

Kiri Tunks
Director, Woman's Place UK

31 January 2022

Dear Kiri

NMC Membership of the Stonewall Diversity Champions Programme

Thank you for your letter dated 23 December 2021, signed by 719 people. We have given this very careful consideration, consulting colleagues within our organisation, our Executive team, and our Council. We have taken time to do this – and thank you for your patience during this period – because our responsibility to promote equality and tackle discrimination for the professionals on our register, the public we serve, and our colleagues, is fundamental to us.

We have decided to remain a member of the Stonewall Diversity Champions Programme. It is important to recognise that this is primarily a workforce-facing programme, designed to help us as an employer to create a welcoming environment for our LGBT+ NMC colleagues, and to understand and address the challenges they face. Creating an inclusive workplace for everyone in our organisation is an essential part of the NMC's values of fairness and kindness. We believe that the Stonewall programme helps us in this regard.

Your letter raised a number of specific concerns about Stonewall's policy positions, and we recognise that there is a high level of interest in these issues. Most of the people on our register are women, as are nearly two-thirds of our staff. We are acutely aware that women, as well as trans communities, face discrimination, inequality and harassment. We are a statutory regulator and an employer, and in both these capacities we are committed to supporting a health and care system that upholds rights and advances equality for all.

Membership of the Stonewall workplace programme does not affect our ability to regulate our professions fairly and effectively. We are not 'affiliated' to Stonewall; nor do we receive legal advice from them. The workplace programme has no connection with the processes we use to develop our regulatory standards, which are produced

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The nursing and midwifery regulator for England,
Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland

Registered charity in England and Wales (1091434) and in Scotland (SC038362)

following wide-ranging open consultations with many stakeholders, professionals and the public.

These standards include our Code for nurses, midwives and nursing associates. The Code guides professionals' practice, and has equality, inclusion and human rights at its centre. It says that professionals must uphold people's human rights, avoid making assumptions, and recognise diversity and individual choice. This person-centred approach is paramount. It requires professionals to ensure that every individual's circumstances, needs and preferences are heard and respected. As a regulator, we expect professionals to act in accordance with the law, current clinical guidance, and the principles set out in the Code.

We work with a range of partners and diversity organisations, of which Stonewall is one, to understand the issues facing different equality groups and communities. Our equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) work is underpinned by data and evidence, and by compliance with equality and human rights legislation including the Public Sector Equality Duty. In this way, we're playing our part as a regulator and as an employer, in tackling inequality and discrimination facing the 745,000 professionals on our register, people who use health and care services, and our employees.

Thank you again for your letter, and for challenging us to think carefully about the concerns you and your co-signatories have raised. We are committed to upholding women's rights and trans rights, and supporting the professionals on our register to do so too.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Andrea Sutcliffe', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Andrea Sutcliffe CBE
Chief Executive and Registrar