we recognise that there are differences of opinion within this community, this phrase is intended to reflect the weight of opinion as we understood it from the interviews we conducted as part of the research.

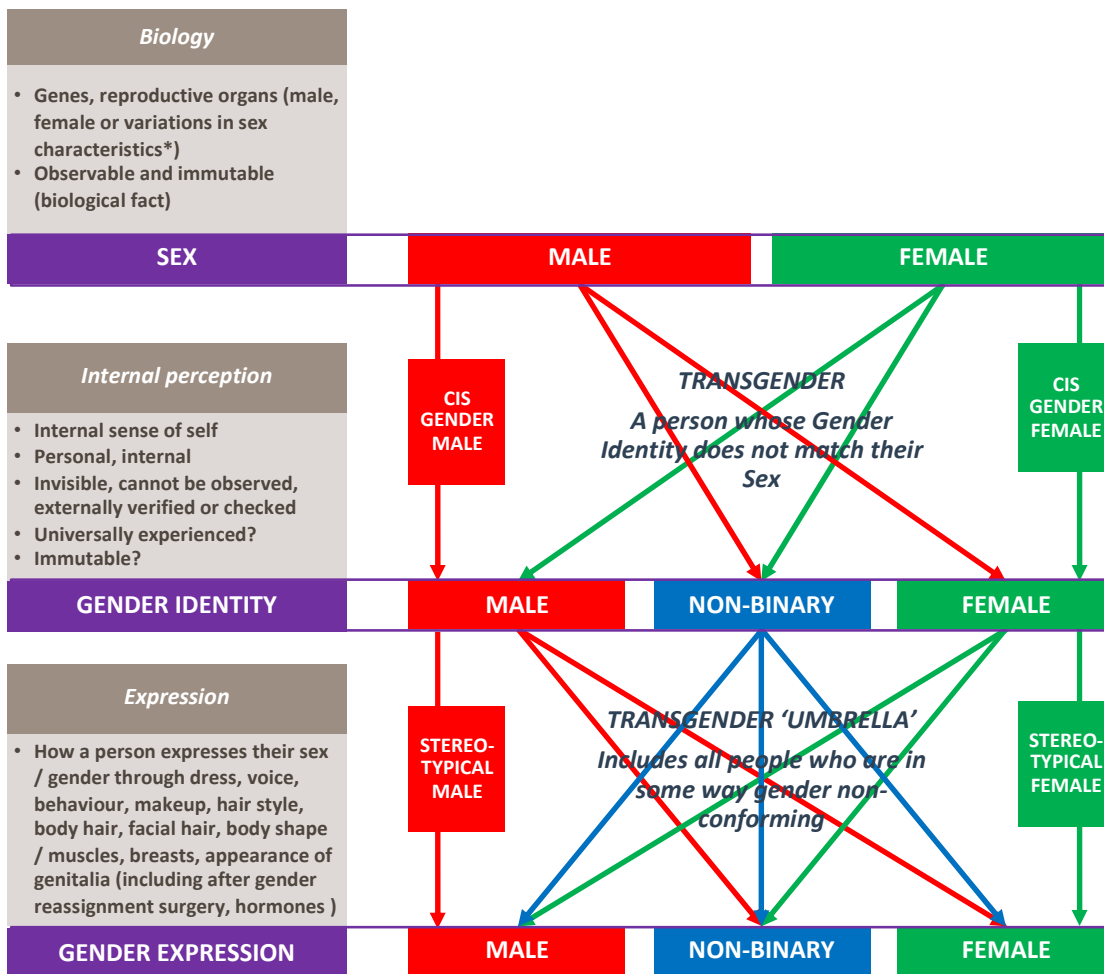
2. Definitions and summary of issues

The treatment of transgender people has evolved over the past century. Initially pathologised, the individual’s belief that he or she is born in the wrong body has been de-pathologised and full legal and medical support is provided in many societies that enables transgender people to transition to a life that is in most respects recognised in the opposite sex to that assigned to them at birth.

In the UK, this support has involved the recent acceptance by the UK government and others of a conceptual framework that identifies gender identity – a personal, internal feeling about one’s gender – as the determinant of ‘true’ gender, whether or not this identity matches the individual’s biological sex as assigned at birth (which is observable and determined by chromosomes and the individual’s organs of sexual reproduction). Indeed, a transgender person is defined as someone whose gender identity does not match his or her biological sex assigned at birth. The term ‘transgender’ has more recently been expanded to include a broader range of gender identities that fall outside the male-female binary, now quite commonly (though not universally) referred to as ‘non-binary’.

This framework is summarised in the diagram overleaf (see the Glossary in Appendix D for full definitions of the relevant terms).

Exhibit 9: conceptual framework



* In its consultation in 2019, the Government Equalities Office (GEO) wrote “our working definition of the umbrella term ‘variations in sex characteristics’ is physical sex development that is different to what is generally expected of males and females... but we are also aware that there are other terms in use, such as intersex and differences of sex development.”

3. The legal framework

UK law provides for binary transgender people (i.e. those who are assigned male at birth but wish to transition to female or vice versa) to change their sex marker on their birth certificates, following a two-year, largely medicalised and expert-mediated process of ‘proof’ that the subject has transitioned to the opposite sex. The transition is certified by a Gender Recognition Certificate (‘GRC’).

The Gender Recognition Act (2004) allows gender recognition for those who have not undergone any physical transition (based on the consideration that some transgender people may not be able to undergo surgery or may have a strong aversion to doing so), thus opening the way for people assigned male at birth who undergo no physical transition to be recognised legally as female and vice versa.

The 2010 Equality Act extended discrimination protection to a new category of ‘gender reassignment’, again designed to protect those who were transitioning (or had transitioned) from the gender they were assigned at birth to the opposite gender.

Following the Women and Equalities Select Committee (‘WEC’) report on transgender equality in 2016, the Government decided to accept the Committee’s proposal to allow people to change the sex marker on their passports using a GRC, an amended birth certificate or a letter from a medical practitioner. Many NHS hospitals and clinics now recognise patients in the gender of their choice. Other institutions have followed suit and many police forces collect crime statistics on the basis of self-declared gender.

The WEC report also proposed that gender recognition should be available to people on the basis of a self-identification of gender, removing the intermediated, two-year, medicalised process introduced in 2004. It also recommended the introduction of an X marker option on official documents and legal protections for non-binary people plus the replacement of ‘gender reassignment’ in Equality law with ‘gender identity’.

These proposals were welcomed by members of the transgender community who believe that the current process is complex, dehumanising, bureaucratic and expensive. However, some felt that these proposals would open up female-only spaces to people who might want to cause them harm and had implications for the treatment of trans children. In July 2020, the Scottish government, which had also been considering the introduction of self-ID for gender recognition, halted its plans to do so (although possibly only temporarily) and in September 2020 the UK government confirmed it would abandon the proposed reform definitively.

In recent years there has been a rise in the number of children referred to the NHS Gender Identity Development Service (GIDS). Some have welcomed this rise in referrals, recognising that many more children are receiving support. However, others have questioned aspects of the treatment offered to children and argued that social factors may be influencing children’s identification as transgender.

The debate around these matters has changed the nature of how transgender-related issues were covered in the UK press. As discussed below, at the start of our analysis period in 2009, coverage was broadly positive, educative, characterised by respectful curiosity.⁷ The heating up of the rhetorical temperature, as the issues outlined above, especially self-identification, were more and more widely discussed, created the impression amongst some transgender community groups and individuals that there was an unacceptable level of hostility towards vulnerable transgender people from the press indicative of tangibly worsening editorial standards in coverage.

4. The Editors’ Code of Practice (the ‘Code’)

IPSO upholds the Editors’ Code of Practice, a set of rules which all newspapers and magazines regulated by IPSO must follow. This contains a number of Clauses relevant to reporting or researching stories on transgender individuals (although of course all Clauses of the Code may be relevant⁸):

Clause	Summary	Comments
Clause (Accuracy)	1 Requires that the press must take care not to publish inaccurate, misleading or distorted information or images. The Clause also makes clear that the press, whilst free to editorialise, must distinguish clearly amongst comment, conjecture and fact.	<i>This is one of the primary focuses of our analysis since the debate inevitably involves discussion of proportion, causes and treatments, all of which can be supported by statistics, studies and conjecture, much of which is open to interpretation and debate.</i>
Clause 2 (Privacy)	Affords everyone the right to respect for his or her private life, home, health and correspondence. The protections provided by Clause 2 are also relevant to the situation of family members or friends of individuals at the centre of such coverage, who may be concerned about potential intrusion.	<i>Privacy is of particular relevance if looking at a subject’s transgender status or details of their transition, etc. Since the subjects in our case studies are all notable and in the public eye electively and partly because of their transgender status, and that this has been made public by themselves, privacy relative to transgender status is not one of the primary areas of focus for this case study analysis.</i>
Clause (Harassment)	3 Provides protection to individuals from harassment, intimidation and persistent pursuit. In addition, it makes clear that if asked to desist, journalists must cease telephoning, questioning, pursuing or photographing individuals, unless an overriding public interest justifies the activity.	<i>Given the events we have selected for our case studies, which relate either to public figures or general issues, harassment is not a primary focus.</i>
Clause (Children)	6 Provides guidance to ensure that children are protected from unnecessary intrusion and that their welfare is protected.	<i>Again, none of the case studies involves individual, identified children so this is not a primary focus.</i>

⁷ We later categorise coverage under three ‘types’, with the first being more prurient and disrespectful (and largely – although not wholly – pre-dating our 10-year review).

⁸ Here, summaries of the clauses from the Code are supplied in roman text, with our commentary in *italics*.

Clause	Summary	Comments
Clause 8 (Hospitals)	May be relevant when an individual is undergoing medical treatment, which could relate to their physical or mental health.	<i>Not a primary focus, given the case study selection.</i>
Clause 12 (Discrimination)	Makes clear that the press should avoid prejudicial or pejorative reference to an individual's sex, gender identity or sexual orientation (alongside other characteristics). An individual's gender identity and sexual orientation must not be referenced unless genuinely relevant to the story.	<i>The manner in which the subjects being debated and the treatment of individuals (albeit public figures) are of course central to our analysis of these case studies. We have examined the use of language and terminology closely to identify whether it is prejudicial or discriminatory. NB: this clause was amended in 2015 to include 'gender' as a relevant characteristic, so that that it specifically covers transgender individuals.</i>

There are exceptions to some Clauses in the Code where publication of material that might normally breach the Code would be allowed in the wider public interest.

5. IPSO guidance on transgender stories (the 'Guidance')

Furthermore, IPSO's guidance on transgender-related stories, issued in 2016, makes some specific suggestions which sit within the Codes. For clarity, IPSO's guidance is there to assist journalists but it is not designed to replace the Code. IPSO looks only at the Code when deciding whether or not there have been breaches of the agreed standards. The Guidance provides further context for our analysis of the coverage of key events in the timeline:

Area	IPSO Guidance
Relevance	Would the story be newsworthy if it did not concern an individual of transgender status? Is the individual's status relevant?
Language	Is the terminology being used pejorative or prejudicial? If known, have you used the pronouns the individual uses to describe themselves in your story?
Publicity	Has the individual made their transgender status known? If not, is the revelation of their status necessary to the story? Do you know if the individual has applied for a Gender Recognition Certificate?
Terminology	What terminology are you using to describe gender transition? Have you taken care not to publish inaccurate or misleading information?
Unnecessary information	Does the article include unnecessary information, such as irrelevant references to previous identities, publication of pictures of individuals pre-transition, or references to medical details? Are you considering publishing information which could be considered a breach of privacy?
Statistics	It is difficult to estimate the number of individuals in the UK with gender dysphoria or who have undergone gender transition. Editors should present such claims with care.

C. Introduction

1. Project background

In recent years, discussion of transgender⁹-related issues has risen to a more prominent position on the news agenda. While the increase in interest may have been catalysed by high-profile celebrities who have transitioned from the gender assigned to them at birth (such as Caitlyn Jenner, the actress Laverne Cox, Big Brother winner Nadia Almada and former soldier Chelsea Manning), there has been an accompanying discussion of a wide range of transgender-related topics, heightening interest in the subject in the public sphere.

In particular, there has been much commentary surrounding the Government proposals to reform the GRA, including the adoption of so-called 'self-identification' for legal gender recognition (a policy proposal that was abandoned in September 2020), and heated debates around how trans children should be treated.

Questions have been raised around how the subject should be treated in the press, with community groups and other interested parties seeking to influence how the subject is covered, including the terms, approaches and definitions that are considered acceptable. While it is normal for parameters that determine acceptable ways of treating a subject to evolve over time in line with changes in social attitudes and behaviours, the goalposts of acceptability have shifted very rapidly for transgender-related discussions.

Among the many questions currently being debated, at times vigorously, are:

- What terminology should be used in discussion of transgender issues? How should individuals be referred to, how should their transition from one gender to another be described, how should one's birth gender be described?
- What pronouns should be used to describe someone? Should they relate to their biological sex or gender identity?
- Should participation in female sports, accommodations in women's prisons and access to female crisis clinics etc. (all access and participation areas that currently can be exempted from protections under the Equality Act) be based on self-declared gender identity?
- Should gender be self-declared, or should there be a process of evaluation before certification can be changed?
- Privacy issues: should a person's change in gender be a matter of public record / should coverage be respectful of wishes to keep private a previous identity?

These issues have inspired fierce debate in public (in the press, via broadcast media and online). There have been instances where individuals or groups representing transgender interests have felt that lines have been crossed, in terms of accuracy, prejudice, discrimination and privacy. Balancing the need and the right to publish with the protections afforded individuals around privacy and accuracy and freedom from discrimination and hatred is not often easy or straightforward, particularly when even the terminology adopted in any discussion is itself subject to debate.

In the Women's and Equalities Committee ('WEC') Report on Transgender Equality (2016), the authors wrote: "While coverage of trans people in the media has been improving in recent years, there is no room for

⁹ The evolution of the term 'transgender' itself forms part of the narrative that underlies our analysis of coverage in this report. The most widely used definitions identify a transgender individual as a person whose 'gender identity' does not match the gender typically associated with their biological sex. However, this definition itself depends on an understanding of, or the acceptance of a concept of, gender identity, the debate over the universality of which forms an underlying part of discussions around transgender-related issues. We chart the evolution of the terms relating to transgender people, gender dysmorphia or gender identity disorder in the timeline in Section C.

complacency — and confidence in regulators still appears low among the trans community. Both the Independent Press Standards Organisation ('IPSO') and Ofcom should consider what steps they might take to encourage more trans people to come forward with complaints.¹⁰

IPSO published advice to editors and journalists on the treatment of transgender issues ([https://www.ipso.co.uk/member-publishers/guidance-for-journalists-and-editors/transgender-guidance/.](https://www.ipso.co.uk/member-publishers/guidance-for-journalists-and-editors/transgender-guidance/))

Summarising its guidance (the 'Guidance'), IPSO wrote in a blog: "The guidance provides some key questions and points which help journalists and editors to make sure they comply with their obligations under the Editors' Code when reporting on stories which may touch on transgender issues. This includes sensitivity around the language used, making sure terminology is not pejorative or prejudicial and carefully considering use of pronouns. There is a particular focus on children who are experiencing gender dysphoria or undergoing a gender transition, as they may be particularly vulnerable. The Editors' Code (the 'Code') contains stringent requirements that are intended to ensure that children are protected from unnecessary intrusion."¹¹

The relevant parts of the Code cover Accuracy, Privacy, Harassment, Children, Hospitals and Discrimination and the specific IPSO Guidance on transgender covers Relevance, Language, Publicity, Terminology, Unnecessary Information and Statistics.

The consultation on the GRA closed in October 2018, and the Government has not indicated when and how it will respond. In the interim, and in light of continued public interest in the issues around transgender and an ongoing debate about how they are covered, IPSO invited external consultants to supply independent analysis and to deliver a report outlining their findings. The aim was to conduct a rigorous assessment of how the editorial standards underpinning coverage have evolved over the past 10 years and, if there has been change in those editorial standards, the factors that may have influenced those changes.

Accordingly, strategy consultancy Mediatique, with independent consultant Conrad Roeber and data science consultancy QuantSpark (the 'Project Team'), were commissioned by IPSO in May 2019 to conduct detailed analysis of the UK press coverage of transgender issues. The project was designed to explore changes in editorial standards in coverage during the past decade.

2. Mediatique's approach

The project consisted in both quantitative and qualitative elements, broadly addressing:

- How have standards in coverage of transgender matters changed?
- What factors may have influenced change and whether (and the degree to which) they were successful in fomenting positive developments?

We have addressed these questions using the following methodologies:

- **Quantitative analysis:** use of data science to examine coverage of transgender issues over the past 10 years (1 May 2009 to 1 May 2019) to produce definitive analysis of occurrences and context for coverage.
- **Manual textual case study analysis:** detailed examination of the coverage of a selection of key events in the ten-year project analysis period.
- **Interviews:** in the form of in-depth interviews with: editorial representatives (including journalists) from selected newspapers and other publications; representatives of transgender community groups.
- **Secondary research:** into social attitudes and other relevant studies, publications by transgender groups and other interested parties.

The following sections provide further detail on each methodology.

¹⁰ <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201516/cmselect/cmwomeq/390/390.pdf>, page 71.

¹¹ <https://www.ipso.co.uk/news-press-releases/blog/ipso-blog-coverage-of-transgender-issues/>

a. *Quantitative analysis*

Our primary objective for the quantitative analysis has been to capture an aggregate perspective on how the volume of stories carried in the UK press has changed and how the use of language within these stories has evolved. Given the volume of stories published over the decade-long analysis period, this analysis has been computer-based, rather than manual. Accordingly, we have depended on material that is published and easily accessible to us online. While there are disparities between online and print versions of our selected publications, we are confident that this analysis provides an overview of the editorial trends in coverage, which serves as valuable context for the more granular manual analysis described below¹².

In order to build a representative 'corpus' of coverage, QuantSpark started with a broad target list of national and regional newspapers and selected magazines and periodicals. Various filters were applied to this initial list (see exhibit 10 below) and data was then captured from the resultant list of newspaper and magazine websites, enabling us to identify those articles that carried one or more key words likely to indicate that the article concerned transgender issues or individuals.

Articles thus identified were downloaded, where possible, to create a corpus of articles from the analysis period.

- While most of the publications under review could be accessed and articles downloaded online, *The Times* and *The Sunday Times* were not available for automatic download owing to technical restrictions.
- Furthermore, due to website anomalies, some articles do not have the publication date attached to the text, so they could not be included in our analysis.
- Accordingly, while the total number of articles identified was 23,760, the number of articles contained within our corpus is 12,405.
- This is a large sample of the articles published about the subject and we believe sufficiently captures the press coverage afforded during the analysis period.

We reviewed the resultant corpus to determine the prevalence of terminology used, the subject matter (where possible) and the types of publications in which the articles appeared.

¹² The corpus consists of articles published online only. In some cases, the online version of an article is not identical to the print version of the same title and in some cases online articles do not appear in the print version at all. We judged this discrepancy to be acceptable, given that for each title the editorial approach, standards and voices are sufficiently close to those of the print version as to be relevant for the analysis. However, it is worth noting that, while the MailOnline publishes most of Daily Mail and Mail on Sunday content, it does not publish all of it and the majority of MailOnline content is the work of its own journalists. For the avoidance of doubt, the Daily Mail, the Mail on Sunday and Mail Online are editorially distinct and separate. Metro.co.uk does not share content with Metro but serves as a valuable proxy for editorial approach in London's local publication sector.

Exhibit 10: process of corpus development for quantitative analysis of transgender-related articles



b. Manual textual case study analysis

The quantitative analysis provides an objective measure of trends in coverage, based on terminology employed. To supplement this analysis, we selected 11 events in the timeline that we and the client (IPSO) determined to be representative of the key types of story being covered within the period for manual analysis. These events are listed in the exhibit below.

Exhibit 11: transgender timeline events selected for manual analysis

09-10	10-11	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19
			Miss Universe dis-qualification						
			Chelsea Manning conviction and transition						
				Caitlyn Jenner Vanity Fair cover					
				Riley Carter Millington first trans actor cast in EastEnders					
				Women and Equalities Select Committee report					
					Speaker's Corner incident				
					Tavistock GIDS rise in referrals / resignations over approach to trans children				
					ITV show about a trans child Butterfly is broadcast				
					Rachel McKinnon first trans woman track cycling record				
					Trans woman prisoner Karen White conviction				
					Mermaids Lottery Fund award confirmation				

For each of these events, the project team conducted manual textual analysis of articles published in a range of publications pertaining to each event (aiming for approximately 20-25 articles per event). We read and analysed the coverage to identify:

- Language used
- Editorial position of coverage (questioning, neutral, supportive)

- Presence of obvious issues relating to the editorial Codes or IPSO’s Guidance on transgender coverage, including:
 - accuracy (in use of statistics, language and other facts, where relevant)
 - discrimination (and the use of appropriate terminology)
 - privacy (where individual subjects are involved)
 - other areas, as appropriate

c. Interviews

A core objective of this research was to capture a wide range of perspectives on the issues relating to transgender and how they have been represented in the UK press. Accordingly, we sent out invitations to newspaper and magazine editors and publishers, individual writers, groups working within the lobby space and other individuals who have a stake in the subject area. IPSO also advertised this research project on its website and received approaches from various groups and individuals seeking to have their voices heard in the research process.

In addition to the invitations sent by us, we accepted all approaches for participation and carried out interviews with 43 people who either spoke on their own account or on behalf of an organisation. These were mostly face to face and almost all lasted longer than one hour. The interviews were conducted on the basis of confidentiality, so we do not report the identity of participants, either in this report or to IPSO, and all quotes have been anonymised, except where specifically noted.¹³ The numbers and types of interview conducted are shown in the exhibit below. Despite this number not being a representative sample of any single group in the debate, we believe the interviews have given us valuable insight into perspectives from all sides of the relevant arguments.

Exhibit 12: interviews conducted by type

Type of voice	Number of entities (individual or group)	Number of people interviewed
National broadsheet	2	3
National tabloid	3	6
Regional publishing	3	3
Magazine	3	5
Transgender ‘supportive’ voices	10	15
Transgender ‘questioning’ voices	6	7
Relevant (independent) institution	3	4
Total	30	43

Note on group or participant labelling: Clearly, there is no well-defined ‘transgender community’ as such but we have used the term to encompass those groups and individuals working explicitly towards expanding the rights and consideration of transgender people. We use the term ‘feminist community’ to represent those taking a questioning approach to the expansion of transgender rights (to put it broadly) and of the application of the gender identity framework and treatment pathways to children and more broadly. Neither of these phrases does justice to the complexity of the positions taken on the many difficult issues addressed in these arguments, particularly given that some of the feminist community representatives would argue that they also have the interests of transgender people at the centre of their arguments. Indeed, there are some within the ‘transgender community’ who are opposed to some of the policy liberalisations being debated. We use

¹³ In the cases of Dr Kate Stone and Nathalie McDermott, both of whom are quoted by name, permission was sought and granted as each spoke in an individual capacity.

‘editorial representatives’ or similar to denote those who control the editorial position and approach of the publications we have included in the analysis.

d. Secondary research

The analysis is supported by extensive secondary research into events and facts underlying the stories where necessary.

e. Notes on methodology

This project is focused entirely on coverage in the UK press, which includes daily and weekly national and regional newspapers, periodicals and magazines. While social media is of current and growing importance and has a powerful influence over writers, editors and publications, we have not included social media coverage in our analysis as it does not fall under IPSO’s purview.

It is also worth noting that changes in the editorial standards around coverage of transgender issues may be judged according to what is left unsaid, as well as how things are said. The absence of discriminatory language or indeed the absence of mentions of a subject’s transgender status (where not relevant to a story) are both indications of improvement in editorial standards but would be extremely difficult to measure.

3. Report structure

We have structured our analysis to reflect a logical sequence of key questions:

- What happened (in terms of transgender-related events)?
- How were these events covered (during the past decade)?
- How did editorial standards change in this coverage?
- Why did editorial standards change?

Accordingly, the report is structured in the following four main sections:

Section C: Timeline of transgender-related events

Section D: Aggregate analysis of coverage of transgender-related stories. Describes broadly how issues relating to transgender people were covered. Descriptive and objective.

Section E: Manual analysis of editorial standards in coverage. Presents deep-dive analysis by the project team of the coverage of selected key events

Section F: Analysis of drivers of change in editorial standards. Presents an analysis of the factors that have acted upon the UK press that may have influenced the evolution of editorial standards in coverage.

Section G: Conclusions. Overview of the report conclusions.

D. Timeline of transgender-related events

1. Introduction

This section is designed to lay out as objectively as possible the range of events in the development of thought, institutions, laws and culture attached to the subject of transgender people. This serves to provide a basis of understanding for our analysis of the coverage in Section E.

Clearly, this is necessarily a vast area and we have not endeavoured to capture every single pertinent event. Instead, we have outlined the evolution in thought, language, institutional roles and legislation that has occurred in recent years as well as indicated the most pertinent events regarding individuals in the same period. This involves indicating milestones as well as specific news events. Some of these have been covered by the press and others have not been; our aim is to give a reasonably complete picture of the evolution of the transgender landscape during the period of our analysis.

Our primary analytical focus is on the past decade, but our timeline extends further back to provide necessary context to the issues that have been debated in the analysis period. We have classed timeline events into four categories:

News/cultural event: relating to newsworthy events or cultural developments affecting an individual.

Conceptual developments: given the very recent evolution of language and concepts surrounding transgender status, an important component of the transgender timeline will be the terminology deployed and the conceptual and theoretical framework that underpins it.

Institutional event: how non-legislative institutions have responded to, reflected or engaged in transgender developments.

Legislative event: covering developments such as changes in the law or consultations.

Clearly, in many cases these different types of event will be linked and we have endeavoured to illustrate such linkages where possible.

We have divided the timeline into three phases, as follows:

- Early history up to 1999
- From legal recognition in 1999 to just prior to the WEC report in 2016
- From the debate around self-ID and treatment of children to the present day

Early history up to 1999

The first decades of the 20th century saw the emergence into the public sphere of people who would initially come to be termed 'transsexuals'; those who were convinced to the point of absolute certainty that their body did not match (in terms of biological sex) the sex that they believed they felt they were 'inside'.

During this period, the therapeutic communities broadly viewed this as a medical disorder and therapies were developed that explored allowing the individuals to live as their preferred sex and possibly 'change sex' (insofar as this is possible). These could range from: name change; change of clothing; the prescription of 'cross-sex' hormones and possibly major surgery to align the body with that of the preferred sex.

During this period the separation of the concepts of sex versus gender emerged – whereby sex denoted biological fact and gender is often intended to emphasise the social and cultural, as opposed to the biological, distinctions between the sexes. However, there remained confusion about, and inconsistency in, the use of the distinction (particularly when considering the related concepts of 'gender expression' (the outward expression of gender in clothing, behaviour) and 'gender identity' (an inward experience of true gender that proponents say can be different from both sex and gender expression)). This sows the seeds of the idea that

the internal sense of gender ('gender identity') could be not just the opposite of the gender associated with the body ('sex') but could be somewhere in between ('non-binary').

1999-2015

This period saw advances in legal recognition for transgender people, starting with the UK Government's addition of 'gender reassignment' as a category protected in employment and vocational training in 1999.

In 2004, the UK's GRA provided the (largely medicalised) mechanism that allows a transgender person to achieve full legal recognition in their preferred gender, via the issuance of a GRC. Recognising that some transgender people are unwilling or unable to transition medically, the *Act* set an important precedent by allowing people who had undergone no physical transition to obtain gender recognition in the opposite sex to that assigned to them at birth. This was followed by the Equality Act of 2010 that includes 'gender reassignment' as a protected characteristic. During this period, groups that had lobbied for rights for lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) people added the T for 'transgender' people resulting in the acronym 'LGBT'. There are several transgender individuals who achieve a high profile in the public sphere in this period (including Caitlyn Jenner). The tone was generally one of discovery and education, which made the backlash against prurient coverage of some news events relating to transgender people (for example, the transition of Lucy Meadows, who was a teacher and the mauling by a deer of Dr Kate Stone) all the more forceful.

2016-2019

The WEC took evidence and in January 2016 published its report calling for the adoption of an entirely de-medicalised process of 'self-identification' for transgender people who wish to obtain a GRC (allowing full legal recognition in the new gender and enabling a change to the sex indicator on the birth certificate). The Committee's report also enshrined acceptance by the Government of the gender identity framework, which allowed for gender identity, defined as an entirely private, internal sense of gender which could be male, female or neither (non-binary) and entirely separate from biological sex, to be given protection in law, suggesting that this should replace 'gender reassignment' in the Equality Act.

The discussion around self-ID and the Government consultation, how to balance and protect both vulnerable transgender individuals and vulnerable women, in relation to female only spaces, ignited a ferocious debate thrashed out between activists, writers, in academia and in other public and private spaces that continues to this day, as the UK government remains silent on its own proposals for transgender recognition. At the same time, we have seen a higher profile for individuals who identify as having a 'non-binary' gender.

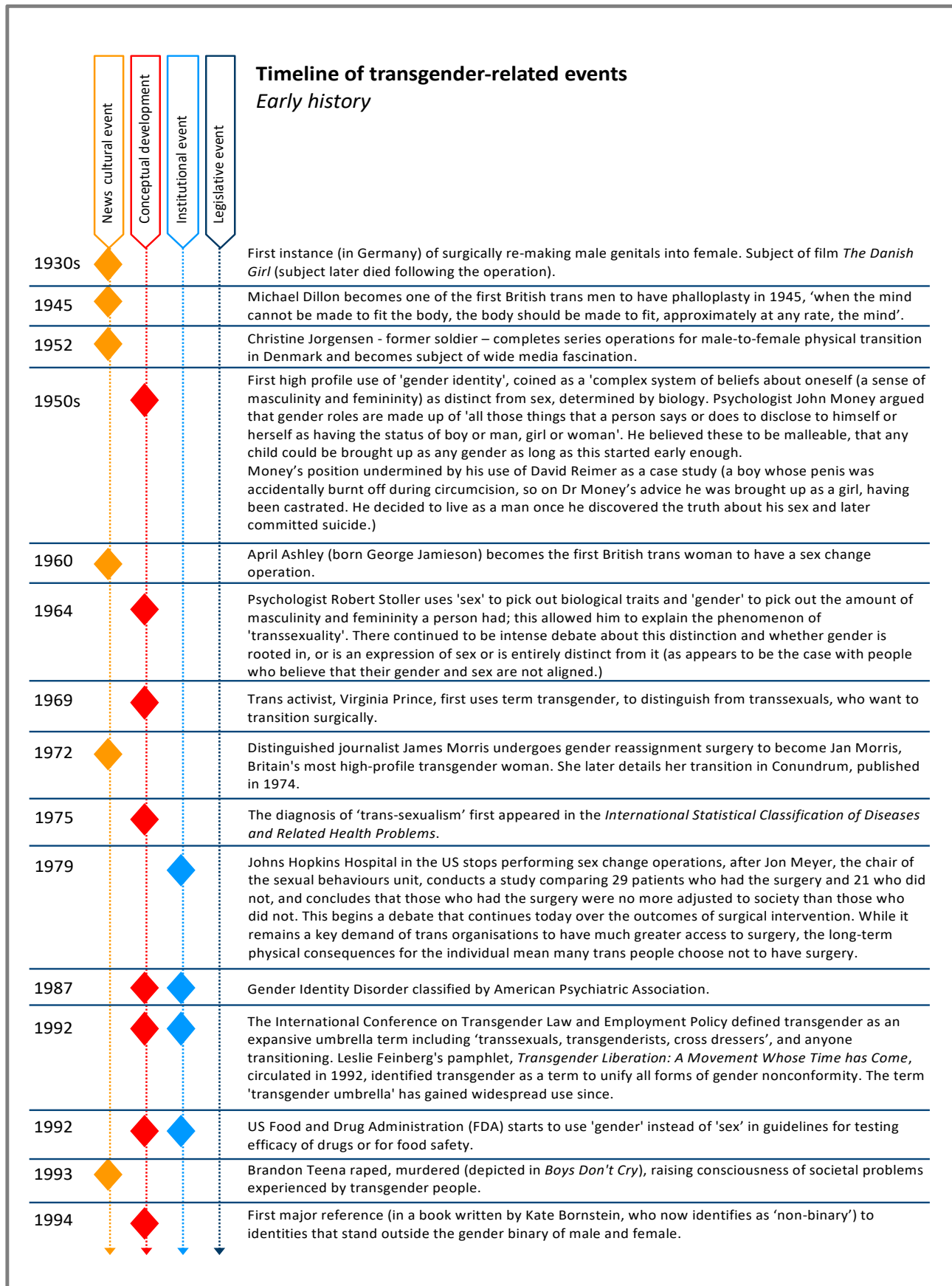
This period also saw dramatic growth in the number of children presenting as transgender to the NHS gender Identity Services (GIDS) and this brought on to the news agenda the debate around (reversible or non-reversible) treatment pathways for transgender children.

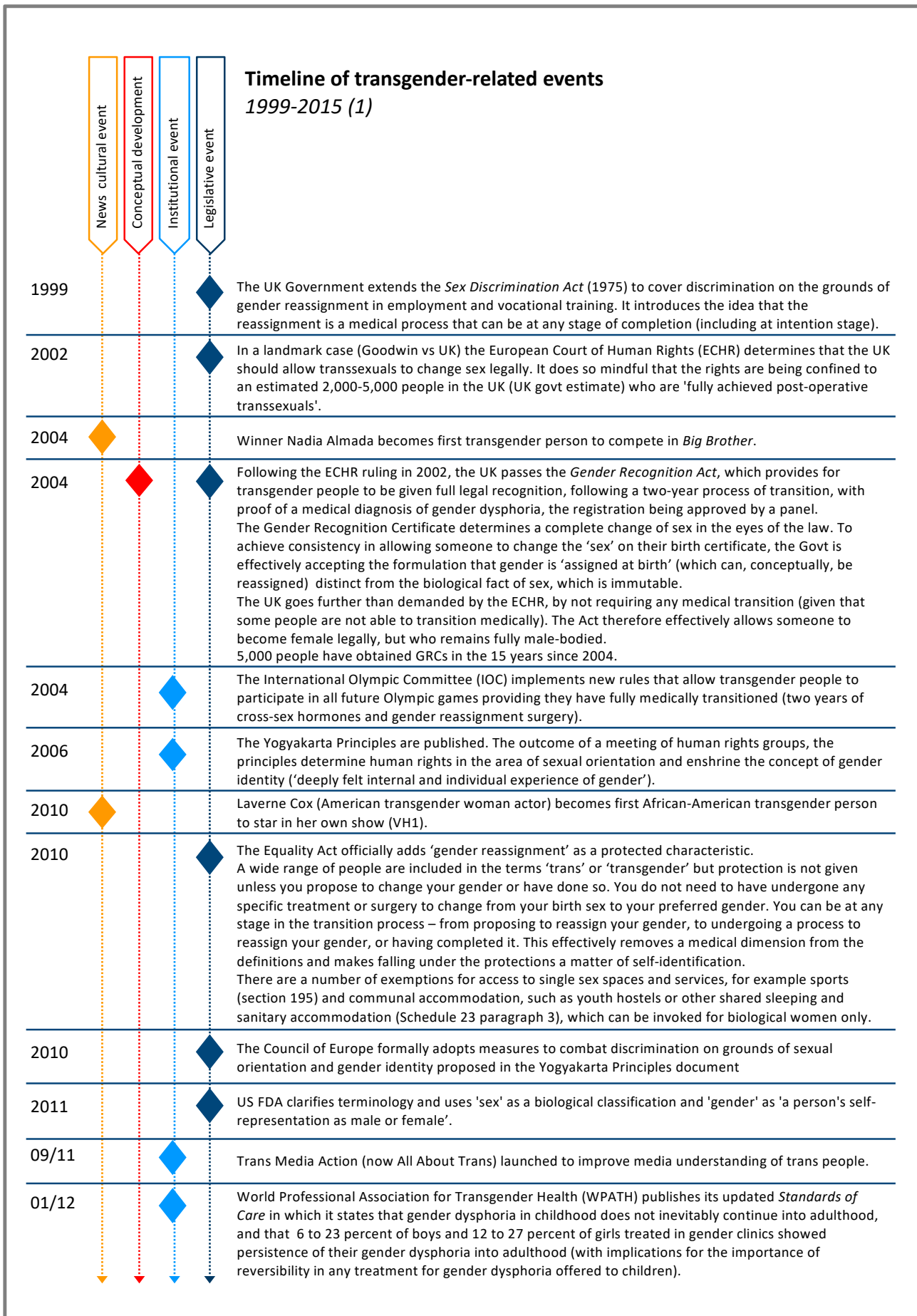
2. Timeline of key events

We have placed the relevant events into the timeline, illustrated in the following six pages. While the timeline extends up to the end of our analysis period, which is summer 2019, it should be noted that several government and institutional decisions have been taken since then that are pertinent to the context. Foremost amongst these are the UK government's decision to abandon plans to introduce self-ID for gender recognition (September 2020). In the same month it also issued advice to schools that teachers should not suggest to children who do not comply with gender stereotypes that either their personality or their body is in need of changing, and that they should avoid working with organisations that produce materials suggesting "non-conformity to gender stereotypes should be seen as synonymous with having a different gender identity"¹⁴.

