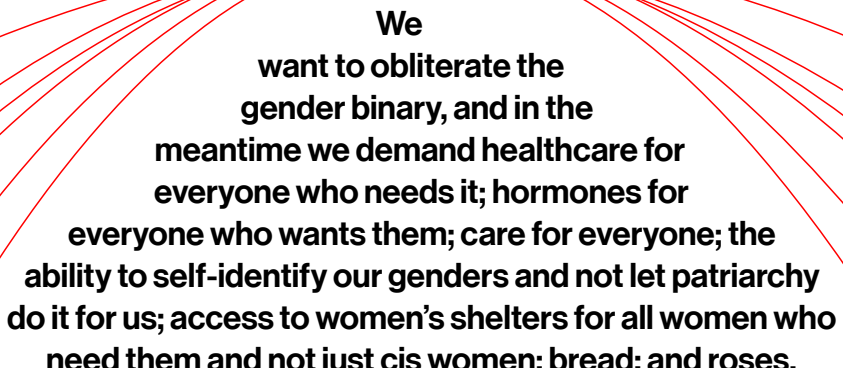


# ~~Red feminism is~~ ~~Trans feminism.~~ ~~Red feminism is~~

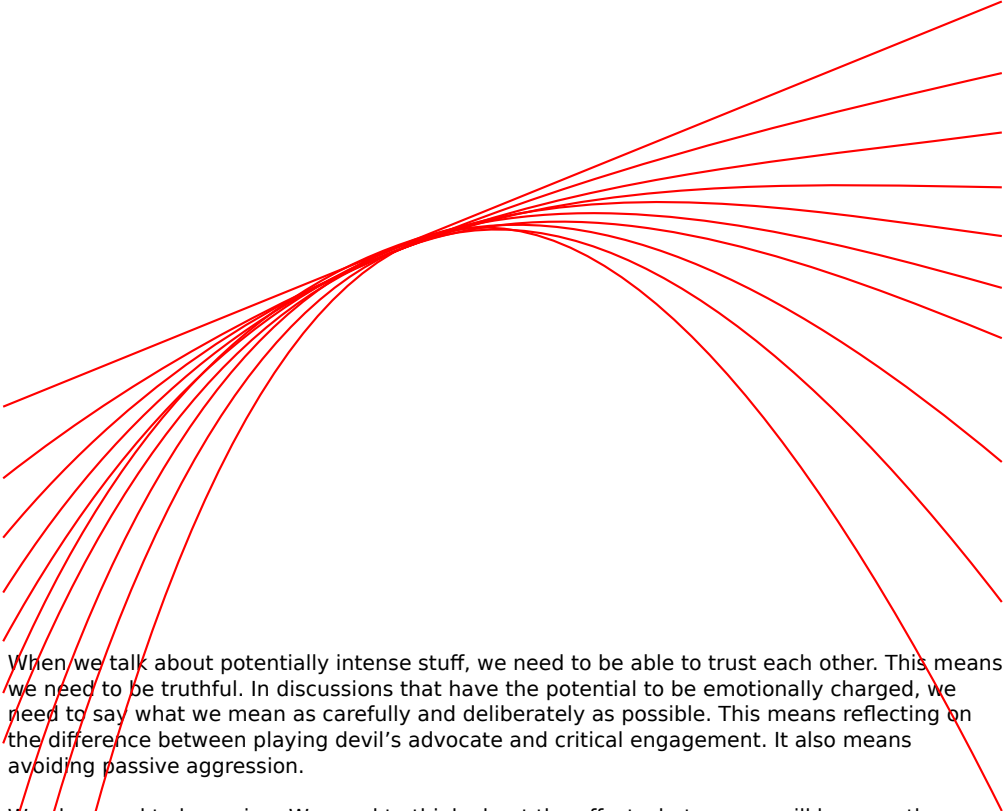
Now is not the time to remain silent on issues which have plagued the feminist movement for decades. We hope that by sharing our perspective and also our beliefs around conduct within the debate we can inspire other political groups, organisations and individuals to do the same. As an organization with a vested interest in class struggle and feminist politics we believe it is important for us to express our position of solidarity with comrades both within and outside of our organization who are currently at the center of a toxic, divisive debate around trans inclusion in feminist and women's spaces.

These perspectives grow out of our experiences in Plan C, the struggles which we have learned from and been shaped by, and more broadly from living our lives as embodied creatures in the world. Reducing what it means to be a woman to a set of biological characteristics and reproductive capacities is a specific form of reactionary and misogynist politics which we must oppose as part of its broader struggle against patriarchy and for joy. From decades of black feminist thought we have learnt that universalist, totalising claims about what a woman is and what it means to be one serve the interests of some women at the expense of others. Universalising claims about what it is to be a woman work against the possibility of meaningful dialogue, connections and solidarity being forged between women who experience womanhood in myriad different ways.

