



01-Nov-2022

Ian Anderson
Chair of Trustees, Stonewall
192 St John St,
London,
EC1V 4JY

Dear Mr Anderson,

We are writing to you as the Directors of the not-for-profit company, the Gay Men's Network. We are a grass roots organisation formed to fight homophobia in all its forms and advocate for homosexual males. We write to you in connection with your appearance on the Laura Kuennsberg show on Sunday, October 30th, 2022.

We appreciate the general conciliatory tenor of your interview, and in particular we are heartened by your statement that Stonewall, under your Chairmanship of trustees, will adopt a "big tent" approach to the difficult and ongoing debate around the concept of gender identity ideology and its implications for our society. We welcome this change in tone and hope your comments signal an end to Stonewall's recent "no debate" policy on this issue which has only served to exclude homosexuals and women from these conversations. Developing a constructive dialogue with Stonewall in which groups like ours are given the space to participate would be a considerable step forward.

We remain, however, concerned regarding your position on the proposed ban on gay conversion therapy. Stonewall successfully lobbied the Government to expand the bill to include gender identity. However, there is now a growing body of evidence which suggests that such a policy would, in fact, mandate doctors - under threat of prosecution - to fast-track children, who might otherwise grow up to be homosexual, into irreversible and lifelong medical decisions.

We urge you and your organisation to review the findings of the interim Cass report and her subsequent conclusion that the GIDS service at the Tavistock was "not safe" and both the internal report by Dr David Bell in 2019-2020 and the judgment in *Appleby v Tavistock* each of which highlighted homophobia as a safeguarding concern at the clinic. In his report, Dr Bell made the disturbing observation that homophobic parents were seeking out transition as a way of avoiding having a homosexual child.

It must surely be clear to you why the Stonewall position on conversion therapy is of such concern to many gay men. As the chair of trustees of an organisation that apparently advocates for homosexuals (though we note the Stonewall glossary prefers the term "homogender") we would hope that you consider it part of your duties to absorb and reflect on these concerns.

Finally, as the Director of the Gay Men's Network with responsibility for Wales, might I draw your attention to the role of your organisation in that country particularly so far as schools are concerned. I have recently been made aware of educational material espousing gender identity ideology apparently inspired by your organisation and its values. We take the view this material is frequently inappropriate for children and is fundamentally homophobic since it relies upon the notion that gender non-conforming boys are in fact girls. Many of us remember from our own youth that we too were gender non-confirming as children and yet have grown into happy, gay, adult men - not girls. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this matter further with you or those in your organisation responsible for Wales.

We reiterate that we welcome your call for respectful and open dialogue and if this amounts to an offer to meet with groups such as ours we should like to accept that invitation and try to make progress in a difficult area through discussion and collaboration such that the dignity of all parties is maintained.

Yours Faithfully

Jon Hayward, by and on behalf of the Directors of the Gay Men's Network