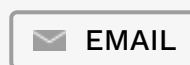




About Stonewall and our Diversity Champions programme



At Stonewall, we stand for lesbian, gay, bi, trans, queer, questioning and ace (LGBTQ+) people everywhere. We imagine a world where all LGBTQ+ people are free to be ourselves and can live our lives to the full.

Over the last 32 years, we have helped create transformative change in the lives of LGBTQ+ people in the UK. Today, we have equal rights to love, marry and have children, and our lives, families and relationships are represented as part of the national curriculum in most of the UK.

As a human rights charity, our campaigns drive positive change in public attitudes and public policy. Some of our current campaigns are:

- **Ban Conversion Therapy:** We are calling for a legally enforceable ban on conversion therapy across the UK, with support for survivors and training for frontline professionals.
- **Support Rainbow Families:** Tackle the inequities facing LGBTQ+ people trying to form a family of their own, particularly through IVF.
- **Protection for LGBTQ+ Afghans** and fairer outcomes for LGBTQ+ refugees here in the UK.
- **Rainbow Laces:** Making sport everyone's game and challenging attitudes towards LGBTQ+ inclusion across sport.
- **Inclusive legal recognition:** Ensuring our lives and relationships are recognised in the

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gender.

We also ensure LGBTQ+ people can thrive throughout our lives by building deep, sustained change programmes with the institutions that have the biggest impact on us, whether we're learning, working, praying or playing sport. We deliver this through a number of programmes, including our [School and College Champions programme](#), our [Children and Young People's Services programme](#), our Sport programmes, and our [Diversity Champions programme](#).

Set up in 2001 to give practical support to employers who wanted to make their workplaces more inclusive, the Diversity Champions programme now counts more than 900 leading employers as members.

Over the last few months there has been some incorrect information in the press about Stonewall's Diversity Champions programme and so we wanted to answer any questions that might have raised.

What does Stonewall's Diversity Champions programme do?

What do organisations get for their Diversity Champions fee?

The fee for Stonewall Diversity Champions programme covers the following services:

- Trained Client Account Managers who provide tailored support and guidance to members (including facilitated introductions to other organisations, catch-up calls, good practice sharing, policy reviews and feedback meetings).
- A suite of resources which are researched and developed by Stonewall staff for Diversity Champion members to use.
- An online memberships hub located on the Stonewall website which allows Diversity Champion members to easily access resources.
- Delivering two-hour feedback meetings to members who have taken part in the Workplace Equality Index (which is run separately to the Diversity Champions programme).
- The fee covers staffing costs to provide these services and organisational running costs.

Are organisations required to take any particular action as a Diversity Champion?

No.

Individual Diversity Champions receive support, guidance, resources and feedback from Stonewall and it's up to them to decide if and how they use our input to shape their own policies, culture and practice.

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A huge range of organisations make up the 900+ members of the Diversity Champions programme. Each of them knows their context best and how to use Stonewall's guidance and support to make their workplace more LGBTQ+ inclusive.

What is the Workplace Equality Index?

It is the definitive benchmarking tool for employers to measure their progress on lesbian, gay, bi and trans inclusion in the workplace.

Any employer can take part in the Workplace Equality Index for free, not just members of the Diversity Champions programme. The Workplace Equality Index is separate from the Diversity Champions programme.

Participating employers demonstrate their work in eight areas of employment policy and practice:

- Policies and benefits
- The employee lifecycle
- LGBTQ+ employee network group
- Empowering individuals
- Leadership
- Monitoring
- Supply chains
- External engagement and service delivery

Staff from across the organisation also complete an anonymous survey about their experiences at work.

Organisations then receive their scores, enabling them to understand what's going well, suggestions of where they could focus their efforts, and how they've performed in comparison with their sector and region.

It is up to individual Diversity Champion members to decide whether they want to take part in the Workplace Equality Index, which is separate from their Diversity Champions membership. Diversity Champion members are, however, entitled to an in-depth benchmarking meeting to review areas for improvement.

How is Stonewall addressing common misrepresentations of the Diversity Champions programme?

We are incredibly proud of our Diversity Champions programme, and the work that member organisations, past and present, are doing to make their workplaces inclusive for their LGBTQ+ employees, using the resources, guidance and support provided by Stonewall.

Several media outlets regularly target the Stonewall Diversity Champions programme and

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actions of members.

We respond to every media enquiry about the Diversity Champions programme to set out how proud we are of the work members do and correct any misinformation about the programme that we believe may be included in the coverage.