In order to understand each other and build red feminism together it is vital that each of us has full and final say on the meaning of our bodies: what they do, how we labour and what is done to us. This means that we must recognise that trans women are women, trans men are men, and nonbinary people are nonbinary.



**We  
want to obliterate the  
gender binary, and in the  
meantime we demand healthcare for  
everyone who needs it; hormones for  
everyone who wants them; care for everyone; the  
ability to self-identify our genders and not let patriarchy  
do it for us; access to women's shelters for all women who  
need them and not just cis women; bread; and roses.**



When we talk about potentially intense stuff, we need to be able to trust each other. This means we need to be truthful. In discussions that have the potential to be emotionally charged, we need to say what we mean as carefully and deliberately as possible. This means reflecting on the difference between playing devil's advocate and critical engagement. It also means avoiding passive aggression.

We also need to be caring. We need to think about the effect what we say will have on the people who hear it. We need not to be defensive when people tell us we've upset them, to say sorry, and to actively try to de-escalate the situation. Beyond all else this means avoiding personal attacks and name-calling. At times we may need to consider stepping away from the discussion for a while. It is important to acknowledge that these discussions will often and understandably involve anger, upset, and other emotions, and that we need to make space for sharp emotion in our discussions, and not insist that everyone remains calm. That said, the 'sharper' these conversations become the more difficult it is to engage in them, especially for those socialised to avoid confrontation. Being mindful of these tensions and learning to navigate them together is a project of care.

We need to be vulnerable. We need to be open to what others say, and allow each other to change our opinions and ways of acting. We need to understand that being open to being changed by each other is far from a weakness, but rather a vital strength for all revolutionaries to have!

This we believe to be a way forward in these struggles and we hope that we, as Plan C, and as comrades, can work collectively to realise and achieve these aims together.

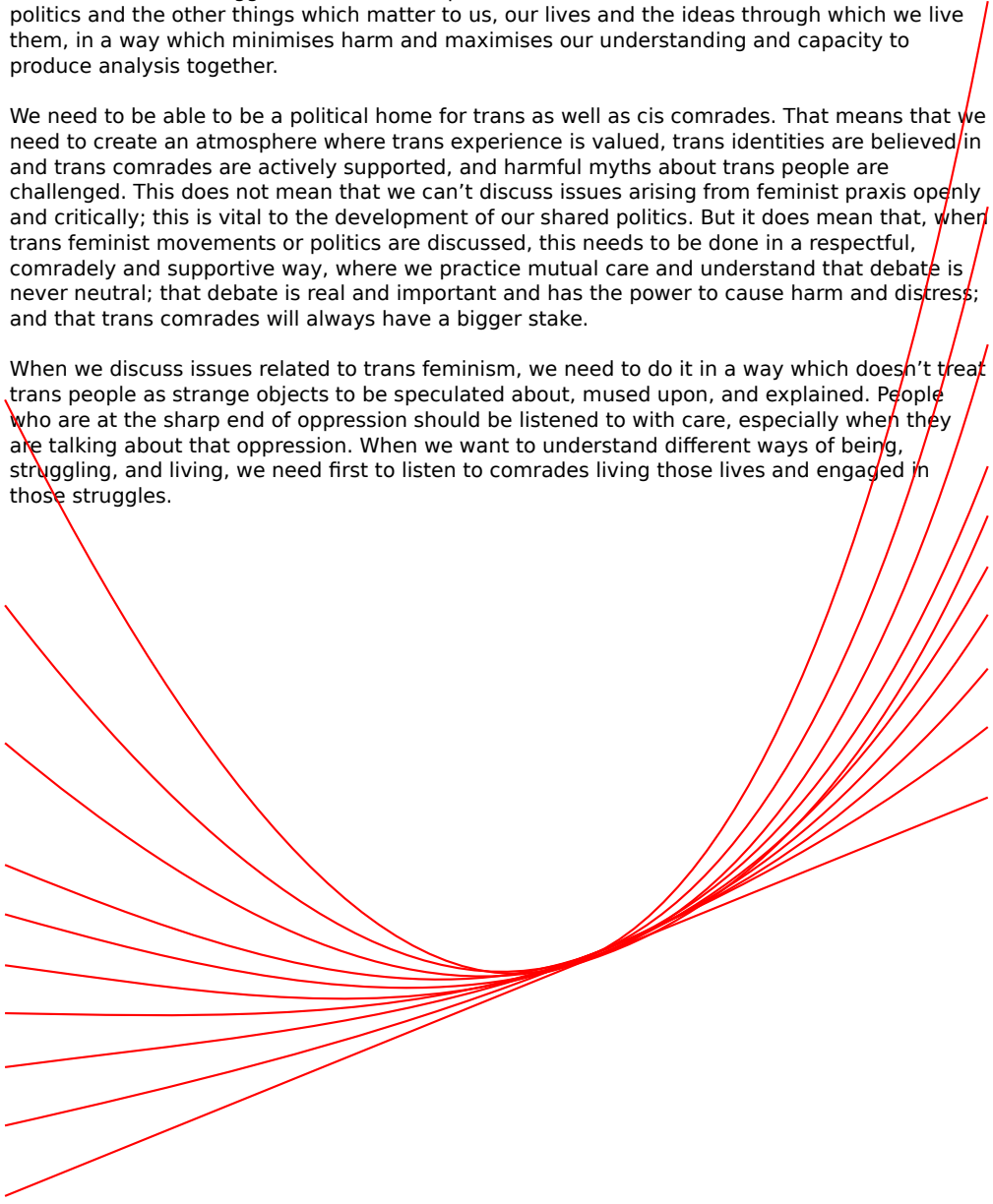
Plan C is a national political organization in the UK which organizes within multiple struggles in our workplaces, housing, internationalist and feminist politics with a particular focus on the politics of social reproduction and the social strike ([www.weareplanc.org](http://www.weareplanc.org)).

