

What the ruling on women means for you

theday.co.uk/what-the-ruling-on-women-means-for-you-421 April 2025



Ideological: Feminist activist group 'For Women Scotland' celebrate the Supreme Court's ruling that the Equality Act 2010 defines a woman as an adult female and not a man who wishes to identify as a woman, as the Scottish government has claimed.

Was the UK Supreme Court right? A controversial new ruling sees many celebrating and others in shock. But some say the decision might end up backfiring on its biggest supporters.

What's happening?

It is rare that legal cases over the interpretation of decades-old laws make the news. But one such case last week has sent shockwaves around the world.

The highest court in the UK, the **Supreme Court**, has ruled that under the terms of the 2010 Equality Act, the terms "woman" and "sex" refer to a person's "biological sex", that which they were given at birth.

The ruling was the latest round in a long debate between activists for **transgender** equality and those who are "**gender-critical**".

Find out more

Transgender activists argue that the law should treat transgender women exactly like **cisgender** women, and transgender men exactly like cisgender men.

Gender-critical activists claim transgender women should be excluded from services that are intended for women.

Now gender-critical activists are celebrating, and much of the transgender community is devastated.

Gender-critical activists argue it was needed to ensure women's spaces cannot be infiltrated by potentially dangerous individuals.

Transgender people worry it will lead to further violence against them.

Most people are taught at school that human beings are separated into two sexes. In reality, it is not that simple.

Was the UK Supreme Court right?

Some say

Yes! Gender-critical activists say this will give women more security. Transgender people can just build their own spaces.

Others think

No! Transgender activists argue this ruling exposes them to more hatred and shuts them out of public life.

Some people say

“There is a higher court than courts of justice and that is the court of conscience. It supercedes all other courts.”

Mahatma Gandhi (1869 – 1948), Indian statesman

What do you think?

1. Connect

How do you feel about this story? - Do you think the Supreme Court ruling has settled this issue? Or made it worse?

2. Wonder

What questions do you have? - For example: Are justice and law the same thing? Is the world generally getting better, or worse?

3. Investigate

What are the facts? - Pick out one thing we know for certain about this story and one thing we cannot say for sure.

4. Construct

What is your point of view? - Imagine you are a judge in the Supreme Court. Would you have agreed with your colleagues' decision in this case, or favoured a different outcome?

5. Express

What do others believe? - Get into small groups. Imagine you represent an activist group on one or the other side of this issue. Work together to write a statement with your response to the Supreme Court's ruling.

6. Reflect

What might happen next? - It is April 2026. How has society changed one year on from the Supreme Court verdict? Write a newspaper article describing what has happened in the past 12 months.

Glossary

Supreme Court - The highest court within the hierarchy of courts in most legal jurisdictions.

Transgender - Someone whose gender identity (what they feel inside) does not match the gender identity they were assigned at birth (based on their biology).

Gender-critical - Opposed to the belief that gender identity is more important or significant than biological sex.

Cisgender - A person whose gender identity matches their sex assigned at birth. The term was first used in academic articles in the 1990s.