



## **Eleanor Frances v Department of Culture, Media and Sport and Department for Science, Innovation and Technology**

*Civil Service settles gender-critical discrimination claim for £116,000*

**Jurisdiction:** Employment Tribunal 2024

**Sectors:** Public

**Causes of action:** Belief discrimination, Constructive dismissal, Unfair treatment

**Legal representation:** Peter Daly at Doyle Clayton (solicitor), Akua Reindorf KC (counsel)

**Updates:** [Eleanor Frances's statement](#)

### **Summary of events**

Eleanor Frances was an engineer and Civil Service Manager at the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and later the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT). She holds gender-critical views that there are two biological sexes that cannot be changed.

In 2022, Frances raised a formal complaint about DCMS's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) policies and guidance on transgender inclusion. These policies, influenced by a:gender (an internal transgender lobby group) and the LGBT charity Stonewall, promoted self-identification, including access to single-sex facilities based on gender identity.

Frances's specific concerns included:

- politicised concepts and language within policies
- use of EDI assessments to vet candidates for senior roles
- compelled recognition of self-declared gender identity in workplaces
- implementation of self-identification rules for access to government facilities.

DCMS conducted internal investigations and concluded that there had been no discrimination or breaches of impartiality, dismissing Frances's concerns as unreasonable. Frances challenged these findings, citing serious failings in the investigation process, but her appeal was ultimately dismissed.

In addition to her complaint to DCMS, Frances wrote a letter to Cabinet Secretary Simon Case, signed by over 40 senior civil servants from 16 government departments. The letter highlighted the ideological capture of the Civil Service by activist networks, the harassment faced by staff with gender-critical beliefs and the improper influence of gender ideology on government policy. It called for urgent action to restore impartiality and uphold freedom of belief.

After she raised formal concerns, Frances was subjected to a sustained pattern of unfair treatment including baseless negative performance feedback and being stripped of her team and responsibilities. Despite her efforts to escalate the matter, senior leaders refused to intervene.

Ultimately, these conditions forced her resignation, and in 2023 Frances filed an employment-tribunal claim against DCMS and DSIT for discrimination on the grounds of philosophical belief (both her gender-critical belief and a belief in the integrity of the civil service), sex and disability, along with victimisation, protected disclosure detriment and unfair constructive dismissal.

## **Outcome**

In December 2024, DCMS and DSIT settled Frances's employment-tribunal claim for £116,749. As part of the settlement, both departments acknowledged failures in maintaining impartiality and committed to revising their transgender inclusion policies in compliance with the Equality Act.