



Wickes Building Supplies Limited  
Vision House  
19 Colonial Way  
Watford  
United Kingdom  
WD24 4JL

21 August 2022

Dear Mr Wood,

## Re: Wickes Branded Presence at Brighton Pride Parade August 2022

We write to you regarding your company's participation in the Brighton Pride event in August this year and the display of two slogans on your pride float reading *"No LGB without the T"* and *"Ban Conversion therapy for all"*. While we accept that this was a well-intentioned attempt to show support and solidarity with the gay community, we are concerned that you may not be aware of the relevant political context, plurality of opinion among gay and lesbian people regarding these statements or how controversial they are.

Our hope in corresponding is to initiate a constructive dialogue to assist your understanding of the wider issues at play in gay politics and shed light on the political implications of your press statement to the effect that you *"are an inclusive home improvement employer and retailer and support the LGBTQ+ community in its entirety"*<sup>1</sup>. We wish to emphasise that we are happy to meet and discuss this matter should you have any queries or wish to explore further the issues we will raise.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-11091091/Wickes-sparks-backlash-Brighton-Pride-festival-No-LGB-without-T-poster.html>

By way of background, we are a not-for-profit, grassroots, volunteer run organisation dedicated to advocating on behalf of male homosexuals<sup>2</sup>. Fundamentally we believe in the right of homosexuals to organise politically as a class, and we work to fight modern forms of homophobia.

### Regarding "*No LGB without the T*"

While the statement "*No LGB without the T*" may have the appearance of a benign show of solidarity you should be aware that in the context of modern debates it is a highly contentious proposition. You should be aware that in 2015 the controversial charity Stonewall began advocating on behalf of trans issues and summarily redefined homosexuality as "same-gender" rather than "same-sex" attraction. Its purpose was to buttress its belief that "trans men are men" and "trans women are women". A belief which in turn led the present CEO of Stonewall to make the comparison between lesbians who would not countenance sexual relationships with trans women and "sexual racism"<sup>3</sup>.

The growing extremism of the mainstream gay rights charities extends to several spheres of public discourse with the CEO of Stonewall recently approving a tweet making the highly contentious suggestion that two-year-olds may be aware of a "trans identity"<sup>4</sup>. You will no doubt be aware that multiple organisations are now distancing themselves from Stonewall and leaving the various schemes they run - one of which, we note, your company joined in 2018. As, what were once, gay rights charities now advocate for ever more extreme ideas regarding sex and gender, same sex attracted people are increasingly politically organising away from such philosophies. Organisations such as our own and the LGB Alliance are examples of that trend.

This context is key to understanding why extremists are now demanding that homosexuals only politically organise in a manner that meets with their approval, thus "*no LGB without the T*" is not, in reality, a show of solidarity, it is a command that homosexuals accept being called "sexual racists" if they observe or celebrate same sex attraction. We appreciate entirely that the above may seem surprising or counter-intuitive to those unfamiliar with the debate. Indeed, we too are surprised to find ourselves in political conflict with organisations who claim to represent us.

Our position is that same-sex attracted people have the right to politically organise as we see fit and that a vital feature of a democracy is the right of minority groups - indeed any group - to organise freely around a shared characteristic or shared interests without being

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gaymensnetwork.com/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-10225111/Stonewall-brands-lesbians-sexual-racists-raising-concerns-sex-transgender-women.html>

<sup>4</sup> <https://unherd.com/thepost/stonewall-thinks-two-year-olds-can-be-trans/>

told they must organise with others. Same sex attracted people are different as a category from those with the protected characteristic of gender reassignment. We bear no malice to such people - indeed many support our organisation - but we have different interests and must be free to behave like any other group in society rather than be told we may only organise with others.

### Regarding *"Ban conversion therapy for all"*

The above statement relates to HM Government indicating it would legislate to ban "gay conversion therapy" but not the supposed trans equivalent. While, again, we accept that your company was seeking to make a benign statement in favour of equality we are concerned that you may be unaware of the relevant medical context for the Government's decision.

The Government took the decision it did because organisations such as our own highlighted homophobia as a safeguarding concern at NHS gender identity clinics. Our argument was that a "trans conversion therapy ban" in effect meant that doctors presented with children identifying as trans could not offer talking therapies or explore reasons or co-morbidities without falling foul of the new law<sup>5</sup>. Some children adopting these identities may have homophobic parents or are themselves struggling with the manifestation of their nascent sexuality.

Former Tavistock governor, Dr David Bell raised these issues in an interview in 2018<sup>6</sup> as did Mrs. Sonia Appleby, Safeguarding Lead at the Tavistock,<sup>7</sup> throughout her tenure at the clinic culminating in her "whistle-blower" case of 2021. You may be aware that the service provided at that clinic was so poor it was subject to an external inquiry by former President of the Royal College of Paediatricians, Dr Hillary Cass OBE and subsequently closed following her judgment that it was "not safe"<sup>8</sup>. You may also be aware the Times newspaper has reported that up to 1000 parents are to take medical negligence actions against this service<sup>9</sup>.

We hope these facts demonstrate that while the statement "Ban Conversion therapy for all" sounds reasonable and plausible, it is in fact a highly controversial suggestion. One

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<sup>5</sup><https://static1.squarespace.com/static/6200252604e9795287de2ada/t/621ff167d49b731100b1b248/1646260583939/Gay+Men+UK+Consultation+Response+Branded+9.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2021/may/02/tavistock-trust-whistleblower-david-bell-transgender-children-gids>

<sup>7</sup>[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6149eb48d3bf7f05ac396f79/Ms\\_S\\_Appleby\\_vs\\_Tavistock\\_and\\_Portman\\_NHS\\_Foundation\\_Trust.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6149eb48d3bf7f05ac396f79/Ms_S_Appleby_vs_Tavistock_and_Portman_NHS_Foundation_Trust.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2022/jul/28/nhs-closing-down-london-gender-identity-clinic-for-children>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/4e7fc538-18dc-11ed-b1f4-627a202c7457?shareToken=1678af115e8ff13dd624f9f359177d8b>

that could lead to doctors being prosecuted if they attempt to investigate the underlying causes of a complex presentation in the treatment of vulnerable young children.

## Conclusion

As an employer and service provider, you may wish to keep in mind the impact of cases such as *Forstater v CGD*<sup>10</sup> inasmuch as "gender critical" views in opposition to those promoted by your company at Brighton Pride now qualify for protection as beliefs in law.

We trust we have demonstrated that what may superficially seem like inoffensive and agreeable statements are in reality extreme positions set in a complex political and medical landscape.

It may well be that the ensuing media and social media coverage of your presence at Brighton Pride has prompted some further consideration within your organisation. We repeat that our purpose in writing to you is to open constructive dialogue on these issues and to assist you with understanding the relevant context.

Yours faithfully,

Jonathan Hayward, Director  
For and on behalf of Gay Men's Network

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<sup>10</sup>[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/60c1cce1d3bf7f4bd9814e39/Maya\\_Forstater\\_v\\_CGD\\_Europe\\_and\\_others\\_UKEAT0105\\_20\\_JOJ.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/60c1cce1d3bf7f4bd9814e39/Maya_Forstater_v_CGD_Europe_and_others_UKEAT0105_20_JOJ.pdf)