We also challenge common misrepresentations in this statement.

Unfortunately we find that some media outlets are content to publish stories that repeat misrepresentations of Stonewall's work and what the Diversity Champions programme is, and use only part of Stonewall's media statements at the end of articles. We make complaints and ask for corrections where appropriate.

Guidance and support

Is Stonewall's guidance and support on the Equality Act correct?

Yes it is.

Our guidance is based on the Equality and Human Rights Commission's Equality Act Code of Practice, [which was recently reaffirmed in the High Court](#).

Quality assurance is very important to Stonewall. We regularly review our guidance to ensure that it is of the highest quality and reflects legal developments. Recently, we obtained a thorough independent legal review of Stonewall's guidance to employers and education settings as it relates to the Equality Act, EHRC codes of practice and guidance as well as the law in Northern Ireland. This independent legal review confirmed the quality and accuracy of our guidance.

Is Stonewall correct to use the term 'gender identity'?

Yes.

There have been a small number of reports that suggest Stonewall is misinterpreting the Equality Act's protected characteristic of 'gender reassignment' when we use the phrase 'gender identity' in our resources.

The accusation is that, because the Equality Act refers to 'gender reassignment' in the legislation, and Stonewall sometimes uses the phrase 'gender identity', Stonewall is misinterpreting the law and offering 'illegal advice'.

When our resources and guidance refer to the wording of the Equality Act we reflect the wording as it appears: 'gender reassignment'.

The [Equality and Human Rights Commission refers to 'gender identity'](#) when explaining who is covered by the law and how they are protected. It is normal to use everyday words to describe the law, as everyday language tends to develop along with societal progress, and legal language often remains static. In most contexts, gender identity is an

Finally, it is important to note that Stonewall does not offer legal advice; we offer inclusion support and guidance to support employers.

What does the Equality Act actually say about ‘gender reassignment’?

Gender reassignment is one of the nine protected characteristics covered by the [Equality Act 2010](#). Under section 7(1) of the EA 2010, a person has the protected characteristic of gender reassignment if that person is:

“proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning the person's sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex.”

The Equality Act protects against four main types of conduct: direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment, and victimisation. It protects people at work, when using public services, with providers of goods and services, on public transport, in clubs and associations, and when you interact with public bodies. It also requires public bodies to consider how their decisions and policies will impact those with protected characteristics (the Public Sector Equality Duty).

The Equality Act 2010 [defines gender reassignment](#) as follows:

- 1) A person has the protected characteristic of gender reassignment if the person is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning the person's sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex.
- 2) A reference to a transsexual person is a reference to a person who has the protected characteristic of gender reassignment.
- 3) In relation to the protected characteristic of gender reassignment—
 - a) a reference to a person who has a particular protected characteristic is a reference to a transsexual person;
 - b) a reference to persons who share a protected characteristic is a reference to transsexual persons.

In summary, the Equality Act 2010 states that you should not be discriminated against because you are transsexual (trans), meaning that you should not be discriminated against because your gender identity is different from your gender assigned at birth. You are also protected if you are discriminated against because you are perceived to be trans (discrimination by perception), or because you are connected to someone trans (discrimination by association).

The Equality Act gives an expansive definition of ‘gender reassignment’: it does not require medical and/or surgical interventions, and the protections begin as soon as you ‘propose’ to move away from your birth-assigned gender, regardless of the steps you have taken or are planning to take as part of your transition.

As noted in the [EHRC's Statutory Code of Practice](#) and the [EHRC's Employer Code](#), a

who may be too young to access medical interventions should they want to pursue medical transition but who have “begun a personal process of changing their gender identity” (2.21).

The recent [Taylor v Jaguar Land Rover employment tribunal](#) judgment provides an example of judicial interpretation of the Equality Act that includes non-binary, gender fluid, and gender diverse people, as noted in the [judges’ conclusions](#):

“We thought it was very clear that Parliament intended gender reassignment to be a spectrum moving away from birth sex, and that a person could be at any point on that spectrum.” (p.178)

People who have a diagnosis of ‘gender dysphoria’ or ‘gender identity disorder’ (also known as ‘gender incongruence’), and those who have a Gender Recognition Certificate are protected under the act, but neither of these are required to have the protected characteristic of gender reassignment.

Does Stonewall’s Workplace Equality Index require organisations to remove the word ‘mother’ from HR policies?