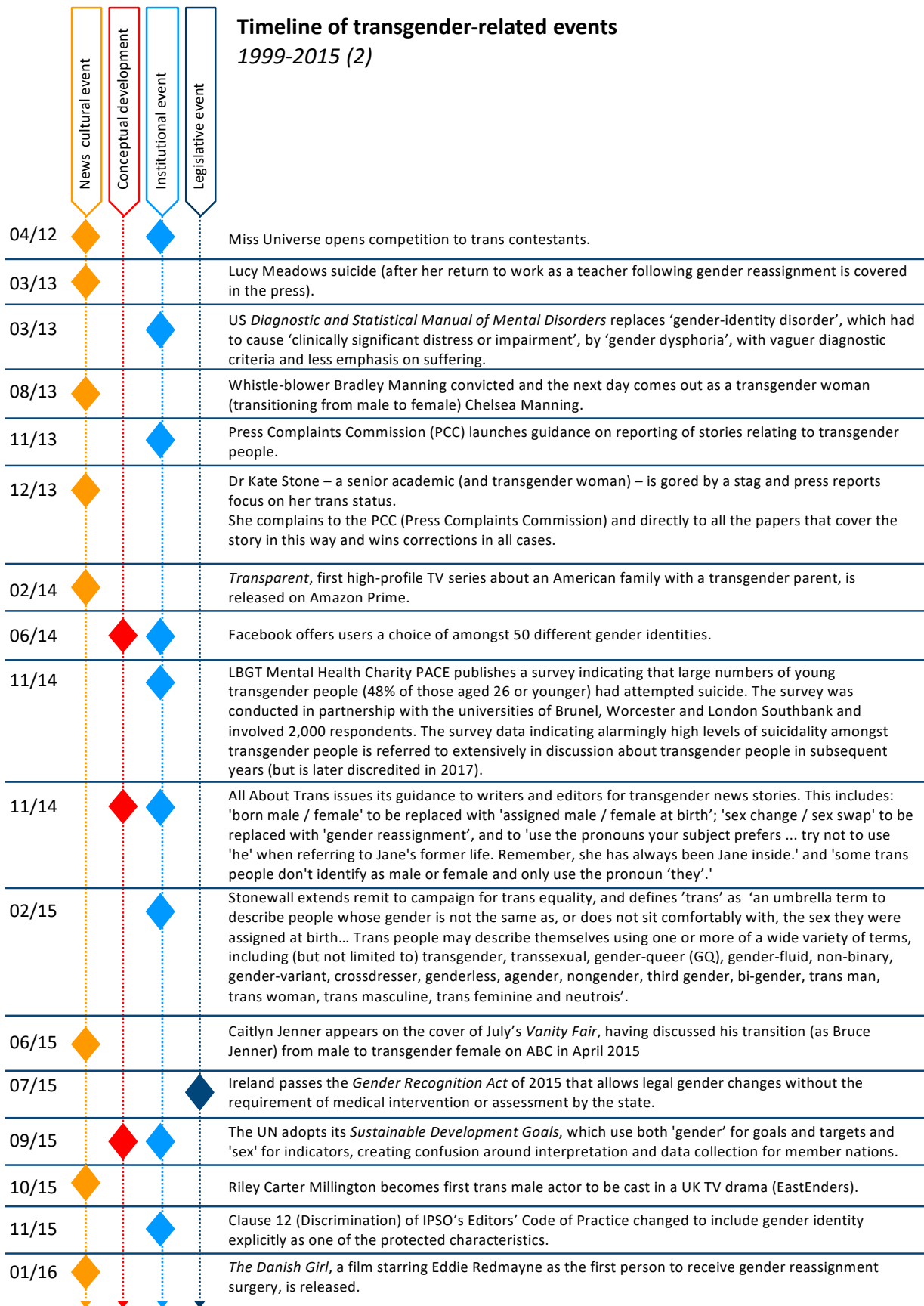
¹⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/plan-your-relationships-sex-and-health-curriculum>

Exhibit 13: Timeline of transgender-related events

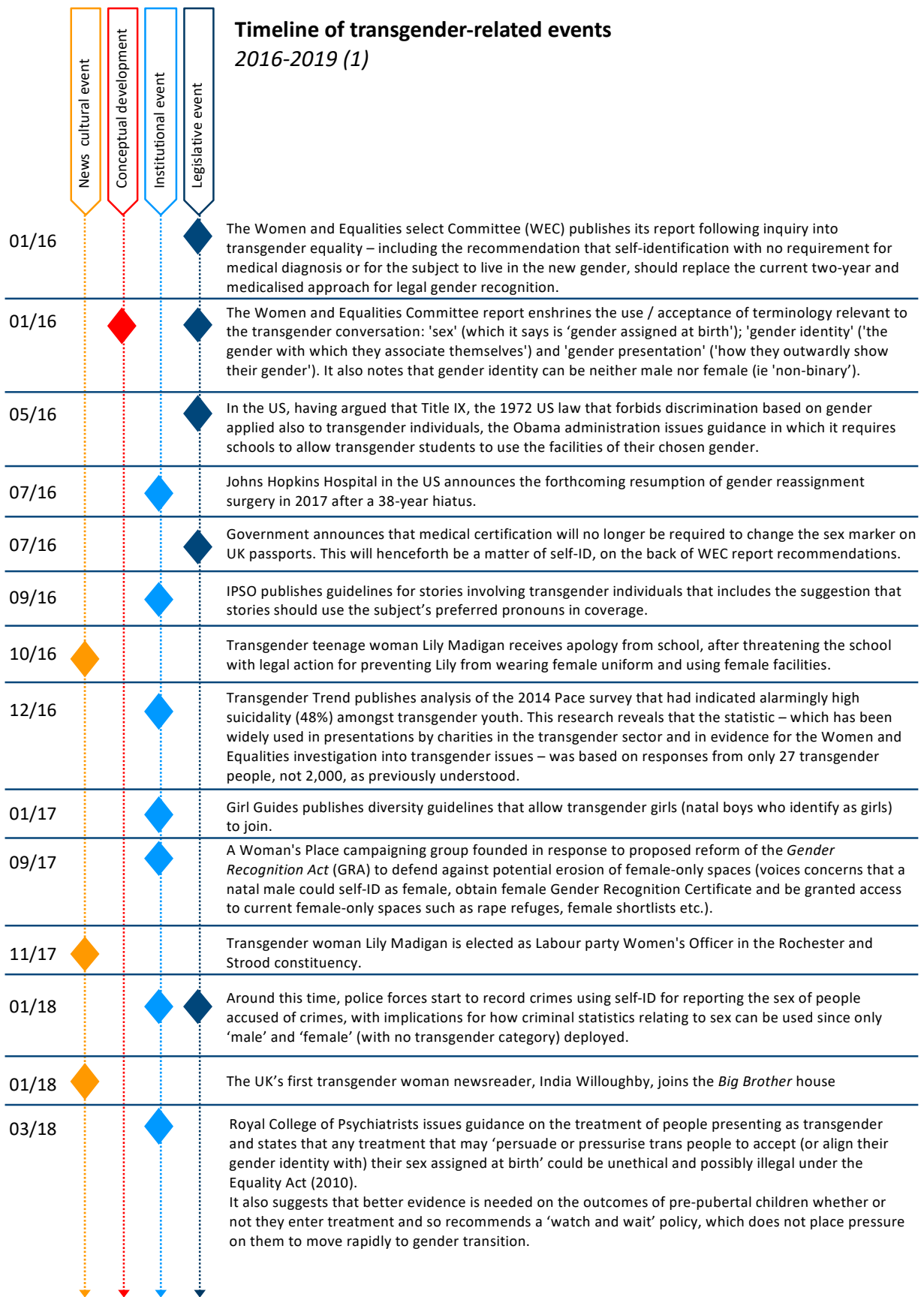




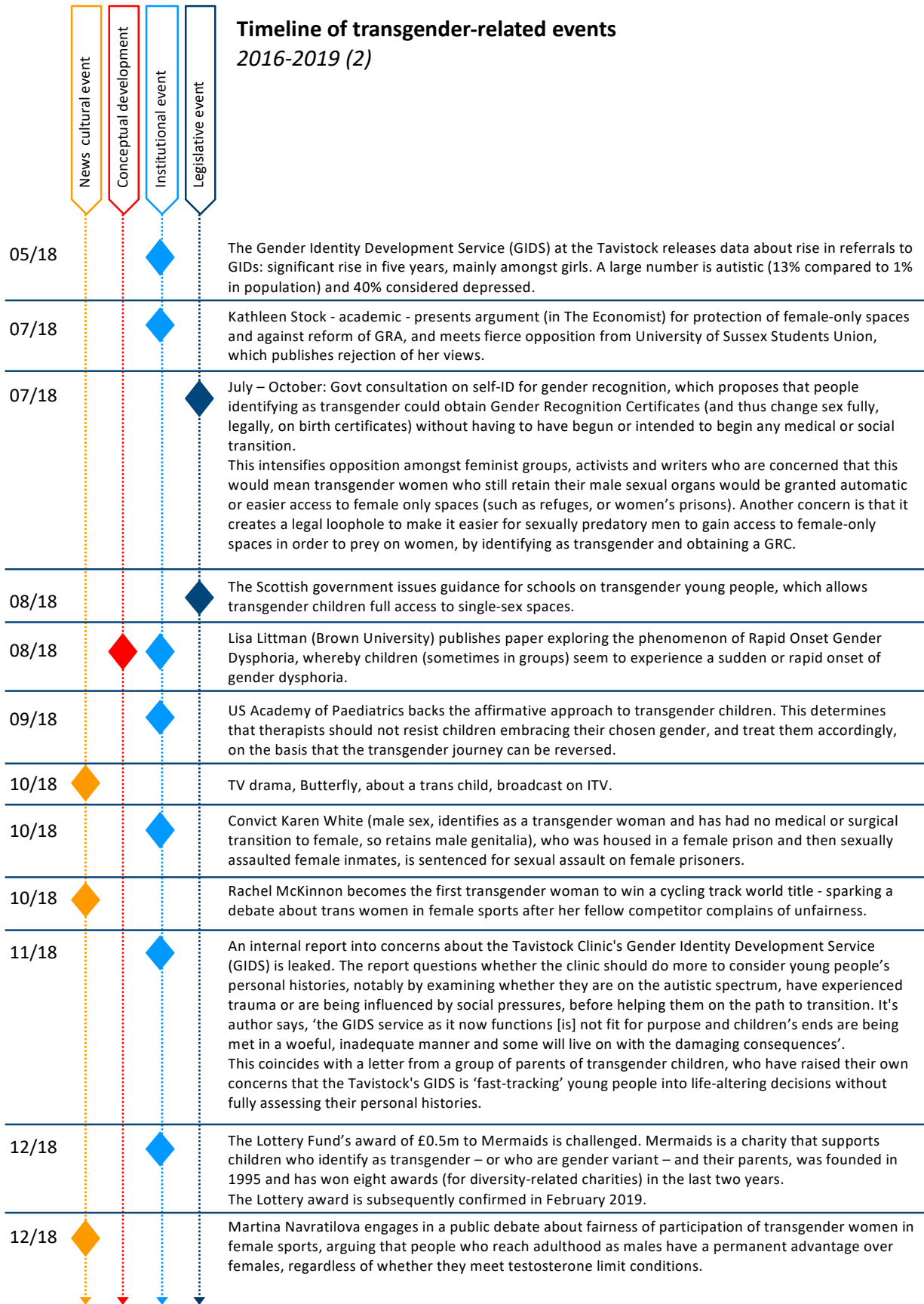
Timeline of transgender-related events 1999-2015 (2)

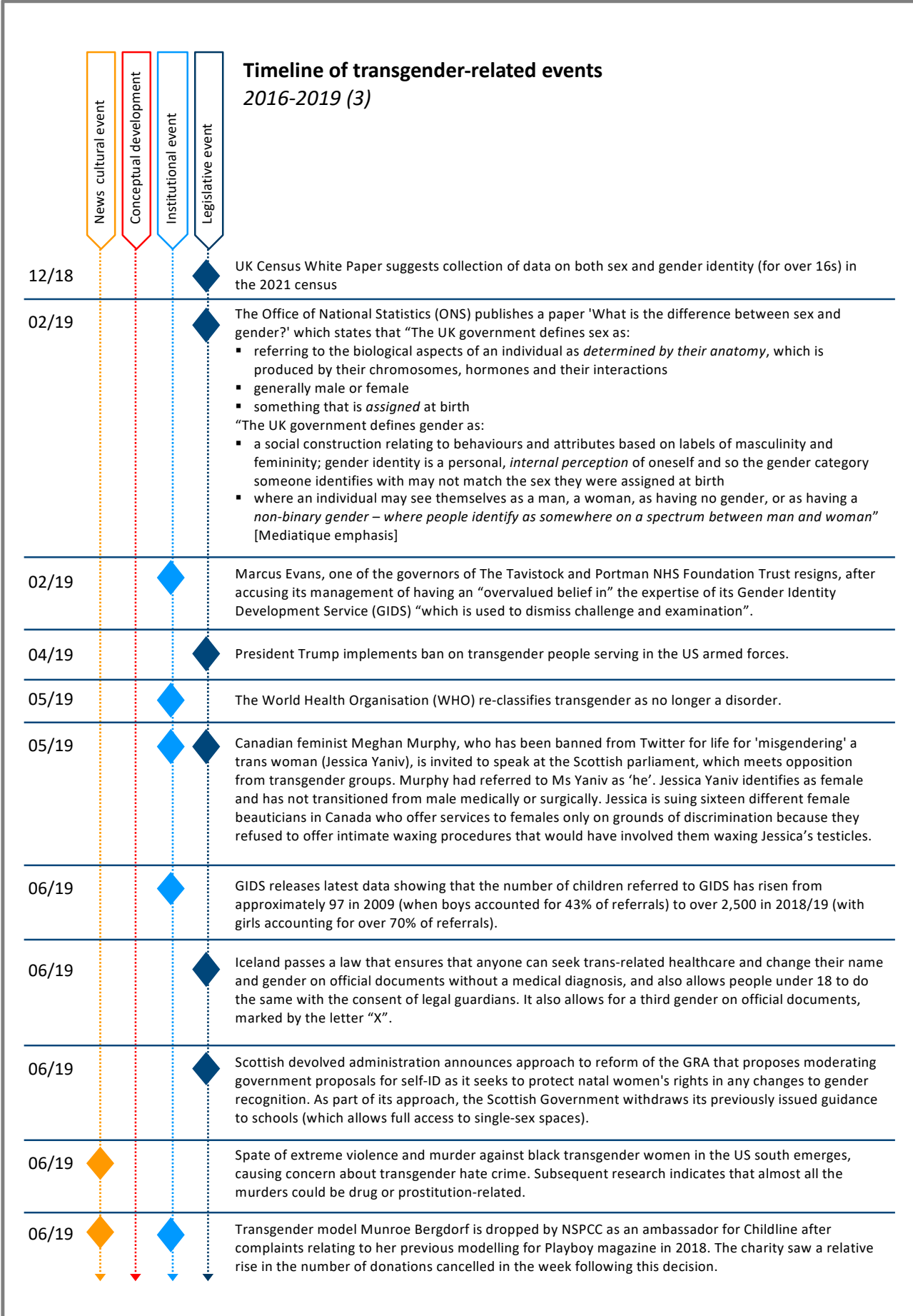


Timeline of transgender-related events 2016-2019 (1)



Timeline of transgender-related events 2016-2019 (2)





E. Aggregate analysis of coverage of transgender-related stories

1. Introduction

In order to deliver comprehensive analysis of coverage of transgender-related issues, the QuantSpark team collected articles from newspaper, periodicals and magazine websites to build a corpus of 12,405 dated articles that contained coverage of transgender themes or individuals. As described in Section B, this represents a large sample of the transgender-related coverage in the analysis period.

This section presents our interrogation of the corpus. Due to the large volume of stories contained in the corpus, this analysis is necessarily presented at aggregate level and does not attempt to judge tone, accuracy or other features of editorial standards. However, the analysis of terminology (pejorative or otherwise) deployed provides an indication (and no more) of one aspect of the respect shown by publishers towards the subject.¹⁵ For absolute clarity, this analysis is not intended to indicate terminology that publications should or should not use; it is aimed solely at describing what language has been used in relevant coverage.

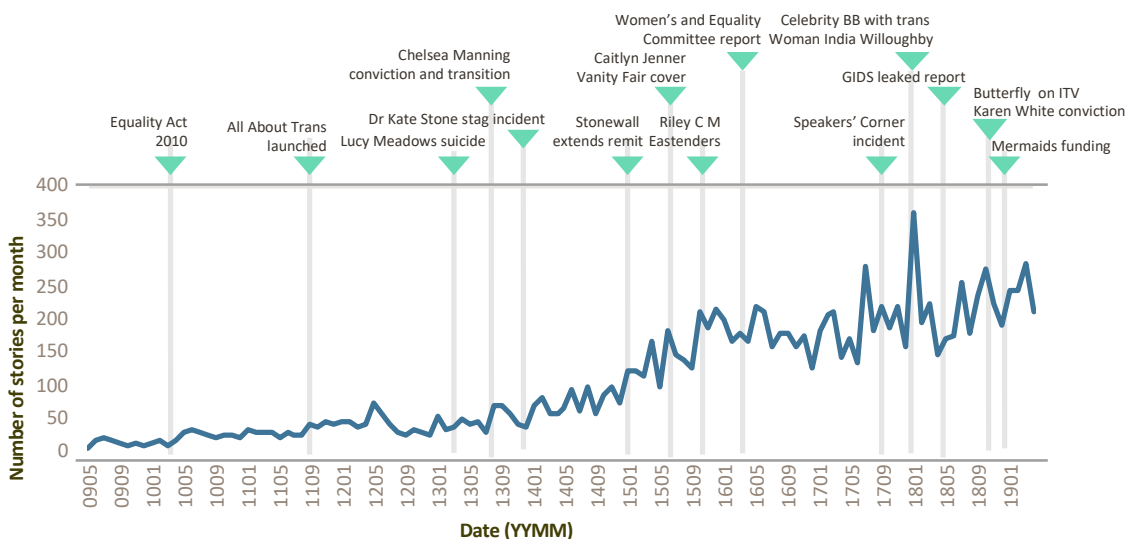
The analysis covers the project period, which is the decade spanning from 1 May 2009 to 1 May 2019.

2. Coverage volume and sources

a. The growth of transgender-related stories

Our analysis of transgender-related articles indicates that there was significant growth in volume of stories published during the past decade. During the first half of the analysis period (five years to April 2014), an average of 34 stories were published per month in the UK. During the second half of the period (May 2014 to 1 May 2019), the number of stories reached an average of 176 per month, a rise of 414% and an indication of the dramatic emergence of transgender-related stories in our press. In the last year of analysis (1 May 2018 to 1 May 2019) alone there were 224 stories published per month. Story length has not changed dramatically during this period.

Exhibit 14: transgender-related stories published each month vs some key events



There are no obvious triggers for the rise in the volume of stories regarding transgender matters that appears to start around 2013. Later events such as Caitlyn Jenner's coming out on the cover of Vanity Fair or the controversies around policy and transgender children can be associated with the higher levels of coverage from 2015 onwards. Prior to that point there had been a growing interest in transgender stories that our interlocutors attribute to the relative newness of the subject and the emergence of more prominent

¹⁵ See the results of the manual analysis in section E for discussion of some of these otherwise attributes of coverage.

transgender figures (such as Chelsea Manning) hitting the headlines. See section E for a fuller discussion of this.

We spoke to editorial staff at some of the major newspaper groups and the consensus view was summed up by the managing editors of two national dailies:

“The amount of content we use that relates to transgender issues of people has definitely increased in recent years. It's difficult to say if this is a conscious decision or whether it's simply because people are talking about it more.”

National newspaper

“Three or four years ago the subject was more interesting as it was newer and we wanted to get ahead of the curve and could tell our readers were interested. But it's now gone on and on and readers are less interested because transgender has almost become the norm.”

National newspaper

There is some circularity to this observation but many of the publications we spoke to mentioned the role of news agencies (the source of a large proportion of ‘real life’ stories within the UK press), who are finding transgender-related stories and offering them in far greater volumes than before.

“Transgender has become more of a topic largely also fuelled by the news agencies selling stories on it.”

Human interest-focused magazine group

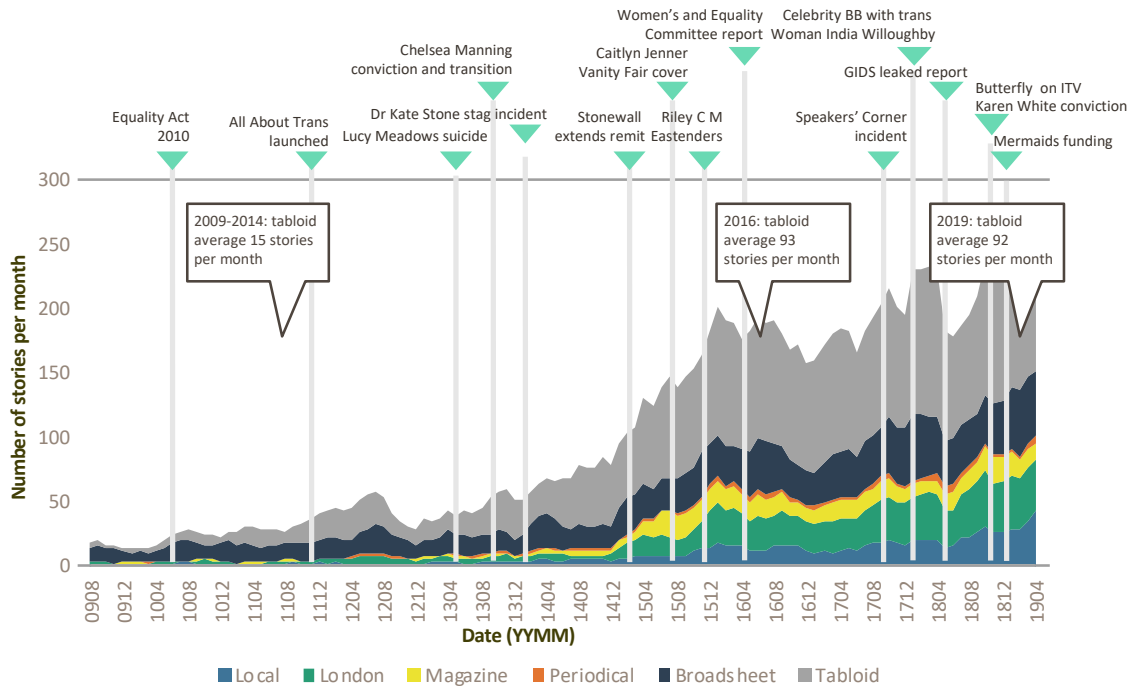
b. The importance of celebrities

The ten-year period is punctuated by an increasing number of high-profile celebrities who have come out as being transgender, from Laverne Cox, the American transgender actress who was given her own show on VH1 in 2010, to Sonny and Cher's daughter transitioning to male as Chaz Bono also in 2010. These laid the ground in the public consciousness for the increasing prominence of the transgender phenomenon, the highest international celebrity peak of which was possibly Caitlyn Jenner's coming out as a transgender woman on the cover of *Vanity Fair* at the start of 2015. Caitlyn Jenner's celebrity had been fuelled, of course, by the global success of the reality format *Keeping Up with The Kardashians*, in which she appeared, and which had been broadcast since 2007.

Since 2014 the overall volume of transgender-related stories has steadily increased with articles devoted to both celebrities and the issues surrounding transgender people and their legal and social status. However, the highest single peak of stories in the UK was nevertheless driven by a celebrity event in January 2018 when the *Celebrity Big Brother* house included India Willoughby (the first trans woman newsreader and broadcaster).

The celebrity driver of transgender coverage is also possibly reflected in the volume of articles published by the tabloid press, which tends to have a higher focus on celebrity-related stories than the other publication types. The exhibit below shows that a large proportion of the extraordinary growth in transgender-related content derives from tabloid newspapers.

Exhibit 15: transgender-related stories published each month by publication type



The growth in tabloid press coverage was most marked during the first six years of the period (to 2015); stories published by tabloids has remained steady since then.

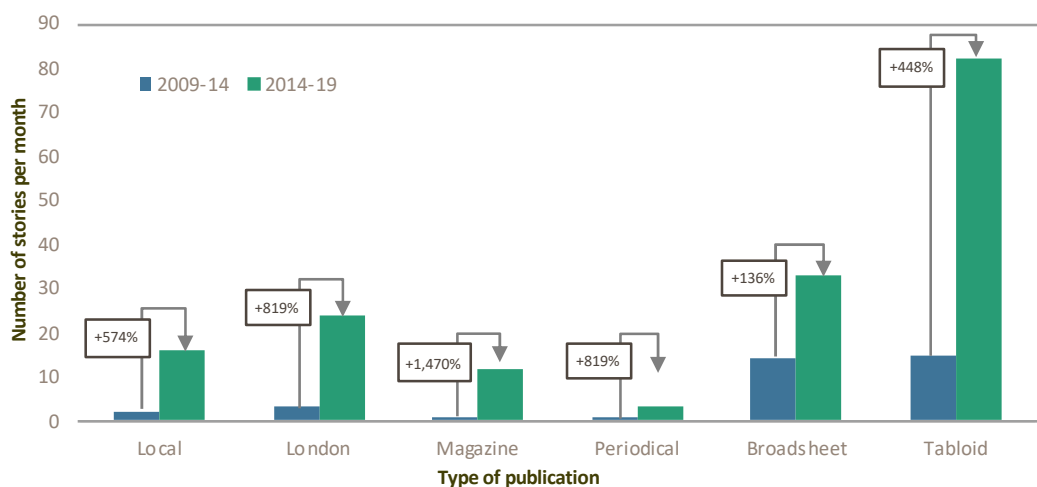
Though it is clear from the data that there was an increasing interest in transgender-related content prior to Caitlyn Jenner’s coming out, a leading LGBT organisation attributed the rise in interest to this event:

“In 2015, trans entered the national consciousness when Caitlyn Jenner emerged. There had been coverage prior to this but she sparked a massive rise in interest.”

LGBT community organisation

Overall, there is a notable growth in transgender-related stories published by all types of publication between the first five years and the final five years of the analysis period, but this growth is most marked (in terms of volume and growth combined) in the tabloid press.

Exhibit 16: average number of stories per month by type of publisher during the first and second halves of the decade

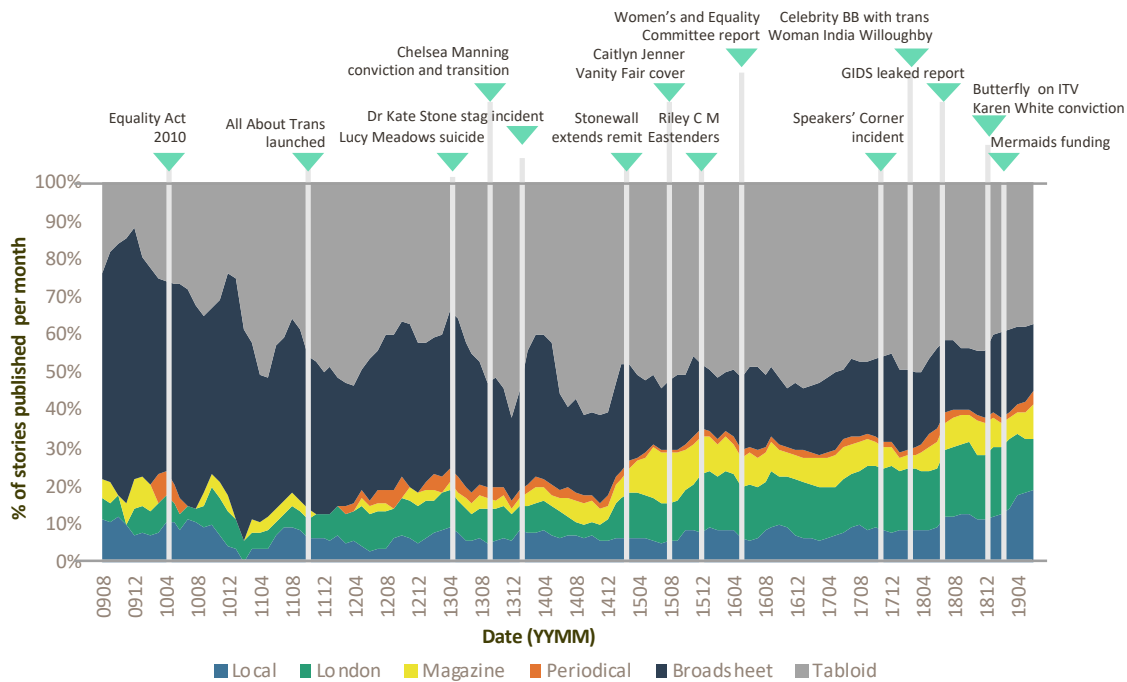


Source: QuantSpark, Mediatique analysis

Analysis of the number of published transgender-related stories expressed as a share of the total transgender-related articles published indicates a rising share of stories published by the regional and London local press, while the tabloid and broadsheet shares remain roughly stable.

NB: Please note that any part of our analysis which shows ‘share’ of articles published is limited to the publications included in our corpus. This does not therefore denote the actual share of the universe of relevant articles published as we have not weighted this sample to represent the universe.

Exhibit 17: share of the corpus of transgender-related stories published, by publication type



Source: QuantSpark, Mediatique analysis

One of our interviews was with an editorial manager of a large publishing group of rurally focused regional papers and his understanding was that transgender-related stories did not figure largely in their papers as:

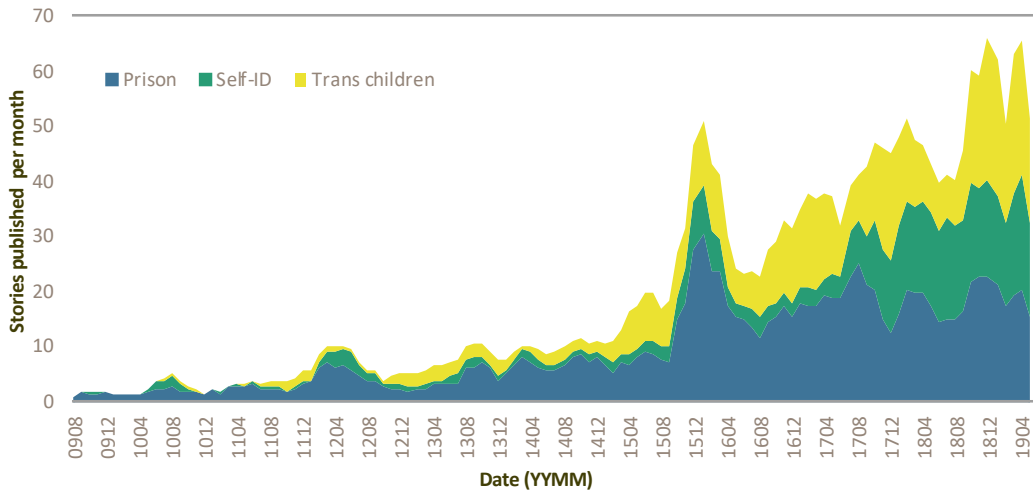
“Regional publishers like us don't publish a lot on transgender issues. We’re more rural; there are simply fewer examples of trans people in our communities than in the cities. Our newsroom is mainly white, male and heterosexual. It is just beyond our realm of direct experience.”

Editorial manager of large regional publishing group

c. The emergence of more serious issues

This growth in the volume of stories carried by non-tabloid publications could be a reflection of the increasing seriousness of coverage, with three selected areas of particular focus (stories regarding transgender children, transgender prisoners and the issue of self-identification in achieving recognition for a new gender) showing significant coverage growth.

Exhibit 18: number of stories relating to selected transgender-related issues published per month



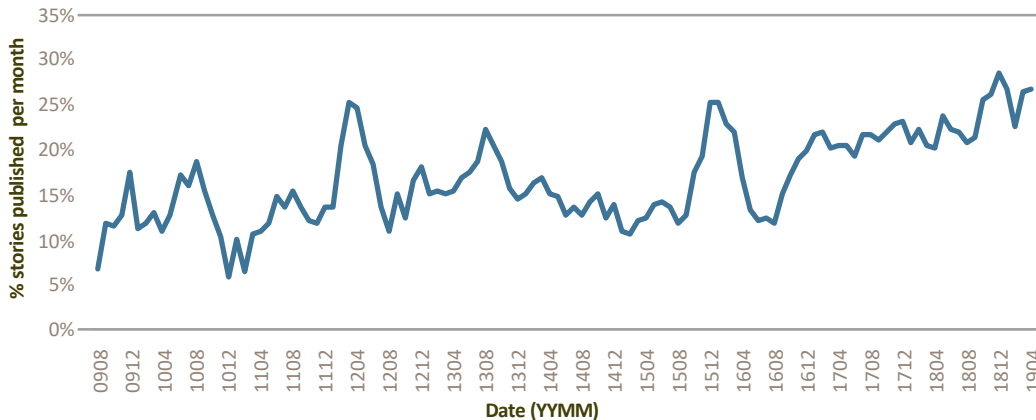
Source: QuantSpark, Mediatique analysis

Notes: 4-month rolling average of the number of stories published on each topic. Stories identified using a range of search terms.

NB: the spike in stories around the end of 2015 and the start of 2016 coincides with the release of *The Danish Girl*, a film starring Eddie Redmayne as the subject of the first known gender reassignment surgery. This may provide an indication of how the story types cross-fertilise within a particular issue area: i.e., that the widespread coverage of *The Danish Girl* drove a greater focus by publications on transgender-related issues adjacent to the film itself.

Stories concerning these three selected issues make up a growing and now sizeable proportion of the total transgender-related stories (around 26% in the final months of the period).

Exhibit 19: selected issues-based stories published, as % of total



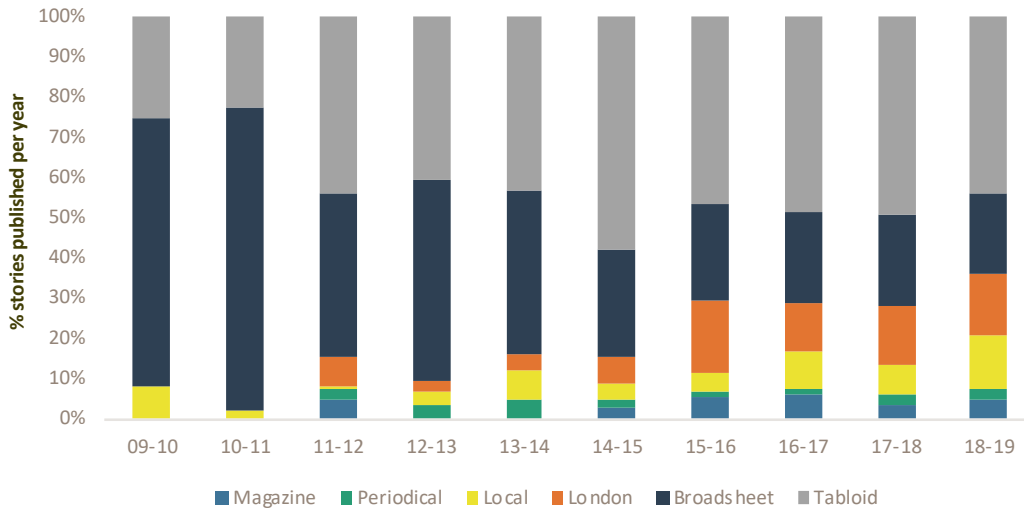
Notes: Stories containing references to trans children, prisons or self-ID as a % of total transgender-related stories.

Source: QuantSpark, Mediatique analysis

d. Engagement in transgender-related issues by the non-broadsheets

During the first half of the analysis period (2009-2014), the proportion of these issues-based transgender-related stories published by tabloids increased to over 50%, but during the second half (2014-2019) the tabloid share diminished as broadsheets and local press published an increasing number of stories on these topics.

Exhibit 20: share of selected issues-based stories published by each type of publisher



Source: QuantSpark, Mediatique analysis

The analysis indicates not so much a passing of the baton from broadsheets to tabloids on serious issues (since the volume of broadsheet stories has increased in the analysis period) but rather it illustrates clearly the enthusiastic embrace of transgender-related issues by the tabloid and local press, which had previously given them little exposure.

The Managing Editor of a national daily tabloid reflected the sentiment we heard from several editorial staff:

“The type of stories we carry has changed. When the trans thing first started 10 years ago, we used to do simple stories about trans pioneers – the first trans pilot, for example. We did a whole series of personal, human interest stories, and wrote sympathetically about their challenges. But the public has lost its appetite for these stories and they have dried up. Now it’s all about the political debate, schools, Karen White (a transgender woman who was admitted to the female prison estate and sexually assaulted inmates).”

National daily tabloid Managing Editor

This view was echoed by a group that has closely followed the evolution of the transgender debate:

“Coverage had changed a lot. It’s moved from 'how can we support trans people', a focus on human interest stories about how people live, how they work. The 24-hour news cycle has been fed by the topic and trans has become more interesting. [The] public actually see it as of niche interest but editors are now over-weighting it and particularly since the GRA proposals in 2017.”

Transgender-focused media support group

3. Language and terminology

a. A shift in terminology

As illustrated in the timeline contained in Section C, there has been an evolution of thought, approach and language in the transgender debate since the 1980s, and this has been particularly marked during the past decade. The following are the some of the key areas where language has changed in alignment with a shifting understanding of, or acceptance of the sex and gender conceptual framework:

- The use of ‘gender identity’
- The use of ‘transgender’ as opposed to ‘transsexual’
- The emergence of ‘non-binary’ to describe a basket of gender identity options that are neither male nor female

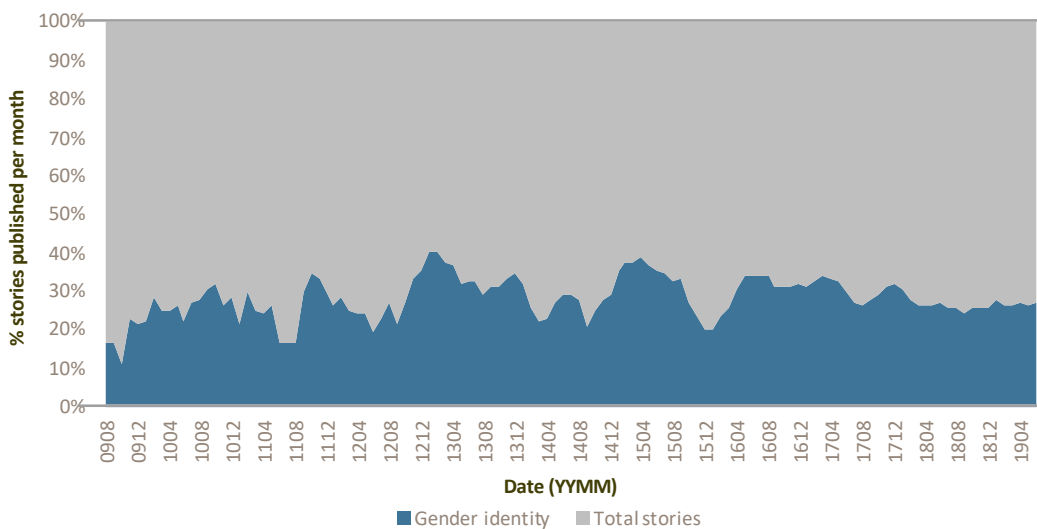
- The use of ‘gender reassignment’ as opposed to ‘sex change’ or ‘sex swap’
- The emergence of the concept of ‘gender being assigned at birth’ in place of ‘born male’ or ‘born female’

The following sections explore evidence from within our corpus of how quickly and to what extent these terms have been adopted, perhaps in response to guidance issued by IPSO and others. In Section F we discuss the drivers of change in coverage, which include the issuance of specific guidance by transgender community groups and by IPSO plus other factors such as social media.

b. Gender identity

As indicated in the timeline, the concept of gender identity as separate from biological sex emerged from the 1970s onwards, when it was used to define what was initially considered a disorder associated with transsexualism. In the analysis of our corpus, the stories that use ‘gender identity’ have grown in line with growth in coverage and has remained stable as a proportion of transgender-related stories.

Exhibit 21: stories using ‘gender identity’ as % of all transgender-related stories



Notes: 4-month rolling average of the number of stories published that contain ‘gender identity’ at least once. Expressed as a proportion of all transgender-related stories.
 Source: QuantSpark, Mediatique analysis

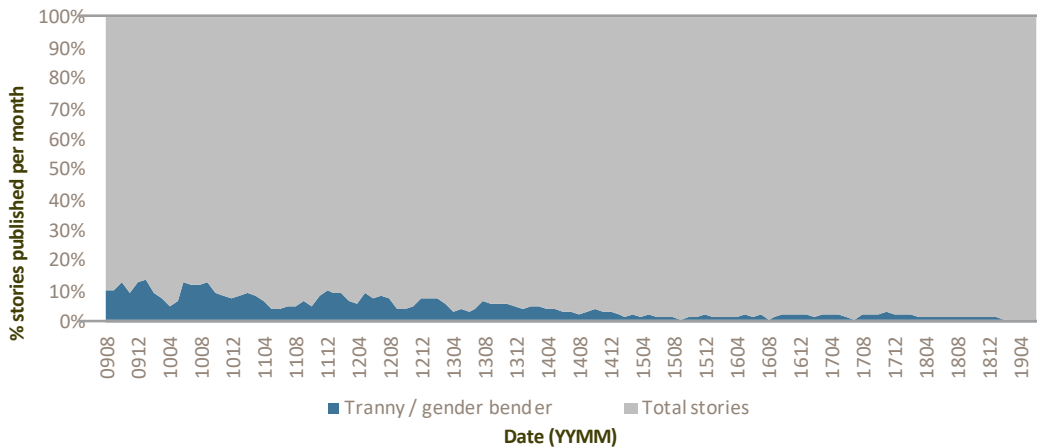
This provides an indication that the level of acceptance of the concept of gender identity does not appear to have grown during the analysis period.

c. Use of terms considered offensive

During the past decade it became unacceptable to use the term ‘tranny’ or ‘gender bender’, which are now considered pejorative in any context. Our analysis of the corpus shows extremely few stories that use the terms, particularly relative to the volume of stories that use ‘trans’ or ‘transgender’, which indicates widespread respect for what is now regarded as acceptable terminology.

