



Eleanor Frances

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January 11 2025

https://x.com/Eleanor_Frances/status/1878164412139184162

I am delighted to have reached settlement in my Employment Tribunal case for discrimination and victimisation in connection with Civil Service EDI initiatives. DCMS and DSIT have agreed to pay £116k, and to make a statement committing to overhaul their HR policies.

In 2022, while employed as a civil servant at the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (@DCMS), I became concerned about the department's approach to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI). In line with Civil Service whistleblowing procedures, I raised formal concerns claiming that, through its HR policies and strategies, DCMS had:

- institutionally embraced politicised concepts and language
- used 'EDI assessments' to vet prospective senior civil servants
- compelled civil servants to recognise male people as women, and
- introduced 'self-identification' in government premises.

I also described a 'climate of fear' around EDI, and named senior civil servants who I claimed had been complicit in significant breaches of impartiality.

After raising these concerns, I believe that I was subjected to a sustained pattern of unfair treatment. This continued when my employment transferred to the newly formed Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT – @SciTechgovuk), and ultimately I reached the conclusion that I had no choice but to resign from my role.

I brought a claim in the Employment Tribunal for discrimination on the grounds of philosophical belief, sex, and disability, along with victimisation, protected disclosure detriment and unfair constructive dismissal. Further details are available on my @CrowdJustice page.

My lawyers quantified the value of my claim as £116,749. In settlement, DCMS and DSIT have agreed to pay this amount in full, plus the associated taxes.

DCMS and DSIT have jointly agreed to issue the following statement, signed by their respective Permanent Secretaries, Susannah Storey CB and Sarah Munby:

We are committed to fostering a tolerant and respectful working culture. As such, our departments are working together to introduce a revised Gender Reassignment policy, informed by a new central model policy which we anticipate will be available by the end of the year. In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, the revised policy will balance the rights of staff with different protected characteristics, including but not limited to gender reassignment, religion and belief, and sex. It will also build on the work both our departments have been doing in consultation with our staff in recent years.

We are committed to upholding our duty of impartiality, in line with the recently issued non-partisan Guidance on Diversity and Inclusion and Impartiality for Civil Servants, and the principles of the Civil Service code. The code is clear that we “must carry out our responsibilities in a way that is fair, just, equitable and reflects the Civil Service commitment to equality, and that we must not act in a way that unjustifiably favours or discriminates against particular individuals or interests”.

A well-functioning Civil Service is one that allows its civil servants to safely hold, voice, discuss or challenge any lawful perspective, without fear or favour. We will ensure we have a safe and open dialogue with all our staff, and we are grateful to those staff who have aided the drafting of this updated policy.

December 2024

While I am disappointed that it took legal action to achieve this result, I am extremely happy with the outcome.

[@peter_daly](#) of law firm [@Doyle_Clayton](#), who acted for me, said:

“This has been a long-running case, but could have been resolved quickly and simply several years ago. None of Eleanor’s concerns were complex or controversial. She only ever sought the application of existing law and policy in order to protect the civil service and her fellow civil servants. She offered to settle her claim for £1 at the start of litigation if that could be agreed.

But rather than treat Eleanor equitably, the civil service forced her out of her career and spent a six figure sum of taxpayers’ money in forcing the litigation to go away.

It is to be hoped that this experience will lead the civil service into a radical rethink of how it approaches disputes of this nature.”

I am very grateful for all the generous and heartfelt support that I have received. It has been truly humbling. I have been fortunate to meet many others who share my concerns, and who have lent their support in all manner of ways – often at some personal risk.

This outcome would not have been possible without the support of my talented legal team. [@peter_daly](#) has been an invaluable source of wise and judicious advice, and [@akuareindorf](#) has been an exceptional and trusted advocate. It has been a privilege to work with them both.

I am also thankful to [@SpeechUnion](#) for raising awareness of my case. I would recommend becoming a member, especially to any public servants who are worried that they cannot safely discharge their duty of impartiality.

Lastly – but by no means least – I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all those who have contributed financially via CrowdJustice. This made it possible to pursue this case and reach this outcome.

Now that I have received a settlement award – and since refunds are not possible through CrowdJustice – the amount I raised has been given to a worthy registered charity.