It is absolutely not true that Stonewall wishes to ban the word ‘mother’ from HR policies, as has been asserted in repeated stories from a small number of news outlets.

The word ‘mother’ is precious for LGBTQ+ people who have fought for years to be able to form families of our own and be recognised as mums, as dads, and as parents.

Our starting point is that we want to see workplaces that are inclusive for LGBTQ+ people. We give guidance and support to employers to ensure HR policies clearly apply to all in our communities. For some employees – such as same-sex couples which may include two mothers, two fathers, or non-binary people – the language used in HR policies has a practical importance in showing precisely who is covered by the policy. It is about avoiding confusion and ensuring everyone who needs the policy knows they are included.

When we review Diversity Champions’ policies we provide feedback on how to make it as clear as possible that LGBTQ+ people are covered by the policies. There are several ways employers can make it clear that all LGBTQ+ parents are included. For example, a parental leave policy could use additive language (‘this applies to birth mothers and other birth parents’), it could use gender neutral language (‘all birth parents’) or it could use you language (‘after you have given birth’).

It is of course up to individual employers to decide how they ensure that all LGBTQ+ people are included by their policies.

All of this is to foster understanding and support for LGBTQ+ people in the workplace. We do not want to ban the word mother or stop it appearing in any employers’ policies.

Does Stonewall see a conflict between employers’ obligations to protect LGBTQ+ workers from discrimination and the recognition of ‘gender critical’ beliefs as protected philosophical beliefs under the Equality Act?

In June, [a ruling was handed down](#) in a prominent appeal brought by a ‘gender critical’ activist. This ruling overturned the original decision of the employment tribunal judge. The new ruling has found that her views are protected as philosophical beliefs.

The [substance of the judgment](#) makes it clear that the protection is very narrow, clears a very low bar, and does not impact trans people’s protections under the Equality Act.

No philosophical belief gives someone the right to abuse, harm or discriminate against others, and this is upheld in the verdict. All trans people deserve to be treated with respect, dignity and humanity in their workplaces.

Does Stonewall encourage organisations go above and beyond the letter of the law?

Yes, and proudly. Equalities legislation rightly protects people from discrimination, abuse and harassment, but complying with the law is the minimum rather than the maximum that employers can do to support LGBTQ+ people to thrive in the workplace.

Employers are constantly driving forward practices to ensure all their employees are supported to perform their best at work. No organisation is legally required to do LGBTQ+ pay gap analysis, provide leadership training for LGBTQ+ employees, support employee resource groups, or provide mentoring opportunities. But they do because they see the benefits. Diversity Champions get to share and learn about good practice from the 900+ members of the programme.

How does the EHRC’s new guidance on single-sex spaces affect your guidance for Diversity Champions?

On 11 April 2022, the EHRC published non-statutory guidance for organisations about single-sex services.

Far from clarifying how the single-sex exemptions in the Equality Act should be used, this non-statutory guidance is likely to create more confusion for schools, workplaces and service providers.

However, it’s important to note that as this is non-statutory guidance, it doesn’t change the existing law or statutory guidance, which organisations must adhere to.

The Equality Act 2010 protects trans people from discrimination on the grounds of gender reassignment. A person has this characteristic if the person is “proposing to undergo, undergoing or has undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purposes of reassigning the person’s sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex”.

The Act also protects people from discrimination on the ground of sex. The act says that a reference to someone with this protected characteristic is “a reference to a man or a woman”. There is no reference in the Act to the term ‘biological sex’.

There is a legal exemption in Schedules 3 and 23 of the Act which means that providers of single-sex services can in some circumstances legally exclude trans people where this is a ‘proportionate means to achieve a legitimate end’.

This is a highly fact-sensitive standard in a contested area of law, and there is little case

Save where an exemption applies, organisations should not prevent access to services on the basis of someone's gender reassignment.

Our guidance for all organisations remains unchanged. We give the following good practice guidance to employers:

“There is a legal exemption in Schedules 3 and 23 of the Equality Act 2010, which means that providers of single-sex services can in some circumstances legally exclude trans people where this is a [‘proportionate means to achieve a legitimate aim’](#). This is a highly fact-sensitive standard in a contested area of law, and there is little case law which establishes where an organisation could legitimately use this provision. There is also a potential tension between the requirement not to discriminate on the basis of gender reassignment under the Equality Act 2010, and the requirement in health and safety law that employers provide toilets and changing rooms either on a single-sex basis or in individual lockable rooms. Save where an exception (as outlined above) applies, you should not prevent access to facilities, spaces and groups on the basis of a person's gender reassignment.”

