

Written evidence from LGB ALLIANCE (FOE0202)

Background

1. LGB Alliance was formed in October 2019 in response to the refusal of Stonewall, once itself an LGB rights campaigning organisation, to engage in any discussion on issues of sex and gender and how they relate to LGB people.
2. Those who disagree with Stonewall's world view are subject to concerted efforts to suppress our freedom of expression. Our submission will seek to explain these efforts and to illustrate their grave implications for public discourse and the health of our democracy.
3. Stonewall promotes their own version of the Equality Act and runs a programme called Diversity Champions that awards "points" to public and private institutions according to their adherence to Stonewall's view of the Equality Act. Based on these points, Stonewall rates these organisations in an annual index of achievement.
<https://www.stonewall.org.uk/stonewall-champions>
4. Stonewall's version of the law is based on evidence given by their then CEO, Baroness Hunt of Bethnal Green, to the Women and Equalities Select Committee in 2015, in which Hunt recommended "*A review of the Equality Act 2010 to include 'gender identity' rather than 'gender reassignment' as a protected characteristic and to remove exemptions, such as access to single-sex spaces*"
<https://www.stonewall.org.uk/women-and-equalities-select-committee-inquiry-transgender-equality>.
Astonishingly, Stonewall interprets the Equality Act, in its training and publications, as if this proposal had already been adopted. The public has understandably become confused. We believe this is a kind of gaslighting and we are determined to counteract it.
5. In effect, Stonewall campaigns for a world where "gender identity" is a protected characteristic and sex-protected spaces are open to all, which would effectively remove sex as a protected characteristic. This is the heart of what we call "gender identity ideology", according to which everyone has a gender identity that matters more than their biological sex. We strongly challenge this view as having no scientific basis: we also believe it is regressive, homophobic, and damaging to children and young people. Part of our work involves explaining and disseminating this view. In so doing, we find our views are misrepresented and efforts made to suppress them.
6. With hundreds of Diversity Champions including the House of Commons, the Scottish and Welsh devolved assemblies, the Ministry of Justice, CPS, the armed forces and emergency services, BBC, Ofcom, Ofsted, the Care Quality Commission, The Tavistock Clinic, trade unions, councils, financial institutions, law firms and the majority of universities, we would argue that the influence of Stonewall is all-

pervasive. It is based on the slogans “acceptance without exception” and “inclusiveness” which we believe to be completely false and misleading. We – LGB people and women who emphasise the key importance of biological sex – are not “accepted”. We are not “included”. “Inclusiveness” primarily refers to including males who define themselves as women in all women’s spaces, activities, and facilities.

7. The most worrying aspect of all is that Stonewall insists that there can be “no debate” of their world view, as if dissent is in some sense too repugnant to countenance. This view has taken hold, and at the moment, virtually any statement seeking to discuss the subjects of sex and gender is described as “transphobic”, a word that in our view has nothing to do with a phobia and is used simply to signal a taboo.
8. Most broadcasters and print media avoid these issues. Many tell us they do so because they can’t face the inevitable backlash. We therefore rely on Twitter, newsletters and webinars to disseminate our views. Fifteen LGB Alliances have now sprung up worldwide, from Brazil to Australia – and in the UK we now have over 33k followers on Twitter.
9. Since LGB Alliance was set up to champion the rights of people with same-sex sexual orientation – which includes challenging the notion that everyone has a gender identity, which must take precedence over biological sex – we have faced consistent defamation from a range of individuals and organisations including MPs, peers, activists, journalists. Our opponents never engage with the subject matter: instead, they seek only to discredit and silence us. With some parts of society, these efforts have unfortunately been successful and the lies are accepted as truth.

Does hate speech law need to be updated or clarified as shifting social attitudes lead some to consider commonly held views hateful?

10. Laws are already in place to punish dangerous speech: speech that incites violence. We have no need of laws that would impose a new authoritarianism, that denies any fact-based discussion of ideas. Those who oppose our views are enthusiastic supporters of new hate crime legislation.
11. There is a global movement to impose gender identity ideology on a world that is only just waking up to what is going on. The strategy is laid out in a document sponsored by the law firm Dentons – *Only Adults – Good Practices in Legal Gender Recognition for Youth* - https://www.iglyo.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/IGLYO_v3-1.pdf Its key recommendation to activists is to avoid media attention. Instead, activists are advised to work with the younger generation of politicians, and to try to ensure that legislation is slipped in “under the radar”, preferably by combining it with more popular pieces of legislation (like same-sex marriage). Banning freedom of expression is essential for the plan to be successful, and it is our job to speak up loudly and clearly.

