

**Request to Welsh government 27 January 2021 – From Kate Harris and Bev Jackson – LGB Alliance.**



Jane Hutt AS/MS  
Deputy Minister and Chief Whip  
Welsh Government  
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Sent by email to  
[correspondence.jane.hutt@gov.wales](mailto:correspondence.jane.hutt@gov.wales)

cc: Leanne.Wood@senedd.wales  
cc: Laura.Jones@senedd.wales

27 Jan 2021

Dear Deputy Minister

**Call for cross-party discussions on proposed Stonewall Cymru LGBT Action Plan due 31 March 2021**

We are writing to ask you to join a non-partisan discussion on the LGBT+ Action Plan for Wales – due for release in 9 weeks’ time. We believe this discussion is urgently needed, since the Action Plan may have severely detrimental consequences for the protected characteristic of sexual orientation.

We believe that the likely impending erosion of LGB rights is not intentional. After all, the Welsh Government has undertaken to ensure that advancing “equality for transgender and non-binary people will not erode the rights of women and other people with protected characteristics”. This is an important and much appreciated aspiration, but complex to achieve. We would like to offer you our support in addressing these complexities. We know that you have recently been in correspondence with our sister organisation LGB Alliance Cymru, and also Ruth Dineen, and we would like to build on the ideas already shared with you.

You have outsourced the job of developing the LGBT Action Plan to Stonewall Cymru. We are sure that you did so in good faith. After all, over the decades, Stonewall built up a reputation as the leading UK LGB lobby group, whose reputation for fact-based argument and bridge building was second to none. Indeed, many of us in LGB Alliance helped to build it up and were proud to do so.

When Stonewall changed its mission in 2015, becoming what can best be called a gender identity lobbying organisation, it kept the same name. This has understandably given rise to confusion. It would have been helpful if, at the time, Stonewall had renamed itself as “Queer, Trans, Intersex People’s Group” as this would make a clear statement of the group’s priorities since 2015. It has been a heart-breaking blow for many of Stonewall’s one-time LGB supporters, who feel the organisation has abandoned them.

Today’s Stonewall promotes a very narrow view of sex and gender and does not represent LGB people as a whole. It insists that everyone has a “gender identity” that takes precedence over biological sex, and that anyone who challenges this doctrine is a bigot. This includes people who say they are only attracted to others of the same sex – in other words, the very homosexuals whose interests Stonewall once held dear. It is a sorry state of affairs, and almost incomprehensible to those hearing it for the first time.

You may not be aware of the two campaigns most heavily pushed by Stonewall right now. The first is that males should be allowed to compete with women at rugby. After extensive research and consultation last year with all rugby unions, World Rugby ruled the risks of injury to women were too high. Stonewall does not accept this and campaigns against the safety of women who play, many of whom are lesbians.

The second relates to the Judicial Review of the Gender Identity Development Services at the Tavistock and Portman clinic brought by Keira Bell and Mrs A in Oct 2020. One might expect Stonewall, theoretically an LGB campaigning group, to be standing up for young lesbian Keira Bell. The opposite is true. In the original hearing Stonewall formally requested to intervene on behalf of the Tavistock. This was rejected by the judges as Stonewall was unable to provide any additional evidence that the court did not already have. Yesterday we learned that Stonewall is applying for a second time to intervene – this time in the appeal by the Tavistock.

Here we have just two examples of the way Stonewall has “changed sides” if you like, and now campaigns directly against the interests of homosexuals – in both these cases they happen to be lesbians.

LGB Alliance, which now has 14 allied groups worldwide, was set up as a response to Stonewall's refusal to allow any dialogue on important issues of sex and gender. Stonewall believes we are "transphobic". We don't accept that it is "transphobic" to stress the importance of biological sex. We don't accept that it is "transphobic" to say a child can't be "born in the wrong body". Many LGB people hold these views. Instead of labelling and silencing we believe that people of different views need to talk.

We believe in freedom of speech as a central pillar of democracy. Expressing ideas that differ from those held by Stonewall Cymru should be allowed and encouraged in a democracy – not banned. We all know that the best way to learn is to listen to opposing views and develop and grow.

As a member of Stonewall Diversity Champions, the Welsh Assembly clearly has an established relationship with that organisation. However, by working solely with Stonewall, the Welsh Government is not receiving a plurality of views, and certainly not hearing from those who oppose gender identity theory.