We must look to the wealth of knowledge forged of shared experience, common struggle and solidarity across difference produced by black feminism, trans feminism and sex worker rights movements. We acknowledge that trans women and sex workers have a crucial role to play in dismantling the capitalist patriarchal systems of power that oppress us all and we know this because we struggle as them and beside them.

Many confrontations have taken place in spaces in which we invest hope for our collective liberation, so these suggestions for shared practice centre on how we can talk about trans politics and the other things which matter to us, our lives and the ideas through which we live them, in a way which minimises harm and maximises our understanding and capacity to produce analysis together.

We need to be able to be a political home for trans as well as cis comrades. That means that we need to create an atmosphere where trans experience is valued, trans identities are believed in and trans comrades are actively supported, and harmful myths about trans people are challenged. This does not mean that we can't discuss issues arising from feminist praxis openly and critically; this is vital to the development of our shared politics. But it does mean that, when trans feminist movements or politics are discussed, this needs to be done in a respectful, comradely and supportive way, where we practice mutual care and understand that debate is never neutral; that debate is real and important and has the power to cause harm and distress; and that trans comrades will always have a bigger stake.

When we discuss issues related to trans feminism, we need to do it in a way which doesn't treat trans people as strange objects to be speculated about, mused upon, and explained. People who are at the sharp end of oppression should be listened to with care, especially when they are talking about that oppression. When we want to understand different ways of being, struggling, and living, we need first to listen to comrades living those lives and engaged in those struggles.



## **Information regarding the Gender Recognition Act and the current government consultation**

Much of the current activity of those who oppose transgender liberation is centered on the government plans to alter the 2004 Gender Recognition Act. There is currently a consultation on this issue intended to seek the views of organisations and individuals most likely to be affected by the changes. But what's really going on with the Gender Recognition Act? Who will it benefit? Is there really a risk to women as its opponents claim?

Problems with the current process include:

- It is a complex, expensive, time consuming and needlessly bureaucratic process making it inaccessible to many.
- The current process involves a panel of strangers deciding whether or not one's gender identity is legally valid.
- There is currently a spousal veto clause meaning that someone's right to change their gender is subject to abuse by their spouse.
- There is currently no provision for non-binary people (people who identify as both, neither or a third gender option) to be legally recognized as their actual gender.
- No person under the age of 18 is currently allowed to legally change their gender.

The proposed changes could include things like:

- Scrapping the expenses, bureaucracy and gate-keeping required by the current process.
- Allowing for statutory declaration without the need for medical reports (this would mean that the additional wait for treatment at Gender Identity Clinics would present less of a barrier).
- Legal recognition for non-binary people and those under the age of 18.
- Getting rid of the spousal veto and allowing married transgender people autonomy from their partners.

Doesn't sound so bad, does it? So - what's the problem? Opponents of the changes to the Gender Recognition Act claim that this would allow people 'pretending to be women' access to women-only spaces like refuges more easily. However, transgender women do not currently need to be legally recognized in their gender to access these spaces so there would practically be no change to current circumstances. The claim that men would 'pretend to be women' in order to be violent towards cisgender women is spurious and there is no current evidence to suggest that it would happen in reality in any of the many countries which already allow for statutory declaration such as Ireland and Malta.

None of these changes would affect people who are not transgender or don't intend to change their legal gender. To suggest otherwise is entirely baseless.

To fill out the consultation and offer your views please go to: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/reform-of-the-gender-recognition-act-2004>