The Managing Editor of a national tabloid said, “we don’t need to tell our writers not to use the term ‘gender bender’; it’s obviously pejorative”.

Exhibit 22: use of ‘tranny’ or ‘gender bender’ as % of stories containing ‘trans’ or ‘transgender’

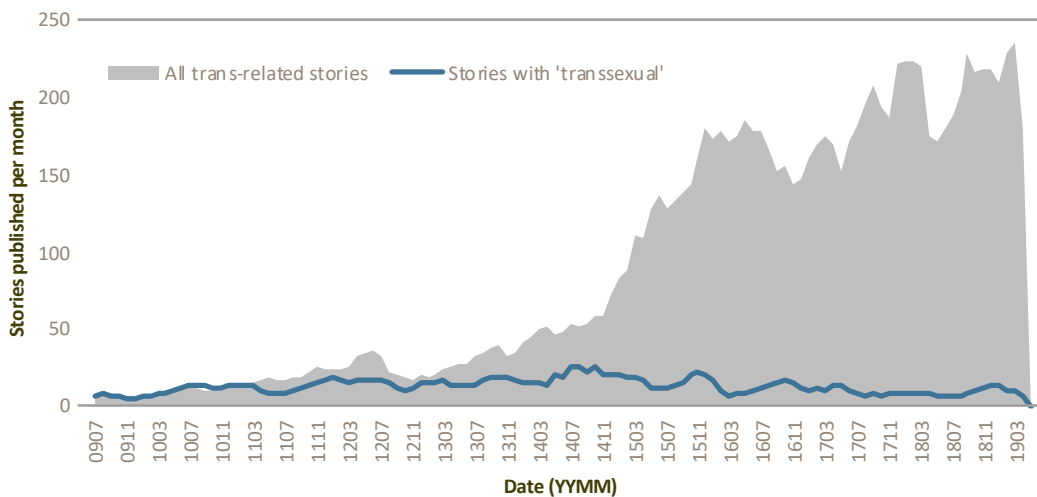


Notes: 4-month rolling average of the number of stories published that contain ‘tranny’, ‘gender bender’, ‘trannie’ or ‘gender-bender’ at least once. Expressed as a proportion of all transgender-related stories.
Source: QuantSpark, Mediatique analysis

d. ‘Transsexual’ or ‘transgender’

The use of ‘transsexual’ is more nuanced. There has been widespread adoption amongst the community of LGBT organisations of the concept of the ‘transgender umbrella’, which extends the use of the term ‘transgender’ to beyond those who used to be called ‘transsexual’ to include all types of ‘gender non-conformity’. According to guidance issued by both All About Trans, ‘transsexual’ applies primarily to those who are determined to achieve, or have already achieved, full medical and surgical gender reassignment. The advice proposes the use of the term only in the context of an individual who identifies as ‘transsexual’.

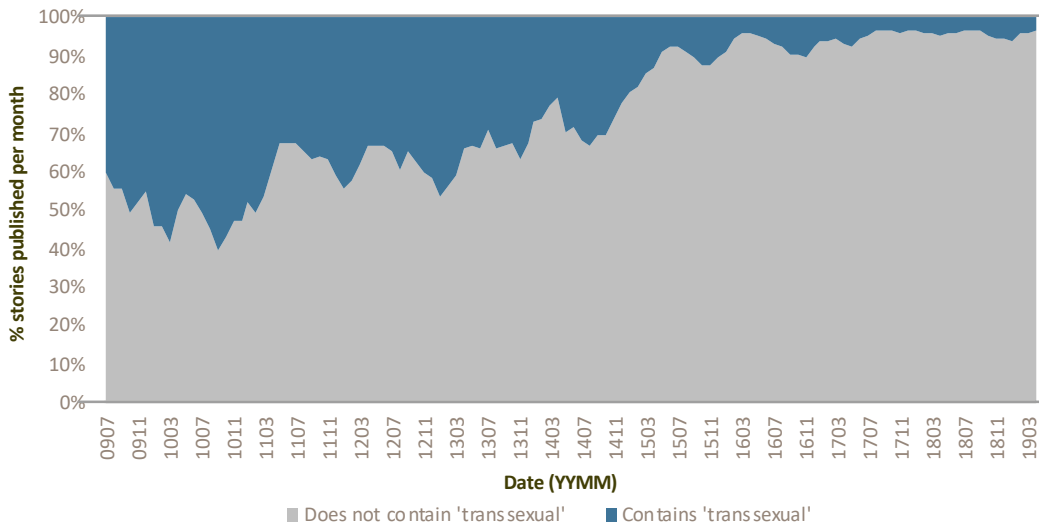
Exhibit 23: stories containing ‘transsexual’ vs all transgender-related stories



Notes: 4-month rolling average of the number of stories published that contain ‘transsexual’ at least once. Against the total number of transgender-related stories.
Source: QuantSpark, Mediatique analysis

The falling number of stories containing ‘transsexual’, both in absolute terms and as a proportion of the total transgender-related stories, indicates – again – a widespread adoption of the terminology preferred by LGBT groups.

Exhibit 24: stories published per month containing 'transsexual' as a proportion of total transgender-related stories



Notes: 4-month rolling average of the number of stories published that contain 'transsexual' at least once expressed as a % of total transgender-related stories.
 Source: QuantSpark, Mediatique analysis

e. The emergence of 'non-binary'

Within the 'trans umbrella', a concept adopted formally by Stonewall when it added transgender to its campaigning remit, cites any individual who would consider themselves 'gender non-conforming'. Our examination of the prevalence of 'non-binary', 'gender non-conforming' and 'gender fluid' in transgender-related stories indicates growing usage of the terms.

This was, however, an area where we perceived some resistance amongst editorial staff at the publishers we spoke to.

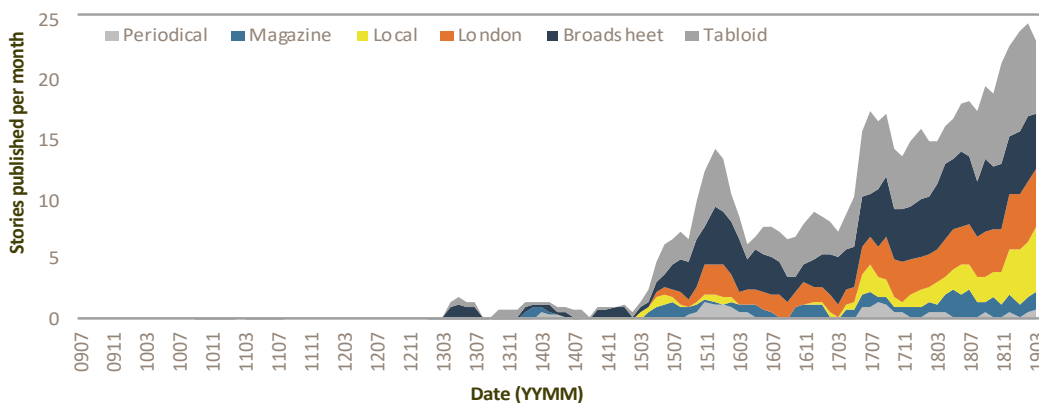
"It would be massively difficult for us to use 'non-binary'; there's no point putting something in a story if the reader doesn't understand it."

National newspaper

"We currently don't use gender neutral pronouns. Our writers would have a hard time with that one."

National newspaper

Exhibit 25: Stories published per month containing 'non-binary' and related terms by publishing type



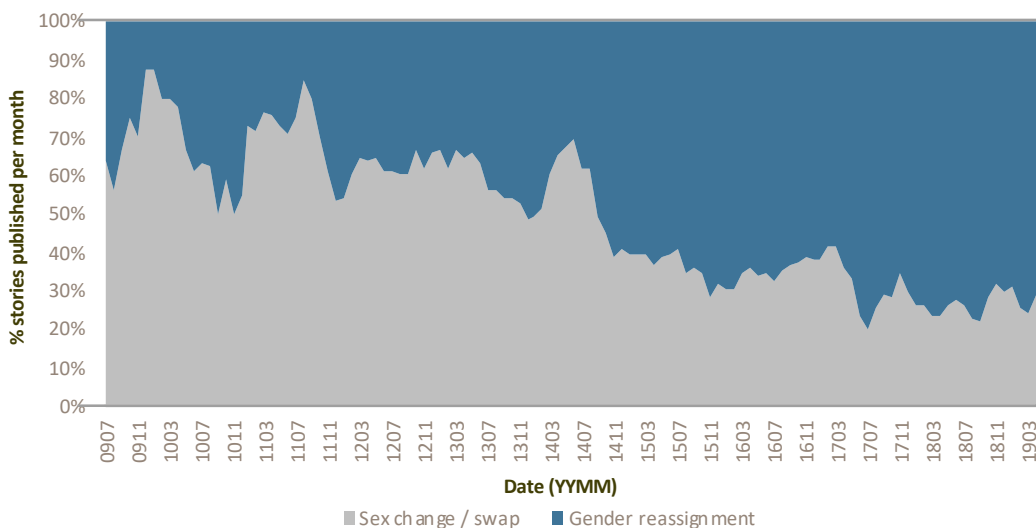
Notes: 4-month rolling average of the number of stories published that contain 'non-binary', 'non-binary', 'gender nonconforming', 'gender fluid' and 'gender queer' at least once.
 Source: QuantSpark, Mediatique analysis

f. Gender reassignment versus sex change

At the heart of the conceptual framework adopted to understand and explain transgender identities are the linked concepts of sex (as biological fact, generally male or female) versus gender identity (as internal perception of gender; male, female or non-binary). Aligned with this is the sister concept of ‘gender reassignment’. This is the term that LGBT or specifically transgender groups would like to be adopted to represent what has often been described as a ‘sex change’. This is challenged by critics who say that sex, being biological fact linked to DNA and reproductive system, cannot in fact be changed. But the gender that is ‘assigned at birth’ can be ‘reassigned’ for someone who identifies as transgender. The use of ‘gender reassignment’ is also supported by the consideration that a transgender person may choose not to have any medical or surgical intervention, so it can refer to a personal decision, prior even to any process of transition to a new gender.

Despite the complexity of this conceptual framework, our analysis of the corpus indicates a growing acceptance of the use of ‘gender reassignment’, and in the last year more than 70% of stories that addressed gender reassignment or sex change used the preferred terminology. The proportion of articles that referred to ‘sex change’ remained stable at around 30% during the last two years of the period.

Exhibit 26: proportion of stories published per month dealing with gender reassignment that use ‘sex change’ or ‘sex swap’



Notes: 4-month rolling average of the number of stories published that contain ‘sex change’ or ‘sex swap’ at least once expressed as a percentage of the total stories mentioning these terms or ‘gender reassignment’ or equivalent.
 Source: QuantSpark, Mediatique analysis

g. Gender being assigned at birth versus born male/female

Consistent with this conceptual framework is the idea that, when we refer to a child as being ‘born male’ or ‘born female’, we are not merely identifying his or her biological sex. Instead, according to this approach, each human is ‘assigned’ a gender at birth.

The use of the term ‘assigned’ for gender at birth allows for the possibility that the observed sex may not be consistent with the child’s gender identity and the possibility that the child’s gender can be ‘reassigned’ in the future once this discovery has been made.

“In simple terms, a ‘gender reassignment’ or ‘transition’ is from the point of view of other people, rather than the transgender person themselves.”

Transgender community group

As a leading transgender media engagement organisation says:

“It’s important to know that, as and when a transgender person discloses that [they are transgender], even if they then go on to a medical intervention, they have been the same person since birth.”

Transgender community group

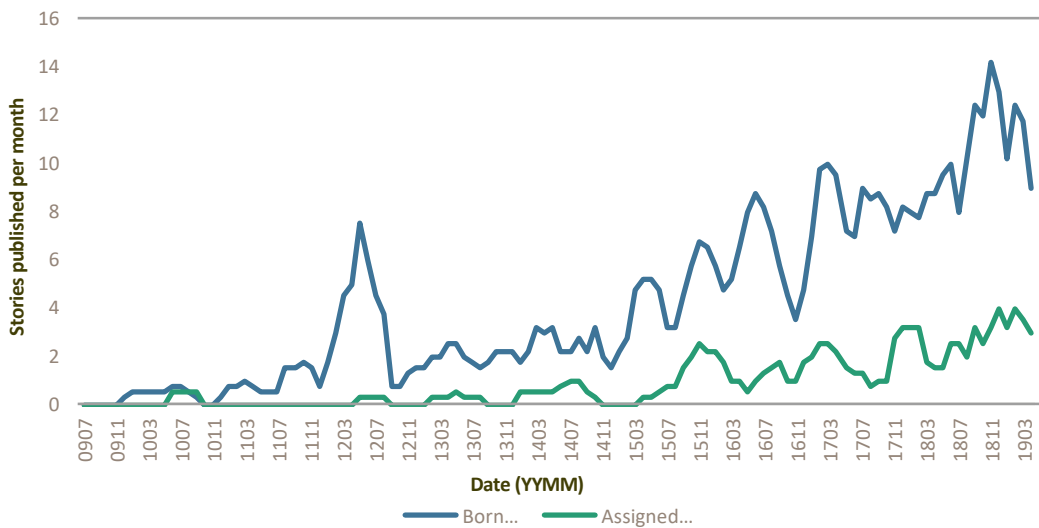
Our analysis of the corpus shows a growing acceptance of this framework and the number of articles that embrace gender being ‘assigned at birth’ reached 25% of those that discuss either ‘born’ or ‘assigned’ in April 2019.

One of the feminist community groups we spoke to voiced concern about this framework:

“‘assigned at birth’ is the language of an ideology”

Feminist community group

Exhibit 27: stories published per month containing ‘assigned gender’ vs ‘born’

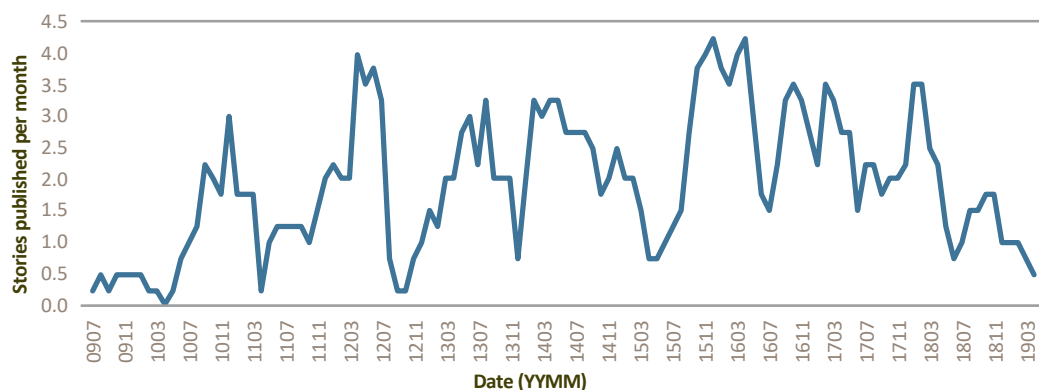


Notes: 4-month rolling average of the number of stories published that contain ‘assigned’ in reference to birth gender vs those containing ‘born’ at least once.
Source: QuantSpark, Mediatique analysis

h. Pre-op / post-op

Casual elisions in reference to gender reassignment surgery are considered disrespectful and our analysis indicates very few articles contain references to ‘pre-op’ or ‘post-op’ in reference to whether an individual has opted to undergo gender reassignment surgery. In recent years, the number of articles that contain this construction has fallen to an average of one every two months.

Exhibit 28: number of stories published each month that contain 'pre-op' or 'post-op'



Notes: 4-month rolling average of the number of stories published that contain at least one reference to 'pre-op' or 'post-op'.
Source: QuantSpark, Mediatique analysis

i. Male- or female-bodied

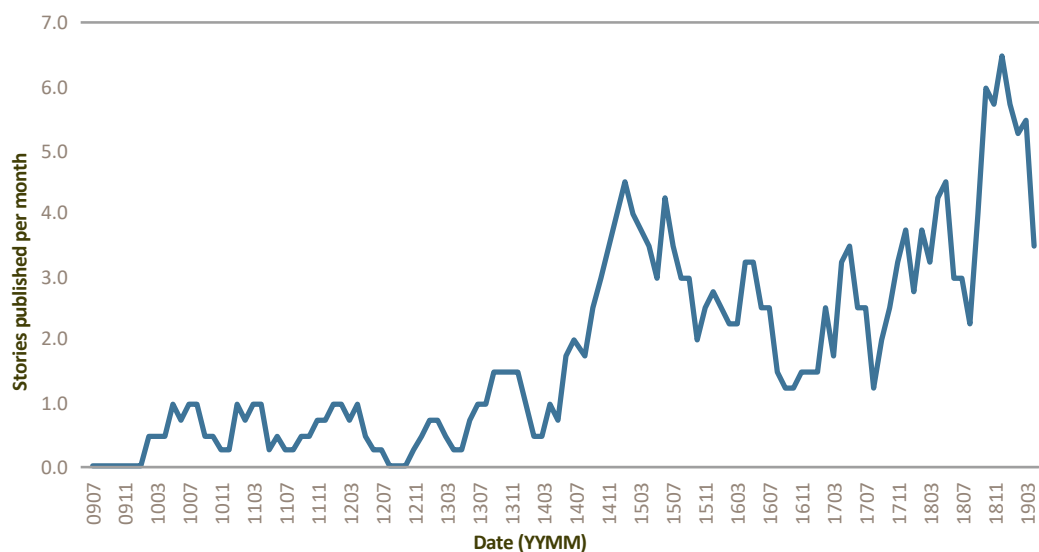
For transgender people who decide that they wish to align their (outward) gender expression with their (internal) gender identity, it is often the case that they would wish to be perceived by the public as a member of the gender to which they have transitioned. For this reason, references to transgender people who are 'male-bodied' or 'female-bodied' can be considered disrespectful by some as it highlights the challenges faced by transgender people who wish to leave behind the sex they were assigned to at birth.

“Those that transition from male to female in later life have a particular challenge in ‘passing’, for whom ‘male-bodied’ is a particular problem”

Transgender community group

In our research, we found extremely few references to either 'male-bodied' or 'female-bodied'. The use of these terms has increased but in a way which is commensurate with the growth in coverage of transgender issues. It appears that newspaper editors have worked hard to find descriptive techniques that avoid using language deemed to be disrespectful.

Exhibit 29: articles published per month containing 'male-bodied' or 'female-bodied'

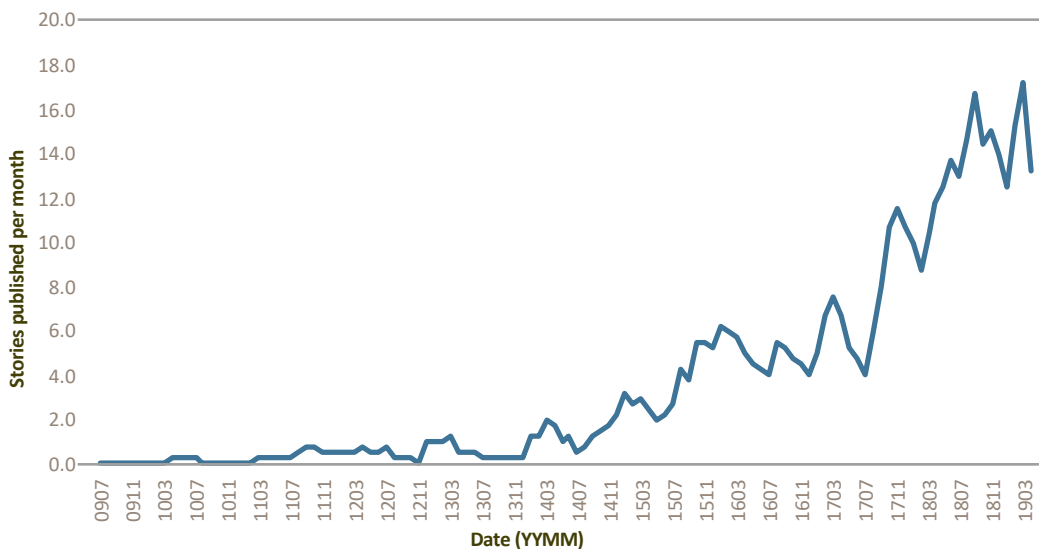


Notes: 4-month rolling average of the number of stories published that contain at least one reference to 'male-bodied' or 'female-bodied'.
Source: QuantSpark, Mediatique analysis

j. The trans lobby

As descriptive terms, ‘trans activist’ or ‘transgender activist’ carry a weight which some of our interlocutors believed was pejorative. ‘Trans lobby’ or ‘transgender lobby’ also imply a heightened level of activity of engagement, which we have certainly seen since the emergence of proposals for self-identification. The use of these terms – whether purely descriptive or to denote an opinion about the debate’s interlocutors – at the least indicate a heating up of the debate around transgender-related issues. Our analysis shows a significant rise in the use of these terms, particularly during recent years.

Exhibit 30: articles published per month containing ‘trans activist’ or ‘trans lobby’

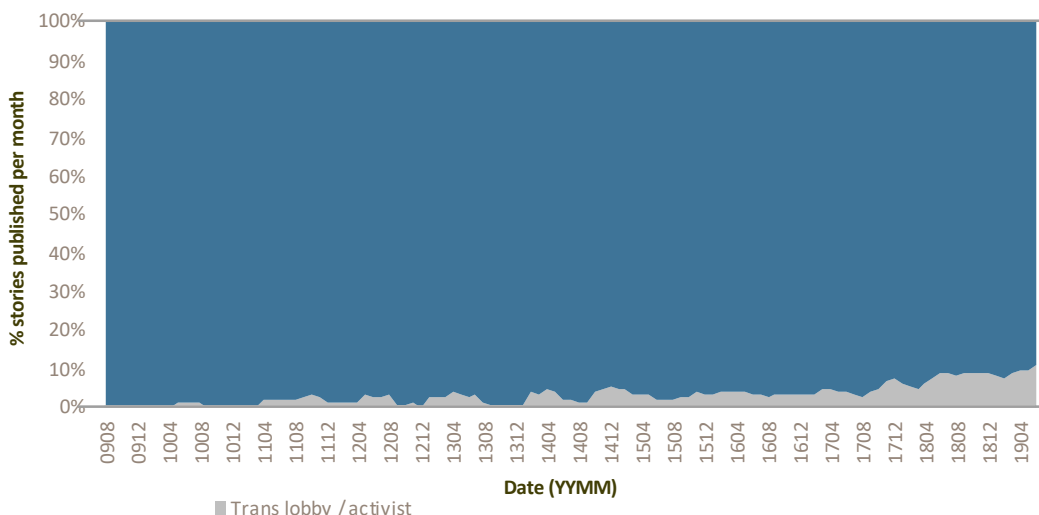


Notes: 4-month rolling average of the number of stories published that contain at least one reference to ‘trans / transgender activist’ or ‘trans lobby / ist’ or similar .

Source: QuantSpark, Mediatique analysis

However, as a percentage of total transgender-related stories, those that contain these terms have not increased markedly as the debate around institutional policies has intensified.

Exhibit 31: % transgender-related articles each month containing ‘trans lobby’ or ‘trans activist’



Notes: 4-month rolling average of the number of stories published that contain ‘trans lobby’, transgender lobby’, ‘trans activist’ or ‘transgender activist’ at least once expressed as a percentage of the total transgender related stories

Source: QuantSpark, Mediatique analysis

Two groups were particularly exercised about this use of language:

“The papers now talk about a 'trans activist', which seems to be used to demonise anything that's done to engage in the debate. They make it sound like angry individuals, rather than organised charities which are doing their job calmly and respectfully.”

Transgender community group

“The term 'activist' is used to delegitimise the experience of a trans person; it seems like a neutral term but has a pernicious undertone.”

Transgender community group

k. *The perspective of the transgender community*

We spoke to several transgender individuals and representatives of transgender community groups. There is an acceptance amongst some that language has changed, as indicated here, though (as we discuss below in Section F) some divergence on whether these changes were materially significant:

“Yes it is true that language overall is more respectful towards transgender people (it's nice that you don't see 'sex change' very much anymore). However, this is mainly a trivial change.”

Transgender individual, transgender community group

“The Daily Mail and the Independent started using better language in 2013, started to gender Caitlyn Jenner correctly as 'she'.”

Transgender media campaign

“Broadly speaking, things are improving, the arc of change is in the right direction; people are using the right pronouns...”

Transgender media campaign

“The stories used to be occasional and the language horrible. It then got better but now it's worse than 10 years ago in that it's actively malicious. Writers have shifted to using language that seems less harmful, such as 'biologically male', 'born male' or 'male-bodied', but these terms dehumanise the person, treats trans people as objects.”

“Maybe the words are no longer obviously offensive and wrong but they have undercurrents that suggest an idea of trans people being dangerous, similar language to that used during the Section 28 debates such as 'ideology', 'propaganda', 'promoting'.”

Transgender community group

l. *The perspective of editors*

Our discussions with editorial staff threw up some common observations, mostly affirming the idea that they had adopted a more respectful approach to stories concerning transgender subjects than at the start of the decade, but that this did not prevent them from debating the issues.

“In the bad old days our terminology was unforgivable. Ten years ago, we used all the wrong terms – 'gender bender', 'tranny' etc. – but now we're careful about language. It's been a learning curve for us all. We want to be decent people, nobody wants to hurt anybody, we have a social conscience. Yes, we sometimes make a mistake, but we admit it when we do; we try to rectify it and try not to repeat it.”

National daily tabloid

“Language has changed enormously because we must reflect society. We have engaged with the trans lobby groups openly and willingly and have a good relationship with them. We are open and honest and will not always agree, but we have a constructive dialogue.”

National daily tabloid

“The language we use has definitely changed. Before we used to have to explain what a 'trans man' is and some readers still are confused. We have had guidance but don't follow it slavishly. For example, we write 'born male' rather than 'assigned male at birth'. But respectful language doesn't prevent us from a discussion of the issues. We frequently respectfully disagree, and our number one priority is to make sure the reader understands what we're talking about.”

National daily tabloid

4. Conclusions

There has been a significant growth in transgender-related stories in all areas of the UK press, growth that is particularly marked in the past five years. A vast range of subjects have been treated in these articles, so it is not possible to ascertain precisely which content has led this growth. While it is clear that coverage spikes correspond to high-profile celebrity events (such as Caitlyn Jenner's coming out as a trans woman or the release of *The Danish Girl*) there also appears to be a rise in stories that cover a full range of 'adjacent' subjects when these spikes are experienced.

Clearly, however, the crescendo in story growth comes at a time when proposals for reform of the GRA have been grasped and fully debated in a way that issues and policies around transgender rights had not been when the laws were last introduced (2004 GRA and the 2010 Equality Act).

All publication types are publishing more transgender-related stories but most notable has been the rise in the proportion of transgender-related stories published by the tabloid press. At the start of the decade, most of the stories were published in the broadsheets but over half of the stories published now are in tabloids (insofar as represented by our corpus).

In terms of language, during the ten-year analysis period there has been a widespread adoption of language that generally indicates acceptance of the underlying concepts used to describe and understand transgender issues. These include:

- 'Transgender' over 'transsexual'
- 'Gender reassignment' over 'sex change'
- The disappearance of pejorative terms such as 'tranny'
- The increasing use of 'gender identity'

There is some resistance to use of language that editors believe readers will find hard to grasp, including:

- The concept of 'assigned male / female at birth', as opposed to 'born male / female'
- Terms relating to 'non-binary' gender identities, particularly the use of the plural pronouns for individuals who identify as non-binary

The analysis in this section is descriptive and does not seek to capture editorial standards issues that go beyond the use of respectful or disrespectful language. To look more closely, we have conducted a manual analysis, focusing on a series of representative case studies, described in Section E. This aims to examine the coverage of specific stories and whether and how editorial standards may have been met or compromised.

F. Manual analysis of editorial standards in coverage

1. Introduction

Section D contained an objective analysis of our corpus of articles, providing an indication of volume, subjects and terminology. By contrast, in this section we present an examination of the evolution of editorial standards during the analysis period, which has required closer textual, and necessarily more subjective, analysis.

Given that resource and time constraints did not permit us to read or examine every one of the 12,400 in our corpus of transgender-related articles, we have undertaken this aspect of the analysis using a limited set of case studies of events in the transgender timeline we believe to be broadly representative of the range of story types typical in the period.

Our aim has been to look at the coverage of these events in detail, in order to ascertain whether and how they meet the editorial standards implied by the Editors’ Code of Practice (the ‘Code’) and whether they align with the guidance issued by IPSO regarding transgender-related coverage in 2016 (the ‘Guidance’).

Our aim is not to identify formal breaches of the Code – this would require deep investigation behind each story and is not the scope of the project – instead, we examine whether on first reading there are any areas that might indicate Code or Guidance issues. We make common-sense observations about the nature of the coverage as we test the bounds of what it means for coverage to respect Accuracy, avoid Discrimination and other requirements of the Code or Guidance.

a. Editorial standards parameters

Coverage can be said to meet editorial standards where it does not obviously create issues around Code or Guidance contravention:

b. Selection of case studies

We have selected 11 events during the past decade, although most of these occurred during the past six years of the period, during which the focus on transgender-related issues has been more intense. The events we have selected comprise both human interest and policy-focused stories, as indicated below.

Exhibit 32: News events comprising our case studies for analysis into editorial standards

09-10	10-11	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19
			Miss Universe dis-qualification						
			Chelsea Manning conviction and transition						
							Caitlyn Jenner Vanity Fair cover		
									Riley Carter Millington first trans actor cast in EastEnders
									Women and Equalities Select Committee report
									Speaker’s Corner incident
									Tavistock GIDS rise in referrals / resignations over approach to trans children
									ITV show about a trans child Butterfly is broadcast
									Rachel McKinnon first trans woman track cycling record
									Trans woman prisoner Karen White conviction
									Mermaids Lottery Fund award confirmation

c. Approach to manual analysis

For each of the case study events, we have gathered a random selection of articles. In most cases the number of articles is determined by the full number that appear in our corpus. We have excluded some news articles that simply repeat a news agency story or replay information from a press release tied to the event. We have added a selection of articles from The Times / Sunday Times online archive since these publications are not included in our corpus (for reasons we explain in Section C).

The articles comprise either news stories or comment pieces. Included in what we call the 'comment' category are any pieces that contain a single perspective on the story or issue. So, this will include profiles where the voice of the subject is the main focus of the piece or feature articles which take a clear position.

We have characterised each article by whether it is broadly Supportive of the underlying argument in favour of the emerging approach to transgender policies, Neutral in its approach (typical of news items) or Questioning, i.e. in some way not accepting of the approach.

For each type of article, we identify where we believe (without further underlying research) there might be editorial standards issues (relative to the Codes and Guidance described above).

This is used to support our judgment on editorial standards for each story and to provide a perspective on the evolution of standards over the period, as represented by the case studies. Where an editorial issue is identified, we provide commentary on our judgment or on issues relating to statistics or accuracy.

d. Section structure

This section presents a summary of some indicators of editorial position and standards from our reading of the case studies plus a review of problem areas we identify as common to several of the cases, as follows:

- Coverage types / phases
- Phase II-type case studies summary
- Phase III-type case studies summary
- Terminology findings
- Gender-related concepts
- Accuracy (rights and legislation)
- Accuracy (statistics)
- Pronouns

Full analysis for each case study is contained within Appendix A.

2. Coverage types / phases

Most of the transgender community representatives and national newspaper editorial staff we spoke to align on there being three broad types of coverage of transgender-related stories: Type I – transgender status as anomaly; Type II – human interest, and Type III – policy, rights and children. These coverage types also broadly but not precisely correspond to three consecutive phases, in that Type I coverage is seldom published now and generally characterised the early phase of coverage but such stories did continue to appear (most notable examples of which being the Lucy Meadows and Dr Kate Stone stories) even when most coverage was of the more sympathetic Type II coverage. Most coverage now published is Type III:

a. Type I: transgender status as anomaly

During the early phase of press interest in transgender-related stories, the stories were typically of the Type I coverage type. They took a prurient and disrespectful interest in transgender people and their transitions. The subjects are generally referred to as transsexuals, as the content typically concerned individuals who had transitioned (or were transitioning) to live outwardly as the opposite sex and / or gender. All of the editorial

staff we spoke to acknowledged that they got it wrong in terms of language and respect in delivering this type of coverage. The most high-profile example of this type of coverage was the reporting of an incident in which Dr Kate Stone (a transgender scientist) was gored by a stag in 2013 which focused on her transgender status, which – while of biographical interest – was irrelevant to the story. The impact of this event on coverage is addressed in Section F below. None of the events we selected for our manual analysis fall into this category in terms of coverage. This is largely because this type of coverage has now largely disappeared and most of the coverage in the analysis period (apart from notable exceptions such as Dr Stone’s goring) falls under the categories described below.

b. Type II: human interest

There subsequently emerged an approach to transgender issues in which more respect was shown and coverage (depending on publication) would consist of broadly sympathetic, genuinely enquiring stories about the experience of being transgender, for example: the first transgender judge, pilot, etc. This phase reached its apex with Caitlyn Jenner’s coming out but continued as other firsts were covered, such as Riley Carter Millington’s casting in *EastEnders* (being the first transgender actor cast in a major UK drama). Editorial staff believe that they had learned their lessons and understood generally the importance of treating transgender subjects with respect.

Four of the 11 events we selected (Miss Universe dis/qualification, Chelsea Manning transition, Caitlyn Jenner coming out and Riley Carter Millington cast in *EastEnders*) broadly exemplify this second type of coverage.

c. Type III: policy, rights and children

As readers became more familiar with transgender individuals and the prevalence of a human interest angle in transgender stories began to fade (as it has done with gay and lesbian human interest stories, which followed a similar, if earlier trajectory), the focus shifted to debate over policy areas and the tone changed.

The questions addressed in this phase focus – very broadly – around two areas: the impact on others of proposed or actual regulations and laws designed to protect and support transgender adults and the impact of the emerging treatment pathways and the gender identity conceptual framework on transgender and other children. This type of coverage is characterised by a more challenging tone.¹⁶

The analysis presented in Section D, which showed a significant rise both in the volume of stories being published about transgender-related issues and in the stories that dealt with real-world implications of proposals for treating or accommodating transgender people (prisons, self-ID and trans children) during the past five years appears to support this characterisation of Type III coverage.

The coverage of the remaining seven events we have selected for our manual analysis falls into this category: the WEC report; Speakers’ Corner incident; GIDS controversies; *Butterfly* broadcast on ITV; Karen White’s conviction; Rachel McKinnon’s world title and Mermaids’ Lottery funding.

d. Editorial approach

Given that these coverage types are found broadly (though not entirely) sequential phases, the consensus view of the editorial representatives with whom we spoke was that editorial standards have changed over the course of the past decade and the treatment of transgender-related issues has improved in terms of

¹⁶ We have not attempted to put precise dates to the start and end of these phases. Indeed, the Phases overlap in that empathetic, type Phase II stories still appear in recent years despite the large number of stories that fall under Phase III type coverage.

terminology, sensitivity and balance.¹⁷ They believe that they have got it broadly right in terms of approach: being respectful but not allowing that to prevent them debating the issues where there is disagreement with some in the transgender community.¹⁸

“The type of stories has changed. Ten years ago we were doing stories like ‘Britain’s first trans helicopter pilot’. We did a whole series of personal stories, we wrote sympathetically. But the public has lost its appetite for these stories.”

National daily newspaper

“Now we wouldn’t mention that the subject of an article was gay. We wouldn’t mention that they were trans; to do so would require us to establish that they were, which may mean access to private medical information. So we wouldn’t mention it unless the information was public. Even then, we would only mention it if it was a core part of their biography. It becomes a privacy issue. We would have to think carefully about this.”

National daily newspaper

Transgender community-related groups and individuals we spoke to have a different perspective. All agreed that there was a period during which the tone and language used improved markedly. Pejorative, disrespectful terms such as ‘tranny’ and ‘gender-bender’ (prevalent in Type I coverage) all but disappeared from use in Type II coverage (at least in the periodicals under review in our analysis). The concepts around gender, including gender identity and gender reassignment started to appear more frequently. But after 2015 / 2016 the tone of the discussion got markedly more combative as the debate around gender recognition for adults and treatment for transgender children intensified as typified by Type III coverage.

In our discussions with individuals and groups in the transgender community we were told of a sense that a sort of ‘honeymoon period’ with the press was now over and that there was palpable vitriol against transgender people and even a vendetta against some organisations within the ‘community’.

Our interlocutors spoke forcefully on this:

“In the early days, all depictions of trans people in popular culture were about deception and delusion and this was disgusting. There were no trans men in popular culture. They were seen as figures of horror or ridicule.

“Then the papers started to use more respectful language. But more recently, there has been the emergence of a highly sceptical, questioning tone.

“Even though, things are improving... In the positive press they have stopped outing people ... there are more varied and positive stories.”

Transgender community media group

¹⁷ As mentioned in section D, there has been an evident change in language used, which editors attribute to a growing awareness of the subject area and understanding better the sensitivities of the people involved. (Section F examines the causes of changes in editorial standards in more detail, including broad evolution in social attitudes.)

¹⁸ Clearly, there is no well-defined ‘transgender community’ as such but we have used the term to encompass those groups and individuals working explicitly towards expanding the rights of and consideration towards transgender people. We use the term ‘feminist community’ to represent those taking a questioning approach to the expansion of transgender rights (to put it broadly) and of the application of the gender identity framework and treatment pathways to children and more broadly. Neither of these phrases does justice to the complexity of the positions taken on the many difficult issues addressed in these arguments, particularly given that some of the ‘feminist community’ would argue that they also have the interests of transgender people at the centre of their arguments and indeed there are some within the ‘transgender community’ who are opposed to some of the policy liberalisations being debated.

“Around 2014 there was a trans zeitgeist, if you like; it was seen as a cultural phenomenon. Articles said, look at these trans people, what does this mean for society? Coverage was open-minded, look at these different ways of expressing gender. It was relatively friendly. Then after summer 2017 you have this increase in questioning of trans rights, that the trans community is bullying people to agree with them and they start asking questions about all these young people being trans. There is a darker tone and you get ‘trans rights activists’ who are portrayed in the negative.

“Suddenly the frequency went up. Weekly, every other day these reports would appear.”

Transgender community group

“Now there is a wanton misrepresentation of fact, there is a nastiness with some writers...”

Transgender community group

“The coverage took a turn for the worse, the volume went up with the level of repeated myth or misinformation (e.g., stuff about the *Gender Recognition Act*, which included sheer falsehood about the law).”

“Most of the negative coverage is now targeted at trans women, but in fact it's a very small number of people. Every weekend [newspaper – redacted] comes out with a scare story about trans folk but it's only 0.5% of the population and their impact is minimal.”

