

The Rt Hon Peter Kyle MP
Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology
Department for Science, Innovation and Technology
100 Parliament Street
London
SW1A 2BQ

Cc: Sir Chris Bryant MP, Minister of State for Data Protection and Telecoms; Hannah Rutter, Chief Executive, Office for Digital Identities and Attributes

24th June 2025

Dear Secretary of State

Following the royal assent of the Data (Use and Access) Act on 19th June, and further to our previous correspondence and meeting with Lord Arbuthnot on 9th April, I am writing to request a further conversation with you, Hannah Rutter and other relevant officials at your earliest convenience.

During the passage of the bill, Ministers gave assurances that the DVS system will be able to verify accurate sex data, and will not use unreliable sources such as passport data when the question being asked is what someone's sex is (i.e. their biological sex).

Sex Matters welcomes these assurances. It is critical that the practical issues are now addressed. If digital identity services are not set up in such a way that they can verify reliable data they will fail to secure trust and as a result, will fail to achieve efficiencies and drive economic growth, and fail to keep people safe. Moreover, they will fail to comply with the law.

This is a problem that is solvable now. The attached briefing note sets out our thinking on the practical steps needed to ensure accuracy and reliability are achieved.

For the DVS system to succeed the Government must take action to ensure that it distinguishes between reliable and unreliable datasets in relation to sex.

There has been some scaremongering and misinformation over this issue, such as the suggestion that the system will "out" people by revealing their sex when they are renting a car. This is unfounded. The benefit of the move to digital is that it limits the sharing of personal information to the relevant and necessary.

We propose a simple, low-cost, practical solution to ensure that accurate sex data is available where it is needed, and unreliable data sources are not allowed to proliferate:

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- Include a requirement in the code of practice for public authorities to review their datasets relating to the attribute of sex and publish a register of these datasets.
- Publish a register of public authorities approved to act as reliable sources of data relating to the attribute of people's sex as part of the establishment of the information gateway.
- Provide within the trust framework directions that digital verification services may treat data on sex from public authorities as authoritative only if that data comes from a source included on the register.

These three steps are not difficult to take now, but if not taken now will result in a system that is not fit for purpose.

I was concerned to see comments from Minister Bryant during a general debate on Pride Month yesterday (23rd June) that suggest there may still be some confusion within your Department regarding the issue of passport data and privacy. There seems to be a misconception that those pointing out the need for data on sex to use only sources that accurately record it, and highlighting that passport data is not a reliable source of sex data because it can be changed on request would also be creating a requirement for people to share information on their biological sex when this is unnecessary. This is a fundamental misunderstanding of the concerns that both Sex Matters and Parliamentarians raised during the bill's passage. I would be happy to speak to Minister Bryant to iron out this misunderstanding and set out in very simple terms how a well-designed DVS would actually mean that people who are sensitive about sharing their biological sex would be much *less* likely to be required by a service provider, public agency or private agency to reveal their birth sex when it is unnecessary – for example, applying for a job where sex is not relevant or proving their identity to open a bank account.

As I mentioned when I first [wrote to you in October last year](#), we were delighted to see the Government take forward such an ambitious agenda to modernise identity services. This has the potential to be truly game-changing – unlocking efficiencies, driving growth and delivering real benefits across the economy. We remain keen to engage constructively and support the successful delivery of a system that realises this vision.

Please ask your office to contact my colleague Laura Pascal at ^{2.1} [REDACTED] to arrange a meeting with me: she will be more than happy to liaise to find a mutually convenient date and time.

Yours sincerely



Maya Forstater
CEO

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Redaction Summary

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Redaction 2.1

Exemptions/exceptions:

- S.40 - Personal Information