The most inclusive employers support all employees in accessing the facilities, spaces and groups that align with their lived gender.

What does the Forstater Employment Tribunal judgement mean for workplace protections for trans people?

The outcome of the Employment Tribunal judgement in the [Forstater vs CGD \(6 July 2022\)](#) (“Forstater”) case does not change the reality of trans people's workplace protection.

Forstater was an Employment Tribunal case which found that the appellant had been directly discriminated against when CGD, the nonprofit thinktank she worked for, decided not to offer her an employment contract or to renew her visiting fellowship due to Tweets she had made and views she had expressed to colleagues about her ‘gender critical’ beliefs (which had been established as ‘protected philosophical beliefs’ by the Employment Appeal Tribunal in a previous hearing).

While the Tribunal ultimately upheld the Claimant's direct discrimination claims, the Tribunal clarified that:

‘The exercise of determining the issues before this Tribunal does not in any way involve an assessment of the merits of gender-critical belief.’ [para 8]

The case did **not** make a judgement about whether the manifestation of the Claimant's beliefs was directly or indirectly discriminatory or harassing of trans people in the workplace.

Nobody has the right to discriminate against, or harass, trans people simply because they disagree with their existence and participation in society.

This is based on Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights, which guarantees all individuals an absolute right to hold or change a particular religion or belief. It also says that people have a ‘qualified’ right to manifest that religion or belief

means the right to express or act on that belief can be limited where it is necessary to protect public safety and the rights and freedoms of others.

In *Forstater*, the Tribunal had to consider whether the actions taken by CGD were because the Claimant held ‘gender critical beliefs’, or whether it was because she had manifested those beliefs in a way to which objection could justifiably be taken.

In the circumstances, the Tribunal found that while she had expressed her gender critical beliefs, that did not constitute manifestation of those beliefs in a manner to which objection could justifiably be taken. That was a significant part of the reason why her claim succeeded; had she been manifesting those beliefs in a way which was more objectionable, then the outcome would likely have been different.

Clearly then, while an employee or worker is entitled to hold gender critical beliefs (and has the right not to be discriminated against on the basis of those beliefs), this judgment does not mean they are entitled to manifest those beliefs in any way they like, and not in a way that would discriminate against another individual who has a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010 (the “Equality Act”).

How do ‘protected philosophical beliefs’ interact with discrimination and harassment protections for people with other ‘protected characteristics’?

The Equality Act sets out a wide range of protections from discrimination and harassment for people who hold certain ‘protected characteristics’. These are: age; disability; gender reassignment; being married or in a civil partnership; being pregnant or on maternity leave; race including colour; nationality, ethnic or national origin; religion or belief or lack thereof; sex; and sexual orientation.

The protected characteristic of religion or belief (or lack thereof) includes ‘philosophical beliefs’. Case law has established a number of philosophical beliefs as protected, based on five criteria (known as “the Grainger criteria”) established in the 2010 Grainger vs Nicholson case. For example, stoicism, Scientology, ethical veganism and a belief in the need for radical action on climate change have all met the five criteria set out in Grainger in successive cases. It is important to stress that in upholding a particular belief as being protected under the Equality Act, a Tribunal is not in any way expressing agreement with that belief.

The Equality Act protects people from discrimination or harassment on the basis of them holding these beliefs or not holding these beliefs. **But people are not entitled to manifest these beliefs at work in a way that is directly or indirectly discriminatory or harassing to other people on the basis of their protected characteristics, for example their gender reassignment status.**

This important point was made clear in the earlier Employment Appeal Tribunal judgment in the Forstater case on 10 June 2021, which concluded that ‘gender critical’ beliefs met the Grainger criteria. Quoting the Summary of [Employment Appeal Tribunal](#) judgement:

a) ‘This judgment does not mean that the EAT has expressed any view on the merits of either side of the transgender debate and nothing in it should be regarded as so doing.

b) This judgment does not mean that those with gender-critical beliefs can ‘misgender’ trans persons with impunity. The Claimant, like everyone else, will continue to be subject to the prohibitions on discrimination and harassment that apply to everyone else. Whether or not conduct in a given situation does amount to harassment or discrimination within the meaning of EqA will be for a tribunal to determine in a given case.

c) This judgment does not mean that trans persons do not have the protections against discrimination and harassment conferred by the EqA. They do. Although the protected characteristic of gender reassignment under s.7, EqA would be likely to apply only to a proportion of trans persons, there are other protected characteristics that could potentially be relied upon in the face of such conduct.’

d) This judgment does not mean that employers and service providers will not be able to provide a safe environment for trans persons. Employers would continue to be liable (subject to any defence under s.109(4), EqA) for acts of harassment and discrimination against trans persons committed in the course of employment.

