

Ursula Doyle

Publisher

“It struck me that the reason middle-aged women have got stuck in is that they understand the risks involved and safeguarding in a way that younger women don’t, and men don’t [understand this] because they are men.”



The cancellation

Ursula Doyle was the publisher of Hachette’s imprint Fleet. She acquired the rights to Kathleen Stock’s *Material Girls* in 2020, which explored the issue of why biological reality matters to feminism. Following the acquisition, Doyle experienced toxic online abuse from across the industry and found herself increasingly isolated by colleagues.

“Social media is a bit like rats. If you see one tweet saying you are a hateful bigoted bully, you can guarantee there will be hundreds of others.”

Her employer issued a trans inclusion policy the day before *Material Girls* was published. This policy appeared to contravene the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 by stating that staff can use “toilets and facilities that align to their gender identity” rather than their sex.

“People were insisting to me that their position on gender was one of neutrality. The HR director had pronouns in her email signature, then there was the trans inclusion policy in itself and the fact that there wasn’t a women’s network because that would offend transwomen. The window of what was considered neutral has completely moved.”

Hachette later allowed two authors to leave Doyle’s imprint and move to another over her beliefs, effectively rendering her unable to do her job. Doyle resigned in April 2024 and is taking her former employer to an employment tribunal.* She continued to experience widespread abuse. One Hachette employee posted about Doyle that being gender critical (“transphobic”, in the employee’s words) was equivalent to being racist or homophobic. “Being a bigot is not a protected characteristic I’m afraid!” she wrote.

The effect

According to Doyle, the personal and professional impact of her experiences has been horrific. She is currently enduring the intense stress of undertaking a legal case. It is hard for people who have been cancelled in publishing to find alternative employment, and she is not currently working.

Her case against Hachette will be heard by the Employment Tribunal in September 2025.*

* Ursula Doyle reached a settlement in her case against Hachette for discrimination on the grounds of her gender-critical beliefs in May 2025.