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New UK Guidance to Restrict Trans Women in Single-Sex Spaces

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New guidance expected to be submitted to ministers later this month will bar transgender women from accessing female-only spaces in schools, hospitals, leisure centres, and cinemas across the UK. This marks a significant development in the ongoing debate over single-sex spaces and transgender rights.

Campaigners had urged the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) to relax restrictions on transgender people using services that correspond with their gender identity. However, the EHRC has reportedly rejected these requests, reinforcing protections based on biological sex. The forthcoming guidance will also allow women to object to the presence of transgender women in changing rooms and permit the exclusion of transgender athletes from single-sex sporting events.

The rules will apply broadly to any organisation providing services to the public. This includes shops with changing rooms, gyms, government departments, NHS facilities, and prisons. Such organisations will be required to ensure compliance with the guidance, balancing the rights of biological women with those of transgender individuals.

This move follows a consultation triggered by a Supreme Court ruling earlier this year. The ruling clarified that under the Equality Act 2010, the terms “woman” and “sex” must be interpreted in line with biological sex, rather than gender identity. The judgment has since been a point of legal reference for policies surrounding single-sex services.

Women and Equalities Minister Bridget Phillipson is expected to receive the updated guidance before the end of the month. She will review it to ensure it meets legal standards before it is presented to Parliament. At that stage, the guidance may face scrutiny from Members of Parliament, who could propose amendments or express concerns during parliamentary debates.

A source familiar with the consultation process told *The Times*: “The law is the law, and the law’s not going to change.” This statement reflects the government’s intention to uphold current legal interpretations rather than introduce new legislation.

The proposed guidance represents a blow to campaigners who have called for greater recognition of gender identity in public services. Critics argue that excluding transgender women from female-only spaces may increase marginalisation. Supporters of the guidance say it protects the privacy and safety of biological women, particularly in sensitive environments like changing rooms and prisons.

The government has emphasised that the guidance is designed to ensure clarity and consistency in how public services are provided. It seeks to balance competing rights while respecting the legal framework established by the courts.

This development comes amid wider discussions in the UK about transgender rights and the scope of single-sex exemptions under the Equality Act. Various organisations, including some sporting bodies and women's groups, have welcomed the clarity that the guidance is expected to provide.

The outcome will be closely watched by campaigners on both sides of the debate. It is expected to influence how schools, healthcare providers, and other public services manage access to single-sex facilities in the coming years.