The Employment Appeal Tribunal judgment in another case, [Mackereth vs the Department for Work and Pensions](#) (1 July 2022), further demonstrates how people cannot use ‘gender critical beliefs’ as a justification to act however they please towards others with impunity.

In that case, a Christian doctor was not successful in claiming that his lack of belief in ‘Transgenderism’ or ‘gender fluidity’ led to him being directly discriminated against when he was informed that continued refusal to use trans people’s pronouns while carrying out his role would be treated as his services being withdrawn.

That is to say, while his lack of belief in ‘transgenderism’ or ‘gender fluidity’ was ultimately found to be a protected belief under the Equality Act, his employer was entitled to sanction him for the way in which he chose to manifest those beliefs. The Employment Appeal Tribunal therefore ruled that it was not discriminatory to sanction Dr Mackereth for misgendering trans service users on the basis that he did not personally believe that trans people existed or should participate in society.

Where can I get advice on an individual case in my organisation?

You should seek legal counsel.

Stonewall is proud to provide information, support and guidance on LGBTQ+ inclusion; working towards a world where we're all free to be. This does not constitute legal advice, and is not intended to be a substitute for legal counsel on any subject matter.

Membership of the Diversity Champions programme

Is Stonewall a political lobbying organisation?

Stonewall is a registered human rights charity and, like all national charities, is required

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Stonewall operates in compliance with the [Charity Commission's CC9 guidance on campaigning and political activity](#). This guidance helpfully sets out an example of the range of campaigning activity that a human rights charity could be expected to do in support of their purpose of promoting human rights.

It is perfectly normal for charities to campaign for legal protections and policies that improve the lives of the communities they serve.

Does working with Stonewall affect an organisation's impartiality?

Working with national charities to support an LGBTQ+ inclusive workplace does not affect an organisation's impartiality on any issue.

The BBC's decision not to renew their Diversity Champions membership was to address the 'perception' that the BBC was partial on public policy matters where Stonewall has a particular stance. The BBC clarified that:

"Being a part of the Diversity Champions Programme has never required the BBC to support the campaigns of Stonewall, nor its policy positions. As a broadcaster, we have our own values and editorial standards - these are clearly set out and published in our Editorial Guidelines. We are also governed by the Royal Charter and the Ofcom Broadcasting Code. Our journalists continue, as ever, to report a full range of perspectives on stories."

Following the decision, the BBC's Director of Nations said on Women's Hour: "We do not believe our relationship with Stonewall has compromised our journalism".

Are public sector organisations allowed to be members?

Yes.

Public sector organisations include local authorities, health bodies, schools, colleges and government departments and agencies

There were reports in the press based on a 'source close to [Liz] Truss' sharing concerns about the programme's value for money when the civil service has its own in-house workplace diversity programme.

On 2 June an Equalities Minister [confirmed that "decisions on engaging with external service providers on diversity and inclusion are delegated to individual departments."](#)

Campaign groups and some press outlets have misrepresented these reports in template letters to public sector bodies as an 'instruction' to withdraw from Stonewall's programmes.

In England, the Department for Education lists Stonewall's inclusive education guidance as a key resource in Annex B of the [Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education \(RSE\) and Health Education Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers](#) (page 46). There is no guidance advising against working with Stonewall.

No. Overall, the Stonewall Diversity Champions programme is growing in membership. We are proud to support more than 900 employers to create an inclusive working environment through our Diversity Champions programme.

This year alone, from 1 November 2020 to 1 November 2021, more than 200 organisations have joined the Diversity Champions programme.

Recent news stories have highlighted high profile organisations leaving the programme, including the BBC. [In our statement on the BBC's decision we highlighted the wider context of campaigns to stop organisations working on LGBTQ+ inclusion for their colleagues.](#)

There are plenty of leading organisations who have recently renewed their membership of the programme, and more joining every week.

As with every membership programme, organisations come and go depending on what works best for them at the time. Since we set up the Diversity Champions programme in 2001, many large employers have developed major internal programmes to promote diversity and inclusion across their staff and make the workplace better for LGBTQ+ people.

