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Subject: Trans inclusion

This ADC recognises the public polarised discourse regarding women’s rights and trans rights. The debate about the meaning of gender, how it corresponds to sex, and how gender is protected by the Equality Act 2010 has been intense in 2021 and is likely to continue to be so in 2022.

This ADC believes that supporting trans rights is consistent with understanding how gender-based inequality is a complex topic, that includes factors like gender identity and expression, sexism, our bodies and physical and reproductive characteristics, and the way we are raised. We believe that we can have a strong position on advancing gender equity and that this is not in conflict with advocating for trans and non-binary people’s rights.

This ADC believes it is consistent with FDA values to have a voice on trans and non-binary people’s rights. The risk of not making our position clear is that we undermine the union’s own EDI ambitions and our core values by retreating to a comfortable space in respect of the EDI agenda.

The comfortable space is where we don’t make a clear commitment and leave our position open to interpretation, which could lead to a lack of safety for trans colleagues and clients, and a lack of clarity around boundaries for colleagues with gender critical views. We should not undermine our independent status as a union and our ambition to do better for our members working lives by submitting to a negative narrative.

Instead, our considerable influence should contribute positively to the debate, in line with many other trade unions and the TUC. This ADC also acknowledges that people’s personal opinions and experiences - on any number of issues - may differ from our organisational position.

This ADC believes it’s particularly important for the FDA to be explicit and vocal about our trans-inclusive position because trans and non-binary communities often experience significant prejudice and harm. Conference also supports and agrees that public service employers have a responsibility to keep all their staff, including our trans and non-binary staff, safe from discrimination and harassment.

This ADC is proud that the FDA has always encouraged respectful dialogue on issues of equity, diversity and inclusion. However, it is important to be mindful about discussions that affect some people more directly, and more personally, than other people. This means that we respect everyone’s right to hold personal opinions but also must consider the impact of our words and actions on other people, regardless of what our intention may be. We each take responsibility for the language we use and the information we share, and we’re mindful of how this could be experienced by Individuals. The FDA understands the importance of listening to people, ensuring they know their rights, making sure they can be themselves at work or when seeking our advice. Treating everyone with respect is in line with FDA values.

This ADC agrees we do not accept trans-exclusionary language or behaviour at work. We do not tolerate discrimination both because it is unlawful, and it is against our values. Our cultural ambition is to ensure an inclusive, purpose-driven workplace that listens, works together, is open and honest, accessible and helps everyone be the very best they can be.

This ADC calls on the Executive Committee and the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion subcommittee to

- Produce and implement a union trans inclusion policy;
- ensure that we support our members to seek to have better understanding and awareness of each other’s experiences where there are differing views, through learning;
- Focus on improving the EDI outcomes and working lives of our members; and
- Build on the FDA intersectional approach to equality and enable us to consider issues in a holistic manner.

Executive Committee
