# UK Supreme Court ruling on 'woman' definition fuels Harry Potter tattoo cover-ups



On 16 April 2025, the UK Supreme Court delivered a significant ruling regarding the interpretation of the terms “woman”, “man”, and “sex” within the framework of the 2010 Equality Act. This ruling establishes that the term "woman" refers explicitly to biological women, and similarly defining "sex" as biological sex. In light of this decision, the court clarified that individuals assigned male at birth who identify as women do not possess the right to access spaces or services designated as women-only.

The case that brought these implications to the Supreme Court was initiated by the gender-critical campaign group For Women Scotland, which is supported financially by JK Rowling, renowned for her bestselling Harry Potter series.

In response to the ruling, social media has seen a surge of users expressing their desire to cover Harry Potter-themed tattoos. Helena Gifford, a tattoo artist and owner of Hella Tattoos, located in The Blackhouse Tattoo studio in Brighton, has offered free cover-up tattoos for those looking to remove or alter their Harry Potter tattoos. Gifford, who has received around 50 inquiries and completed three cover-ups thus far, articulated her reaction to the ruling: “I saw a post that JK Rowling had funded the ruling, and I got really annoyed. I thought that if I had a Harry Potter tattoo, I would want to get it covered,” she said.

Gifford noted that while she has been met with a generally positive reception surrounding her offer, she has also encountered a mix of defensive comments and backlash, particularly from individuals who support Rowling. She further emphasised the challenges involved in creating aesthetically pleasing cover-ups, especially when the original tattoos are large or dark. Instead of accepting tips, Gifford has encouraged supporters to donate to a GoFundMe campaign, which has thus far raised £250 for Trans Pride Brighton.

Betsy Clarke, a 49-year-old resident of Hove, shared her experiences after relocating from the USA. Clarke, who has a trans wife, revealed that she recently opted to have her tattoo of the Harry Potter deathly hallows symbol covered by a different tattoo artist, Sophie Sharp, at True Romance in Brighton. Clarke reflected on the importance of the Harry Potter series during her upbringing, stating: “Harry Potter was very fundamental in my child-rearing years and I would read it aloud to my children. It was really important in terms of bonding.” However, she acknowledged the evolving context around the franchise, saying, “Now I think, what are you signalling to other people with a Harry Potter tattoo? I don’t want to make anyone feel uncomfortable."

This ruling in the UK comes as JK Rowling has faced significant backlash over her vocal support of gender-critical views, which she first expressed publicly in 2019 after defending Maya Forstater, a woman whose employment was terminated following her gender-critical statements. Critics have labelled Rowling as transphobic, leading many to withdraw their support for her work. As a result, the intersectionality of art and artist has come into sharp focus, prompting individuals like Gifford and Clarke to reassess their relationships with the Harry Potter series.

While the Supreme Court's ruling has undoubtedly sparked a wave of public debate and personal reflection, individuals are left to navigate the complexities surrounding their own experiences with the Harry Potter franchise and its author.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

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