It is encouraging to see that despite the challenges of living and working through a global pandemic, so many more organisations are committed to ensuring that all of their lesbian, gay, bi, trans and queer staff are supported.

Policy debates about LGBTQ+ equality

What are Stonewall's campaign priorities?

We set out our Free to Be 2021 – 25 strategy in May 2021, setting out Stonewall's priorities for the coming four years. Some of our current campaigns are:

- **Ban Conversion Therapy:** We are calling for a legally enforceable ban on conversion therapy across the UK, with support for survivors and training for frontline professionals.
- **Support Rainbow Families:** We are campaigning to address the inequities facing LGBTQ+ people trying to form a family of their own, particularly through IVF.
- **Protection for LGBTQ+ Afghans** and fairer outcomes for LGBTQ+ refugees here in the UK.
- **Rainbow Laces:** Making sport everyone's game and challenging attitudes towards LGBTQ+ inclusion across sport.
- **Inclusive legal recognition:** Ensuring our lives and relationships are recognised in the law and official documentation, whether that's our relationships, as parents, or our

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Does Stonewall have a role to play in addressing divisions within the LGBTQ+ community?

Stonewall is a charity that advocates for LGBTQ+ people's human rights, we campaign for better policies to support our communities, and we support organisations to make their schools, workplaces and sport communities more inclusive for LGBTQ+ people.

Stonewall works as part of a movement of LGBTQ+ charities, community groups and activists with different specialisms, to make sure that our campaigning priorities align with the broad priorities of the movement.

There have always been differences of opinion and different perspectives about what the priorities of the LGBTQ+ movement should be. For example, there were different opinions in the community about whether we should pursue same-sex marriage. However, we see a sector that is almost exclusively united behind a trans inclusive approach to supporting and championing our communities.

Does Stonewall engage in debate on policy issues?

Yes! All the time. Debate about the best way to achieve change for LGBTQ+ communities is a core part of our work. The staff in our External Affairs team spend much of their time engaged in discussions with policymakers, campaigners and the media on how best to improve policy, practice and support for LGBTQ+ people in the UK and across the world.

The only thing we won't debate is whether LGBTQ+ people actually exist or deserve respect.

Is Stonewall campaigning to amend the Equality Act?

No, we are not campaigning to amend the Equality Act.

When the Equality Act was introduced, we had concerns about the terminology used in the Act, whether the Act sufficiently covered all trans people, and if Equality Act exemptions could be used as a blanket ban to exclude trans people from a wide range of settings.

However, in practice, the Equality Act appears to be working well. We see organisations from across society supporting trans inclusion throughout their work.

The environment for organisations supporting LGBTQ+ rights

What do organisations supporting LGBTQ+ rights experience?

Supporters of LGBTQ+ equality have been facing attack for a number of years for taking a trans-inclusive approach to fighting for equality.

These have come from campaign groups, online activists and sections of the UK media.

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A few groups have launched legal challenges to public sector organisations regarding their work with Stonewall. Many of these cases have already been thrown out by judges as ‘unarguable’.

In the first four months of 2021 there were more than 900 template Freedom of Information requests sent to public sector bodies about their work with Stonewall.

Media organisations are using these Freedom of Information Requests to generate news stories about public sector organisations not renewing their membership. The same news outlets repeat those news stories over and over.

A number of campaign groups are currently encouraging their supporters to send template letters out to members of our Diversity Champions programme, schools across the country, and threatening other public sector bodies with legal action.

What can organisations do if they face attacks for their work on LGBTQ+ rights?

Unfortunately we are seeing coordinated attacks on organisations who support LGBTQ+ inclusion whether or not they are members of the Stonewall Diversity Champions programme.

These attacks are designed to undermine your confidence in supporting LGBTQ+ inclusion, whether in the workplace or in your wider work.

Start by getting the facts straight. Is there a basis to the complaints or concerns? Use this FAQ as a support and check in with your teams who lead your work on LGBTQ+ inclusion, who know the status of this work and its legal basis.

Make sure your colleagues who run social media and press office for the organisation have the support they need if they are experiencing hostility, particularly if they are LGBTQ+.

Be proud of your work to support LGBTQ+ inclusion. Opponents of LGBTQ+ rights want you to be ashamed. Stand tall and be bold. Look out for more actions you can take to celebrate and support LGBTQ+ inclusion in the workplace in the months ahead.



JULY 25, 2022

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