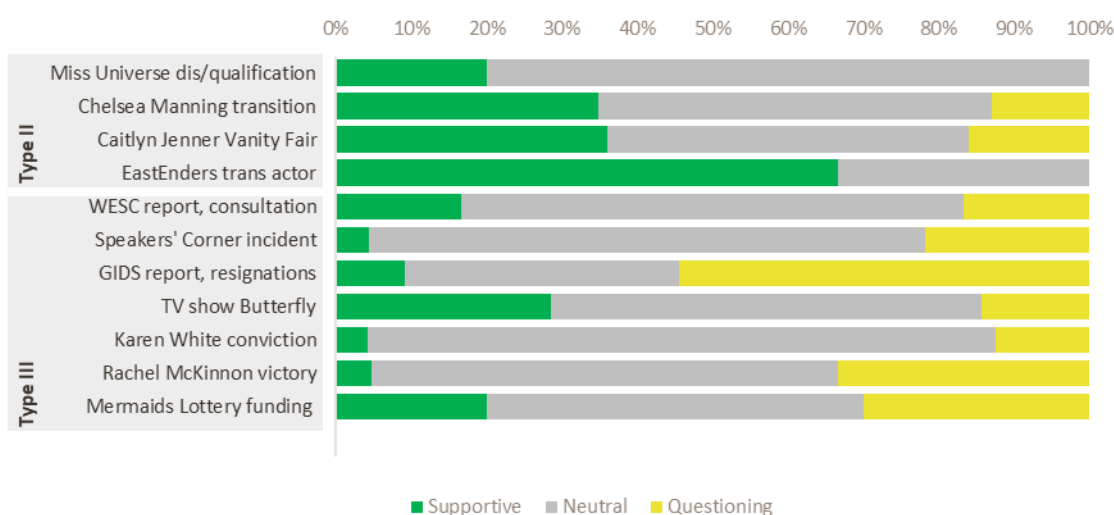
Transgender individual and transgender community group representative

“It was going OK in terms of coverage – respectful, good language – then the tone shifted to questioning. There was then a focus on the worst-case scenarios for everything.”

Transgender community group

In terms of editorial position, as a percentage of stories we reviewed for this analysis there was a greater number of Questioning stories for events that fall under Type III than Type II, as follows:

Exhibit 33: Editorial position of articles surveyed as % of total for each case study



Source: Analysis by Mediatique and QuantSpark

3. Type II case studies summary

While we cannot specify precise dates as to when each type of coverage was prevalent, three of the events in our case study series – the transgender Miss Universe contestant (2012), Caitlyn Jenner’s ‘coming out’ and the casting of a transgender actor in EastEnders (both in 2015) – typify the more sympathetic human interest-focused coverage of transgender individuals associated with Type II coverage. Coverage of Chelsea Manning’s

transition (2013) is complicated by the serious nature of her criminal conviction but the coverage of her transition is broadly sympathetic.

- Of the 78 articles we reviewed for these four events, only 7 could be characterised as Questioning, while 30 are classed as Supportive (and the rest Neutral)¹⁹
- Amongst these articles we identified only 12 cases where there may have been minor editorial standards issues. Of these:
 - Nine were matters of accuracy
 - Two were matters of potential prejudice / discrimination²⁰
 - One was a matter of potential privacy intrusion

Exhibit 34: Overview of case study analysis (Type II)

Event	Date	Editorial position	Editorial issues
Miss Universe	05/12	3 Supportive 12 Neutral 0 Questioning	0 issues
Chelsea Manning	07/13	8 Supportive 12 Neutral 3 Questioning	1 Accuracy 1 Privacy
Caitlyn Jenner	07/15	9 Supportive 12 Neutral 4 Questioning	6 Accuracy 2 Discrimination
Riley Carter Millington	10/15	10 Supportive 5 Neutral 0 Questioning	2 Accuracy

Source: Mediatique analysis

Most of the potential accuracy issues relate to the use of suicide or transgender population data that is unreliable (discussed below), or the use of the incorrect name or pronoun for someone who has transitioned. The two potential discrimination issues for the Manning story are the closest that commentators get to disrespectful coverage of Manning’s transition, more in the use of irony in reference to Manning’s status than in the use of language that is explicitly discriminatory.

The discrimination issues for Caitlyn Jenner come from opinion pieces, one in which ironic reference is made to Jenner as ‘him / her’ and another in which a more aggressive tone is used to tackle Jenner’s coming out including the description: ‘...Caitlyn Jenner, a bloke who, despite all the evidence to the contrary, insisted he was a woman...’.

4. Type III case studies summary

This second part of the decade saw, in addition to continued human interest stories, an increasing number of stories containing debate around various policies regarding treatments and individual rights and the implications of these for transgender and non-transgender individuals and groups.

According to the transgender community groups we spoke to, the turning point in coverage tone and content came with the WEC report on transgender equality that set out proposals to de-medicalise the process of

¹⁹ We use our judgment to determine whether the article has a voice that is – broadly – Supportive of the case for liberalising or extending trans rights, is Questioning of this direction of travel, which may include voices that are aggressive in their articulation of the arguments or whether the voice is Neutral, by which we mean it does not take a position on the argument but presents both sides or simply reports the news around an event.

²⁰ We use our judgment to determine whether points made in the article raise issues around the Codes or Guidance. Use of pre-transition pronouns, raises a potential issue under IPSO Guidance. Use of statistics without support raises accuracy issues. Pejorative use of terms would raise issues around discrimination.

obtaining a GRC and make it a matter of what came to be called ‘self-identification’ (or self-ID). It was at the point that this proposal became more than just a possibility, if not a likelihood, after the publication of the WEC report that the debate gathered momentum.

We reviewed 155 articles covering these seven cases we identify as typifying this type of coverage. We have excluded some of the repeated news articles that appear to be based on the press release or news agency piece relating to an event as these tend to be neutral and repetitive. As a result, the collection of articles we reviewed for each case generally includes all the comment pieces published relating to the event that were found in our corpus plus some relevant news coverage. As would be expected, there was a greater polarisation of editorial position represented in these articles:

- 40 of the articles we reviewed for these six events we categorised as Questioning
- 19 we categorised as Supportive, the rest being Neutral
- Amongst these 155 articles we identified 36 cases where there may have been editorial standards issues, most of which were related to coverage of the WEC report, the Speakers’ Corner incident and the GIDS controversies, which clearly encapsulate the central issues in this debate. Of these:
 - 34 were potential issues around accuracy
 - 2 were potential issues around privacy

Exhibit 35: Overview of case study analysis (Type III)

Event	Date	Editorial position	Editorial issues
Women and Equalities Committee report	01/16	4 Supportive 16 Neutral 4 Questioning	9 Accuracy
Speakers’ Corner incident	09/17	1 Supportive 17 Neutral 5 Questioning	11 Accuracy 1 Privacy
Tavistock GIDS	05/18	2 Supportive 8 Neutral 12 Questioning	3 Accuracy
ITV Butterfly	10/18	6 Supportive 12 Neutral 3 Questioning	3 Accuracy
Karen White	10/18	1 Supportive 20 Neutral 3 Questioning	0 issues
Rachel McKinnon	10/18	1 Supportive 13 Neutral 7 Questioning	5 Accuracy 1 Privacy
Mermaids Lottery award	12/18	4 Supportive 10 Neutral 6 Questioning	3 Accuracy

Source: Mediatique analysis

Our analysis points to an intensification of the debate, indicated by aggressive terminology used in some coverage. For example, in the coverage of WEC report one columnist uses the term ‘terf’ (seen by many feminists as pejorative, to denote ‘trans-exclusionary radical feminist’) and the same term is used frequently in the coverage of the Speakers’ Corner incident to describe the woman who was attacked. In coverage of Rachel McKinnon’s world title win that we examined we found two uses of ‘transphobic’ to characterise those who question trans woman participation in female sport. An article about Mermaids’ funding award contains a powerful accusation about opponents of the award who are accused of wanting to ‘persecute trans youth personally’. These do not comprise editorial standards issues but are indicative of the heating up of debate in these areas.

The McKinnon coverage contains one potential privacy issue in one article’s reference to unnecessary detail on McKinnon’s physical transition.

Most of the accuracy issues relate to the use of suicide statistics or trans population statistics which are discredited or unsupported and which we discuss below.

Nevertheless, it is our perspective that most of the debate around these serious and contentious issues, while heated at times, is conducted broadly within the parameters set by the Codes and Guidance.

5. Terminology

The analysis described in Section D indicates that the terminology deployed to describe transgender people and transgender-related issues has evolved over the past decade:

- The use of ‘gender identity’ growing roughly in line with the growth in the volume of transgender-related stories
- The use of pejorative terms such as ‘tranny’ etc. declining to a very small proportion of total transgender-related stories – indeed we found no examples of such language in the articles surveyed for the manual review
- The use of ‘transsexual’ declining in both absolute and relative terms
- Growth in the prevalence of ‘non-binary’
- Decline in the proportion of stories that use ‘sex change’ relative to ‘gender reassignment’
- Growth in the use of terms related to ‘assigned gender at birth’
- Proportionate rise in the terms ‘male- or female-bodied’

The textual analysis of our 11 case studies (represented in 229 separate articles) in this section throws up very few examples where terminology does not conform to this emerging, generally accepted approach.

An exception to this is the prevalence of the phrase ‘sex change’ in several of the articles examined, particularly in relation to the GIDS and Mermaids case studies, which many of our interlocutors from the transgender community would prefer not to be used, favouring ‘gender reassignment’ instead. We address our approach to this below.

6. Gender-related concepts

Terminology functions in an article only if the reader understands the concepts that it is purporting to describe. There are three main areas where we suspect the use of certain terminology may be confusing to readers given that it denotes quite complex and not uncontentious underlying concepts, which are not always explained fully in context. We outline these below:

a. *Sex change / gender reassignment*

As mentioned above, the phrase ‘sex change’ is prevalent in several of our cases. We indicate in our commentary that our interlocutors in the transgender community have a preference for ‘gender reassignment’ to be used in place of ‘sex change’. Some editorial representatives are not persuaded.

“At the end of the day, ‘transsexuals’ want to change sex, which is why they have surgery, hormone therapy. They may want to change gender too but at the heart of the matter they want to change their sexual features. Using ‘transgender’ broadens the field to include those who may want to move their gender expression along a spectrum without ‘changing’ sex, which is why ‘transsexual’ doesn’t fit for them. But it’s important to retain the distinction, which is why gender reassignment and sex change are actually different things.”

Freelance journalist

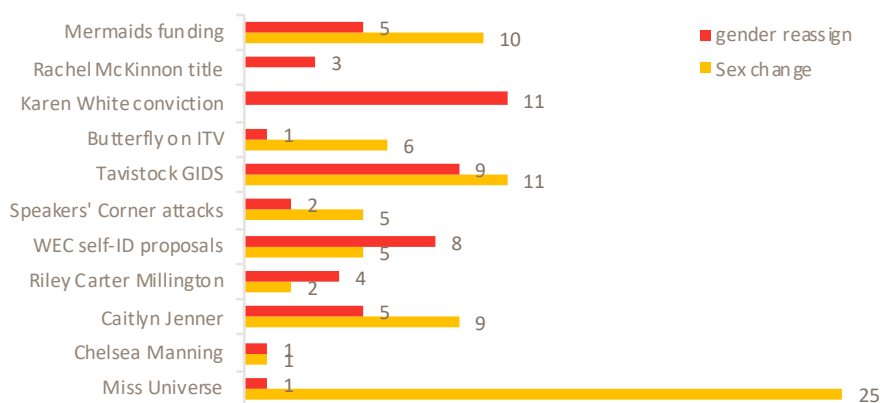
Since biological sex is largely binary whereas gender exists on a spectrum, the choice of ‘sex change’ vs ‘gender reassignment’ is not a trivial one; each denotes a different way of looking at the issue of transsexualism (a term still used by one constituency within the transgender community) or transgender status. If sex change is used, then this implies that the subject is seeking to change sex in a binary fashion. This would apply to those who wish to inhabit the opposite sex to that assigned at birth without notice being taken in society at large. We therefore do not automatically class the use of ‘sex change’ as indicative of an editorial standards issue; it depends on the context and how likely the reader is to understand its usage. But there clearly exists ongoing confusion in this area.

“In terms of language, four or five years ago, we thought 'sex swap' was an acceptable term. We do still use ‘change sex’ on occasion and our writers sometimes use ‘gender’ and ‘sex’ interchangeably. Sometimes it just has to be done.”

National daily newspaper

In our case studies, both terms are used at levels that depend on the story and date. At the time of the Miss Universe story, the concept of gender reassignment was new, so ‘sex change’ was used almost exclusively. The use of terms containing ‘gender reassign’ in our case studies broadly grows during the analysis period, while ‘sex change’ declines.

Exhibit 36: number of mentions of ‘sex change’ and ‘gender reassign...’ in the case study articles



Note: number of mentions of ‘sex change’, ‘sex-change’, ‘change of sex’ vs ‘gender-reassign...’ ‘gender-reassign...’
 Source: QuantSpark, Mediatique analysis

b. Born sex / assigned gender

The idea that gender is ‘assigned at birth’ in turn appears to support the idea that gender can be ‘reassigned’ should the original assignation be incorrect, as in the case of a transgender person. Indeed, the use of the expression ‘assigned male / female at birth’ in place of ‘born male / female’ is amongst the preferred usages promoted by some transgender community groups.

However, to establish clarity in the use of this expression, it is important to understand what is meant by the word ‘gender’. If *gender* is a basket of attributes and behaviours and features, some physical, some societal, some performative, that determine maleness or femaleness in life, then if the child is having gender ‘assigned at birth’, the doctor and nurses (and parents) are saying something about how the baby will grow up to be / behave / dress etc.

“It’s a confusing subject for the reader and this issue of language can make it more confusing.”

National daily newspaper

“Young trans groups try to revolutionise language, for example in their use of ‘cis-gender’. They’re demanding about the use of language. But this just gets people’s backs up. We should be more relaxed about it.”

Transgender community group

“An MP said that using the GRA to get a new birth certificate is ‘legalised lying’. But it’s not a lie. It’s a correction; the original certificate makes an assumption based on the appearance or not of a phallus. This doesn’t capture what is going on when you declare a child to be male or female.”

Transgender community group

It could be argued instead that what happens at birth is the *observation* of biological sex, rather than the presumption of gender. In this way, the medical staff are describing the baby, making a guess, perhaps, but essentially describing what they see, which is either a male or a female child (or in some rare cases, a child with ‘variations in sex characteristics,’ sometimes called ‘intersex’ attributes.²¹ For this reason, many writers still use ‘born male’ and ‘born female’.

“A child is born either male or female and we continue to use language that reflects that fact.”

National daily newspaper

At the point of birth, it is difficult to say very much about how a child will develop in terms of gender in the broadest sense (behaviour, clothing, preferences etc.).

“We try to respect individuals as much as we can. But there are limits. ‘Assigned male or female at birth’, for example, simply do not correspond to how our readers think about sex and gender.”

National daily newspaper

“We use ‘born male’ rather than ‘assigned...’ otherwise our readers wouldn’t understand”

National daily newspaper

Accordingly, we have not identified the use of ‘born male / female’ as indicative of an editorial standards issue.

It is worth observing that we came across few examples in the articles we surveyed where the conceptual implications of these terms were discussed or debated; perhaps indicating where writers and editors are challenged in providing clarity for their readers, given the clear lack of consensus over the terminology and underlying concepts attached to the transgender subject area.

It is clear from the sample of case studies, that the concept of ‘assigned gender at birth’ is not widely used at this stage.

²¹ The Government Equalities Office defines ‘variations in sex characteristics’ as “physical development that is different from what is generally expected of males and females,” It points out that “there are other terms in use, such as intersex and differences of sex development.” <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/variations-in-sex-characteristics-call-for-evidence>.

Exhibit 37: number of mentions of ‘born male / female’ and ‘assigned male / female at birth’ in the case study articles



Note: number of mentions of ‘born male / female’, ‘male / female-born’, ‘change of sex’ vs ‘assigned male / female...’
 Source: QuantSpark, Mediatique analysis

c. Non-binary and gender identity

The WEC report recommended both adding an X category to the sex marker on British passports and exploring legal protections for non-binary people. Most of the coverage of the report concentrated on the WEC’s proposals regarding self-ID for gender recognition and very little made reference to the proposed legal recognition of the ‘non-binary’ gender identity.

Only one of the articles we reviewed (a national tabloid 01/06/18) refers to voices that directly question this underlying conceptual framework: “the current accepted view – that whether you are a man or a woman is merely a feeling, an inner essence, which transcends biology – offers a loophole to [...] abusers. And if proposed changes to the gender recognition act are passed, this new orthodoxy will become enshrined in law”.

Most of the articles that question the WEC recommendations and the Government’s subsequent proposals for reform of the GRA do question the validity of awarding the full legal status ‘female’ or ‘male’ entirely on the basis of an unchallengeable individual declaration, but, in the case studies we examined, there is little debate about, or exposition of the fundamental framework which is being proposed to define how equality legislation applies to gender and there is little debate in the mainstream press about the problems defining what ‘gender identity’ means.

“The concepts are difficult to explain and quite obscure, it's not what we do to provide definitions of complex stuff like that. And actually a lot of these stories are very niche. Our readers will be thinking, 'what the f*** is this?!'. We don't want to preach to our reader so now we're avoiding the controversies. Our job is to put on what will sell.”

National daily newspaper

This provides an indication of the difficulties in providing coverage that elucidates the complex and central concept of ‘gender identity’ in this debate.

7. Accuracy (rights and legislation)

The laws and rights around sex and gender reassignment – mainly those enshrined in the Equality Act and the GRA – are also complex, which presents an obvious challenge for writers when addressing the implications of proposed changes to gender recognition legislation. The self-ID proposals – which the government abandoned in September 2020 but which several opposition politicians have declared remain part of their policy platforms – would allow candidates to effect legal recognition of their new gender, allowing them to change their birth certificates. This would have implications for the use of some services

and facilities that may fall under Equality Act legislation. However, there are places such as public lavatories and public changing rooms where access is already effectively a matter of self-ID (a transgender woman who is seamlessly accepted as female, for example, is likely to meet no hindrance in her use of female lavatories etc.). Furthermore, subsequent to the WEC report the Government announced that changing the sex marker on passports does not necessarily require a birth certificate (it requires either a GRC, an amended birth certificate or a letter from a GP²²) and the NHS in some areas now recognises gender according to the patient's self-ID. Many police forces are now reporting criminal statistics based on the subject's self-ID.

However, there are several examples in our analysis of writers who have not described with clarity where access and rights are afforded presently according to self-ID and where the GRA proposals would extend such rights if passed in the future. This is not to say that arguments that express concerns about self-ID overall do not meet editorial standards, but there is a potential accuracy issue where the writers do not clearly identify what's possible now vs what may be possible in the future.

"The press aren't honest about what's possible now, what is accessed or not using effectively self-ID. Or they're lazy. They make this big fuss about GRA reform when we can already do most of what's being debated anyway. It's extremely misleading."

Transgender individual, transgender community group

"The GRA is about changing your birth certificate, it is the Equality Act which affects shared spaces and it was passed in 2010."

Transgender community group

8. Accuracy (statistics)

Throughout our analysis we indicate where articles make use of statistics that are disputed. The two areas of particular concern are in relation to suicidality of young transgender people and the proportion of transgender people in society as a whole.

a. Suicidality of young transgender people

The statistic that '48% of young transgender people have attempted suicide' is used frequently by columnists, lobbyists and politicians to reinforce the urgency of ensuring therapeutic support to children who are presenting as transgender.

This statistic about suicidality in transgender youth, which derives from a survey conducted by mental health charity PACE using a sample of 2,000 people²³, was based on responses from a sub-set of only 27 young transgender people. This raises questions about its applicability, which is significant given how widely it has been quoted (notably, in evidence to the WEC inquiry and as repeated in the WEC report itself). Many of the articles that quote the PACE survey suicidality statistic do not mention the small sample size.

Mermaids has said it perceives the children who engage with the charity to have high levels of suicidality. The Tavistock GIDS has suggested that suicidality amongst those who are referred to the service is 'extremely rare'²⁴. The use of the specific 48% statistic from the PACE survey therefore highlights potential editorial standards issues relating to accuracy. It was not until 2017 that Transgender Trend published its own analysis

²² https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/251703/Apply_for_a_passport_additional_information.PDF

²³ https://www.transgendertrend.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/RARE_Research_Report_PACE_2015.pdf.

²⁴ <http://gids.nhs.uk/evidence-base>

of the PACE survey which indicated the small sample size in relation to suicidality. Other issues have been raised as to the reliability of the statistic.²⁵

“[Transgender community group – redacted] weaponised the suicide stat, which turns out to be completely unreliable. Journalists repeat the stat without exploring its validity. Without it, some of their arguments, particularly about the urgency of treatment for trans children, would be weakened.”

Freelance journalist

b. Proportion of transgender people in the population

Another frequently cited statistic is the proportion of transgender people – described as people who are in some way ‘gender non-conforming’ – in society as a whole. This is put variously at 600,000 – 650,000 or 1% of the population. The statistic is quoted in the WEC report where it derives from a trial survey conducted by the Equality and Human Rights Commission designed to determine how best to measure gender identity in society for Government purposes (described in its *Technical Note* of 2012).

Apart from problems attached to measuring ‘gender identity’, which the survey describes as ‘how you think of yourself’, the trial survey results indicate only 25 respondents of the sample of 10,000 who identify as trans man, trans woman or transsexual. This small number of respondents (at 0.25%) undermines conclusions about the proportion of transgender people in the population at large. Accordingly, there is little basis from this survey to conclude that 600,000 of the UK population may be transgender.

While the use and repetition of this statistic highlights potential editorial standards issues relating to the Accuracy Code and IPSO’s own transgender Guidance on statistics (which explicitly refers to the difficulty of estimating the number transgender people); it is incumbent on journalists who quote a statistic such as this to check its source and methodology.

9. Pronouns

For the most part, writers use the preferred pronouns of the transgender subject in the article (a trans man is referred to as ‘he’ and a trans woman is referred to as ‘she’).

Using a person’s preferred pronouns is part of recognising them in a way that is consistent with, and respectful of, the gender expression they have chosen.

“People get very sensitive about pronouns. A recent occurrence is that one of the things often done at the start of a meeting is to ask everyone for their preferred pronouns.”

Transgender community group

“If you misgender trans folk, it’s traumatic.”

Transgender campaigner, transgender community group

Some people have raised concerns about situations in which the use of personal pronouns can create confusion for the reader, for example in relation to reporting on violent or sexual crimes carried out by transgender women. Where the publications use the preferred pronouns, such reporting can give the impression that females have committed violent / sexual crimes when in fact the incidence of this is low.²⁶ We note, however, that transgender groups make a case for careful treatment of coverage of crime involving transgender individuals, as in this advice from GLAAD: <https://www.glaad.org/publications/consistent-respect-reporting-transgender-crime-suspects>.

²⁵ For a critique of the research, see: <https://fairplayforwomen.com/suicide/>.

²⁶ ONS March 2018 *Crime Survey*; ONS March 2017 *Sexual Offences in England and Wales*.

“Pronouns were important because the people being referred to wanted to disappear. But writing 'her penis' is simply madness. And now 'misgendering' is a heinous crime.”

Feminist community campaigner

“With the Karen White story, we used 'she'; we have to comply and can't pick and choose on a story like that. You get into more trouble if you pick and choose. It's not our role to adjudicate on this stuff; our role is to present the facts.”

Daily national newspaper

10. Conclusions

Our case study analysis is aimed at examining the coverage of specific stories and whether and how editorial standards may have been met or compromised in the coverage of these stories.

Our observations from this case study analysis reflect the perspectives of most of our interlocutors: that the nature of coverage changed quite dramatically as the public became more familiar with transgender-related stories, typically focused on celebrities, but then the tone changed again as the relevant real-world events became more focused on policy and legislation.

We therefore identify three types of coverage, which evolved in a broadly sequential manner. The first type of coverage was prurient and disrespectful, typified by the use of terms such as 'tranny', which as we have seen has almost died out. The second coverage type focused more respectfully on the human interest in the transgender experience, typified by high-profile stories such as Caitlyn Jenner's coming out or Riley Carter Millington's casting in *EastEnders*. This coverage was generally respectful, descriptive and educative. The third type of coverage relates to discussions of policies (e.g., in the treatment of children who present as transgender) or laws (e.g., in proposals to reform the GRA) and is typified by a more heated debate, and sometimes a more strident tone.

Bar a few opinion pieces that allow passionate views to cross over into the rare use of disrespectful language, the debate is generally conducted within the bounds of the editorial standards implied by IPSO's Guidance and the Editors' Code.

However, there are areas in terms of accuracy around statistics and laws, the use of pronouns – perhaps partly due to the fundamental complexity surrounding transgender-related issues – where some publications are neglecting to provide readers with a full understanding of the facts and concepts underpinning the debate.

G. Analysis of drivers of change in editorial standards

1. Introduction

We have seen in earlier sections that there has been a change in editorial standards over time, across the phases we identified and confirmed by both quantitative and qualitative analysis. In this section we ask why the standards have changed, by examining the perspectives of the different stakeholder groups involved in publishing, influencing and consuming coverage of transgender-related stories.

We spoke to 43 different people from a range of groups and organisations described generically below:

Exhibit 38: interview participants in IPSO research on transgender coverage

Type of voice	Number of entities (individual or group)	Number of people interviewed
National broadsheet	2	3
National tabloid	3	6
Regional publishing	3	3
Magazine	3	5
Transgender 'supportive' voices	10	15
Transgender 'questioning' voices	6	7
Relevant (independent) institution	3	4
Total	30	43

Broadly, we identified five areas of influence that have acted on publications during this period of changing editorial standards in the coverage of transgender-related stories:

- the evolving news agenda
- social media pressure
- a series of notable news events that directly forced publications to examine their approach
- the influence of specific groups aiming to educate publications about the subject
- the introduction of specific guidelines around coverage.

Exhibit 39: Summary of drivers of change in coverage of transgender-related issues

Factor	Perspectives	Mediatique comments on impact
Evolving news agenda	Editors: papers followed (and led) evolving social mores towards transgender issues. More respectful. The news agenda dictates a more serious debate about policy implications that is their duty to conduct. Trans groups: the change in coverage driven by a vendetta against groups and transgender individuals.	High impact. Change in tone coincides with changes in subject matter over the years and changes in society's treatment of the subjects. Respectful tone coincides with society's attitudes evolving. More recent coverage tone and content triggered by GRA report and consultation and GIDS controversies.
Social media pressure	Magazines: editors identify social media pressure on their writers as driving more 'politically correct' approach. Newspapers: editors acknowledge pressure put on writers on social media.	Medium / high impact. Constant factor in coverage. Social media is where groups exert most direct pressure, where the debate is most ferocious. Some individual writers claiming pressure on them might have an impact on willingness to embrace debate.
Notable news events	Shocking events such as Lucy Meadows' suicide, Kate Stone's goring and others were identified by editorial staff at newspapers as instrumental in changing editorial approach. For example, Kate Stone used the coverage of her accident as a means of enlightening editors to the harm done by their approach to coverage. All About Trans was set up after disrespectful coverage of a trans woman pushed onto the tube tracks.	High impact (depending on publication / individual). Acknowledged impact at individual level.
Transgender group action	Some groups have developed engagement strategies for influencing coverage and educating writers at key publications. Some national publications acknowledge that these have been helpful.	Medium impact (depending on publication). Most editors welcome interaction with community groups though, and language has changed in the period of group action.
Publishing guidelines	Regional press indicated that guidance was followed quite slavishly due to inexperience of the issues it addresses. National press did not attribute coverage approach to Guidance on transgender coverage. Some trans community groups indicated that the Guidance was helpful.	Medium impact (depending on publication). Despite not explicitly valuing the IPSO Guidance on transgender coverage, national editors and writers confirmed their default approach towards transgender issues coincides with Guidance areas. Only in the matter of using preferred pronouns was there expression of dissent, with some saying that non-binary pronouns would be hard to use without misleading readers and writers and groups expressing concern about misleading coverage of sexual crimes by trans women that use female pronouns.

Source: Mediatique interviews and analysis

The development of editorial standards takes place in an ecosystem of guidance, influence, journalistic and editorial instinct each of which acts on the other. The impact of each of these areas of influence cannot therefore be identified in isolation.

The remainder of this section examines each area in turn.

2. The evolving news agenda

a. Editorial perspectives

Without exception, and while not exhaustive, the editorial staff we spoke to – national tabloids and broadsheets and regional newspaper groups – claimed that their journalism generally evolves as society's attitudes evolve, often triggered by the news agenda. Accordingly, as society has become more familiar and respectful towards difference and towards the idea of transgender people, so their publications adhere to editorial standards that naturally reflect these attitudes. All the papers we spoke to recognised that the way they treated transgender people and issues in the past was not always respectful.

“Why did our coverage change? You get different answers depending on who you ask here. But my personal view is because it needed to, because it was absurd. I have confidence in my journalists to question how we cover things.”

National press group

“We just pick up how society talks about a subject.”

National newspaper

“Regional journalism is a more thoughtful place than it used to be. Our responsibilities weigh on us more these days; we’re more transparent, more open-facing, as is society. In the context of our approach to discrimination in general and how we report such subjects, we are more thoughtful about how we do that than 10 years ago.

“Anecdotally 10 years ago most of our newsrooms wouldn't have been particularly well-informed or sophisticated in their understanding of this subject. We have an innate belief that language is important, therefore trying to be thoughtful, considered, appropriate and accurate is important. Why has it changed? Well, regional newsrooms are a reflection of society as a whole and as society changes, we will change in tandem with that. Editors have a responsibility to edit life in a way that's appropriate, we make judgments to be thoughtful. We're now better informed than 10 years ago.”

Regional press group

“Except in some of our urban titles, transgender issues don’t come up very much. When they do, we try to deal with things as sensitively as possible, particularly when the story relates to young people.”

Regional press group

“There was a phase during which we carried ‘first of a kind’ stories (the first transgender pilot etc.). We learned then to be more thoughtful and open.”

Regional press group

The national daily and Sunday press we spoke to mirrored this approach:

“We listen to what people are saying and report the facts of the issue. Our coverage reflects a wider debate in society.”

National newspaper

“3, 4 years ago, trans was more interesting, it was newer. We wanted to get ahead of the curve on this, follow where we think our readers are interested. It used to be a ‘thing’ and we’re here for our readers, so we covered it. But if our readers' interests change, then we want to lead the way. We also want to be decent people. Nobody wants to hurt anybody; we have a social conscience.”

National newspaper

“We are respectful of privacy. We agree that someone’s status as trans is not necessarily a story and we would certainly never ‘out’ someone (as we wouldn’t if they were gay). But there was a period in which there were a series of ‘firsts’ and we did carry profiles of the first in some senior positions. This backfired once when the subject, the first senior [redacted] sued us for privacy, despite the piece being a respectful and admiring profile. We learned then that trans status should be ignored unless in some way central to the story.”

National newspaper

“It is a minefield. The most important thing is to ensure the readers can understand what has happened. There are rules, such as to use the chosen pronoun, not to deadname trans people, don't use photographs and avoid 'transsexual' because the gender-sex difference is not understood.”

National daily newspaper

“It is pretty much always the case when writing on this subject that we have a discussion on how we are referring to people in the copy. It’s often the case that on this subject, much more than others, that the writer will consult to make sure they will not mistakenly refer to someone other than the pronoun they wish to be referred to by. This is quite unusual; we need to strike a balance between making sense and avoiding complaints and offence.”

National daily newspaper

The same paper reiterated that the information would have to be public and relevant. Private medical details should always be left out of a story. Even if in the public domain and apparently a central part of a subject’s biography, they felt they would “have to think very carefully” before including trans status now.

Amongst the people that the publishers listened to were transgender community groups, some of which engaged with them specifically to improve coverage of transgender-related stories. We discuss this later in this section below.

As we have seen, publications have adopted different language to describe transgender people and issues (as described in Section C and illustrated in Section D). It has also meant that publishers both led and followed as the volume of stories on transgender-related issues increased.

“The amount of content we use that relates to transgender issues of people has definitely increased, no question. It’s difficult to say if this a conscious decision or because people are talking about it more. There are also more [news] agencies selling stories on it. And since the GRA consultation it has become more of a topic. At an editorial level, we haven’t said, get me a transgender story. Yes, it’s quite possible we’ve done this at a feature level - keep an eye out for something interesting in that field. But we haven’t said overtly we need to up the number of transgender stories.”

National newspaper

Given that the increase in story volumes was accompanied by a shift in the type of story, from human interest, curious, educative, to serious stories about policy proposals and other issues (GRA reform, Tavistock controversies, prisons etc.) then as we have seen the tone of the stories shifted towards more a questioning note.

b. Transgender community and feminist community perspectives

Both gender critical and transgender community groups we spoke to broadly shared this characterisation of how coverage initially changed and became more respectful.

“We are on board to the idea of respectful reporting on transgender issues, that trans shouldn’t be mentioned unless germane to the story and that has been seen, broadly”

Feminist group

“We saw coverage change a lot. Up to 2015 there was a blossoming of interest in trans issues. Editors took on board improved standards. Previously stories had been about ‘sex changes’ and was sensationalist. There was a period during the first half of the decade in which it was positive, ‘how to support trans people’. Then there was an interest in human interest stories - how people live, how they work.”

Transgender community group

But the transgender community interlocutors were concerned at the change of tone that occurred as subjects became more contentious, which some attribute to a growing appetite for news generally with editors *not* now responding to public demand but pushing it on them.

“With the 24-hour news cycle, trans became a more interesting topic. But in fact, the public see it as a niche interest and editors have been vastly over-weighting the subject.”

Transgender community group

Others identified a conscious aggression in the editorial approach of some leading press.

“To understand these more recent changes in coverage, you need to look at some of the writers leading this debate. These people have a vendetta against Mermaids in particular, they’re against transgender females, enjoy representing them as a threat to women, as sexual perverts and deviants.”

Transgender community group

Others spoke of coverage being based on poor research or ignorance, albeit motivated by genuine concern:

“The self-ID debate changed coverage. This appears to be partly driven by worry in the feminist movement that their rights were being undermined, that if you allowed gender diverse people rights you would undermine rights of women...but they use exaggerated language and adopt a tone of false indignation...”

“There’s a constant to-ing and fro-ing between what’s happening in the real world and what’s happening in the press world. This has led to some uninformed and spiteful attacks on trans women.

“So many have lost a lot – jobs, family – and then they get attacks from people like [columnist – redacted] who should know better. They should take the trouble to learn before they pontificate. If you cause stress in a person, that’s harmful. To see articles written in derogatory offensive terms is damaging and stressful for trans people.”

Transgender community group

“Coverage now often appears like two sides screaming at each other, both not listening, both sides thinking the other is stupid or evil. But there is an almost total ignorance amongst writers of the actual process of transition and they exhibit layers and layers of ignorance about aspects of transgender lives: why the trans person is in the loo or changing rooms of the opposite sex (to get a Gender Recognition Certificate, you need to live in the opposite gender for two years); what it takes to get your first hormone; then the hoops you have to jump through to get basic operations.

“The writers display ignorance about the experience of transition and the science of transgender; it’s NOT a choice.

“I accept the fact that a) things have come a long way b) people’s intention is good (there is no intentional transphobia at the paper where I work [in a major national daily: Ed]). Things have got better but I wish that more journalists would do what journalists do and actually do a modicum of research.

“Sadly we’re not past the point that people feel they can’t make generalised statements to wilfully mislead. Sometimes this is dangerous and people are oppressed.”

Transgender writer

In our analysis, we looked for instances of poor research and inaccuracy and identified these where possible, but would be unable to attest (given the extent of our own research) any particularly high level of ignorance manifested in the coverage we examined.

Our interlocutors within the transgender community all agreed that the Self-ID debate (around the recommendations stemming from the WEC report) was a turning point in coverage:

“The GRA consultation was a key moment in changing coverage. You could see in the build-up to the consultation, in Maria Miller's [chair of the WEC] report, the bubbling up of dissent. We contacted a few key journalists to get sense of what's happening and could see a few negative articles coming up. The feedback was that the ‘trans moment’ was over, there was a bit of a backlash, they wanted to take a different angle. Actually, this was the beginnings of a movement made up of sceptics, feminists and radical feminists like [feminist – redacted] laying down their cards, bringing unhelpful and powerful narratives to the table, such as, ‘would you want 16-year old penis in your daughter's tent?’”

Transgender community group

“Coverage seemed to change in 2017. There was the emergence of some sort of awareness that trans people weren't what was wanted in society. There appeared to be a very concentrated specific attack on trans people.”

Transgender community group

“Everything went to shit in 2017; the GRA consultation was the turning point. Transgender hadn't been a pressing concern but the anti-trans people weaponised this issue. They used it as a way of concern-trolling from what if bad men used trans rights to do bad things, to what if trans people were like these bad men?”

Transgender community campaigner

Many of those we spoke to felt that the press discussion of WEC proposals was one-sided and ill-informed:

“During the GRA discussion, no one was covering the facts, they weren't talking about the impact on people in the press. If it wasn't for *The Times and Guardian*, there would be virtually nothing that's factually accurate and showed the other side. It's been a very pro-transgender agenda. It should be called the Sex Recognition Act; the lack of understanding is due to years and years of bad language and an ideology being accepted by institutions.”

Feminist community group

One of our interlocutors who was at the heart of one of the most complex of the policy-related stories of the past few years believed that the exposure of arguments around his area of policy was useful and respectfully done and represented an improvement in editorial standards.

“Before, it had been considered 'transphobic' to raise questions. After [redacted] it became more acceptable and the debate was covered intelligently and was well-represented in the Times and Telegraph in particular. There had been lots of things being accepted about gender, gender identity, policies, treatments etc. without much informed comment or debate. These issues coming onto the public agenda marked an improvement in coverage because they could be questioned. Can't the press criticise the direction of travel in transgender-related policy without it being considered a hate crime?”

Individual involved in a key area of transgender policy

It is clear that the change in the nature of coverage of transgender-related issues was in part driven by the real-world events that the publications were covering and that occurred during this period, amongst these primarily the contentious GIDS controversies and the GRA reform proposals. Given that both of these sets of events carried implications for policy that have an impact on both children and adults both transgender and not, it is not unreasonable to assume that a free press has a duty to debate them, should they be aiming to reflect and lead social attitudes as they declare is their intention on these matters. The publishers we spoke

to acknowledged that there was a shift in tone but that this was due to the nature of the events they were covering, not because they had any particular interest in attacking or denigrating transgender people.

The strength of opinion amongst the transgender community can be seen in the light of the rapid change in tone of coverage. This change was from a period in which many stories displayed unquestioning support and curiosity towards transgender issues to one in which serious and firmly-argued questions were raised about the implications of awarding certain rights to transgender people, or the long-term impact on children of certain treatment pathways. This was indeed a change in language and tone, as indicated in the research we present in sections D and E. Our analysis points to the change in subject matter as the primary driver of the changes perceived (albeit negatively by the transgender community).

3. Social media pressure

While clearly social media presents a loud and vigorous voice on all subjects, the newspaper publishers mentioned it as a more or less direct influence in how they approach their coverage:

“Our writers have had abuse on social media. But I don’t believe this has affected what we have published.”

National newspaper

“Social media is where the furthest extremes of any lobby group or community dominate. They shout the loudest and skew the debate so that sensible or consensus opinion can be drowned out. Twitter is basically an outraged mob with pitchforks awaiting activation at any moment.

“So a journalist will be aware of the potential reaction when tackling a contentious subject like transgender identity politics. All nuance is lost from a piece once broken down into 140 characters or a headline and a lot of the attacks against journalists and their employers will be based on misinformation.

“Journalists feel this pressure. More importantly, some people within communities - including the transgender community - feel they cannot articulate a view during a social media storm or they too will be targeted.

National newspaper group

“I felt completely besieged by social media after my stories. If I were in my 30s with my whole career ahead of me, I wouldn't say what I say. I'm very protected by my paper.

Journalist

We spoke to two magazine editors, both of whom had extensive experience editing several glossy magazines in the UK. There was a subtle difference in perspective from the newspaper editors. The magazine editors both cited the powerful and direct influence on their writers of social media pressure.