We note that in your email to Ruth Dineen dated 18 December 2020, that "There will be opportunities for organisations and individuals to input to the plan during its development". We respectfully suggest that since Stonewall Cymru has been working on this plan since June 2020 this is too little and too late.

The Proposed Timeline of Work between the Welsh Government and Stonewall Cymru was agreed as follows:

*"End of June 2020 – scoping document to receive approval, enabling Stonewall Cymru to commence work on the terms laid out..."*

*"End of June – End of August – Stonewall Cymru to undertake outreach and research. To provide key main findings to Welsh Government ahead of the summer recess for consideration."*

*"March 2021 – Initial proposed final deadline for the publishing of LGBT Action Plan, up to this point Stonewall Cymru to engage with Welsh Government on specific elements of the plan"*

It seems to us that is not reasonable to ask for serious input at this late stage – with only 9 weeks to go. We therefore suggest that you “press pause” on the project while a cross-party group reviews the assumptions and ideology Stonewall Cymru are likely to have built into the draft plan. Clearly defined terms and a balance of rights will be needed to build broad acceptance of the plan amongst the electorate – and we can help with that.

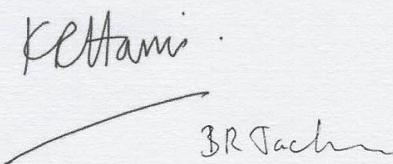
We know that your Government is committed to evidence-based policy making. In LGB Alliance Cymru’s recent letter to you and the First Minister, the group commended the Welsh Government for “using the best available scientific evidence in managing the country’s response to the pandemic”. It is important that the LGBT+ Action Plan commands respect, and that surely means it too must be based on evidence and not on a limited, doctrinaire ideology.

Our goal, like yours, is to ensure equality for all. By “equality” we mean social acceptance as well as equal protection under the law. To achieve that, it is essential to hear a range of views – to hear from all those likely to be affected by a national plan for equality. With that in mind, we are writing to you, and to Senedd members Leanne Wood and Laura Anne Jones, to ask you all to consider setting up a cross-party group to revisit the thinking behind the plan.

This is an important issue requiring careful scrutiny and open, thoughtful discussion. We would like to help in any way we can. We would be happy to host any initial meetings with you or with your officials to set the terms of reference of a cross-party group to address these issues.

Please let us know your thoughts. We look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards

The image shows two handwritten signatures. The top signature is "Kate Harris" and the bottom one is "Bev Jackson". Both signatures are written in black ink on a white background.

Kate Harris & Bev Jackson  
LGB Alliance



**Welsh government's response to Kate Harris and Bev Jackson – LGB Alliance letter dated 27 January 2021.**

Ein cyf/Our ref TO/JH-/00114/21

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LGB Alliance  
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17/02/21

Dear Kate,

Thank you for your email of 27 January addressed to the Deputy Minister and Chief Whip Jane Hutt MS. I have been asked to reply.

As you are aware work is currently underway to create an LGBT+ Action Plan for Wales. The Welsh Government is committed to developing a robust, challenging and cross-cutting action plan – one that strengthens the protections for LGBT+ people, promotes equality for all and helps coordinate ambitious actions across government and beyond. It is the intention that this Action Plan will be drafted by Easter, with a view to launching a public consultation thereafter.

We are working with a range of stakeholders from across the LGBT+ community who have been brought together to help produce a draft action plan. It is vital that in addition to the expertise of this group, lived experiences of LGBT+ people guide the content and actions of the plan throughout its development. There will therefore be further engagement opportunities for LGBT+ people and stakeholders, as well as the wider public, to share their views on the plan during the public consultation phase.

This consultation will be key to the development of the plan and responses will be shared with the relevant Ministers. We would encourage all interested parties to take part in this consultation and submit their views. As you have shown an interest in the development of the plan we will write to you notifying you when the public consultation opens.

The Welsh Government takes seriously our duty to consider the impact on equality of all of our decisions. This includes identifying where we can take action to advance equality of opportunity, eliminate discrimination and foster good relations, and where possible, mitigate negative impacts which may result from our decisions.

Feedback from any organisations and individuals with an interest in the LGBT+ Action Plan will be considered carefully to ensure that it is not only an ambitious plan but that it takes into consideration the advancement of equality for all in Wales and does not erode the rights of any group.

Yours Sincerely,