12. One of the key pillars of the plan to impose gender identity ideology is to pass increasingly broad laws on “hate crime” to prevent any discussion of sex and gender issues. The views of those who support LGB Alliance are frequently described as “hateful” despite the contrary being true. The objective is clear: call something “hateful” and any person expressing that view will be punished. This is the behaviour of an authoritarian regime – not a liberal democracy.

Does current police guidance and practice on hate speech law help promote freedom of expression?

13. No – quite the opposite. Many police forces are Stonewall Diversity Champions. The College of Policing recently stated that social media hate crime must be treated as a hate crime. If a person believes the action was motivated by hostility it “should be recorded and flagged as a non-crime hate incident”. The person is to be referred to in the report as the “victim” and the “incident” is to remain on the “perpetrator’s” record. **No evidence is required.** This is a shocking step towards a police state.

Is greater clarity required to ensure the law is understood and fair?

14. Yes – the wording of the 2010 Equality Act needs urgent clarification. Stonewall and others consistently misrepresent the Act to advise that any ‘self-identifying’ male may enter spaces reserved for women. This has led to the situation where many hospitals, shops, women’s refuges, rape crisis centres, and prisons believe they need to allow such men into previously protected spaces.
15. The Act says that discrimination may be used when “it’s a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim”. This is not clear at all and has led to deliberate disinformation being spread so that the intended protections of the law can be ignored by those who campaign for the end of single sex spaces.
16. In addition, we believe that all official documents where sex and gender are conflated must be re-written. Neither gender nor gender identity have any meaning under the law and massive confusion results from the widespread misunderstanding of the terms.

How has the situation changed in universities in the two years since the Committee’s report on the issue?

17. It has deteriorated significantly. One example, which paints a terrifying picture of the loss of freedom of expression in our universities, is that of Kathleen Stock, Professor of Philosophy at Sussex University, recently awarded an OBE in recognition for her services to higher education. She has been subject to years of attacks for her willingness to promote freedom of expression. She talks about this when interviewed by The Guardian ([Kathleen Stock: taboo around gender identity has chilling effect on academics | Higher education | The Guardian](#))::

“Academics being online, students being online – it’s introduced a whole new landscape for dealing with controversial ideas, especially when those ideas are controversial within your peer group or a student body. Threats to academic freedom don’t just come from China, or millionaires trying to buy a library wing for your college; they also come from students whipping up a petition within seconds of you saying something and trying to get you fired.”

Sometimes, she claims, it is more insidious than sackings: “For academics [the gender identity debate] has a chilling effect, because academics believe their careers may suffer in ways that are less visible: they don’t get promoted, or they’re removed from an editorial board.” The net result of all this, she says, is an impoverishment of ideas and knowledge, and damage to the dissemination of information.”

18. Another example is the recent apology issued by University of Essex to two professors, Jo Phoenix and Rosa Freedman following the publication of a report into the treatment of the two Professors. The University admitted that its treatment of the Professors in cancelling a number of their talks infringed their freedom of speech. Julie Bindel, writing in The Spectator on 19 May 2021 ([Stonewall and the silencing of feminist voices at universities | The Spectator](#)), says: “Both professors Jo Phoenix and Rosa Freedman have views which accord with our current laws on gender identity, and yet they had a number of talks cancelled by Essex university and Freedman was potentially rejected from a job after they were labelled ‘transphobes’ by a mob of intolerant academics and students. Now Essex has been forced into issuing a humiliating apology and admitted that its treatment of the professors infringed on their freedom of speech.” Regarding the independent report commissioned by the University of Essex, Bindel says “The report makes it clear that the Stonewall Diversity Champions programme is in tension with academic freedom.” This is an issue of wider concern as “Stonewall lists 121 universities as members of its ‘Diversity Champions’ scheme. Similar stories of academics and students being investigated for expressing ‘gender critical’ beliefs are surfacing across the UK.”
19. We urge the committee to report again on universities. One academic recently commented that the atmosphere across UK academia is very similar to that of Russia under Putin.

Does everyone have equal protection of their right to freedom of expression?

20. No – LGB Alliance is attacked regularly and has no protection. The same applies to all who speak out against gender identity ideology. The committee may be aware of the extraordinary attacks on JK Rowling after she spoke out – and also that she has remained quiet since then. Hundreds of less well-known people – mainly women – have been banned from Twitter for “hate speech”, which includes saying that a man cannot become a woman.

21. In contrast, LGBTQ+ groups receive public funding to spread their views. All the main social media companies, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Tik Tok, YouTube and so on, subscribe to gender identity ideology. They all have a similar definition of “hate speech” which includes gender identity as a protected characteristic. At a stroke – critics of gender ideology are silenced, or our speech severely limited.

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