“If my writers don't say the right thing they get trolled very badly indeed. They get kept in check by the audience. We really have to be careful otherwise we get held to account. This applies to subjects and to language equally; there is an unspoken language that's unacceptable amongst these readers.”

Lifestyle magazine editor

“We worked with trans influencers on social media and they had a massive effect on our editorial approach. We’re always very careful about how to cover them. In fact, we’re nervous about doing coverage. I also have a lot of younger people working for the team and they’re particularly nervous about towing the Twitter line.

“But I want my writers to resist this social media pressure. This is a mob, not reality.”

Lifestyle magazine editor

“It’s very hard to keep up with language. We’re very worried about online reprisals so generally the writers avoid using the subject or avoid using anything contentious.”

Lifestyle magazine editor

4. Notable news events

Amongst the editorial staff we spoke to were those who indicated that their own approach to transgender-related stories was heavily impacted by two news events that occurred in this period: the death by suicide of teacher Lucy Meadows and the reporting of an accident that happened to a transgender scientist called Dr Kate Stone.

a. *Death of Lucy Meadows*

Lucy Meadows was a transgender woman who transitioned while working as a primary school teacher. Her return to work, post-transition, was covered in some newspapers but most notably was referred to in a comment piece in a national newspaper, in which the columnist said, ‘He’s not only in the wrong body...he’s in the wrong job’. Meadows complained about the piece to the Press Complaints Commission (PCC) in January 2013 and an online petition was set up calling for the writer’s sacking. The PCC and Meadows resolved the complaint. In March 2013, Meadows was found dead. At the inquest into her death, the Coroner criticised the press for their handling of the story.

We spoke to editorial staff who referred specifically to this story as the cause of a sea-change for their own approach to transgender stories.

“This tragic event made such an impression. While we didn’t actually run the story, it was a pivotal moment for me personally. Ever since then we’ve got with the programme and realised that what you put in the paper has an effect on people. When judging the effect of any human-interest story we always use that example.”

National newspaper

The story also helped one of the transgender community groups we spoke to gain access to editorial staff at the major papers to discuss coverage of transgender issues generally; it had been such a shocking outcome of what appeared to be press coverage that the editorial representatives were not willing to refuse the group’s entreaties. We discuss this later in this section below.

b. *Goring of Dr Kate Stone*

In December 2013, Dr Kate Stone, a transgender woman and Cambridge scientist, was involved in a terrible accident when gored by a stag. This required emergency surgery during which Dr Stone was put into an induced coma. When she came around from the operation, she discovered that much of the tabloid press had covered the story of her accident but with a primary focus on her trans status.

Dr Stone decided to use this as a case study that she would take to the editors of the main newspapers to illustrate a more respectful approach to transgender people. She made formal complaints to the press that had covered the story through IPSO but also asked to see the editors herself.

This led to a series of meetings, which she wanted to be entirely non-confrontational. Her only intention was to educate the editorial staff and in this she succeeded. Indeed, the result of some of these meetings was an ongoing dialogue and relationship. As a result of the success of her engagement with the press, Dr Kate Stone was invited to join the Editors’ Code of Practice committee.

“When I saw the publications, I got the sense they were just doing stuff because that’s how it used to be done. They started realising this, but the sub-editors carried on adding information about

trans aspects of subject – of when or if they'd had their operation, other personal details that were not relevant to the story.

“It was understandable that they didn't have an approach to deal with trans as it is a small population.

“This story was a pivot point for press coverage of transgender people. I engaged with papers in non-confrontational way and this was highly effective. The original coverage had demonstrated that the media had a latency between their approach and public opinion. They had a legacy of laziness which led them to do things in a way that probably surprised them when I asked them to look at what they did.

“There were hundreds of comments, nearly all of them were negative to the articles. This gave the editors a sense that their publication was out of step with their readership.

“The editors were representative of an industry doing things that were out of step with the times. Some transgender community groups were annoyed with me for not pushing for an adjudication, but I didn't feel that it would serve any purpose. I realised quite quickly that the strong sense I had that what had happened to me was so wrong, that I had all the ammunition to do something good about it. And I felt that if I didn't do something about it, I would feel responsible.

“Now, however, most of the good work done as a result of their improved editorial standards is unseen: people don't understand that the editors are working hard to be respectful. This is because there are stories about trans people that don't mention that they're trans, but these stories are invisible. Things *are* better but it's hard to know that they are. “

*Dr Kate Stone*²⁷

5. Lobby / campaigning groups

Media campaigning group On Road Media set up a campaign entitled 'All About Trans' (AAT) to improve the treatment of transgender-related subjects in the UK press.

This was motivated by the coverage of a fatal accident at Kings Cross, witnessed by ORM's founder, Nathalie McDermott, in 2010, which had focused on the victim's transgender status in a way that was clearly pejorative and which appeared designed to diminish reader sympathy for the impact of the accident. At this stage there were very few bodies concerned with coverage of transgender-related issues and in the eyes of her organisation coverage was negative and prurient.

““Transgender people were regularly outed by tabloids and most depictions of them in popular culture portrayed them as deluded (for example Little Britain's "I'm a lady" sketch), or out to deceive (for example Crying Game). This was unacceptable.”

*Nathalie McDermott, founder, On Road Media*²⁸

Gathering various interested parties together, including transgender individuals and representatives of transgender-related organisations, On Road Media ran a media training workshop and developed an approach and material that they went on to deploy with newspaper editors.

They secured seed funding from the BBC and C4 heads of diversity, with the aim of getting senior journalists to care about it. Realising that 'diversity training' for media professionals is not effective, they decided to do something methodical, to bring as many people from the community together with senior media professionals, in what they called 'interactions'.

²⁷ Permission granted by Dr Kate Stone to quote her by name.

²⁸ Permission granted by Nathalie McDermott to quote her by name.

Using a non-confrontational approach, these interactions between editorial staff and writers matched participants with an equal number of transgender individuals. These were seated next to each other and the engagement would comprise a set of structured questions and conversations between the transgender individuals and editorial staff.

Alongside these interactions, All About Trans produced its own guidance (see exhibit 40 below) regarding the language that it would prefer newspapers used when dealing with transgender-related stories. As discussed, and demonstrated in previous sections of this report, these reflect the terminology that has broadly (though not exhaustively) been adopted by newspapers in addressing transgender-related issues.

Exhibit 40: All About Trans: tips for writing and editing transgender news stories

Area	Terms to avoid	Preferred terms	Comments
Pronouns			Use the pronouns your subject prefers. If it's not obvious, and you have the opportunity, don't be afraid to ask. Try not to be tempted to use 'he' when referring to Jane's former life. Remember, she has always been Jane inside. Some trans people don't identify as male or female and only use the pronoun "they".
Birth sex	"Born a man" "Born a woman"	"...who is transgender" "born male / born female" "...who transitioned from male to female / female to male" "assigned male / female at birth"	Some people prefer not to have their birth sex made public and prefer to be known as trans – always ask permission
Personal history	"Was a man" "When she was a man"	"before Jane transitioned (to female)" "before Peter transitioned (to male)" "when Jane still presented as male / Peter still presented as female"	How does the person you are writing about describe their history? Everyone's experience is different.
Surgery	"Jane is pre-op / post-op" "John is having the 'op' to become Jane" "Sex change" "Sex swap"		Genital surgery is a private, medical affair and is rarely relevant Best to avoid these terms. They're considered inaccurate and potentially offensive shorthand for the process of gender reassignment by surgical and other medical procedures. Remember, not all trans people have surgery or undergo hormone treatment.
Names	"John, now called Jane / calls herself Jane / changed her name to Jane"		She's called Jane now. Call her that.
Usage	"Transgendered"		You wouldn't write 'lesbianed' or 'gayed' so it's 'transgender person' or 'trans person' please. Or even just 'person'. Adjectives never nouns. They are used to describe someone's identity rather than labelling the person.
Sexuality			Being transgender is not a sexuality. Sexuality is about who you go to bed with – trans is whom you go to bed as.
Subject		"Jane is transgender"	There are thousands of trans people in Britain; doctors, lawyers, politicians, artists, musicians, teachers...etc. Is this really newsworthy? Surely there's more to the story!

All of the national newspapers we spoke to had been approached by AAT and had received the guidance. Some have an ongoing relationship with the organisation which they may consult regarding stories and approaches they may be unsure of.

While our aggregate analysis of terminology used in coverage presented in Section D indicates an adoption of most of the terminology recommended in the AAT guidance, and mindful that we did not survey every

single newspaper that the organisation approached, the editorial staff with whom we spoke do not attribute their change in attitude solely to AAT's intervention.

"We have been contacted by trans groups and of course listen to them. But we are a responsible publisher and I don't need to tell my journalists not to use out-dated terminology."

National newspaper group

"Our interaction with On Road Media was quite useful. It was well structured and made those who attended think about language and how they covered things. However, we still use 'sex change' and we occasionally interchange gender and sex, which the trans community doesn't like, but sometimes it just has to be done. Depends on what the reader will comprehend."

National newspaper

"The trans community has been effective, more effective than other groups. They're very calm and genuinely try to understand why we cover things the way we do. If we publish things differently from the way the trans lobby wanted, we get a friendly email. But it doesn't happen very often."

National newspaper

"Our approach has definitely changed. Before, we used to have to explain what a 'trans man' is. Readers are still confused, however. We have the guidance from All About Trans but we don't follow it slavishly."

National newspaper

Others indicated that they responded to pressure from external groups, if only to avoid trouble.

"There is a strong lobby group reacting to stories and it just isn't worth the grief dealing with complaints. We might as well get it right in the first place."

National newspaper

"We resist changing our approach because of complaints from groups. But we do need to strike a balance between making sense and avoiding complaints and offence. It's a minefield, to be honest. The most important thing is to use language so the readers can understand what has happened."

National newspaper

We spoke to two large regional press groups, representing over three hundred regional titles and neither had been approached by AAT or any other trans-related group, so they relied on other guidance (discussed in part 6 below) or their own editorial instincts.

"We welcome with open arms advice and guidance from people who are better informed, for example, mental health groups. We have had people from various organisations come in to speak to journalists, around suicide, for example, so all of our journalists have been briefed on Samaritan guidance and we have had local organisations come in to talk about this.

"But I don't think we have been approached by any of the trans groups. If they did come, we'd be open-minded."

Regional newspaper group

Generally, the newspapers we spoke to felt it was part of their job to engage in the communities about which they report. They often receive representations from other groups, such as the Samaritans, whose advice on reporting suicide they follow closely. Another influential group mentioned was Tell Mama, which advises newspapers on how to report on Muslim-related issues. But in all cases, they claim to use their own instincts to judge what their readers will accept and understand. Some were concerned about the influence that groups are having on the press.

“Language is so important. The transgender lobby has won the language battle in the media. But why have the media jumped to change their language like this? They have completely capitulated to one very small but powerful lobby in changing the language that communicates concepts; the more we hear ‘her penis’ the more we will believe that women can have penises. This is dangerous. Women have campaigned for years to get journalists to stop victim-blaming, to change the way they cover murders of women / rape etc., the language around child prostitution (which should be called child rape); women have campaigned for the media to use more accurate words. The media have failed, they haven't listened: why have they listened to this group and jumped to obey them?”

Feminist community group

Several of the writers we spoke to mentioned the impact of pressure from transgender community groups or individuals on their own journalism.

“I wrote a commissioned essay for [redacted] about the effects on gay people, women's safety, sport of self-ID proposals. Despite it getting watered down, the piece was published, effectively pointing out that aspects of the proposed Gender Recognition Act reforms were illiberal.

“This elicited extraordinary emails from groups and individuals, for example comparing the questions I raised about trans women gaining access to female spaces as the same as raising questions about black people being allowed into white changing rooms. I have never seen anything like the trouble my publication had over this article. It made them extremely reluctant to address these issues going forward.”

Staff writer, periodical

“I'm freelance and a lone parent. I need to support my family and so if I step out of line too much, I could lose work. So, I self-censor and do what I can anonymously.”

Freelance writer, women's issues

6. Formal guidance

The Press Complaints Commission first introduced guidance on reporting stories related to transgender people in 2013. IPSO produced its own guidance on reporting of transgender-related stories in September 2016, which is described in Section E.

While the newspapers and publishing groups we spoke to were mostly aware of the guidance, but with mixed views of its impact.

“Yes, we're aware of the IPSO guidance but I'm not sure it adds anything to our own code of conduct.”

National newspaper

“We make the assumption that our writers will pay attention to the guidance, but we also have confidence in our journalists to question what they're writing independently. In our journalists' induction and training, the Editors' Codes are included.”

National newspaper

“We're unaware of any specific guidance on transgender from IPSO.”

National newspaper

“IPSO has had no significance whatsoever in the coverage of transgender.”

National newspaper

“We are now focused on avoiding controversies around transgender. The issues don't touch the day to day lives of our readers' lives. We just need the guidance on these niche issues, and we'll follow it. We don't want to cause ourselves issues.”

National newspaper

The regional groups and one of the magazine publishers we spoke to acknowledged that they had far less direct experience of transgender-related stories and people than large city-based national press operations, so were more inclined to accept IPSO guidance and incorporate it into their editorial operations.

“Changes to IPSO guidance or any changes to the Editors' Code would be circulated to editors and we would trust the editors to implement them. It's difficult for us to police this but the editors generally do what they're asked to do. Complaints from IPSO would identify any transgressions.

“But we have nothing in our guidelines on transgender and it's not something that's being considered at the moment.”

Regional newspaper group

“When guidance comes in, we incorporate it into our editorial training, which we top up every now and then. This hasn't been done for a while. When IPSO provides updates or guidance, they get circulated around the editorial team.”

Regional newspaper

“In terms of guidance and advice they have shared, as soon as IPSO released its guidance on transgender, this was incorporated into newsroom and editors' briefings and was put on the intranet. We brief regularly and ensure appropriateness.”

Regional newspaper group

“We are fully IPSO compliant; we complete an annual report on this to confirm every editorial person has been appraised of the Codes. We ensure journalists are trained on all aspects of code and we notify them of any updates.”

Lifestyle magazine group

IPSO's intervention is viewed as positive by some in the transgender community.

“The community will say that IPSO is 'toothless' but actually its guidance has been helpful. It provided All About Trans with a legitimate roadmap, it has been helpful and we appreciate their cooperation. IPSO has been supportive.”

Transgender community group

IPSO's guidance on pronouns was singled out frequently in our conversations with gender critical groups and individuals.

As we discuss in Section E, we identify a contentious issue in the use of female preferred pronouns for subjects who may have committed, or are alleged to have committed, the sort of sexual crimes that are virtually never committed by people assigned female at birth.

There are many examples where reporting of news events causes confusion, particularly if in relation to sexual crime.

“IPSO's preferred pronouns guidance is a huge issue. I completely get where they're coming from, but when you use 'she' for a transgender woman, everyone is imagining a fully-imagined, transitioned person. Instead, it's hard to use pronouns for people who have not transitioned.

“In a piece about Karen White [a transgender woman who was admitted to the female prison estate and sexually assaulted inmates], I wanted to put a footnote about IPSO guidance on

pronouns so my readers understood why I was referring to White as 'she' but the editor said it was confusing. So, I wrote around the pronouns, which made for a difficult read.

"There are lots of examples of where we aren't able to report properly because of the pronouns guidance."

Staff writer, periodical

"If a pronoun is confusing, then the paper needs to explain the complexity. Writers are often nervous about explaining stuff."

National newspaper

"The pronoun issue is particularly difficult. If it's an article that has nothing to do with their biological sex, then using the preferred pronoun of the person is fine. But if it's an article about male violence, sexual assault, or the representation of women politically, then it does matter to the reader that that person is a natal male, then it's important that this information is part of the article so they understand what's being said.

"By not being clear about what you can do with pronouns, they're confusing coverage. IPSO is siding with a particular ideology; 'mis-gendering' is a concept developed by a particular view of the argument. In fact, calling Karen White 'her' is 'mis-sexing'. IPSO is complicit in promoting one view of the sex-gender issue."

Women's group

"I would like to see changes so that journalists could be more nuanced in how they can refer to criminals masquerading as women under the guise of being trans so that we do not have to lie to readers and write solecisms.

"I'm aware of the guidelines which cause women distress in that we are not allowed to call male predators male if they identify as female. This could also lead to abusers being able to conceal their identities and start again which is very worrying."

Freelance journalist, women's issues

"The idea at the heart of using people's preferred pronouns and calling them 'women' or 'men' according to their self-identity is that all that matters about a person is what they think about themselves. But when you're reporting their use of single-sex spaces, or violent or sexual assaults they have committed - what matters to everyone else is their sex, not their innate gender feelings.

"When you write, as a journalist, that a woman has lunged at another woman and had to be restrained by security guards - EVEN if you've said that person is trans - you are painting a word picture that is simply not reality, when the reality is that this is male violence against women.

"Obviously the IPSO guidelines are voluntary. But I work in a busy newsroom, and I see the strain and stress our editor is under all the time, from all directions. When there's a guideline from an official body, and it seems superficially reasonable - it will be followed. Because it's too much time to think about it deeply, and too much grief to break it."

Staff writer, periodical

A further area of difficulty related to the use of pronouns is raised when considering the 'non-binary' gender. This purports to refer to gender identities that do not sit comfortably within 'male' or 'female'. These could be 'gender fluid', 'gender queer', simply 'non-binary' or various other similar options. Some people who claim to have a non-binary gender identity choose the plural 'they / them' as their preferred pronouns.

Our discussion with editors indicated strong resistance to using the plural as pronouns for an individual. Almost all of the publications felt that this would be confusing to their readers.

“Non-binary would be massively difficult; there's no point putting in a story if the reader doesn't understand it.”

National newspaper

“We currently don't use non-binary pronouns.”

National newspaper

“Our style guide says not to use ‘they’ etc. partly because it is confusing and partly because we believe it's a fashion.”

National newspaper

“In practice, it's rare that we are writing about someone outside either gender. If such a case arose, we might use ‘they’ but would probably try to avoid it as it's clumsy and makes it sound like a plural. We would probably just repeat the person's name.”

National newspaper

One of the national papers indicated that they would, without question, use the preferred pronouns regardless of whether binary or not.

7. Conclusions

A number of interrelated factors has acted on the editors and writers of transgender-related stories to produce the evolution in tone and content that we have witnessed over the past decade. According to editorial staff, foremost amongst these is their fundamental duty to reflect how society views and discusses a particular subject. But they also identify a duty to lead, to be socially responsible and treat all subjects with a respect that many admit was lacking in their earlier coverage of transgender subjects. Some acknowledge that their interactions with groups and individuals who have invested time and effort in engaging with them have also helped develop their appreciation of what respectful coverage looks like. The publications we spoke to are clear that this does not prevent them from debating the issues fully or from being able to disagree but to do so in a manner that respects the highest editorial standards. Exceptions to this are voiced by individual writers, who describe pressure from transgender community individuals and groups as one factor that may encourage them or their editors to stand back from addressing some of the issues, and magazine editors who describe the power of social media to pressurise their writers towards a particular perspective.

IPSO guidance on pronouns is identified as problematic for certain types of coverage but the IPSO guidance on reporting transgender issues is also singled out by both regional groups and transgender groups as a useful benchmark towards establishing editorial standards in this area.

H. Conclusions

1. Introduction

The analysis presented in this report was aimed at exploring two broad questions about the coverage of transgender-related issues in the UK press:

- How have standards in coverage of transgender matters changed?
- What factors may have influenced change and whether (and the degree to which) they were successful in fomenting positive developments?

We examined these in the light of: quantitative analysis of the use of language during the project period (2009-2019); a closer qualitative reading of coverage of 11 representative case studies; secondary research into transgender issues, concepts, legal and institutional frameworks, and a set of in-depth interviews with 43 writers, editors, transgender individuals, feminist and transgender community groups.

2. Quantitative analysis

Our quantitative analysis of over 12,000 articles harvested into our 'corpus' of coverage indicated significant growth in the number of transgender-related stories published in all areas of the UK press, growth that is particularly marked during the past five years. A vast range of subjects has been treated in these articles, so it is not possible to ascertain precisely which content has contributed most to this growth. While it is clear that coverage spikes correspond to high-profile celebrity events (such as Caitlyn Jenner's coming out as a trans woman or the release of *The Danish Girl*) there also appears to be a rise in stories that cover a full range of 'adjacent' subjects (such as those relating to general policy towards transgender adults and children) when these spikes are experienced.

Clearly, however, the crescendo in story growth comes during a period in which proposals for reform of the GRA have been grasped and fully debated in a way that issues and policies around transgender rights had not been when the relevant laws were introduced (2004 GRA and the 2010 Equality Act).

All publication types are publishing more transgender-related stories but most notable has been the rise in the proportion of transgender-related stories published by the tabloid press. At the start of the decade, most of the stories were published in the broadsheets but over half of the stories published now are in tabloids (insofar as represented by our corpus).

In terms of language, during the ten-year analysis period there has been a widespread adoption of language that generally indicates acceptance of the underlying concepts used to describe and understand transgender issues. These include:

- The use of 'transgender' over 'transsexual'
- The use of 'gender reassignment' over 'sex change'
- The disappearance of pejorative terms such as 'tranny'
- The use of 'gender identity'

There is some resistance to use of language that editors believe readers will find hard to grasp, including:

- The concept of 'assigned male / female at birth', as opposed to 'born male / female'
- Terms relating to 'non-binary' gender identities, particularly the use of the plural pronouns for individuals who identify as non-binary

3. Qualitative case study analysis

To look more closely, we conducted a manual analysis, focusing on a series of representative case studies. This was aimed at examining the coverage of specific stories and whether and how editorial standards may have been met or compromised in the coverage of these stories.

Our observations from this case study analysis reflect the perspectives of most of our interlocutors: that the nature of coverage changed quite dramatically as the public became more familiar with transgender-related stories, typically focused on celebrities, but then the tone changed again as the relevant real-world events became more focused on policy and legislation.

We therefore identify three types of coverage, which evolved in a broadly sequential manner. The first type of coverage was prurient and disrespectful, typified by the use of terms such as ‘tranny’, which as we have seen has almost died out. The second coverage type focused more respectfully on the human interest in the transgender experience, typified by high-profile stories such as Caitlyn Jenner’s coming out or Riley Carter Millington’s casting in *EastEnders*. This coverage was generally respectful, descriptive and educative. The third type of coverage relates to discussions of policies (e.g., in the treatment of children who present as transgender) or laws (e.g., in proposals to reform the GRA) and is typified by a more heated debate, and sometimes a more strident tone.

Bar a few opinion pieces that allow passionate views to cross over into the rare use of disrespectful language, the debate is generally conducted within the bounds of the editorial standards implied by IPSO’s Guidance and the Editors’ Code.

However, there are areas in terms of accuracy around statistics and laws, the use of pronouns – perhaps partly due to the fundamental complexity surrounding transgender-related issues – where some publications are neglecting to provide readers with a full understanding of the facts and concepts underpinning the debate.

4. Drivers of change

A number of interrelated factors has acted on the editors and writers of transgender-related stories to produce the evolution in tone and content that we have witnessed over the past decade. Amongst these we identify five leading drivers:

- the evolving news agenda
- social media pressure
- a series of notable news events that directly forced publications to examine their approach
- the influence of specific groups aiming to educate publications about the subject
- the introduction of specific guidelines around coverage.

According to editorial staff, foremost amongst these is the evolving news agenda, twinned with the publication’s fundamental duty to reflect how society views and discusses a particular subject. Editorial representatives also identify a duty to lead, to be socially responsible and to treat all subjects with a respect that many concede was lacking in their earlier coverage of transgender subjects.

Representatives of some national publications acknowledge that their interactions with community groups and individuals who have invested time and effort in engaging with them have also helped develop their appreciation of what respectful coverage looks like. The publications we spoke to are clear that this does not prevent them from debating the issues fully or from being able to disagree but to do so in a manner that respects the highest editorial standards. Exceptions to this are voiced by individual writers, who describe pressure from transgender community individuals and groups as one factor that may encourage them or

their editors to stand back from addressing some of the issues, and magazine and newspaper editors who describe the power of social media to pressurise their writers towards a particular perspective.

IPSO guidance on pronouns is identified as problematic for certain types of coverage where clarity is difficult to achieve without recourse to gender-specific pronouns; however, the IPSO guidance on reporting transgender issues is also singled out by both regional groups and transgender groups as a useful benchmark towards establishing editorial standards in this area.

Appendix A: Manual case study analysis of editorial standards in coverage

This appendix contains summaries of the manual analysis we conducted into a series of 11 news events. These events were selected as a set of representative case studies of a range of event types and to capture some of the key areas of debate surrounding transgender-related issues and policies.

For each event we describe the facts and context as objectively as possible before providing a summary of our reading of the articles concerning the event. As part of this analysis, we indicate the editorial position (‘EP’) – i.e., whether we believe the article to be generally supportive (‘S’), neutral (‘N’) or questioning (‘Q’) of the event in question. We also indicate where we believe there may be potential issues relating to the IPSO Guidance or Editors’ Code, but we are not making any decisions as to whether or not there have been breaches of standards.

Exhibit a: news events selected as case studies for manual analysis of editorial standards in coverage

09-10	10-11	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19
			Miss Universe dis-qualification						
			Chelsea Manning conviction and transition						
				Caitlyn Jenner Vanity Fair cover					
					Riley Carter Millington first trans actor cast in EastEnders				
						Women and Equalities Select Committee report			
							Speaker’s Corner incident		
								Tavistock GIDS rise in referrals / resignations over approach to trans children	
									ITV show about a trans child Butterfly is broadcast
									Rachel McKinnon first trans woman track cycling record
									Trans woman prisoner Karen White conviction
									Mermaids Lottery Fund award confirmation

The summaries below outline where we have identified areas that might indicate issues with editorial standards as determined by the Codes or Guidance.

1. Miss Universe dis/qualification

a. Background

Jenna Talackova is a former Miss Universe contestant from Canada who gained notoriety in 2012 when she was disallowed from competing in the pageant after the competition discovered she was a transgender woman and she had allegedly not disclosed this on her entry form. Shortly after she was banned from entering the contest, she was reinstated after a public outcry and online petition gained momentum (20,000 signatures) and after she decided to take legal action.

Talackova had previously competed at the Miss International Queen pageant for transgender and transsexual women in Thailand in 2010. She subsequently registered for Miss Universe in Canada in 2012. Talackova had reached the finals of the 2012 event before organisers discovered she was a transgender woman. It was at this point she was disallowed from progressing any further on grounds that the pageant rules required its competitors “to be naturally born women”.

Talackova maintained that she disclosed on her entry form that she was transgender and accused the pageant’s owners and organisers of discrimination. She hired a lawyer and won her battle to be reinstated to the competition.

Talackova eventually failed to make the top 5 of the competition but was awarded the title of Miss Congeniality and established a precedent that a number of transgender models across the world have followed since.

b. Coverage

We randomly selected 15 articles on this subject from our corpus and *The Times and The Sunday Times* online archive, covering the period 24th March 2012 to 5th September 2013, comprising coverage of the event and the 18 months following.

Of the Codes and Guidelines, the focus of our analysis is on discrimination and accuracy in the use of terminology. Our analysis shows:

- No examples of the use of male pronouns for the subject
- No examples of discriminatory use of language
- Most articles refer to the subject’s ‘sex change’ rather than ‘gender reassignment’

c. Accuracy

The articles reviewed include mainly news reports, plus one feature piece. Nine of the articles use ‘sex change’ to describe gender reassignment.

NB: While the expression ‘sex change’ does not reference or acknowledge the now more widely used gender identity framework (in which sex is distinct from gender identity and ‘gender reassignment’ is used in place of ‘sex change’) ‘sex change’ is still in relatively common usage today where writers or editors believe their readers have yet to grasp the gender identity framework and related concepts.

Generally, none of the articles contained any pejorative language, indications of discrimination towards the subject or the inclusion of questionable statistics. There is consistent use of female pronouns for Miss Talackova throughout.

d. Editorial position

Of the 15 articles we reviewed, in terms of EP, three are explicitly supportive of Talackova or other transgender celebrities and the rest are neutral.

Exhibit b: Summary analysis of articles relating to Miss Universe disqualification and reinstatement

Date	Comments	EP
24/03/2012	Transgender beauty queen kicked out of Miss Universe Canada pageant	N
National	News article reporting Talackova’s disqualification from the pageant.	
Tabloid	Use of female personal pronouns throughout the article. One reference to the then 23-year-old’s ‘sex change’ and another to ‘surgically changed’.	
News	<i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	
26/03/2012	Oh boy! Miss Universe beauty pageant contestant disqualified - for being a man	N
National	News article reporting Talackova’s disqualification from the pageant.	
Tabloid	Female personal pronouns.	
News	<i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	
30/03/2012	Pageant expels sex-change finalist	N
National	News article reporting Talackova’s disqualification from the pageant.	
Broadsheet	Female personal pronouns throughout. One reference to the then 23-year-old’s ‘sex change’.	
News	<i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	
31/03/2012	Transgender beauty queen disqualified from Miss Universe Canada	N
National	News article reporting Talackova’s disqualification from the pageant.	
Tabloid	Female personal pronouns throughout. One reference to the subject’s ‘sex change’.	
News report	<i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	
31/03/12	Beauty queen contestant disqualified for being born a man	N
National	News article reporting Talackova’s disqualification from the pageant.	
Broadsheet	Female personal pronouns throughout the article.	
News report	Two references to the subject’s ‘sex change’. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	

Date	Comments	EP
03/04/12	Transgender model's beauty pageant comeback	N
National Tabloid (News)	News article reporting Talackova's disqualification from the pageant. Female personal pronouns throughout the article and use of the term 'gender reassignment'. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	
03/04/12	Jenna Talackova: Transgender beauty queen allowed to compete in Miss Universe Canada pageant	N
National Tabloid (News)	News article reporting Talackova's disqualification and reinstatement to the pageant. Female personal pronouns throughout. Uses "rules regarding sexual reassignment surgery" – use of the term reassignment, but misapplication of 'sex' and not 'gender': indication of early use of the concept. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	
04/04/12	Donald Trump spars with transgender Beauty Queen	N
National Tabloid (News)	News article reporting Talackova's disqualification, reinstatement, and subsequent sparring with Donald Trump. Female personal pronouns throughout. Out-dated reference to the process of reassignment and transition: 'surgically changed' and 'sex change'. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	
04/04/12	Girl power! Transgender woman could be crowned Miss Universe after beauty pageant ban is lifted	N
National Tabloid (News)	News article reporting Talackova's disqualification and reinstatement to the pageant. Female personal pronouns throughout. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	
10/04/12	Sex change for pageant	N
National Broadsheet (News)	Short news article reporting Talackova's disqualification and reinstatement to the pageant. Includes one reference to the process of transition as 'sex change'. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	
11/04/12	Jenna Talackova controversy: Miss Universe changes its rules to allow transgender contestants to compete	N
National Tabloid (News)	News article reporting the pageant's change to its rules to allow transgender contestants to compete. Female personal pronouns throughout. One reference to the process of transition as 'sex change'. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	
17/04/2012	Miss Universe transgender rule change: After Jenna Talackova, Dayana Saucedo reveals dreams	N
National Tabloid (News)	News article reporting the pageant's change to its rules to allow transgender contestants to compete. Female personal pronouns. One reference to the process of transition: 'sex change'. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	
18/05/12	Whoa mama! Transgender beauty queen in a bikini makes history at Miss Universe	S
National Tabloid (News)	News article reporting Talackova's performance at the 2012 pageant. Female personal pronouns throughout and highly supportive. Uses 'reassignment' to describe the transition process. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	
30/05/12	Miss England semi-final for transgender teen	S
National Tabloid (News)	News article reporting the success of a transgender contestant in Miss England 2012. Female personal pronouns throughout the article. One reference to the transition process: 'sex change'. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	
05/09/13	Famous transgender people: From Lauren Harries to Hayley Cropper	S
National Tabloid (Feature)	Feature article exploring 'Famous transgender people: From Lauren Harries to Hayley Cropper'. Supportive article with female personal pronouns throughout. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	

2. Chelsea Manning's transition and aftermath

a. Background

Chelsea Manning was convicted of espionage and theft in July 2013 after leaking information obtained while serving as an intelligence analyst in the US army in 2009. She was stationed at forward operating base Hammer in Iraq, during which time she gained access to the classified information. She later passed the information to Wikileaks founder Julian Assange in 2010 after failed attempts to contact the Washington Post and the New York Times.

In August 2013, during the sentencing hearing, Manning revealed that she was transgender and wished to transition into a woman henceforth to be called Chelsea and referred to using female pronouns.

The military prison where she would serve her sentence initially said that they would not provide hormones or surgery for Manning's gender transition. This policy was challenged by both Manning and LGBT groups, who said that it was unconstitutional to refuse treatment for a medical condition (given that Manning had been diagnosed with what was then referred to as 'gender identity disorder').

In 2015, Manning was placed in solitary confinement for infringement of various prison regulations (including possessing printed material, in this case a copy of the *Vanity Fair* on the cover of which Caitlyn Jenner appeared).

In 2016, Manning went on hunger strike to protest at her treatment, which included the refusal to offer gender transition therapy.

The authorities eventually relented and Manning was given therapy for gender transition. In 2017, Obama granted Manning clemency and commuted her sentence to time served and she was released in May 2017 after which she posted a photo of her new self, in her female identity, as Chelsea Manning.

In September 2017, a Harvard professor resigned over the appointment of Manning as a visiting fellow (to focus on LGBT issues in the military). After a concerted campaign by the military community opposed to this appointment, Harvard rescinded its offer to Manning.

b. Coverage

We examined 23 articles – both news and comment pieces – that covered Manning's conviction, transition, clemency and post-release.

While US news outlets were divided over Manning's request to be referred to using female pronouns and some refused to do so, the UK press was almost united in adopting female pronouns immediately following Manning's announcement.

- In its article reporting on Manning's request, *one national broadsheet* went so far as to correct a direct quotation from Manning's own lawyer that had referred to Manning in the masculine gender: "*The stress that [she] was under was mostly to give context to what was going on at the time...*" Manning's lawyer, David Coombs, told NBC's today show on Thursday. "*It was never an excuse because that's not what drove [her] actions. What drove [her] actions was a strong moral compass.*" 22/08/13
- In its first article on Manning's transition, one national broadsheet explained its pronoun policy explicitly: "*The Independent on Sunday* uses Manning's preferred feminine pronouns." *The Independent on Sunday*, 24/08/13

Of the 23 articles surveyed, only two referred to Manning as 'he' in the immediate aftermath of her announcement.

- A comment piece, published on 31/08/13, questioned the wisdom of the US military having allowed Manning to serve in the military in the first place and consistently uses male pronouns.
- A national tabloid profile of a different American transgender soldier (31/08/13), refers to Manning only using male pronouns: "Earlier this year, disgraced US soldier Bradley Manning [...] also announced that he wanted to live as a woman called Chelsea. The 25-year-old said he had felt female since childhood and wanted to begin hormone therapy while serving his lengthy prison sentence for espionage."

Almost all articles concerning Manning's conviction and transition use her previous name, Bradley. This is relevant to readers, given that her transition became a major part of the story surrounding Manning's actions and that understanding this is valid context for any profile or update piece on Manning.

None of the coverage surveyed questions Manning's motivation.

- A feature article in a national tabloid 23rd August 2013 contained a clear explanation of gender dysphoria which reflected the evolution that had taken place in the US earlier that year from treating gender identity problems as a ‘disorder’ to its current treatment as a condition: “Gender Dysphoria’, or ‘Gender Identity Disorder’, a condition in which people feel that their physical gender does not match who they are on the inside.” 23/08/13

Coverage of Manning on the publication resumes in May 2017 when she is released from prison.

- An article published at this time said: “While imprisoned, she began the process of ‘transitioning’ from male to female, paid for by the American taxpayer. It is understood that she still requires surgery to become a woman.” 17/05/17

While continuing to use preferred female pronouns, the quotation marks around ‘transitioning’ and the reference to the American taxpayer appear to indicate a slight shift in tone towards Manning or the subject of transgender generally. The detail speculating on Manning’s need for surgery arguably could be considered prurient or at least the provision of irrelevant detail.

c. Editorial position

Of the 23 articles reviewed, eight express positive editorial support for Manning while only three express doubts about her or adjacent issues.

Exhibit c: Summary analysis of articles relating to Chelsea Manning conviction and transition

Date	Comments	EP
27/04/13	San Francisco gay pride rescinds honour for Bradley Manning	N
National	Post-conviction but pre-transition.	
Broadsheet (News)	No editorial standards issues.	
15/08/13	I’m sorry I hurt people, says Wikileaks whistle-blower Bradley Manning	N
National	Refers to ‘gender identity disorder’ but prior to Manning’s transition announcement.	
Broadsheet (News)	No editorial standards issues.	
22/08/13	‘I am Chelsea Manning,’ says jailed soldier formerly known as Bradley	S
National	News item on Manning’s transition announcement. Female pronouns. Article corrects a quote from Manning’s own lawyer:	
Broadsheet (News)	“It was never an excuse because that’s not what drove [her] actions. What drove [her] actions was a strong moral compass.” No editorial standards issues.	
23/08/13	‘I am Chelsea, I am female’, says soldier formerly known as Bradley Manning	S
National	Piece on the transition announcement. Respectful and explains the condition: ‘Two army psychiatrists testified that he had	
Broadsheet (News)	gender dysphoria, or gender identity disorder, a condition in which people feel that their physical gender does not match who they are on the inside’, reflecting the change from disorder to condition. Female pronouns No editorial standards issues.	
24/08/13	Heroes and villains – a modern definition: Whistleblowers are vilified or intimidated while the wrongs and the wrongdoers that they expose go uninvestigated	S
National	Explains Independent’s approach to pronouns: ‘(The Independent on Sunday uses Manning’s preferred feminine pronouns.)’	
Broadsheet (Comment)	No editorial standards issues.	
28/08/13	Fox News plays ‘Dude looks like a lady’ over Chelsea Manning segment	S
National	News report on debate in US media on use of female pronouns.	
Broadsheet (News)	Uses female pronouns No editorial standards issues.	
31/08/13	After 200 missions, soldier reported to Pentagon in a dress	Q
National	‘Disgraced US soldier Bradley Manning who was jailed for handing over intelligence documents to the wiki-leaks website also	
Tabloid (News)	announced that he wanted to live as a woman called Chelsea. The 25-year-old said he had felt female since childhood.’ Use of male pronouns No editorial standards issues.	
31/08/13	Why was Bradley Manning ever allowed to join the army?	Q
Magazine (Comment)	Questioning piece on Manning’s motivation. ‘He has now proclaimed himself to be a woman, and changed his name from Bradley to Chelsea’ ‘He will be lucky if he [she] gets [hormones] in prison’. Uses incorrect personal pronoun: accuracy / statistics issues	

Date	Comments	EP
10/09/16	Manning goes on hunger strike over prison treatment	N
National	News report on decision to protest treatment in prison.	
Broadsheet (News)	Female pronouns <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	
15/05/17	Chelsea Manning to transfer prisons for gender treatment	N
National	News report on agreement to provide gender reassignment treatment.	
Broadsheet (News)	<i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	
13/08/15	Chelsea Manning 'faces solitary' over Caitlyn Jenner magazine	N
Regional (News)	Report on disciplinary action against Manning. Female pronouns <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	
14/09/16	Chelsea Manning ends hunger strike after Army approves treatment	N
Regional (News)	Female pronouns <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	
14/11/16	Chelsea Manning asks Obama to cut sentence to time served	N
National	News report on petition to the President to commute sentence.	
Broadsheet (News)	Female pronouns <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	
17/01/17	Chelsea Manning: Why was the whistle-blower who exposed some of America's most brutal war crimes serving such a harsh sentence?	S
National	Review of Manning story.	
Broadsheet (News)	<i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	
18/01/17	How is Edward Snowden linked to Chelsea Manning? SUPPORTERS of Edward Snowden are calling for him to be pardoned after President Barack Obama commuted the prison sentence of Chelsea Manning.	N
National	News report.	
Tabloid (News)	Female pronouns <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	
19/01/17	Chelsea Manning will lose transgender benefits after leaving military prison, says US Army	N
National	Female pronouns	
Broadsheet (News)	<i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	
17/05/17	Chelsea Manning released from Fort Leavenworth prison after serving seven years of 35-year sentence	N
National	News report of Manning's release and review of story.	
Broadsheet (News)	Female pronouns <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	
18/05/17	'So here I am everyone!!' Chelsea Manning releases first photo of her new look after leaving prison	S
National	News report on release of Manning photo as Chelsea.	
Broadsheet (News)	Female pronouns <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	
17/05/17	Chelsea Manning returns to active duty on release from jail	Q
National	News report on Manning after release.	
Broadsheet (News)	<i>"Chelsea Manning, 29 — who used to be called Bradley" — reference to old name. Also pointed reference to the transition: "While imprisoned, she began the process of 'transitioning' from male to female, paid for by the American taxpayer. It is understood that she still requires surgery to become a woman." Both the reference to American taxpayer and the prurient detail of her state of transition indicate a shift in tone.</i> Disclosure of transition and reference to American taxpayer indicates potentially pejorative tone: privacy issues	
18/05/17	Chelsea Manning posts first photo day after release from prison	S
	News item on photo reveal as Chelsea. <i>Use of female pronouns but also mentions previous name, Bradley.</i> <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	
14/09/17	Former CIA Deputy Director quits Harvard role in protest at Chelsea Manning's appointment	N
	News report of resignation due to Manning's appointment at Harvard. Female pronouns. <i>Mention of previous name.</i> <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	
16/09/17	I'm a fellow at Harvard, and I know that their silencing of Chelsea Manning puts power before freedom of speech	S
	Comment piece on the pressure the military establishment put on Harvard to retract Manning appointment. Female pronouns <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	
17/09/17	APExclusive: Chelsea Manning says she not a traitor	N
	News item on Manning interview about actions. Female pronouns <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	

3. Caitlyn Jenner's Vanity Fair cover

a. Background

Caitlyn Jenner is an internationally famous American former Olympic gold medal-winning decathlete. She gained subsequent success and notoriety in later life after she started appearing in the E! reality television series *Keeping Up with the Kardashians*, which first broadcast in 2007.

In an interview in April 2015, Jenner came out as a trans woman, confirming that she had been dealing with her gender dysphoria since her youth. This was formally announced in June 2015 as she debuted her new name and image in a *Vanity Fair* interview and cover shoot (captioned: "Call me Caitlyn"), the magazine's first to feature an openly transgender woman.

Since coming out in 2015, Jenner is arguably the most famous and recognisable transgender woman in the world. She has since discussed transgender rights with the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations and starred in her own documentary series, *I am Cait*, recounting her transition and the impact that it had on her family and friends.

b. Coverage

We randomly selected 25 articles on this subject from our corpus and *The Times* and *The Sunday Times* online archive. These articles cover the period 1st June 2015 to 23rd June 2015, from the reception of the magazine's cover and the three weeks subsequent to its release. They were published by a range of newspapers.

The articles reviewed include comment, feature and news reports. We found six articles containing potential Code or Guidance issues:

- Use of the pronoun 'he' in a national tabloid piece (03/06/15) to describe a transgender woman
- A piece in a national broadsheet (03/06/15) that cites suicide statistics from an extremely small sample survey
- One strident opinion piece in the national tabloids (06/06/15) bemoans the respect that the transgender community demands of the world. Uses Kellie Maloney's pre-transition name, uses 'sex change' and plays with pronouns for Caitlyn Jenner ('him / her') – potential Guidance issue relating to pronouns and names and discrimination.
- A *national broadsheet* feature comment piece (06/06/15), while challenging the supposed bravery of Jenner in transitioning, uses 'changing sex', refers to her identity as an 'alter ego' and uses male pronouns (which presents a potential Guidance issue).
- A *national broadsheet* news feature (10/06/15) which explores gender politics and dynamics: cites the small sample survey suicide stats – which raise potential Accuracy Code and Statistics Guidance issues and also cites an estimate of the percentage of the population that is trans which is again not supported by evidence – a potential accuracy issue ("It is difficult to estimate the number of individuals in the UK with gender dysphoria or who have undergone gender transition. Editors should present such claims with care"²⁹)
- A *national broadsheet* comment piece (15/06/15) that is consciously inflammatory in using the wrong pronouns: "...Caitlyn Jenner, a bloke who, despite all the evidence to the contrary, insisted he was a woman..." – A potential Guidance issue

Otherwise, former names and pronouns are used infrequently and only when completely necessary.

²⁹ IPSO Guidance on researching and reporting stories involving transgender individuals, October 2016

c. Editorial position

Of the 25 articles, just four articles (two feature and two comment) take a Questioning view of Caitlyn Jenner’s transition while nine are Supportive. The remainder are Neutral news reports on events surrounding the magazine’s cover.

Note on statistics cited

The coverage of Caitlyn Jenner’s transition twice cites a statistic relating to the suicidality of young transgender people:

- As discussed above, the data comes from a survey conducted by a mental health charity, PACE, in November 2014 which was presented to the WEC in its evidence and has become widely cited since.
- The statistic about suicidality amongst transgender youth came out of this survey, which involved 2,000 participants. As the results for transgender youth are based on responses from 27 young transgender people, this casts into doubt its applicability to a wider population.
- This is not to say that high suicidality amongst transgender youth is not prevalent but using the statistic as fact, or without qualification, could raise potential issues around the Accuracy Code.

The report also refers to an estimate that the proportion of the UK’s population that is to some degree ‘gender incongruous’ or ‘gender nonconforming’ is 1%, or 600,000 people.

- There is little evidence to support this figure and a study by the Equality and Human Rights Commission published in 2016 (see the case study on WEC report below) also fails to support this proportion.
- IPSO’s Guidance explicitly cautions against using such statistics so the articles that make use of it could be inconsistent with the guidance.

Exhibit d: Summary analysis of articles relating to Caitlyn Jenner coming out

Date	Comments	EP
01/06/15 National Tabloid (News report)	Bruce Jenner unveils herself as a woman Objective and supportive reporting of Caitlyn’s news. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	S
02/06/15 National Broadsheet (News report)	Drake Bell says he will continue to refer to Caitlyn Jenner as 'Bruce' - while others celebrate the news of the former athlete's transition Objective reporting of comments made by Drake Bell in aftermath of the news of Caitlyn’s transition. Article acknowledges the criticism that Bell received without apportioning blame. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	N
02/06/15 National Tabloid (Feature)	As Caitlyn Jenner unveils her amazing transformation on Vanity Fair, the other transgender cover stars who went mainstream revealed Supportive feature piece that examines the significance of Caitlyn’s emergence as cover star, and further profiles other ‘taboo-busting figures’ helping to get transgender issues on the front page. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	S
03/06/15 Magazine (News)	Caitlyn Jenner’s mum speaks out about her Vanity Fair cover Objective reporting of Caitlyn’s mother’s reaction to her transition. Lightweight article on her response and the progression of her feelings on the matter. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	N
03/06/15 National Tabloid (Feature)	What does being transgender mean? Everything you want to know but were too afraid to ask Feature discussion piece on the transgender definitions and navigation of new terms. Sensitive use of the correct terminology: ‘dysphoria’ and ‘gender reassignment’. Lengthy and appropriate explanation of what the term ‘transgender’ means; wide ranging and encompassing definition which acknowledges the term’s nuance. Includes a list of (basic) ‘tell-tale signs’ and contact numbers. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	S

Date	Comments	EP
03/06/15 National Broadsheet (Feature)	Here's why role models such as Caitlyn Jenner matter for trans kids like my daughter Feature article on the importance of Caitlyn Jenner and the impact that she has made on the lives of young trans people. Refers to the impression that she has made on <i>all</i> people, not just those with privilege (an issue that the article alludes to). <i>Cites unreliable suicide stats: accuracy / statistics issues</i>	S
03/06/15 National Tabloid (News report)	Timbaland under fire for posting transphobic' meme about Caitlyn Jenner News report outlining Timbaland's (rapper & producer) comments on Caitlyn's transition. Article deems the comments as transphobic and implicitly describes Timbaland's response to the criticism as dubious but does refer to Caitlyn as 'he'. <i>Uses incorrect personal pronoun: accuracy / statistics issues</i>	S
04/06/15 National Tabloid (News report)	Caitlyn Jenner WILL KEEP Olympic gold medal as transphobic petition thrown out by IOC News report describing a petition begun to strip Jenner of an Olympic Gold Medal. Objectively reports the event with reference to the text included in the petition and uses preferred personal pronouns. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	N
04/06/15 National Tabloid (News report)	Caitlyn Jenner worth FIVE times more than Bruce: Expected to earn hundreds of thousands through public speaking News report describing the potential uplift in pay that Caitlyn might expect to receive post transition. Details her signing onto CAA and includes predictions from TMZ on her use of social media. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	N
05/06/15 National Tabloid (News report)	Caitlyn Jenner wanted for Orange is the New Black cameo: "she'd queen bee" News report describing the demand for Caitlyn to appear in Orange is the New Black. The show already has a member of the cast who has recently transitioned, and when asked about the story Ruby Rose said she would like Caitlyn to appear in an episode. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	N
06/06/15 National Tabloid (Comment)	Must we all be like Caitlyn Jenner? Inflammatory article bemoaning today's "mustn't give offence" world. <i>Describes the global transgender community as "notoriously touchy" and "contemptuously intolerant extremists". Uses the unacceptability of the use of 'sex change' to illustrate evolution of terminology and re-uses 'sex change' later in article. Pejorative use of 'him / her' – discrimination issues</i> <i>Uses Kellie Maloney's pre-transition name – accuracy / statistics issues</i>	Q
06/06/15 National Tabloid (Comment)	Kim Kardashian pregnant? No Caitlyn Jenner's big transformation is hotter news Lightweight comment piece comparing two pieces of news from the Jenner / Kardashian families (Kim's pregnancy and Cait's transition). <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	N
06/06/15 National Broadsheet (Feature)	Put your kit back on Caitlyn. Changing sex is vain, not brave Deliberately provocative article asserting that transitioning is "vain, not brave". <i>Laziness in terminology ('changing sex' and describes identity as 'alter egos'). Uses male pronouns: accuracy / statistics issues</i>	Q
06/06/15 National Tabloid (Feature)	Laverne Cox talks bullies and helping Caitlyn Jenner to transition A feature profile of Laverne Cox and of her friendship with Caitlyn Jenner. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	N
07/06/15 National Tabloid (Feature)	Carlotta talks Caitlyn Jenner and how her transition was different A feature profile of Carlotta and of her relative experience having transitioned. Supportive piece on her relative experience (with some lazy use of terminology) but is generally supportive in tone and pronoun use. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	S
08/06/15 National Tabloid (News report)	Transgender women support Caitlyn 'Bruce' Jenner using Vanity Fair cover Article reporting on the worldwide support Caitlyn has had globally; including take up of 'Vanity Fair templates' to make their own trans magazine covers. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	N
10/06/2015 National Broadsheet (Feature)	From he to she – the new sexual politics Feature article exploring new gender politics and dynamics. Invites scepticism towards transition process by writing it in inverted commas: "the legendary <i>Times</i> reporter turned author, who 'transitioned' in 1972 and has lived as a woman ever since". <i>Includes percentage of trans people attempting suicide: accuracy / statistics issues</i> <i>Also includes percentage of trans population (stat not known to be supported): accuracy / statistics issues</i>	Q
11/06/2015 National Broadsheet (Feature)	Does feeling like a woman make you one? It's OK to ask Exploratory feature article on notion of identity / feeling / sexuality. Sensitive counter arguing assumed definitions. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	S

Date	Comments	EP
14/06/15 National Broadsheet (Feature)	Turning Point Feature article recounting significant milestones in trans / coming out history. Includes respectful explanation of nuanced definitions. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	S
15/06/15 National Broadsheet (Comment)	Man becomes woman and white becomes black in this age of transition Article seeking to mock ideas of identity. <i>Uses correct terminology ('dysphoria') but is knowingly pejorative and incorrect vocabulary uses: discrimination issues</i>	Q
18/06/15 Magazine (News report)	Miley Cyrus teams up with Gigi Gorgeous for latest Instagram portrait News report of Miley Cyrus partnership for Instagram portraits. Objective review. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	N
19/06/15 National Tabloid (News report)	Ashley Roberts will play Caitlyn Jenner 'sensitively' on Keith Lemon Sketch Show News story on Caitlyn's inclusion to a UK sketch show. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	N
22/06/15 National Tabloid (News report)	Kendall and Kylie pay touching tribute to their 'hero' Caitlyn Jenner on Father's Day News story reporting Kendall & Kylie's new relationship with Caitlyn. Necessary (in this instance) use of terminology: 'him'. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	N
23/06/15 Regional (News report)	Caitlyn Jenner undergoes Simpson-style transformation from Alessandro Palombo News story reporting Caitlyn's illustrative interpretation from Alessandro Palombo. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	N
23/06/15 National Broadsheet (Feature)	Meet the transgender Navy SEAL running for Congress Feature piece on former Navy SEAL Kristin Beck who is now running for congress. Sensitive use of PP and acknowledges the permission gained to use male when appropriate. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	S

4. Riley Carter Millington becomes the first transgender actor to be cast in a major UK series

a. Background

Riley Carter Millington is an actor from Stretford in Lancashire and is most famous for his role in EastEnders where he played Kyle Slater. Carter Millington first appeared on the programme in late 2015 and was a central character for about a year.

His casting in the programme gained significant news coverage as he was the first transgender man to play a regular transgender character in British soap history. *The Independent on Sunday* named Carter Millington the most influential LGBTI person in the UK in its 2015 Rainbow List, the first trans man to earn the accolade.

b. Coverage

We randomly selected 15 articles on this subject from our corpus and *The Times* online archive, which include comment, feature, and news reports. These articles cover the period 8th October 2015 to 26th November 2015, reporting the announcement and subsequent debate about gender identity in adults and children. They were published by a range of newspapers.

In the coverage we examined, former names and pronouns are used infrequently and only when completely necessary for biographical reasons. Otherwise Carter Millington is referred to using male pronouns throughout.

We found only two Codes or Guidance issues:

- A local news piece (14/10/15) uses ‘alter ego’ incorrectly to represent the subject’s chosen gender identity – this appears to represent a misunderstanding.
- A feature on children with gender dysphoria in a national tabloid (26/11/16) that repeats the small sample suicide statistic without qualification – a potential Accuracy issue

c. Editorial position

Of the 15 articles we reviewed, 10 take a Supportive and positive editorial stance and none is Questioning or negative.

Exhibit e: Summary analysis of articles relating to casting of Riley Carter Millington in EastEnders

Date	Comments	EP
08/10/15 National Tabloid (News report)	EastEnders cast its 1st transgender actor Riley Carter Millington Objective and supportive reporting of the announcement of EastEnders’ casting. Reports on the wider implications of the casting decision for television broadly. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	S
08/10/15 National Tabloid (News report)	Who is Riley Carter Millington? Everything you need to know about EastEnders' new transgender actor Objective and supportive reporting of the announcement of EastEnders’ casting. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	S
10/10/15 National Broadsheet (News report)	British TV drama putting trans on the agenda as BBC castings signal major step forward Supportive news piece exploring the significance of the BBC’s decision. Sensitive use of language, terminology and definition. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	S
11/10/15 National Tabloid (News report)	Hollyoaks reveals first transgender actress as Hayley Cropper inspiration joins soap Objective reporting of the announcement that Hollyoaks cast its first transgender actress, the first after Riley Carter Millington was announced on EastEnders. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	N
14/10/15 Regional (News report)	Hollyoaks' first transgender actress says 'times are a-changing' Generally supportive news report on the announcement of Hollyoaks’ first transgender actor. <i>Accuracy issue in the use of ‘alter ego’ to represent the subject’s true gender identity): accuracy / statistics issues</i>	S
20/10/15 National Broadsheet (Feature)	You don't have to be trans to be an ally against transphobia Sensitive discussion about what it means to be a trans ally, addressing trans identity being misappropriated to physical appearance and the reaction of feminists to its increased publicity. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	S
05/11/15 National Broadsheet (Feature)	Why are young people so keen to declare their sexuality in public? Feature piece concerning the increasing number of young people declaring as trans and the necessary protection that children are entitled to. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	S
15/11/15 Magazine (News report)	Trans actor Riley Carter Millington tops Rainbow List 2015 News article telling how Carter Millington topped the Independent’s Rainbow List which names the 101 most influential LGBTI people in the UK. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	N
23/12/15 Regional (Feature)	Transgender actress Rebecca Root: 'The year my identity stopped being a crisis' A profile feature of actress Rebecca Root, star of <i>Boy meets Girl</i> . Profiles the show’s success, the changing dynamics of transgender actors auditioning for roles, and the impact of high profile celebrity transitions. Sensitive explores the relationship between gender, identity and sex. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	S
23/12/15 National Broadsheet (News report)	HSE ‘needs a unit’ for transgender children Objective news article stating the requirement for a dedicated healthcare unit for transgender children. The article does use the phrase ‘gender identity disorder’ but acknowledges the term ‘gender dysphoria’. No Guidelines issues. Describes the term ‘dysphoria’ as “where a person feel they are trapped within the body of the wrong sex”. <i>No editorial standards issues</i>	N
24/01/16 National Tabloid (News report)	EastEnders' Riley Carter Millington cuts a relaxed figure in London Lightweight news article commenting on a public appearance made by Carter Millington. Generally observational in tone. <i>No editorial standards issues</i>	N

Date	Comments	EP
23/03/16 Magazine (News report)	EastEnders viewers threaten to switch off over new trans character Objective report covering social media content at the time of the first airing of an episode starring Carter Millington. Article attributed no support or weight to any of the posts quoted. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	N
28/06/16 National Tabloid (News report)	EastEnders' transgender star Riley Carter Millington says he was 'trapped' in a girl's body Profile report on Riley Carter Millington and his feelings in early childhood as he came to terms with that 'he was trapped in the body of a girl'. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	S
15/11/16 Magazine (Feature)	The line between male and female has always been clouded Quasi academic feature piece exploring the historical relationship between male and female, citing psychoanalytical work from 1960, theatre in the 16 th century, and non-gendered contemporary theatre. Explores some well covered stories (Caitlyn Jenner), including Bradley Manning whose old name is mentioned for context. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	S
26/11/16 National Tabloid (Feature)	Jackie Green at the heart of a controversy over children given drugs to change sex A profile feature on Jackie Green (Mermaids' CEO Susie Green's trans daughter, made famous by being the youngest British woman to transition from male to female). Article explores Jackie's new life, Mermaids, the charity that her mother runs, and the ongoing debate in the role a parent should have in their child's transition. <i>The article repeats unreliable small sample statistics about trans suicide figures: accuracy / statistics issues</i>	S

5. WEC report and consultation

a. Background

In its first major act as a select committee, the WEC of the House of Commons, created in 2015, commissioned an inquiry into transgender equality. The research was carried out during late 2015.

Amongst evidence presented to the Committee were the results of a survey that indicated extremely high suicidality amongst young transgender people. As discussed above, the survey claimed that 48% of respondents aged under 26 had attempted suicide. The survey had over 2,000 respondents but it was demonstrated later (in 2017) that the data relating to transgender was based on responses of only 27 transgender youth. Nevertheless, the results were widely disseminated – and referenced prominently in the Committee's report – before this was acknowledged.

The outcome was a study, *Transgender Equality*, published in December 2015, which highlighted the areas in which there remained prejudice and discrimination against transgender people.

Another key data point that figured prominently in the Committee's report was the estimate that around 1% of the UK population identified as 'gender nonconforming' to some degree. This figure derives from a trial survey conducted by the Equality and Human Rights Commission to ascertain how best to measure the proportion of transgender people in the UK population. The technical note on this trial survey (referred to in the WEC report) indicates that only 23 (0.23%) of the 10,000 respondents identify as a trans man, trans woman or as transsexual. While this respondent group is too small to draw any conclusions about the proportion without a t-test to establish variance from a normal population statistic, the higher 1% figure has nevertheless been widely used since.

The report made a set of 35 recommendations, the most high-profile of which was to recommend changes to the process by which transgender people obtain GRCs. The current process, which had been introduced with the GRA in 2004, involves the applicant providing evidence that they had been living in their new gender for at least two years, the provision of evidence of diagnosis from a relevant medical practitioner and the decision would be subject to the adjudication of a panel.

The report proposed completely de-medicalising the process of obtaining a GRC and making it a matter of so-called 'self-identification' (self-ID). Since obtaining a GRC already did not require the applicant to have

undergone any medical or surgical transition (on the basis that some candidates were unable to take hormones or undergo surgery for health reasons), this new process could mean that a person with completely male physical features, could gain full legal recognition as a woman without any requirement to prove their transgender status. This would allow the individual to have the sex indicator on their birth certificate changed.

Other recommendations included:

- Removing the gender marker from all official documents that do not require them
 - Creating a 'X' gender marker for passports, to indicate a gender other than male or female (i.e. non-binary)
 - Removing the medical certification requirement to change the sex indicator on a passport
 - Ensure all public services staff are trained to understand transgender service users and prevent prejudice
 - Explicit acceptance of the position that delaying gender reassignment treatment is worse than providing it so prescription times for puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones should be reduced [NB: the WEC report states cross-sex hormones to be reversible, which they are not³⁰]
 - Exploring creating legal protection for people who identify as non-binary
 - Replacing gender reassignment with 'gender identity' as the protected characteristic in the Equality Act
- After its publication in early 2016, there was fierce debate amongst commentators, women's and transgender groups and individuals about the implications of the recommendations, most of which focused on the self-ID proposal.

The Government responded to the report in July 2016 and announced that it was minded to adopt most of the recommendations it contained, albeit subject to a four-month public consultation that would take place from July to October 2018. Many felt that the seven-month gap between publication of the report and the Government's response and the subsequent gap until consultation, during both of which it remained silent, contributed to the heat of the debate that had taken place in the meantime.

In September 2020, the UK government announced that it would not proceed with the implementation of the WEC's recommendations regarding self-ID. This followed the Scottish government's abandonment of the same proposals due to the impact of Covid-19 on the legislative agenda, though the devolved administration has said it will consider whether to re-start the legislative process in the future.

b. Coverage

We selected 24 articles on this subject from our corpus and the Times online archive. These articles cover the period 1 January 2016 to 3 July 2018, from the publication of the Committee's report to the date when the Government's consultation on GRA reform began. They were published by a range of newspapers and one periodical.

Given that this subject area is related to policy and does not involve reports on individuals (individuals are mentioned insofar as they are participants in the debate), standards relating to privacy, harassment, children or hospitals are not relevant in this case. Instead, of the Codes and Guidelines, the focus of our analysis is on: discrimination / language and accuracy / statistics.

c. Editorial position

Of the 24 articles, four (three comment pieces and one news report) take a Supportive view of the WEC proposals, and four (four comment pieces) present counter-arguments and are therefore Questioning. The rest are Neutral reports on events surrounding the report.

³⁰ We provide further information on this issue in our discussion of Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust, page 105.

Many of those we spoke to felt that the press discussion of WEC proposals was one-sided and ill-informed:

“During the GRA discussion, no one was covering the facts, they weren’t talking about the impact on people in the press. If it wasn’t for *The Times* and *Guardian*, there would be virtually nothing that’s factually accurate and showed the other side. It’s been a very pro-transgender agenda. It should be called the Sex Recognition Act; the lack of understanding is due to years and years of bad language and an ideology being accepted by institutions.”

Feminist community group

On the other hand, our transgender community interlocutors saw this moment in a different light:

“Everything went to shit in 2017; the GRA consultation was the turning point. Transgender hadn’t been a pressing concern but the anti-trans people weaponised this issue. They used it as a way of concern-trolling from what if bad men used trans rights to do bad things, to what if trans people were like these bad men?”

Transgender community campaigner

d. *Discrimination / Language*

The articles surveyed include both comment, profiles and news reports. Only one of the articles contains language that would be considered insulting (though not a discrimination issue):

- A comment piece *in a national broadsheet* (13/02/16) uses the acronym ‘terf’ for ‘trans-exclusionary radical feminist’ which is considered pejorative

Otherwise, all terms used fall within the boundaries requested by trans group guidance. For example, ‘gender reassignment’ is used consistently, and ‘transsexual’ is only used in reference to interlocutors who identify as transsexual.

e. *Accuracy / statistics*

The coverage of the WEC report frequently cites a statistic relating to the suicidality of young transgender people:

- Many of the articles cite a survey that showed that half or 48% of young transgender people have attempted suicide, a statistic that was presented as evidence to the WEC during its research period. The use of this statistic is discussed elsewhere in the report.
- The report also refers to an estimate that the proportion of the UK’s population that is in some way ‘gender incongruous’ is 1%, or 600,000 people. As discussed above this is not supported by convincing evidence but is cited in much of the coverage around the WEC report – because it was referenced in the report.
- While most articles are clear in their discussions of the impact of self-ID proposals, one of this sample implies that the proposals will allow men to identify as women and gain access to female-only spaces such as lavatories.

Transgender people can already gain access to spaces such as public lavatories effectively through self-ID (i.e. by being accepted or not being challenged by other users when entering the facilities they wish to use) and the self-ID proposals will not change this.

Those articles that imply that it is the proposals that will enable this access could be seen as an Accuracy Code issue.

Exhibit f: Summary analysis of articles relating to WEC report and aftermath

Date	Comments	EP
16/01/16 National Broadsheet (Editorial)	Parliamentary report on transgender rights has many recommendations which should be adopted immediately Very supportive of WEC proposals, with caveats. <i>Cites suicide stats: accuracy issue</i>	S
23/01/16 National Broadsheet (News)	Maria Miller says the only hostility to her trans report came from women 'purporting to be feminists' Profile of Maria Miller, WEC Chair Extremely supportive of proposals. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	S
30/01/16 Magazine (Comment)	It's dangerous and wrong to tell all children they're gender fluid Questioning piece. Epitomises the counter-argument: that this is an ideology which society is being asked to accept, with serious implications for children. Presenting as orthodoxy the trans ideology to <i>all</i> children, in order to protect a tiny minority. Refers to the issue of whether trans status should be treated as a medical condition. Referring to Paul McHugh (Johns Hopkins) who felt that many trans people had underlying psychological problems that were unresolved by transitioning; so, the proposal to 'de-medicalise' could be questioned. <i>Cites suicide stats: accuracy / statistics issues</i>	Q
13/02/16 National Broadsheet (Op-ed)	Trans people have no dispute with feminists Aggressive toned article attacking those who are concerned about awarding trans women the exact same rights as cis women. Makes parallel between gay and trans fights for rights. <i>Use of 'terf' as pejorative for 'trans-exclusionary radical feminists' (not a discrimination issue)</i> Misrepresents the argument, which is that introducing the idea of sex – gender identity separation could create a pathway towards transgender status for children who would otherwise be going through a normal experimentation period (tom boys) by saying argument is "parents forcing kids to be trans". <i>Makes prominent use of the discredited suicide stats: accuracy / statistics issues</i>	Q
02/02/16 National Broadsheet (Profile)	'Gender is irrelevant, why have it on passports or driving licences?' Maria Miller (WEC Chair) profile. Descriptive, non-judgmental. Reference to statistic quoted in the WEC report, that 1% of population is 'gender dysmorphic' – for which there is little basis. <i>Reference to suicide stat: accuracy / statistics issues</i>	N
31/03/16 National Broadsheet (News)	Transgender zeitgeist is now reaching law's mainstream Profiles of trans lawyers and their wide acceptance within legal profession. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	S
02/04/16 National Broadsheet (News)	SNP gender laws would introduce protection for 'non-binary' people Report on SNP proposals to recognise 'non-binary' people in law. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	N
07/07/16 National Broadsheet (News)	Government to consider 'gender neutral' official documents Report on proposals from WEC report to remove gender marker in official documents (passport etc.). Includes quotes in opposition to this proposal "official documents have to reflect reality and the reality is that people are either male or female" (Christian Institute). <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	N
08/07/16 National Broadsheet (News)	Trans people can now change the gender on their passports without a medical letter Report on the Government's announcement that it will implement the WEC report's recommendation that changing the sex marker in a passport will no longer require a medical report. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	N
07/07/16 National Broadsheet (News)	Government to review 2004 Gender Recognition Act Announcing the Govt's response to the WE report, that it will review the GRA. Descriptive. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	N
08/07/16 National Broadsheet (News)	Transgender victory on changing passport details Report on the Government's announcement that it will implement the WEC report's recommendation that changing the sex marker in a passport will no longer require a medical report. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	N
13/12/16 National Broadsheet (News)	Families are urged to give bullied transgender children more support Report into the rise in NSPCC counselling sessions for children who think they had the wrong gender. <i>Reference to suicide stat: accuracy / statistics issues</i>	N

Date	Comments	EP
01/03/17 National Tabloid (Opinion)	[Columnist – redacted] on the powerful transgender lobby Outrage at RAF decision to ban skirts on parade because it would be discriminatory towards personnel including transgender people. “Education authorities and even some nurseries seem to be in thrall to the gender thought police”; “boys who believe they are girls are being allowed to join the guides under radical changes to the organisation’s single-sex policy”; “British Medical Association, long hijacked by left-wing militants, has joined the bandwagon, announcing pregnant women should not be called expectant mothers’ in case it offends transgender people”; “some men in full possession of a penis are identifying as women and demanding entry to women-only colleges and the right to change in women’s dressing rooms. Call me old-fashioned, but I tend to think of people with penises as men”. <i>Refers to WEC report and parliament statistic that around 1% of people are ‘gender incongruent’: accuracy / statistic issues</i>	Q
23/07/17 National Broadsheet (News)	People will be allowed to pick their own gender without doctor’s diagnosis, under Government plans Report on Government’s plans to consult on GRA reforms, including self-ID proposals. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	N
23/07/17 National Tabloid (News)	Government to allow transgender people to change gender Report on Government’s plans to consult on GRA reforms, including self-ID proposals. Balanced article, quotes supporters and detractors. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	N
24/07/17 National Tabloid (News)	Justine Greening’s sexuality brought into Tory infighting over gender change policy Report on Tory activist raising the question of whether Justine Greening’s sexuality affected her approach to policy towards transgender people. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	N
24/07/17 National Broadsheet (News)	Tory activist suggests minister’s sexuality could be behind decision to change trans policy Balanced report on Tory activist raising the question of whether Justine Greening’s sexuality affected her approach to policy towards transgender people. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	N
25/09/17 National Tabloid (News)	Violence stifles debate on transgender law proposals as experts claims issue is ‘too explosive’ to discuss and activists defend assault of woman, 60 Balanced report about the Speakers’ Corner incident, regarding the debate about self-ID proposals and how they would undermine female-only protections. “They [Action for Trans Health] say that means they should be allowed to use women-only spaces such as changing rooms and toilets” Depending on who is managing access to a space (if anyone) this is possible already (e.g. public toilets) and is in these cases can be a matter of self-ID. But is not necessarily the case with women-only spaces such as female refuges or other spaces managed by an organisation that has jurisdiction over space purpose and access, which is currently a matter of discretion for each charity or organisation, “where the exclusion is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim” ³¹ <i>Potential accuracy issue where this distinction is not made clear</i> “The morning after the assault, the Edinburgh branch of ATH tweeted: “punching terfs is the same as punching Nazis. Fascism must be smashed with the greatest violence” Cites other decisions (refusal of research grant to James Caspian to study de-transitioning on the basis that it would be politically incorrect and damaging to Bath university).	N
06/11/17 National Broadsheet (News)	Transgender women criticise reform Report on Miranda Yardley, a trans woman who identifies as transsexual (and “never as a woman”) who opposes the government’s proposals for self-ID as it would make it impossible to challenge opportunistic men who abuse the system. ““Out of respect to women. I’m not trying to lay any claim to being a woman. I have not had the same life.” “We’re being told that a trans woman is a woman. No debate. It’s almost like a cult. Obey the rules of the cult, enforce the rules and anyone who disagrees is kicked out.” Critics say that changing the law to protect transgender people on the basis of infinite, undefined notions of “gender identity” instead of “gender reassignment” is identity politics gone mad — as doomed as “trying to legislate for agnostics”, Ms Yardley says. “They’re looking at legislating for my thoughts and feelings and it is nonsense.” “At the moment, we’ve got the option of saying, look, here are pieces of paper that say we’ve been assessed by society. If you replace that with self-identification only, then effectively these people are relying only on their own assertions. People [who may be hostile to trans people] could simply say, we don’t believe you. It actually weakens our position,” she said.’ <i>Contains trans population statistic: accuracy / statistics issues</i>	N
10/11/17 National Tabloid (Comment)	We must stop pandering to the tiny minority that is the transgender lobby Attacks the gender reassignment orthodoxy: “just because a man undergoes surgery to make himself look like a woman doesn’t mean that he has magically been transformed into a female”: <i>use of ‘he’ runs counter to IPSO Guidance.</i> “In 2009 the gender identity research and education society reported just 56,000 people might be transsexual. A more than 10-fold increase in eight years is more to do with Caitlyn Jenner’s TV transformation and the liberal media desperate for the next minority cause to espouse.” <i>Contains trans population statistic: accuracy / statistics issues</i>	Q

³¹ EHRC – *Services, Public Functions and Associations: Statutory Code of Practice* (2011)

Date	Comments	EP
01/06/18 National Tabloid (News)	<p>Hampstead ponds row continues on whether transgender demands are going too far</p> <p>Report on the group of women who identified as men for one day (called ‘Man Friday’) to gain access to the Hampstead men-only pond to illustrate their opposition to self-ID proposals. This action was taken on the back of the women’s pond changing its rules to allow men access who identify as women: “We’re scrupulous about respecting transgender rights, but the law must also acknowledge biological differences between men and women and their entitlement to separate spaces in order to retain dignity, privacy and safety.”</p> <p><i>Such spaces are already accessible by those who self-ID as women – unless exclusion is deemed proportionate – and this will not be affected by the GRA reform</i></p> <p>Campaigning also against: “the current accepted view that whether you are a man or a woman is merely a feeling, an inner essence, which transcends biology and offers a loophole to such abusers. And if proposed changes to the gender recognition act are passed, this new orthodoxy will become enshrined in law”.</p> <p>The group includes trans women who are concerned about the change (that if it’s simply an assertion, then this can be challenged).</p> <p>Balanced. The article quotes both sides of the argument. Trans woman Jane Fae: “If men want to abuse, they will abuse. They will nick a woman’s jacket and go into the women’s loo. They do not need paperwork to do it.”</p> <p><i>Some misrepresentation of the GRA reform and its impact: accuracy / statistics issues</i></p>	N
24/06/18 National Broadsheet (News)	<p>Transgender people can continue to be denied access to some women-only spaces, government says</p> <p>Report on the Govt’s response to fears about single-sex spaces. Govt states that the changes to GRA won’t change this: “in response to a petition calling for women to be consulted before any change to the Gender Recognition Act (GRA), which allows people to legally change their gender, the Government Equalities office said: we are clear that we have no intention of amending the Equality Act 2010, the legislation that allows for single-sex spaces. Any GRA reform will not change the protected characteristics in the Equality Act nor the exceptions under the Equality Act that allow provision for single and separate sex spaces.”</p> <p>“Providers of women-only services can continue to provide services in a different way, or even not provide services to trans individuals, provided it is objectively justified on a case-by-case basis.”</p> <p><i>No editorial standards issues.</i></p>	N
27/06/18 Regional (Comment)	<p>Equalities minister is right to insist on civility in the trans rights debate</p> <p>On the back of Govt’s clarification that Equality Act will not be changed. Celebrates Penny Mordaunt’s ‘even-handed’ approach.</p> <p><i>No editorial standards issues.</i></p>	S
03/07/18 National Broadsheet (News)	<p>Theresa May pledges to overhaul 'bureaucratic and intrusive' hurdles to changing gender</p> <p>Report on the gov’t’s consultation announcement.</p> <p><i>No editorial standards issues.</i></p>	N

6. Speakers’ Corner incident

a. Background

On 13th September 2017 a group of women congregated at Speakers’ Corner in Hyde Park while awaiting the address of a venue nearby at which they had planned to hold a meeting to discuss their concerns about the impact of proposed GRA reform on women’s rights. The meeting was entitled ‘What is gender? The Gender Recognition Act and beyond’. They had been forced to move venue from New Cross after they discovered that it was likely to be disrupted by people who disagreed with the group’s opposition to GRA reform.

At Speakers’ Corner, a group of people from Action for Trans Health (ATH) started protesting against the women’s group, chanting, “when the terfs attack, we fight back”. ‘Terf’ is an acronym, considered pejorative, for ‘trans-exclusionary radical feminists’, used to characterise women who oppose reform of the GRA towards self-ID.

Maria MacLachlan, who was a member of the women’s group, decided to film the disruption. She was seen doing this by the protesters, who attempted to stop her, causing (as confirmed in the subsequent trial judgement), some injury. The protesters ran off but were caught in camera on video that was subsequently posted to YouTube.

The police obtained copies of the photographs of the suspects and released them to the public to seek help identifying them. This resulted in the identification of Tara Wolf, a trans woman, as the key suspect who was subsequently charged and tried at the Hendon Magistrates Court.

She was found guilty of assault and fined £430 including costs and a surcharge.

During the trial, the victim (Maria MacLachlan) referred to Tara Wolf as 'he' and was asked by the judge to use female pronouns. Maria MacLachlan's apparent reluctance to do this was cited by the judge as one reason for the low punitive element of the fine.

The incident led the original group of women to form a new group, called A Woman's Place, founded to create a forum where women concerned with the impact of GRA reform on women's rights could discuss their concerns and form an action plan for input into the debate.

b. Coverage

We selected the 23 articles within our corpus and *The Times* and *The Sunday Times* online archive within the period from mid-September 2017 to April 2019, covering the incident, the subsequent trial and aftermath.

Since the incident involves individuals, we have been mindful in our review to consider issues associated with the clauses on Privacy (including the Relevance consideration of IPSO guidance on transgender stories) as well as those pertaining to Accuracy and Discrimination (including the Language and Terminology considerations).

c. Editorial position

Of the 23 articles reviewed, five are Questioning of the transgender group's arguments, one was more Supportive and the rest were Neutral.

d. Accuracy

Reporting of this incident was littered with examples of potential inaccuracies. We counted 19 examples in the 23 articles we reviewed. Perhaps surprisingly, most of these were instances where the article identified the victim as belonging to a group called TERF, for Trans Exclusionary Radical Feminist. In fact, this acronym is a pejorative and no such group exists, and Maria MacLachlan does not identify herself as a 'terf'. In one instance, the protestors are described as belonging to a group called the 'Trans Activists', which – again – is not a group but is a term (which can be considered pejorative) to describe those who are campaigning in support of GRA reform.

Furthermore, there were several instances of misrepresentation of the views of each side of the argument, which were often poorly summarised. Typical examples are: "clashes between a pro-trans group and a group who don't believe in relaxing the law on who can enter women-only spaces" and "The controversial [Gender Recognition] act is designed to make it easier for people to define their gender independently of the state", which attempt to summarise quite complex positions and fail to capture the nuances of each side's positions.

e. Discrimination

We did not identify any examples of discriminatory use, only cases that indicate the heating up of argument where the term 'terf' – considered by many feminists to be pejorative – had been used without qualification.

Collectively, these instances point primarily to a lack of understanding of the issues being debated and the relative novelty of terminology deployed (such as 'terf'). Given that the women who were meeting had not yet organised themselves into a formal grouping, it is possible that the journalists latched on to the only denomination that was available at the time.

Exhibit g: Summary analysis of articles relating to the Speakers' Corner attacks

Details	Comments	EP
16/09/17 National Tabloid (News)	Fists fly in a punch-up in London's Hyde Park Report on Speakers' Corner incident. <i>Use of 'terf' (to represent 'trans-exclusionary radical feminists') without qualification could be pejorative?</i> <i>No editorial standards issues</i>	N
17/09/17 National Tabloid (News)	Moment transgender group and feminist activists clash in Hyde Park brawl leaving 60-year-old woman on the floor Report on Speakers' Corner incident. <i>Inaccuracy about affiliation of the victim: "mother-of-two Maria MacLachlan, a member of terf".</i> Misrepresentation of the positions of the people involved: accuracy / statistics issues	S
17/09/17 National Tabloid (News)	Mum punched in face as transgender group and feminists clash over equal rights at Hyde Park Report on Speakers' Corner incident. <i>Misrepresentation: "she is a terf - feminists who are opposed to some campaigning by transgender women."</i> <i>An over-simplification and inaccuracy on positions: "trans-exclusionary radical feminists (terfs) say trans females are not real women and should not share their rights and women only areas" when the position is more nuanced, asking for a higher burden of proof and discretion on access to women's spaces.</i> Misrepresentation of the positions of the people involved: accuracy / statistics issues	N
19/09/17 National Tabloid (News)	CONFUSED? Feminists who OPPOSE equal rights in outdoor scrap with transgender group! Report on Speakers' Corner incident. <i>More misrepresentation / accuracy: "Maria MacLachlan, 60, was hit in the face by an activist protesting trans-exclusionary radical feminists - feminists who oppose equal rights for trans people - and protestors campaigning for transgender rights" - "TERF's Ms MacLachlan."</i> Misrepresentation of the positions of the people involved: accuracy / statistics issues	N
24/09/17 National Tabloid (News)	Transgender group ATH says it is fine to punch women Continuing coverage after the trans group's Twitter feed contains incendiary comments and that one of its members submitted evidence to the WEC: "Transgender group Action for Trans Health (ATH) says it is fine to punch women." It has also emerged that Jess Bradley, a former member of the ATH, gave evidence on gender equality to the Woman and Equalities Select committee in 2015, the Sunday Times reported. <i>"Bradley, who said she no longer works for the group, tweeted 'terfs are using Nazi tactics...don't let it work'".</i> <i>Article reveals that Bradley is currently the trans officer for the National Union of Students (NUS).'</i> Misrepresentation of the positions of the people involved: accuracy / statistics issues Unnecessary disclosure of transition progress: privacy issues	Q
24/09/17 National Broadsheet (News)	Violence has no place in transgender debate Letters Open letter saying that women have a right to free association and assembly. "Politically motivated violence aimed at silencing women and shutting us out of political discussion will not succeed." <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	Q
24/09/17 National Broadsheet (News)	Trans group ATH "condones punching feminists" Report into ATH's evidence to WEC and tweets after incident, which included: "Terfs are using Nazi tactics. Don't let it work" and directed readers to a blog that supported the violence. The ATH account retweeted the message. Reveals that the violence triggered setting up of A Woman's Place by Kiri Tunks. However, the report over-simplifies ATH position: "ATH believes that anyone who self-identifies as a woman — without having undergone transition surgery — should be allowed to use women-only spaces such as changing rooms." Oversimplification of ATH position: accuracy / statistics issues	N
25/09/17 National Tabloid (News)	Violence stifles debate on transgender law proposals as experts claims issue is too explosive' to discuss and activists defend assault of woman, 60 Report on the incident and aftermath. <i>Misrepresentation / over-simplification / accuracy on the two group's positions: "clashes between a pro-trans group and a group who don't believe in relaxing the law on who can enter women-only spaces"</i> Reflects the view that people raising questions on transgender rights or GRA reform are shut down, ostracised. But contains some inaccuracy given that access to changing rooms and toilets is not determined by sex on birth certificate (which is what the Gender Recognition Certificate allows the individual to change): "they say that means they should be allowed to use women-only spaces such as changing rooms and toilets." This is subject to appearance, self-ID of sorts and is at the discretion of the operator of the space in the context of a 'legitimate aim'. Misrepresentation of the positions of the people involved: accuracy / statistics issues	N
26/10/17 National Tabloid (News)	Cops release pictures of transgender activists wanted after 60-year-old woman was attacked at Hyde Park rally Reports on the release by the police of photos of three suspects. <i>"Mother-of-two Maria MacLachlan, a member of TERF who describes herself as a gender critical feminist" - relevance of parent status and inaccuracy on group membership.</i> <i>No editorial standards issues</i>	N

Details	Comments	EP
<p>26/10/17 Regional (News)</p>	<p>Woman, 60, knocked to the ground and repeatedly kicked as brawl breaks out between radical feminists and transgender activists Report regarding the original incident at police release of images. <i>"Scuffles are said to have broken out between members of a group called the trans-exclusionary radical feminists, or TERFs, and rival organisation the Trans Activists." Inaccuracy as neither of these are actual groups.</i> <i>"TERFs have been described as a group who advocate women-only spaces and oppose some campaigning by transgender women. Trans Activists believe the views of TERFs are threatening to trans women in particular." Inaccuracy and misrepresentation of the positions.</i> Misrepresentations of the positions of the people involved / invention of groups that don't exist: accuracy / statistics issues</p>	N
<p>26/10/17 National Tabloid (News)</p>	<p>3 trans activists wanted for Hyde Park attack on feminist News report on the incident following police release of photos. <i>"Action for Trans Health (ATH) clashed with their bitter enemies the Trans-Exclusionary Radical Feminists (TERFs)." Misrepresentations of the positions of the people involved / invention of groups that don't exist: accuracy / statistics issues</i></p>	N
<p>03/03/18 National Tabloid (News)</p>	<p>Women's Equality Party sacks key official over transgender concerns Women's Equality Party sacks key official over transgender concerns. Report on the Women's Equality Party firing one of its senior officials after she raised concerns about adults labelling children as transgender and complaints were received. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i></p>	N
<p>12/04/18 National Broadsheet (News)</p>	<p>Radical feminist warned to refer to transgender defendant as a 'she' during assault case Report on trial of trans woman who attacked Maria MacLachlan at Speakers' Corner, during which the judge instructs the victim to refer to the accused as 'she' after she repeatedly refers to the accused as 'he'. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i></p>	N
<p>12/04/18 National Tabloid (News)</p>	<p>Transgender activist 'battered' radical feminist at Speakers' Corner brawl Trial update on evidence. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i></p>	N
<p>13/04/18 Regional (News)</p>	<p>Transgender activist Tara Wolf fined £150 for assaulting 'exclusionary' radical feminist in Hyde Park Trial outcome. Tara Wolf found guilty and fined £420. <i>Mentions that the Speakers' Corner gathering was "to discuss changes to the Gender Identity Act" – inaccuracy as it misnames the Act.</i> <i>"The controversial act is designed to make it easier for people to define their gender independently of the state" – again inaccuracy / misrepresentation.</i> Misnaming / misrepresentation of community: accuracy / statistics issues</p>	N
<p>13/04/18 National Tabloid (News)</p>	<p>Model who punched feminist and smashed her £120 camera in violent brawl walks free from court Report of the trial outcome. <i>Some misrepresentation of the protagonists: "radical trans-exclusionary feminist Maria MacLachlan" – not how she describes herself.</i> Misrepresentation of the subject of the article: accuracy / statistics issues</p>	N
<p>14/04/18 National Broadsheet (Comment)</p>	<p>Trans activists think debate is hate speech Analysis post-trial – comment. On the back of reports that A Woman's Place (set up after the Speakers' Corner incident) has had a meeting cancelled by the venue due to the group being considered 'bigoted'. Reports that A Woman's Place has six demands, including "respectful and evidence-based discussion" and for impact assessments on how proposed changes to the GRA, allowing people assigned male at birth to self-ID as women, will affect data-gathering on crime, health and the gender pay gap. The piece outlines the concerns, including participation in sport. Argues that the transgender case it is not the same as that fought for gay marriage etc. as recognition of the right to love who you choose does not impact on anyone else, but trans rights have an impact on people assigned female at birth. Argues that a proper debate on the GRA is essential: what is proposed is nothing less than changing the very definition of man and woman in law — biology replaced with identity. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i></p>	Q
<p>14/04/18 National Broadsheet (News)</p>	<p>Trans attacker is a thug, says feminist Report on the sentencing of Tara Wolf. Ms MacLachlan, speaking outside court, told of her disgust at being forced to address her attacker as a woman (as instructed by the judge during the trial). <i>"It was particularly offensive because he is a violent male," she said – potentially against IPSO Guidance on pronouns but is a quote.</i> <i>No editorial standards issues.</i></p>	N
<p>05/05/18 Magazine (Comment)</p>	<p>Terf wars and the ludicrous lexicon of feminist theory Short piece reflecting on the state of the debate between 'terfs' and trans activists. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i></p>	N

Details	Comments	EP
16/06/18 National Tabloid (News)	Co-operative bank bans feminist group from using its services Co-Op decision to refuse bank services to feminist group – because of its stance on transgender rights. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	N
07/10/18 National Broadsheet (Comment)	Be kinder on gender, begs Jan Morris Piece on the extent of opposition to feminist groups questioning the GRA reform proposals discovered by the newspaper. ‘15 public meetings held by feminist groups opposed to the proposals have been invaded, threatened, picketed, closed down or forced to move venue by transgender activists.’ No editorial standards issues.	N
08/10/18 National Tabloid (News)	We must all now bow to the transgender agenda Wrap up of the issues relating to new transgender-related concepts and potential GRA reform: “Trans issues, with a whole new language and vocabulary, are bewildering enough for adults. But what about the colonisation of safe spaces for young, sometimes pre-adolescent girls and boys?” <i>Exaggeration / misrepresentation in use of word ‘colonisation’, which implies takeover?</i> Misrepresentation of the community: accuracy / statistics issues	Q
28/04/19 National Broadsheet (News)	Police used ‘violent’ transgender activist for equality training Report that some transgender activists “with a record of using insulting language or even violence against women have been used for police training in equality and diversity.” <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	Q

7. Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust Gender Identity Development Service controversies

a. Background

The Gender Identity Development Service (GIDS) is a service provided by the NHS for children and young people, and their families, who experience difficulties in the development of their gender identity. It's a national specialised service, based in London and Leeds, and is the only one of its kind in Great Britain.

It provides diagnosis for these children and treatment according to their needs. This can range from therapy (group or individual) to the prescription of drugs that can pave the way for the patient to transition to the opposite gender in adulthood:

- ‘Puberty blockers’³², drugs that inhibit the production of the hormones that would trigger puberty in a child. These can be prescribed to children to give them a ‘pause’ before their bodies change in ways that they consider abhorrent. They are ostensibly reversible in that puberty in the sex assigned at birth will resume if they stop taking them, but the few studies available on the long-term impact of taking these drugs do not demonstrate clear efficacy on delivering improved mental well-being as a result of the therapy³³ and there are concerns on the impact on bone density³⁴. Accordingly, much of the debate in this area has been on the safety and efficacy of this treatment. Furthermore, the drugs are not licensed for treatment of gender dysphoria so their use in this way is ‘off-label’.

These drugs can be prescribed from the age of 12.

- ‘Cross-sex hormones’³⁵, which will encourage the body to develop certain features typical of the sex opposite to that assigned to the child at birth. Testosterone is prescribed for trans males (those assigned as female at birth who wish to transition into males) and oestrogen for trans females (those assigned as male at birth who wish to transition into females).

³² <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/gender-dysphoria/treatment/>.

³³ <http://wpath2016.conferencespot.org/62620-wpathv2-1.3138789/t001-1.3140111/f001-1.3140333/0706-000441-1.3140337>.

³⁴ <https://www.endocrine-abstracts.org/ea/0058/ea0058oc8.2.htm>.

³⁵ <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/gender-dysphoria/treatment/>.

These drugs can be prescribed from the age of 16 and are not considered fully reversible as they arrest the development of their biological sexual features. Drugs will need to be taken for life for the effects to continue and will lead to infertility for both sexes in the longer term.

If taken prior to, or close to puberty, these drugs will prevent some of the most obvious physical features of the patient's sex as assigned at birth from appearing as strongly, making any future physical transition more effective in terms of appearance.

The GIDS clinic has experienced a massive rise in referrals during the past decade, with the number rising from 97 in 2009 to over 2,500 in 2018. This rise in referrals without a commensurate rise in resources and staff has put pressure on the service. Some staff expressed concern internally about the quality of the service the unit was providing the patients and in November 2018 an internal report written by Dr David Bell – in his capacity as staff governor – articulating these concerns was leaked to the press.

The report warned that the GIDS “as it now functions [is] not fit for purpose and children's ends are being met in a woeful, inadequate manner and some will live on with the damaging consequences”. In particular the report expressed concern that the child's circumstances (whether this be evidence at home of bereavement, abuse, homophobia) were not being fully taken into account in understanding the child's presentation as transgender before allowing the child to proceed on the pathway towards gender reassignment.

At the same time, a group of parents of older children who had been referred to the service wrote an open letter, expressing concern that children in the 17-25 yr-olds group were being fast-tracked into the adult gender reassignment therapy without being fully appraised of other factors that might be leading the patient towards identifying as transgender.

As a result of Dr Bell's report, the Trust which runs GIDS conducted a review of the claims but did not identify any immediate issues in relation to patient safety or failings in the overall approach taken by the service in responding to the needs of young people and families who access its support. The review identified areas for improvement and made several recommendations which are now being implemented.

In February 2019, Marcus Evans, one of the Governors of the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust, resigned in protest at the Trust's refusal to recognise the problems outlined in Bell's report. "There is pressure from the child who is in a distressed state, there is pressure from the family and the peer group and from the pro-trans lobbies – and all of this puts pressure on the clinician who may want to help the individual to resolve their distressed state by going along with a quick solution. There is a lot at stake here as these decisions have far-reaching consequences."³⁶

b. Coverage

We examined 22 articles (news and comment pieces) published between 3rd November 2018, when the Bell report was leaked to the press, and 26th July 2019. The news events that triggered most of these articles are driven by criticism of the GIDS (including Bell's report, parents' letter, staff resignations) therefore the stories, particularly the opinion pieces, tend to explore and articulate criticism of the service rather than defend its approach or record. The voices of transgender-supporting groups or individuals are not given much prominence in this coverage, apart from in an article published by The Sun on 4th December 2018 which carries an interview with a GP who ran an unofficial gender dysmorphia practice.

Generally, while the debate around GIDS (and adjacent transgender-related subjects) is carried on in this coverage with some rhetorical energy (in comment pieces in particular) we did not find many egregious examples where editorial standards may have been infringed.

³⁶ BBC Radio 4 Today programme, 25 February 2019.

c. Accuracy

In providing coverage of negative events relating to GIDS, these pieces can be seen to over-simplify the context or the approaches of groups involved in the debate. We identified three potential Accuracy infringements, where statements were not supported by evidence or facts were over-simplified or misrepresented. The most notable example of this was in an opinion piece published in a national tabloid on 3rd March 2019 which summarises many of the arguments calling for transgender-related approaches to be reviewed but in doing so (as is perhaps often the case with such wide-ranging comment pieces) potentially appears to over-simplify or misrepresent some arguments or points of fact. However, overall the number of such inaccuracies is small relative to the volume of coverage included and all appeared to be accidental rather than intentional misrepresentations.

d. Discrimination

We identified no instances of a potentially discriminatory use, despite the heated nature of the arguments around treating vulnerable children.

e. Editorial position

Of the 22 articles reviewed, we categorise 12 as being of a Questioning bias and two being generally Supportive. This is perhaps unsurprising given that the news events in this case study comprise protest resignations and investigations into concerns expressed by clinicians, which opinions the coverage articulates and reflects.

Exhibit h: Summary analysis of articles relating to GIDS internal report and resignations

Details	Comments	EP
03/11/18 National Broadsheet (News)	Gender identity clinic accused of fast-tracking young adults News piece regarding Bell's leaked report and the parents' letter in the context of the huge increase in numbers of children seeking referrals. Highlights the view that psychosocial factors – such as the popularisation of trans issues on social media, or the role trauma has played in their early life – can help shape someone's desire to transition is rejected by many trans support groups. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	N
04/11/18 National Tabloid (News)	NHS clinic for transgender children announces review into its operations amid 'fast-tracking' claims News piece on same story. Quotes Mermaids (transgender children and parents support charity): "At Mermaids, we see that a delay in necessary, developmentally appropriate or age-specified medical intervention can have a negative effect on the wellbeing of a trans child an inability to concentrate at school, to engage with their peers, to excel in their hobbies because they are not getting the support they need in time." <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	N
05/11/18 National Broadsheet (News)	Gender advisers 'rushing young into big decisions' News piece on same story. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	N
17/11/18 National Tabloid (News)	School has 17 children changing gender as whistle-blower claims autistic pupils are being tricked into thinking they are the wrong sex News piece on factors influencing children identifying as transgender. Focus on school where 17 children are changing gender, plus emergence of data from Tavistock that a disproportionate number of patients (a third) have strong autistic traits. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	Q

Details	Comments	EP
<p>18/11/18 National Tabloid (Comment)</p>	<p>We'll look back on the rush to change our children's sex as one of the darkest chapters in medicine</p> <p>Authored piece by Bob Withers (psychotherapist). Presenting the idea that we should explore and challenge a patient's belief that they are a transgender person rather than adopt the 'affirmative' approach:</p> <p>"We'll look back on the rush to change our children's sex as one of the darkest chapters in medicine"; "how do we decide whose needs are genuine? And how, then, should we treat them?"; "surgery – which is irreversible – should only ever be a last resort...we should always begin by working to help the mind fit better with the body before we start altering the body to fit the mind"; "we will question why we failed to challenge their belief that they were born in the wrong bodies. We will ask why we so readily ignored the clanging alarm bells that many were autistic, or had mental health problems"; "one major problem in today's blinkered reality is that, if you don't affirm a patient's claim to be transgender, you can run the risk of being accused of practising conversion therapy" and "it surely can't be long before more difficult questions will be asked by a new generation. They will ask why nobody stopped them, told them treatment could destroy their sex life or warned them that it would make them infertile and might not make them happy after all."</p> <p><i>"Debate on this issue has been silenced by transgender activists who label as 'transphobic' anyone who dares to challenge their dogma."</i></p> <p><i>No editorial standards issues</i></p>	Q
<p>18/11/18 National Tabloid (News)</p>	<p>How only NHS children's transgender clinic 'buried' fact that 372 of 1,069 patients were autistic</p> <p>News report into the revelation that 372 of 1,069 patients were autistic, which could be a reason for identifying as transgender.</p> <p><i>No editorial standards issues.</i></p>	Q
<p>04/12/18 National Tabloid (News)</p>	<p>Doctor fined for helping transgender kids as young as 12 transition insisted her controversial treatment was saving lives</p> <p>Profile and interview with the GP fined for giving children hormones to help them transition.</p> <p>Outlines the argument in favour of prescribing puberty blockers: "blockers are three-monthly injections which act as a puberty 'pause button' so bodily changes are put on hold. Stop them and puberty starts again, so Helen's argument is that they give a child who is questioning their gender some breathing space"; "she wants kids who are querying their gender to have easier access to these"; "puberty is excruciating for children when it's completely the wrong puberty, she argues. It's just crucifying"; "If you ask a transgender adult, 'when would you like to have started treatment?' They will all say at the beginning of puberty."; "transgender charities and the WPATH – World Professional Association of Transgender Health – state very clearly that doing nothing is not a neutral option. It's actually causing harm" and "say one in 100 would change their mind – 99 have got to go through puberty just in case that one changes their mind." <i>Accuracy issue given WPATH says that 73-94% of transgender children no longer identify as transgender upon reaching adulthood, not 1% as quoted. [Source: WPATH Standards of Care 2012] and does not make reference to the fact that reversibility has not been fully investigated.</i></p> <p><i>Misrepresentation of statistics: accuracy / statistics issues</i></p>	S
<p>23/02/19 National Broadsheet (News)</p>	<p>Governor of Tavistock Foundation quits over damning report into gender identity clinic</p> <p>News report on resignation of Marcus Evans and update on GIDS report and aftermath. Also covers news that GIDS has been awarded £1.3m by the National Institute for Health Research to track treatment outcomes, allowing them to compare outcomes for those who go on to use physical interventions, such as hormone blockers, and those who select an alternative pathway.</p> <p><i>No editorial standards issues.</i></p>	N
<p>16/02/19 National Broadsheet (News)</p>	<p>Staff at trans clinic fear damage to children as activists pile on pressure</p> <p>Further news coverage of Bell report and parents' letter.</p> <p><i>Refers to Mermaids, as "a charity that campaigns for children to be given sex-change treatment": use of 'sex-change' outdated.</i></p> <p><i>No editorial standards issues.</i></p>	Q
<p>24/02/19 National Broadsheet (News)</p>	<p>Governor quits 'blinkered' Tavistock trans clinic</p> <p>News report on Marcus Evans' resignation as governor of the NHS trust that runs GIDS.</p> <p><i>No editorial standards issues.</i></p>	Q
<p>01/03/19 National Tabloid (Comment)</p>	<p>Former governor says he fears we're hurrying children down a transgender path</p> <p>1st person piece from Marcus Evans, the Governor who resigned from the Tavistock over GIDS not taking criticisms more seriously.</p> <p>Contains the view that "the clinic bowed to pressure from highly politicised 'pro-trans lobby groups'", which is contentious but doesn't infringe editorial standards.</p> <p>"The young people who attend the clinic often turn up in great distress. We owe it to them to explore their reasoning in forensic detail before hurrying them down the path of no return."</p> <p><i>No editorial standards issues.</i></p>	Q

Details	Comments	EP
03/03/19 National Tabloid (Comment)	Is Britain FINALLY coming to its senses over transgender madness? Wrap-up piece asking if the direction of travel regarding society's approach to transgender-related issues and policies might be changing. <i>Misrepresentation / accuracy – exaggeration to say “promoting trans rights has become central to healthcare, policing, education and the law, raising many troubling questions.”</i> <i>“The lack of scrutiny has led to a new disturbing reality in which women have been sexually assaulted in prison by trans inmates, trans athletes increasingly compete as females, children transition rapidly, and women suffer vitriolic abuse for standing up for their rights.” Accuracy: while all of these things have happened, the tone implies far greater volume of incidents than experienced.</i> <i>Accuracy / misrepresentation in description of “Mermaids, an influential trans-lobbying charity that pushes doctors to fast-track children to treatment”, though it does lobby to lower the age at which medical treatments are made available.</i> <i>“The issue of inmates is concerning, with prison policy prioritising the preferences of trans inmates.” Again, a misrepresentation of the scale and reality of the application of prison policy, which should seek to safeguard all inmates equally.</i> <i>“One of the defining features of the trans lobbyists are the vituperative attacks they orchestrate on anyone who dares disagree or question them.”</i> Misrepresentation of reality in trans rights, prison policy and description of Mermaids: accuracy / statistics issues	Q
07/03/19 National Broadsheet (News)	NHS transgender clinic accused of covering up negative impacts of puberty blockers on children by Oxford professor News story on Dr Michael Biggs, an Associate Professor at Oxford's Department of Sociology, who claims the [GIDS] has been giving puberty blocking hormones to children, without robust evidence as to the long-term effects. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	Q
06/04/19 National Tabloid (News)	One trans child a week is being given hormone-blocking drugs on the NHS News story on volume of children being prescribed puberty-blocking drugs. <i>“Critics warn it is experimental and side-effects, including bone and sex organ development problems, are irreversible.”</i> <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	N
08/04/19 National Broadsheet (News)	It feels like conversion therapy for gay children, say clinicians News article on GIDS carrying new quotes from one of the clinicians who have resigned from the service. <i>“It feels like conversion therapy for gay children...I frequently had cases where people started identifying as trans after months of horrendous bullying for being gay.” Accuracy on use of ‘frequently’ given lack of evidence presented for proportion of GIDS patients who might turn out to be gay.</i> The article quotes Mermaids, GIRES and Gendered Intelligence, groups which say they do not “encourage parents to demand any particular treatment”. Use of the term ‘frequently’ despite lack of evidence: accuracy / statistics issues	Q
08/04/19 National Broadsheet (Comment)	If I'd transitioned in my teens, it could have ruined my life The writer (a trans woman, charting own transition with weekly column) presents own view supporting ‘watch and wait’ strategy for children that present as transgender: “I know from personal experience that if a child really is trans, it isn't a phase and they won't get over it. Nor is it a disorder that can be cured. But equally, I recognise that some kids may think they are trans, who actually aren't. Telling the difference between the two can't be easy...shouldn't we let our children determine for themselves, as adults, who they are and how they want to lead their lives?” <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	Q
08/04/19 National Tabloid (News)	Workers at transgender clinic quit over concerns of 'unregulated live experiments on children' News story on the resignation of workers from GIDS over concerns about treatment for children. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	N
09/04/19 National Tabloid (News)	Kids as young as three are being sent to an NHS transgender clinic accused of live experimenting on them News report on GIDS. “Kids as young as three are being sent to an NHS transgender clinic accused of live experimenting on them...a spokesman said of the puberty-blocking drugs: there is little reported evidence of harm. But Stephanie Davies-Arai, of parents' group Transgender Trend, said: their use will have serious life-long effects such as infertility.” <i>Minor accuracy point – it is cross-sex hormones that have direct impact on fertility, not puberty-blockers (though most on puberty-blockers are thought to continue on to cross-sex hormones).</i> <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	Q
13/04/19 National Broadsheet (Comment)	Opinion: Polarising debates around gender dysphoria are deeply damaging for young people I've seen it firsthand Neutral comment piece by a Tavistock clinician on the damage around the debate about GIDS and treatment offered. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	S
30/06/19 National Broadsheet (News)	Tavistock clinic reveals surge in girls switching gender News story into the rise in referrals to GIDS and the high proportion who are girls: “Almost three-quarters of children seeking help to change their gender are girls, the highest proportion recorded...Transgender activists say the rise is due to increased public acceptance and awareness. Others say transition is promoted by activist groups and online as an all-purpose answer to loneliness, autism, abuse, not wanting to be gay, or the normal problems of adolescence.” Presents both sides. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	N

Details	Comments	EP
21/07/19	Psychologist says children are misled at gender clinic	Q
National	Follow-up story on concerns of GIDS clinicians who resigned.	
Broadsheet (News)	<i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	
26/07/19	Use of puberty blockers on transgender children to be investigated	N
National	News story on The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health, which has asked its committee of experts to look at the	
Broadsheet (News)	ethics around the rapid increase in the use of hormone blockers to treat under-16s who identify as transgender. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	

8. ITV *Butterfly* drama about a transgender child broadcast

a. Background

Butterfly is a three-part television drama series that aired in the UK in October 2018. It tells the story of an 11-year old Maxine and her family as Maxine begins to realise that she is a transgender person. The drama was aired on ITV, written by Tony Marchant who also wrote *Different for Girls* in 1996 (a 1996 film about a trans woman in adulthood) and was produced by Red Production Company. It starred Callum Booth-Ford, Anna Friel and Emmett J. Scanlan.

Marchant, writer and creator of the drama, disclosed in an interview with the Huffington Post that in writing the series he wanted to confront two core ‘myths’ that recur in the discussion about transgender children: “if the drama does anything, it is to dispel two myths – that children are deciding to go through this process because its trendy, because it’s rubbish. So is the idea that it’s a free for all. When children ‘blindly’ decide and the parents accept, that puberty blockers can be given out like sweets and that it’s an easy process...they are not pushovers and are extremely careful in their assessments.”

b. Coverage

We identified 21 news and comment pieces that cover the stories that precede the drama’s release and the response it gained after its third and final episode was aired.

The series gained a generally positive reaction in the media, earning praise for the sensitive handling of the programme’s subject matter: “it is a wonderfully delicate drama that covers new ground carefully and features fully realised characters at war with their instincts, intellects and worse or better natures.”³⁷

Also positive was the reaction that the drama received in the trans community.³⁸ The production team and cast made a concerted effort to visit, talk to, and spend time with families supported by Mermaids (a charity founded in 1995 by a group of parents whose children were non-conforming or gender-diverse). This has been cited by some as the reason for the programme’s believability and delicacy: “the most striking and important thing...was how much care was taken to create a believable, loving family...”.

A minority of voices did not receive the programme’s airing well, citing an annoyance at the perceived ‘one-sidedness’ of the arguments portrayed. Transgender Trend objected to not being consulted in the show’s production (as Mermaids had been) and believed the programme acted as a national platform for their narrative: “*Butterfly* is a vehicle for the inflexible narrative of Mermaids”.

The drama’s release was the catalyst for much coverage in the media (it was the first attempt by mainstream television to address a subject of this type). We found very few Codes or Guidance infringements:

³⁷ <https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2018/oct/14/butterfly-review-an-important-truthful-drama-about-a-transgender-child>

³⁸ <https://www.radiotimes.com/news/tv/2019-01-29/butterfly-itv-review/>

- The expression ‘sex-change’ appears in several pieces. As we have pointed out, parts of the transgender community would prefer the expression ‘gender reassignment’ to be used instead, but there are reasons why sex change is an acceptable substitute. So, we do not identify this usage as indicative of Code or Guidance issues.
- Three articles refer to disputed statistics regarding the rates of trans suicide and self-harm: “a staggering 45 per cent of young transgender people try to take their own lives, and over 80 per cent self-harm”.
- One piece in a national tabloid describes the transition process as a “lazy and damaging solution”, which expresses rare disagreement with the orthodoxy surrounding gender reassignment.

Exhibit i: Summary analysis of articles relating to the broadcast of *Butterfly* on ITV

Date	Comments	EP
26/03/18 National Tabloid (News)	Makers of ITV drama series <i>Butterfly</i> brace themselves for backlash over transgender 11-year old storyline News report on the (then) upcoming drama and the producers’ fear of a public backlash. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	N
05/10/18 National Tabloid (Feature)	The transgender trap: drama about a young boy who wants to live as a girl “A staggering 45 per cent of young transgender people try to take their own lives, and over 80 per cent of them self-harm”. This is a statistic that is a) often referred to and b) been shown to be based on unreliable research. Prominent members of the health community have suggested the figure is dramatically lower than suggested and its repeated use in publications could be seen as irresponsible. <i>Use of discredited suicide statistics: accuracy / statistics issues</i>	S
08/10/18 National Tabloid (Feature)	Real-life true story of family who inspired ITV’s transgender drama <i>Butterfly</i> Feature interview with CEO of Mermaids Jackie Green who acted as consultant on <i>Butterfly</i> . <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	N
12/10/18 National Broadsheet (Feature)	Anna Friel on transgender drama <i>Butterfly</i>: ‘If it was my daughter, I don’t know what I would do’ Supportive interview with Anna Friel – exploring her own response to the script and show’s content as a mother. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	S
13/10/18 Regional (Feature)	‘To tackle an issue like this... it’s a huge thing to take on’ Interview with Anna Friel recalling her experience in Brookside 25 years ago. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	N
14/10/18 National Broadsheet (News)	<i>Butterfly</i>: Teen transgender drama ‘inflates suicide risk’ News article describing the NHS’s only gender clinic’s response to the drama, stating that it “would be very unusual for a child of that age to attempt suicide”. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	N
14/10/18 National Tabloid (News)	Parents’ fury at Anna Friel’s ‘one-sided’ transgender drama <i>Butterfly</i> Article reporting the annoyance of Transgender Trend, a parental group alarmed by frequency of child transitions. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	N
14/10/18 National Tabloid (News)	<i>Butterfly</i> episode 1 review: Anna Friel anchors admirable transgender drama Review of episode 1 of <i>Butterfly</i> . <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	N
14/10/18 National Tabloid (News)	ITV’s <i>Butterfly</i> will do for trans kids today what Anna Friel’s Brookside kiss did for me in the ‘90s Supportive article reporting on the impact of <i>Butterfly</i> and the comparative significance of Brookside. The article exacerbates the acknowledged “hostility and misinformation in the media” by citing that “research found that nearly two thirds of trans students (64%) are bullied for who they are at school, while four in five (84%) have self-harmed.” As above, this is a questionable use of statistics. <i>Use of statistics: accuracy / statistics issues.</i>	S
16/10/18 National Broadsheet (Opinion)	Who would choose to be a man in our straitjacketing, anti-masculine society? Opinion article exploring the role of traditional masculinity in modern society. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	Q
17/10/18 National Broadsheet (Opinion)	The tyranny of the transgender minority has got to be stopped (Allison Pearson) Opinion piece questioning the rise in children presenting as transgender. Extends to review the self-ID proposals and risks attached, citing Karen White as an example, though saying: “Karen White is not typical of trans people, far from it. Most men and women who choose to embark on the long, difficult journey to a different gender are answering a call that lies deep within them, and which demands to be heard”. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	Q

Date	Comments	EP
21/10/18	I know what the parents are going through in ITV's Butterfly	S
Regional (Feature)	Feature interview with mother who has gone through a similar experience as portrayed in Butterfly. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	
22/10/18	Butterfly on ITV: Is it based on a true story?	N
National Tabloid (Feature)	Feature interview with Susie Green (Mermaids). <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	
24/10/18	Transgender girl who came out at nine says no one can stop transgender children transitioning	S
National Tabloid (News)	News article reporting the appearance of a trans girl on the news speaking about her experiences and Butterfly's importance for the rest of the trans community. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	
25/10/18	What child told mum who supported their transgender switch	S
National Tabloid (Feature)	Feature interview with Danielle Munro describing her own familial experiences and the parallels with Butterfly. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	
26/10/18	Gays on TV: Your guide to the week's best LGBT TV and film	N
Magazine (News)	News report on upcoming tv schedule. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	
28/10/18	Butterfly is a crucial watch, but it's not my reality of parenting a trans child	N
National Tabloid (Feature)	Feature on the different experiences shared by families of trans children. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	
28/10/18	Butterfly season 2 spoilers: ITV viewers DEMAND another series after emotional finale	N
National Tabloid (News)	Article reporting social media's reaction to Butterfly final episode. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	
28/10/18	Butterfly on ITV: Stephen Duffy twist EXPLAINED as star reveals the harrowing truth	N
National Tabloid (News)	News article recounting plotlines and including interviews with cast. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	
29/10/18	Butterfly viewers left 'bawling' after series finale as transgender child begins treatment	N
National Tabloid (News)	Article reviewing audience reaction on social media and recounting some of the drama's major plot points. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	
18/11/18	We'll look back on the rush to change our children's sex as one of the darkest chapters in medicine	Q
National Tabloid (Opinion)	Questioning article written from a clinical perspective on the writer's perceived dangers of early transition and issues of gender identity dealt with at too young an age. Author labels transition or to 'change sex' as "a lazy and damaging solution..." – bold opinion but no editorial standards issue. Article cites suicide statistics regarding post-transition adults: one, [study] which followed men who had transitioned to be women for 15 to 20 years after surgery, showed they had a 20-times higher risk of suicide than others matched for age, social class and mental health problems". <i>Use of statistics: accuracy / statistics issues</i>	

9. Transgender prisoner Karen White conviction for sexual offences in a woman's prison

a. Background

Karen White, a transgender woman, was jailed for life for rape in the early 2000s. While on remand for grievous bodily harm, multiple rapes and other sexual offences, White was transferred to HMP New Hall at the prisoner's own request after decision by a "transgender case board."

While at New Hall, White was accused of sexually assaulting other female inmates. After a criminal trial White was convicted in October 2018 on two counts of rape, two sexual assaults and one offence of wounding, and was sentenced to life to be served in a male prison.

White had been granted permission to serve time in a female prison because, after White announced her identification as a transgender woman, the prison service decided, in accordance with new guidelines, that she should be allowed to do so.

The Ministry of Justice had just updated its policy 'on the care and management of transgender prisoners' after the death of two trans prisoners in male prisons. The updated policy introduced in January 2017 emphasised the right of prisoners to 'self-identify' and to be treated 'according to the gender in which they identify'. Previously, prisoners requiring such treatment would have needed a GRC or to have had a medical diagnosis of gender dysphoria.

Citing Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights, the new policy stated: “the primary focus of this policy are offenders who identify as transgender and who have expressed a consistent desire to live permanently in the gender they identify with, which is opposite to the biological sex assigned to them at birth [...] whilst a GRC is proof of legal gender, the absence of it does not automatically prevent that prisoner being located in the part of the estate consistent with the gender they identify with.”

After White’s conviction in 2018, the prison service apologised for having failed inmates in its decision to house White in the female estate.

b. Coverage

We have analysed 24 articles (taken randomly from our corpus and from *The Times* and *The Sunday Times* online) from September 2018 when the trial finished to March 2019 when it emerged that inmate White was seeking funds for gender reassignment surgery.

This case study presents an interesting challenge for our research because of the particular nature of White’s crimes and the possibility that White’s self-identification as, or claim to be, transgender might be disingenuous, designed purely to gain closer access to females.

IPSO’s guidance on reporting transgender-related stories suggests that the subject’s preferred pronouns should be used but the articles in our review use a range of approaches. Some use ‘he’ when referring to actions and statements made by White when he identified as male and then use ‘she’ for any action or statement following the announcement of White’s transition (as we have done in this summary). Others use ‘he’ consistently and refuse to recognise White as female. Most refer to White as ‘she’. We have indicated these approaches in the table below.

Some of the articles that use female pronouns consistently are forced by their approach to use sentences that include ‘her penis’ when reporting on the court proceedings. In terms of editorial standards, this poses a problem for editors; ‘her penis’ challenges the notion that only males can have penises and might be confusing for readers. We have indicated where this phrase is used.

This case raises a valid question regarding the IPSO guidance on pronouns and whether the suggestion that the individual’s preference should dictate the pronouns used should be absolute or whether publications should be free to follow the approach they deem best suited to inform their readers of the facts of the case.

Apart from the range of treatment of pronouns, and despite the fact that this case appeared during a moment when issues around self-ID were being debated at their fullest and most heated – and indeed the debate conducted on the comment pages of some of these publications is vigorous – there are no further editorial standards issues associated with this case study.

c. Editorial position

Of the 24 articles, we categorised three as Questioning and one was mildly Supportive in the context mainly of Neutral news reporting of the crimes, trial, conviction and aftermath.

Exhibit j: Summary analysis of articles relating to Karen White conviction

Details	Comments	EP
06/09/18 National Broadsheet (News)	Transgender person accused of rape is remanded into female prison and sexually assaults inmates within days News report of trial for sexual assaults while serving time in a women’s prison. <i>Female pronouns</i> <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	N
06/09/18 National Tabloid (News)	Transgender rapist carried out four sex attacks on female inmates in jail News report that White has now pleaded guilty to four rapes. <i>Female pronouns</i> <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	N
06/09/18 National Tabloid (News)	Transgender prisoner rapist who identifies as a woman admits sexually assaulting fellow inmates Same news report. <i>Female pronouns</i> <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	N
07/09/18 National Tabloid (News)	Transgender woman admits sexually abusing fellow inmates at all-female prison Same news report. <i>Female pronouns</i> <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	N
07/09/18 National Tabloid (News)	Transgender prisoner ‘sexually assaulted four fellow inmates’ at women’s prison after being charged with rape Report from the trial. Includes a quote from the prosecutor, who told the court (in relation to the victim), "the defendant would stand very close to her, touch her arm and wink at her [...] her penis [sic] was erect and sticking out of the top of her trousers." <i>Female pronouns</i> <i>No editorial standards issues except accuracy in use of ‘her penis’.</i>	N
07/09/18 National Tabloid (News)	Transgender rapist sexually assaulted four inmates after being sent to women's prison' Same news report. <i>Female pronouns and ‘her penis’.</i> <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	N
08/09/18 National Broadsheet (Comment)	Trans rapists are a danger in women’s jails – Janice Turner Extends from the events regarding White to a broader concern about treating trans female prisoners as men, particularly given so few people assigned female at birth commit sex crimes (impact on statistics). Explores the implications should it be the case that transgender female prisoners were to be housed more easily in female estate. <i>Female pronouns</i> <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	Q
10/09/18 National Broadsheet (News)	Rapist, Karen White, in women’s jail ‘was trans faker’ News report about White’s ex-neighbours believing that White is not authentically a transgender person. The whole story is written without ‘misgendering’ White but without using female pronouns except in quotations by neighbours. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	N
14/09/18 National Tabloid (News)	Rapist Karen White's ex-girlfriend says his gender change is a sham News report on White, based around an interview with White’s ex-partner. ‘Karen White, 52, was moved to HMP New Hall, a women’s prison between Wakefield and Huddersfield in West Yorkshire, where, within days of arriving last year, he sexually assaulted four female inmates’. <i>Consciously uses male pronoun having previously used female in earlier coverage.</i> <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	N
11/10/18 National Broadsheet (News)	Transgender prisoner born a male who sexually assaulted female inmates after being jailed for rape is sentenced to life Report into White’s life sentence for rape and assault. <i>Uses female pronouns for events post-transition and identification as trans and ‘he’ for historic offences committed as a man.</i> <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	N
11/10/18 National Tabloid (News)	Transgender prisoner sexually assaulted inmates at all-female prison News reporting on White’s sentencing (to be served in the male estate). <i>Male pronouns.</i> <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	N
11/10/18 Magazine (News)	Transgender sex attacker preyed on women in prison while being held for a rape in Manchester News report on the sentence. <i>Male pronouns.</i> <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	N
12/10/18 National Broadsheet (News)	Trans predator Karen White who targeted women inmates is jailed for life Sentence report <i>Female pronouns</i> <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	N
12/10/18 National Tabloid (News)	Prison Service apologises for sending transgender rapist to women's prison Report into the sentence and the prison service’s apology for having housed White in the female estate. <i>Female pronouns</i> <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	N

Details	Comments	EP
13/10/18 National Tabloid (Comment)	This transgender madness is now a danger to women, says TIM NEWARK Male pronouns Piece on direction of travel, extent of and impact of trans rights. Self-ID: “even after the process of surgical and hormonal reassignment, a human being born male will still be a man”. <i>Male pronouns</i> <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	Q
14/10/18 National Broadsheet (Comment)	Common sense is not so common in Westminster Dominic Lawson General commentary on ‘hijack’ of policy by minority views and includes self-ID – using Karen White as an example – amongst these. Carefully avoids use of pronouns whatsoever. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	Q
14/10/18 Regional (Comment)	Vicky Allan: Woman, transphobe, misogynist do we really have to pick our tribe? “The increasing ferocity of the feminist fight against trans people doesn't seem, to me, to reflect the degree of risk.” <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	S
17/11/18 National Tabloid (News)	Rapist transgender woman sent to male prison for UK's most dangerous men News of White's imprisonment at the high-security HMP Wakefield. <i>Female pronouns</i> <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	N
18/11/18 National Tabloid (News)	Transgender woman rapist who molested female prison guards sent to notorious prison for MEN Report on White's imprisonment at HMP Wakefield. <i>Female pronouns</i> <i>No editorial standards issues</i>	N
29/11/18 National Broadsheet (News)	Record numbers of transgender prisoners transition from men to women News story on the record number of prisoners currently housed in HMP who are transitioning from male to female. <i>Female pronouns</i> <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	N
06/01/19 National Tabloid (News)	Transgender prisoner begs friends for £25k for sex op so she can return to women's jail News story about White that he is asking friends to help raise the money needed for a private gender reassignment surgery so he can be transferred to a women's prison. <i>Female pronouns</i> <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	N
10/02/19 National Broadsheet (News)	Prisons to get transgender wings News report on decision to explore use of transgender wings. The Justice Minister “revising” guidelines that said the “great majority” of trans prisoners should be allowed to “experience the system in the gender in which they identify”. <i>Female pronouns</i> <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	N
03/03/19 National Tabloid (News)	First jail 'within a jail' for transgender inmates to open this week despite female prisoner fears News that prisons may have ‘transgender wings’ and to ensure that a Karen White event doesn't happen again. <i>Both female and male pronouns used</i> <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	N
17/03/19 National Broadsheet (News)	'High-risk' transgender inmates at Downview mix with women News report that in the first HMP transgender wing, trans prisoners are mixing with female prisoners for certain activities, despite undertakings they'd be kept separate. <i>Female pronouns</i> <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	N

10. Rachel McKinnon victory as first transgender world title

a. Background

In October 2018, Rachel McKinnon won the UCI (Union Cycliste International) Masters Track Cycling World Championships in the US and became the first transgender athlete to win a world title of any kind. Her victory triggered a ferocious debate on social media and in the press about the fairness of transgender women competing in female-only sports.

Her social media post on the victory, which showed a picture of her and the silver and bronze winners on the podium, elicited a barrage of negative comments from people questioning the fairness of the competition,

given that in the picture Rachel was physically so much larger than her competitors, due to her having developed as a male sexually.

The bronze medal winner, Jen Wagner-Assali, weighed into the debate by suggesting that the competition was unfair. McKinnon replied by suggesting that there is no physical evidence that she has an advantage over competing female cyclists and that she was competing within the rules laid down.

In December 2018, Martina Navratilova entered the debate when she tweeted that “you can't just proclaim yourself a female and be able to compete against women. There must be some standards, and having a penis and competing as a woman would not fit that standard”, after which Rachel McKinnon accused her of being transphobic and demanded an apology.

Though Navratilova deleted the tweet, two months later she re-entered the debate with an article in the Sunday Times which reiterated her view that athletes who became adult as males would have an unfair advantage, due to the development of muscle and bone mass and other sources of physical advantage.

The International Olympic Committee's rules on transgender participation in its competitions were updated in 2016 when they allowed transgender people to compete in the competition of their new gender without having to have undergone any medical transition. For transgender men there would be no further requirements for competition. For transgender women, they would be allowed to compete as long as they took drugs that kept testosterone below a pre-agreed level for at least one year prior to competition. This threshold level was scheduled for review prior to the (now postponed) Tokyo games in 2020.

In her article, Navratilova pointed out that the revised rules meant that a person assigned male at birth could self-identify as a transgender woman, take testosterone suppressants for the year prior to competition, compete and win against athletes assigned female and then resume life identifying as male afterwards. The debate then became about whether the exploitation potential of such a potential regulatory loophole was sufficient cause to exclude transgender athletes from competition altogether.

In March 2018, ex-Olympic swimming medallist Sharron Davies joined the debate when she argued that transgender women should not be allowed to compete in women's sporting competition and that competition eligibility should be based on sex not gender (which she said was too fluid). She put together a petition, supported by several leading female athletes, to press the IOC to change its rules to ban transgender participation, on the basis that testosterone limits do not account for other natural advantages that athletes who go through a male puberty have.

At the heart of the whole debate is the question of what constitutes a woman for the purposes of determining access to female-only activities or spaces. Should 'woman' be determined by biology or gender identity or a mixture of both?

The debate was further complicated by the ruling in May 2019 of the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) in the case of Caster Semenya, a South African athlete with a rare condition that meant she has extremely high testosterone levels, that they would not allow her to compete unless she agreed to lower her naturally occurring testosterone levels.

b. Coverage

We selected 21 articles from our corpus and from *The Times* and *The Sunday Times* online archive that chart the development of the debate from Rachel McKinnon's win to the Caster Semenya participation ruling.

While the debate is heated and goes to the heart of one of the main dimensions in the transgender rights discussion – whether a trans woman should have the same rights as someone assigned female at birth – the language used in these articles (a mixture of both news and comment pieces) remains respectful. Rachel McKinnon is referred to using female pronouns in all the articles. Most writers, where relevant, use 'born

male’ as opposed to ‘assigned male at birth’. Since the latter is not in common usage, we do not count this as a Codes or Guidance issue.

There are a few editorial standards issues, mostly minor:

- one minor accuracy issue in a Rod Liddle piece in *a national broadsheet* (11/11/18) that conflates gender and sex
- another accuracy issue where an article (13/12/18) headline in the *national tabloid* suggests that Graham Linehan had compared ‘trans activists’ to Nazis when this was not his meaning
- an accuracy issue in an article (26/01/19) in *a magazine* which misrepresents the fact that some official documents and spaces are already accessible by trans people using self-ID (passports, public toilets, NHS)
- a minor accuracy issue in a *daily tabloid* article (18/02/19) which refers to McKinnon as “a man until the age of 29”, but some might argue misrepresents the fact that McKinnon was always a trans woman
- an instance in a daily tabloid piece (19/02/19) which refers to the fact that McKinnon “still has her male anatomy”, which might be seen as irrelevant and prurient and constituting a privacy issue (we are unaware of whether this detail has been made public by McKinnon).
- a characterisation of the impact of self-ID proposals in *a national broadsheet* (06/03/19) which says single sex spaces (such as prisons and sports) would “become single-gender ones”, which does not take account of the fact that prisons can already house trans people by gender based on self-ID, and sports already accept participation in the same way

The heating up of the argument, though not editorial standards issues, is indicated by:

- National tabloid article in which McKinnon is quoted as calling Fair Play for Women ‘transphobic’
- a quote regarding Martina Navratilova which uses the pejorative ‘transphobic’ in *a national broadsheet* piece

c. *Editorial position*

Of the 21 articles we reviewed, seven had a broadly Questioning approach and one is Supportive. The remainder are Neutral.

Exhibit k: Summary analysis of articles relating to Rachel McKinnon world title victory

Date	Comments	EP
15/10/18 National Tabloid (News)	Podium picture of transgender woman winning female road race leads to torrent of abuse Report anchored on RM’s win, relates it to Caster Semenya’s ongoing battle to compete. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	N
16/10/18 National Tabloid (News)	First transgender cycling world champion hits back as Katie Hopkins and Ricky Gervais join debate over whether she has unfair advantage <i>RM tweet quoted: “still waiting for the transphobic bigots to point to a rule I broke”</i> Balanced piece reflecting both sides of argument. <i>No editorial standards issues</i>	N
20/10/18 National Tabloid (News)	Trans cyclist defends her championship win after 3rd place competitor complained ‘it’s NOT fair’ Supportive piece, uses transgender framework language (assigned at birth, cis female). RM’s response to her opponents is quoted extensively, e.g.: “No one is ‘born a man’. We are all born babies. The language of ‘born a man’ helps contribute to harmful myths and false stereotypes.” <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	S
20/10/18 National Tabloid (News)	American cyclist lashes out after losing world championship to trans woman who won’t accept apology Coverage of the social media debate. <i>No editorial standards issues</i>	N
11/11/18 National Broadsheet (Comment)	I’m identifying as a young, black, trans chihuahua, and the truth can go whistle Rod Liddle piece: likens being transgender to being trans-species or trans-age or trans-race “demonstrating the absurdity of where we are now”. <i>Elides sex and gender “linear time is more of a social construct than gender, which can be defined very easily by the immutability of chromosomes.” – minor accuracy point it is sex that is arguably defined by chromosomes?</i> Arguing that sex can be defined and / or is limited by chromosomes: accuracy / statistics issues	Q

Date	Comments	EP
13/12/18	Father Ted creator Graham Linehan compares trans activists to Nazis National Article reveals he was talking about 'calling out' something he considers to be wrong, not making direct comparison between trans activists and Nazis. Headline misleading. Tabloid (News) <i>Misrepresentation of the subjects in the article: accuracy / statistics issues</i>	N
21/12/18	Martina Navratilova in 'transphobic' row over comments about women's sport National Report on MN's tweet: "you can't just proclaim yourself a female and be able to compete against women. There must be some standards, and having a penis and competing as a woman would not fit that standard". Broadsheet (News) <i>No editorial standards issues</i>	Q
23/12/18	Navratilova sparks transgender fury: Having a penis and competing as a woman is not on' National Report on same story. Tabloid (News) <i>No editorial standards issues</i>	N
26/01/19	When trans sportsmen and women compete, can it ever be a level playing field? Magazine Roger Alton (Comment) <i>'The amendments will allow anyone to self-identify rather than living in their preferred gender for two years and getting a diagnosis of gender dysphoria.'</i> Potential accuracy issue: <i>misrepresents fact that in some areas self-ID is used already (passports, NHS etc)</i> <i>'Of course, men can live like women till the cows come home if they choose. but should they be allowed to compete as women, while biologically men? The answer seems to me obvious....'</i> <i>Misrepresentation of the use of self-ID in modern society: accuracy / statistics issues</i>	Q
18/02/19	Lesbian tennis hero Martina Navratilova blasts trans athletes as 'cheats' National Report pegged to her article on trans women participating in female sport. Tabloid <i>"McKinnon, 35 - a man until the age of 29" - trans groups would argue she was always a trans woman: minor accuracy issue?</i> (News) <i>Misrepresentation of trans groups: accuracy / statistics issue</i>	N
19/02/19	BBC 'cut Nicola Williams from debate with Rachel McKinnon over trans row' National Report into BBC decision to drop Nicola Williams from feminist group Fair Play for Women from debate with RM. Broadsheet (News) <i>No editorial standards issues</i>	N
19/02/19	BBC in 'no platform' row after 'axing a guest from discussion on transgender athletes' National <i>"Asking me to debate transphobic organizations like Fair Play for Women is like asking an astronaut to 'debate' flat-earthers"</i> Tabloid <i>- pejorative use of 'transphobic'?</i> (News) <i>"McKinnon, 35, still has her male anatomy, but has lived as a woman since she was 29."</i> Privacy issue or relevant given the debate? <i>Disclosure of McKinnon's anatomical status: privacy issue</i>	N
20/02/19	LGBT group cuts ties with Martina Navratilova in row over transgender women in sport National <i>'LGBT group Athlete Ally said Navratilova's comments were "transphobic"</i> Broadsheet (News) <i>No editorial standards issues</i>	N
20/02/19	Are transgender athletes 'cheating' in women's competitions? Magazine Balanced piece presents all sides of argument. (News) <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	N
23/02/19	Male bodies don't belong in women's sport National Janice Turner Broadsheet That there are real differences between women and men, physically, which should be obvious. That 'biology deniers' are getting the upper hand in the debate. (Comment) <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	Q
03/03/19	Ex-Olympic swimmer Sharron Davies says transgender athletes should be banned from women's sport National Overview, after SD intervention in debate. Tabloid (News) <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	N
04/03/19	Piers Morgan: It's unfair for transgender women to compete in women's sport and outrageous to bully Martina National That Serena Williams would rank 700-1,000 in men's tennis. Presents the 'loophole argument': that the rule allowing transgender participation in female competition could be abused by cynical cheat nation or individual. Tabloid (Comment) <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	Q
06/03/19	Sport can help to clarify the trans debate National Hadley Freeman Broadsheet "The current ideology is that gender identity is at least as important, if not more so, than biological sex." (Comment) <i>With self-ID proposals, "single-sex spaces (such as sport and prisons), which exist because of the significant physical differences between male and female bodies, would become single-gender ones."</i> Accuracy, given Equality Act protections would still persist? <i>Misrepresentation of Equality Act Protections: accuracy / statistics issue</i>	Q

Date	Comments	EP
08/03/19	Sharron Davies slams trans cyclist as web war takes an ugly turn	N
National	Report on SD intervention including SD proposal to make sport a matter of sex not gender.	
Tabloid (News)	<i>No editorial standards issues</i>	
27/03/19	Sharron Davies profile: Vladimir Putin could send his tenth best man to win a sack of medals as a woman	N
National	Report around SD's petition calling on IOC not to allow trans women to compete in female sports. That the rules could be a loophole which could be exploited by more cynical countries (look at what Russia did at Sochi).	
Broadsheet (Profile)	<i>No editorial standards issues</i>	
04/05/19	Semenya is casualty of a vicious gender war	Q
National	Janice Turner	
Broadsheet (Comment)	Piece pegged to ruling on Caster Semenya. <i>No editorial standards issues</i>	

11. Mermaids Lottery funding award confirmed after review

a. Background

Mermaids was founded in 1995 by a group of parents whose children were gender non-conforming, or gender-diverse (an umbrella term more frequently used to describe an ever-evolving array of labels people may apply when their gender identity, expression, or even perception does not conform to the norms and stereotypes others expect).

Mermaids offers advice and support to young people up to the age of 19 as well as their families and professionals involved in their care. It works with approximately 5,000 people including 1,400 parents and 500 youths. The charity, based in Leeds, employs eight full-time staff and has an annual turnover of £310,000. It has a grant from the Department of Education to provide training in schools to combat homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying, and raise awareness of the rights of transgender young people.

Mermaids does not offer medical advice and has no medical or therapeutic expertise within the organisation. Instead it offers information and support through interactions with medical service providers and is also a campaigning organisation. It campaigns for the ages at which medical treatments are currently offered (12 for puberty-blockers and 16 for irreversible cross-sex hormones) to be lowered. The charity argues that medical (and not just psychotherapeutic) intervention is 'absolutely vital' in the treatment of transgender children. It also campaigns for the adoption of the 'affirmative' approach towards transgender children (currently more prevalent in the US) according to which a child's presentation as transgender should be embraced rather than challenged or investigated to explore whether there are any circumstances that might be causing the child to present in this way.

Currently, the NHS GIDS broadly applies a 'watch and wait' approach, which is also supported by the Royal College of Psychiatrists and is consistent with WPATH (the World Professional Association for Transgender Health, *Standards of Care* 2012) data showing that between 73% and 94% of children who present as transgender are likely to no longer identify as transgender once they reach adulthood.³⁹

An important observation in the context of providing treatment for transgender children is the rapidly growing number of referrals of children to the NHS's GIDS clinics. The number of children has grown from 97 in 2009 to over 2,500 in 2018. The majority of this rise is accounted for by girls.

One question for the therapeutic community is whether this rise constitutes a revelation of a naturally occurring number of children with gender dysmorphia or whether identifying as transgender has in some

³⁹ https://www.wpath.org/media/cms/Documents/SOC%20v7/Standards%20of%20Care_V7%20Full%20Book_English.pdf, p.11.

way been adopted by children who have other conditions or are in circumstances whereby they see identification as transgender as in some way a solution to those other conditions or circumstances.

The current CEO of Mermaids is Susie Green, who has a transgender daughter and was a user of the charity's support during her daughter's childhood and transition. In order to obtain puberty blocking drugs for her daughter, Ms Green took her abroad at the age of 12 where she obtained a prescription which included some cross-sex hormones which were not allowed in the UK. She took her daughter to Thailand for genital surgery at the age of 16, when such surgery was then (as now) not allowed in the UK until 18. Thailand has since banned such gender reassignment surgery for patients below the age of 18.

In the UK the only gender identity development service is the GIDS clinic run by the Tavistock and Portman health trust. This is where children and their parents must go to receive any medical treatment for gender dysphoria. Until recently, Mermaids' website contained information on, and a link to the practice of, a GP, Dr Webberley, who was found guilty of running an illegal gender clinic from which she would prescribe puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones.

We mention these facts as context to the controversy surrounding Mermaid's receipt of Lottery funding. This happened in December 2018, when the Big Lottery Fund (BLF) awarded Mermaids £500,000 to set up a regional structure for the charity. In response to this announcement, the BLF received a number of complaints and it decided to review the decision.

After two months, the BLF confirmed its decision to award the funding to Mermaids. In its report the National Lottery Community Fund suggested that the charity should make a clearer distinction between facts and opinion and that the charity should remove from its website a link to a Dr Webberley's GP practice given the practice was under investigation for prescribing puberty blockers to under-age children.

b. Coverage

We identified 20 news and comment pieces that cover the events around the BLF award in December 2018 to its aftermath and ending with Prince Harry's endorsement of Mermaids in April 2019.

While this set of events provoked heated debate in the coverage, we found very few Codes or guidance infringements:

- Much of the coverage of Mermaids uses the term 'sex change' given that amongst the treatment pathways for transgender children is gender reassignment (the preferred term). Given that 'gender reassignment' is not universally understood, it is common for journalists and editors to default to 'sex change' without this necessarily indicating prejudice.
- For this reason, throughout our analysis we do not consider the use of sex change to be pejorative or inaccurate, unless the use is quite obviously provocative or pejorative.
- In a national broadsheet article (16/12/18) some of the history of Susie Green is provided which refers to her 'son' and as 'he', which could be viewed as 'misgendering' this individual.
- A national broadsheet comment piece (18/12/18) by Aaron Hughes (a self-proclaimed 'trans activist') makes reference to suicide statistics ('nearly half of trans pupils in the UK have attempted to take their own lives'), which presents a potential Accuracy issue.
- A piece in a magazine (24/12/18) makes pejorative use of 'transphobic' in reference to the Sunday Times and accuses the writer of wishing to 'persecute trans youth personally', which, while not an editorial standards issue, is an exemplum of the heated and sometimes aggressive nature of this debate.

c. Editorial position

Six of the 20 articles we reviewed take a Questioning editorial position, four are Supportive and the rest are Neutral.

Exhibit I: Summary analysis of articles relating to Mermaids Lottery funding award

Date	Comments	EP
16/12/18 National Broadsheet (News)	Child sex-change charity Mermaids handed £500,000 by national lottery ‘A transgender charity that campaigns for children to be given prohibited sex-change treatment has been awarded £500,000 by the national lottery’. Whilst being perhaps provocative, this is a factual statement (given that Mermaids does indeed campaign to lower the permitted age for medical treatment for gender dysphoria). ‘The chief executive of Mermaids, Susie Green, who took her son for a now illegal sex-change operation in Thailand when he was 16, believes medical intervention is “absolutely vital” for children unhappy with their biological sex. Her view is disputed by NHS gender specialists who say intervention is not always right.’ Green has said the refusal by the NHS to give children the hormones can make them “self-harming and suicidal” and claimed attendees at the main clinic that treats gender-dysphoric youngsters, the Tavistock Centre, in north London, have a “48% suicide attempt risk”. The clinic says the true rate is less than 1%. This presents the debate rather than publishing one (discredited) statistic as relevant. Inaccurate use of ‘son’ and ‘he’ given the child already identified as a transgender girl: accuracy / statistics issues Use of statistics: accuracy / statistics issue	Q
17/12/18 Magazine (News)	Big Lottery Fund reviewing decision to give transgender charity £500,000 following ‘concerns’ News report into review of award. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	N
18/12/18 National Broadsheet (Comment)	Campaigning to halt Big Lottery funding for trans support charity Mermaids isn't noble – it'll directly harm children Aaron Hughes, ‘trans activist’ “The backlash against the Big Lottery Fund's decision is a testament to the power of anti-trans rhetoric.” “Nearly half of trans pupils in the UK have attempted to take their own lives. More than four in five have deliberately harmed themselves. These children need our care, not our derision. Their survival is dependent on the work of groups like Mermaids.” Use of suicide statistics: accuracy / statistics issue	S
19/12/18 National Tabloid (News)	‘As a teen I had my breasts removed because I wanted to be a boy – but it was a mistake so I'm transitioning back’ Feature piece about children who no longer identify as transgender plus voices from GIDS. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	Q
23/12/18 National Tabloid (News)	National Lottery is accused of breaking its rules on political donations Report into both Mermaids and Stonewall funding awards. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	N
22/12/18 National Broadsheet (Comment)	Trans ideologists are spreading cod science Janice Turner Piece questioning Mermaids’ approach to gender dysmorphia as ‘underpinned by rigid, spurious ideology’. Reference to a Mermaids training session tape that – amongst other claims – creates a parallel between human sexual <i>dimorphism</i> and that of a clownfish, which is a <i>protandrous hermaphrodite</i> . <i>No accuracy issue.</i> <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	Q
23/12/18 National Broadsheet (News)	Lottery thousands pay for former trans stripper to sway public opinion Review of Lottery award to Stonewall for ‘communications’ and to Mermaids, the process of award and whether it is fit for purpose. <i>No editorial standards issues</i>	Q
23/12/18 National Tabloid (News)	Robert Webb criticises transgender rights charity Mermaids Expresses support for Janice Turner article which questions Mermaids approach. Report examines his views and those who opposed him. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	Q
24/12/18 Magazine (News)	Stonewall hits back at ‘vicious’ and ‘inaccurate’ Sunday Times article News item regarding Stonewall response to Times article criticising the Lottery award to Stonewall. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	S
24/12/18 Magazine (News)	Activists hit back at the Sunday Times for transphobic fear-mongering ‘This is not fair or balanced journalism, it's a transphobic agenda’. <i>Pejorative use of transphobic.</i> ‘Unable to persecute trans youth personally, they have turned their attention to Mermaids, a charity which provides support to trans youths and their families.’ <i>Pejorative to accuse opponents of wanting to persecute trans youth personally.</i> <i>No editorial standards issues</i>	S
21/01/19 National Tabloid (News)	British gamer H. Bomberguy raises £225,000 for charity as endurance Donkey Kong stream goes global News report into money raised to support Mermaids. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	N
22/01/19 Regional (News)	Scottish Parliament to congratulate Youtuber who raised £250,000 for trans charity News report on Green MSP Patrick Harvie who has submitted a motion to Holyrood to congratulate Brewis on his achievement. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	N
19/02/19 Magazine (News)	National Lottery Fund to award transgender charity Mermaids UK with funding after ‘reviewing’ a number of ‘concerns’ News report on BLF’s confirmation of award to Mermaids. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	N

Date	Comments	EP
22/02/19 National Broadsheet (News)	Mermaids: Charity for trans children given lottery grant despite opposition News report on BLF's confirmation of its award to Mermaids in which it re-states the Times' original concerns about the charity. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	N
20/02/19 National Tabloid (News)	Charity helping transgender kids and their families will get £500,000 lottery grant after review of funding News report on BLF funding after review. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	N
05/03/19 National Broadsheet (Comment)	Opinion: Banning students from LGBT+ learning is a travesty – the shame of being a gay Muslim still hangs over me 1 st person piece on growing up as a gay Muslim and the importance of LGBT education in schools. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	S
19/03/19 National Tabloid (News)	Cops to quiz woman for 'misgendering' a transgender child and accusing her mum of 'child abuse' on Twitter after TV debate News report into debate between Mrs Farrow and Susie Green (CEO, Mermaids) after the former accused Ms Green of 'mutilating' and 'castrating' her child and, effectively, conducting 'child abuse' on her child, while also referring to Ms Green's daughter as 'he'. This had prompted Ms Green to contact Surrey police. The police decided to investigate the complaint under potential breach of the <i>Malicious Communications Act</i> . Susie Green subsequently withdrew the complaint. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	N
23/03/19 National Tabloid (News)	Mum of transgender daughter WITHDRAWS police complaint over 'misgendering' and 'abuse' claims News report of same. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	N
08/04/19	Families 'exploited by gender lobby groups pushing for treatment' News report claiming that frontline clinicians who assessed thousands of young people coming to the Gender Identity Development Service (GIDS) for help, said they felt families were "systematically" demanding to be referred for life-changing hormone treatment on the advice of campaigners including Mermaids. "Mermaids are always saying this is a matter of life and death. 'Would you rather an alive boy or a dead girl?' That Mermaids narrative is everywhere [within the service]," one former clinician claimed. "Mermaids sell themselves as a support group," said another. "They are not. They are lobbyists. During sessions they would sit in the waiting room outside." "The GIDS said: "The trust engages with a number of support groups, with a wide range of different positions. These groups include Mermaids and Gendered Intelligence but also those with quite opposite views. The trust always seeks to be independent and focus on the needs of individual children." <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	Q
24/04/19	Prince Harry shows his support for transgender charity Mermaids News report into Prince Harry's support for Mermaids. <i>No editorial standards issues.</i>	N

Appendix B: IPSO Code and Guidance

1. The Editors' Code

The editorial standards for newspapers and magazines regulated by IPSO are set out in the Editors' Code of Practice. There are a number of Clauses of the Code relevant to the reporting of matters related to transgender individuals. These are set out below:

Clause 1 – Accuracy

- i) The Press must take care not to publish inaccurate, misleading or distorted information or images, including headlines not supported by the text.
- ii) A significant inaccuracy, misleading statement or distortion must be corrected, promptly and with due prominence, and — where appropriate — an apology published. In cases involving IPSO, due prominence should be as required by the regulator.
- iii) A fair opportunity to reply to significant inaccuracies should be given, when reasonably called for.
- iv) The Press, while free to editorialise and campaign, must distinguish clearly between comment, conjecture and fact.
- v) A publication must report fairly and accurately the outcome of an action for defamation to which it has been a party, unless an agreed settlement states otherwise, or an agreed statement is published.

Clause 2 – Privacy

- vi) Everyone is entitled to respect for his or her private and family life, home, health and correspondence, including digital communications.
- vii) Editors will be expected to justify intrusions into any individual's private life without consent. In considering an individual's reasonable expectation of privacy, account will be taken of the complainant's own public disclosures of information and the extent to which the material complained about is already in the public domain or will become so.
- viii) It is unacceptable to photograph individuals, without their consent, in public or private places where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy.

Clause 6 – Children

- i) All pupils should be free to complete their time at school without unnecessary intrusion.
- ii) They must not be approached or photographed at school without permission of the school authorities.
- ix) Children under 16 must not be interviewed or photographed on issues involving their own or another child's welfare unless a custodial parent or similarly responsible adult consents.
- x) Children under 16 must not be paid for material involving their welfare, nor parents or guardians for material about their children or wards, unless it is clearly in the child's interest.
- xi) Editors must not use the fame, notoriety or position of a parent or guardian as sole justification for publishing details of a child's private life.

Clause 12 – Discrimination

- i) The press must avoid prejudicial or pejorative reference to an individual's, race, colour, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation or to any physical or mental illness or disability.
- ii) Details of an individual's race, colour, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, physical or mental illness or disability must be avoided unless genuinely relevant to the story.

2. Guidance on reporting of transgender matters

In 2016, IPSO published guidance for journalists and editors on the reporting of transgender matters. The guidance is non-binding and is designed to help journalists and editors to think through issues related to the Code. The guidance covers the following points:

Issue	Clauses of the Code	Relevant points
Relevance	12 and 2	Would the story be newsworthy if it did not concern an individual of transgender status? Is the individual's status relevant?
Language	12 and 1	Is the terminology being used pejorative or prejudicial? If known, have you used the pronouns the individual uses to describe themselves in your story?
Publicity	12 and 1	Has the individual made their transgender status known? If not, is the revelation of their status necessary to the story? Do you know if the individual has applied for a Gender Recognition Certificate?
Terminology	1 and 12	What terminology are you using to describe gender transition? Have you taken care not to publish inaccurate or misleading information?
Unnecessary information	2	Does the article include unnecessary information, such as irrelevant references to previous identities, publication of pictures of individuals pre-transition, or references to medical details? Are you considering publishing information which could be considered a breach of privacy?
Statistics	1	It is difficult to estimate the number of individuals in the UK with gender dysphoria or who have undergone gender transition – editors should present such claims with care.

Appendix C: The Project Team

1. Mediatique

Mediatique is a specialist research and advisory boutique with an expertise in media and communications industries, both in its home market of the UK, the wider European market and internationally. It provides strategic and commercial analysis across three core competencies:

- **Strategy consulting**
- **Market sizing and scoping**
- **Commercial due diligence**

This analysis typically feeds into a range of commercial decisions, strategy development, transaction support and policy reviews. Mediatique has worked extensively on issues around the sustainability of the press industry, the value chain of news, and business models for news and current affairs online.

2. Conrad Roeber

Conrad Roeber has 25 years of experience as a strategy and research consultant within the media and communications sectors, both in the UK and globally. He has recently managed a major project for a global technology company which explored issues around gender diversity within its different office functions.

3. Quantspark

Quantspark, conductor of the report's quantitative coverage and sentiment analysis, is a data science consultancy that uses its expertise in open-source intelligence (OSINT) to scrape, process and analyse open-source text data to support analysis for private equity portfolio companies, counter-terrorism, and counter-disinformation purposes.

Appendix D: Glossary

We provide here definitions of key terms that have been used throughout the report.

The language used to discuss transgender matters is sensitive, contested and constantly evolving. While it is unlikely, in these circumstances, that any set of terminology will meet with universal approval, we have tried to use neutral and generally accepted terminology. The purpose of this glossary is to provide a common language for the accompanying research report. Some terms referenced in this glossary may be less preferred, or even considered offensive by some. We have sought to limit use of such terms to the extent necessary to communicate the research findings.

The Glossary is not proposed as being definitive or exhaustive. Readers are referred to a range of sources for further discussion of the terms and definitions associated with transgender issues, which are subject to debate and to changes over time. Three glossaries published by groups working on transgender issues, which have been key references for this report, are:

- Stonewall⁴⁰
- GLAAD⁴¹
- GIRES⁴²

In addition, we have reviewed the glossary published by Transgender Trend, which offers a set of alternative and questioning definitions as a counter to those provided by the groups named above.⁴³

Where relevant, we have sourced information on diagnosis and treatment from the National Health Service ('NHS').⁴⁴

Where the definition is informed by direct quotations, we provide the source.

Some terms defined here are adjectives and should not be used as nouns (for example, 'transgender' or 'transsexual'); these are marked (as 'adj') in the list of terms below.

Assigned gender at birth/assigned sex at birth

Phrases used to describe the sex and / or gender of a person at birth. This can be used in place of 'born male' or 'born female'.

Biological sex

"Either of the two main categories (male and female) into which humans and most other living things are divided on the basis of their reproductive functions." (*Oxford English Dictionary*)

"[R]eferring to the biological aspects of an individual, as determined by their anatomy, which is produced by their chromosomes, hormones and their interactions, generally male or female, something that is assigned at birth." (*UK Office for National Statistics, ONS*)

Cis-gender (adj.)

Refers to a person whose gender identity and sex are the same; to describe people who are not transgender.

⁴⁰ <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/help-advice/glossary-terms>.

⁴¹ <https://www.glaad.org/reference/transgender>.

⁴² <https://www.gires.org.uk/resources/terminology/>.

⁴³ <https://www.transgendertrend.com/transgender-terminology/>.

⁴⁴ E.g., <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/gender-dysphoria/>; <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/gender-dysphoria/treatment/>; and <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/trans-teenager/>.

Cross-sex or transgender hormone therapy

A form of hormone therapy in which sex hormones and other hormonal medications are administered to align their secondary sexual characteristics with their gender identity.

Dead-naming

The act of referring to the name that a trans person was given at birth but is no longer actively using. The former name is typically associated with birth-assigned gender.

Desist

Term used to describe a decision no longer to identify as transgender. An area of significant controversy and debate around incidence and extent.

Detransition

When a person who has undergone a transition or has taken steps toward transitioning returns to the gender or sex assigned at birth.

Gender

"In modern (especially feminist) use, a euphemism for the sex of a human being, often intended to emphasise the social and cultural, as opposed to the biological, distinctions between the sexes." (*Oxford English Dictionary*).

"[A] social construction relating to behaviours and attributes based on labels of masculinity and femininity." (*Office for National Statistics*)

Genderqueer (adj.)

An identity label describing genders outside of the male / female or man / woman binaries. It is used by some as an umbrella term for non-binary-identified people.

Gender dysphoria

A condition where people experience discomfort or distress because there is a mismatch between their biological sex and gender identity. This used to be called 'gender identity disorder' before gender dysphoria was de-pathologised in recent years.

Gender expression

The way in which an individual outwardly expresses their gender: through dress, voice, behaviour, makeup, hair style, body hair, facial hair, body shape, muscles, breasts, etc.

Gender identity

A person's innate sense of their own gender, whether male, female or something else. Gender Identity describes the psychological identification of oneself, typically, that is, in the majority of the population, as a boy/man or as a girl/woman, known as the 'binary' model.

Gender reassignment

The process or outcome of changing gender. This can involve changing name and / or preferred pronouns, dressing differently, changing superficial characteristics or undergoing surgical procedures.

Gender reassignment surgery (GRS)

A surgical procedure (or procedures) by which an individual's physical appearance and existing sexual characteristics are altered to resemble those associated with the identified gender.

Gender Recognition Act

Act passed by the UK government in 2004 that determines how a UK citizen can change gender in the eyes of the law. It determined that a complete, legal change of gender could be achieved if you meet the following conditions:

- You are 18 years or over
- You have been diagnosed with gender dysphoria (discomfort with your birth gender)
- You have lived in your acquired gender for at least two years
- You intend to live in your acquired gender for the rest of your life

The process is adjudicated by a Gender Recognition Panel, which decides whether these conditions have been met.

Gender Recognition Certificate

The certificate awarded by the government to those who have gone through the process of changing gender as dictated by the 2004 Gender Recognition Act and can obtain a new birth certificate with their new gender / sex marker. This in turn facilitates the issuance of a passport with the new gender / sex marker.

Misgendering

Referring to someone using pronouns in a form that does not correctly reflect the gender with which they identify. Using pronouns for a transgender person that refer to their gender as assigned at birth as opposed to the gender identity which they express.

Non-binary (adj.)

The term refers to a spectrum of gender expressions that are not exclusively masculine or feminine — those that are outside the gender binary.

Non-binary people may identify as: having two or more genders (being bigender or trigender); having no gender (agender, nongendered, genderless, genderfree or neutrois); moving between genders or having a fluctuating gender identity (genderfluid); being third gender or other-gendered (a category that includes those who do not place a name to their gender).

Puberty blockers

Medication used to prevent the development of biological secondary sex characteristics. Specifically, gonadotropin-releasing hormone (GnRH) agonists which inhibit the action of hormones and are used for a variety of medical purposes.

Self-identification / Self-ID

Terms used to describe a proposed new process by which people can legally change their gender, in place of the current process (see entry under Gender Recognition Act). This new process would be one in which the individual could declare an intention to transition and this would be sufficient to achieve legal transition. There would be no need for a diagnosis, nor would the process be intermediated by an expert panel. Instead, applicants would need to declare their intention to live in their acquired gender for the rest of their lives.

Trans (adj.)

The term is used both as a short version (or synonym) of transgender and as an umbrella term to describe people whose gender is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with, the sex they were assigned at birth.

Transgender (adj.)

The most widely used definitions identify as transgender a person whose gender identity does not match the gender typically associated with the biological sex. The term transgender has more recently been expanded to include anyone who considers themselves to be 'gender non-conforming', which includes those who identify themselves as having no gender identity, fluid gender identity, or a non-binary gender identity (see transgender umbrella).

Transsexual (adj.)

A word previously used to describe transgender individuals. Now used mostly in legal and medical documents. The abbreviation 'tranny' is considered pejorative.

Transgender or trans man, transgender or trans woman

The expression trans is often used synonymously with transgender.

Trans men or transgender men are those assigned female at birth but who identify as men; and trans women or transgender women are those assigned male at birth but who identify as women. The terms may also be used to imply a direction of travel, towards a more masculine or feminine gender expression, rather than a complete transformation of a person's gender status. People in this situation may also describe themselves as 'trans masculine' or 'trans feminine'.

Transgender umbrella

Refers to "all those whose gender expression falls outside the typical gender norms." (GIRES). Non-binary and non-gender identities also fall under this umbrella term.

Transition

The process to live in the gender one identifies with, sometimes involving medical intervention.

Variations in sex characteristics

An umbrella term used by, *inter alia*, the Government Equalities Office in a consultation in 2019 for people whose reproductive or sexual anatomy does not appear to fit definitions for female or male. This is sometimes referred to as 'intersex.'