

**From:** [Douglass, Caroline](#)  
**To:** [REDACTED]; [Lawton, Nicola](#); [Sutton, Rob](#); [Marks, Kate](#); [Rawlinson, Lee](#)  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]; [REDACTED]; [Burns, Anna](#); [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: Trans / gender critical belief issues- Exec champion update  
**Date:** 03 November 2022 10:27:12  
**Attachments:** [image005.png](#)  
[image006.jpg](#)  
[image007.png](#)  
[image008.png](#)  
[image009.png](#)

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[REDACTED]

Thanks for this. I would very much welcome a conversation about this network and it's impacts on the existing Womens Network (soon to be Gender Equality Network) and members. I would like to understand better its role, our responsibilities and how we promote a balanced and respectful approach. I think there is the potential for confusion for staff about the role of this network and as a result, some of our transgender staff to feel even more isolated. I note in the briefing to James it mentioned that I would be joining briefings on 7/8 November – I don't have any of these in my diary so I don't think this is correct.

I look forward to the conversation and improving my understanding

Thanks

Caroline

**Caroline Douglass**

**Executive Director Flood and Coastal Risk Management**

Environment Agency

☎ External: [REDACTED] Internal: [REDACTED] Mobile: [REDACTED]

**Pronouns:** [REDACTED] ([why is this here?](#))

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**From:** [REDACTED] [REDACTED]@environment-agency.gov.uk>

**Sent:** 02 November 2022 17:08

**To:** Douglass, Caroline <caroline.douglass@environment-agency.gov.uk>; Lawton, Nicola <nicola.lawton@environment-agency.gov.uk>; Sutton, Rob <rob.sutton@environment-agency.gov.uk>; Marks, Kate <Kate.Marks@environment-agency.gov.uk>; Rawlinson, Lee <lee.rawlinson@environment-agency.gov.uk>

**Cc:** [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@environment-agency.gov.uk>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@environment-agency.gov.uk>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@environment-agency.gov.uk>; Burns, Anna <anna.burns@environment-agency.gov.uk>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@environment-agency.gov.uk>

**Subject:** Trans / gender critical belief issues- Exec champion update

Hi all

You will recall we met together on 12 Sept to discuss support for colleagues caught up in ongoing public debate about gender critical views in the context of transgender rights, and how we can work to deescalate conflict. Since then a number of things have happened:

- Conflict between colleagues on a Women's Network/ ADHD Autism Network event held 18 Oct, with several people reporting wellbeing impacts

Two new FOIs [REDACTED] related to our participation in Stonewall Workplace Equality Index / spending on Stonewall membership and training

- Initial draft of new 'communication principles' developed by HR EDI team, with the aim of setting clearer expectations for users of Yammer, MS Teams chat etc. I am involved in this work, along with [REDACTED]. The initial draft was discussed at ExCo and shared with James on 26 Oct. We have also shared it with our Network leads and collated their initial feedback on 1 Nov
- New cross-government Sex Equality and Equity Network (SEEN- [About SEEN \(seen-network.uk\)](#)) established on 20 Oct, with involvement from EA and NE colleagues. We will support this as we do other diversity networks
- Further conversations with individuals on all sides of the issues, with the aim of fostering better relations/ mutual understanding, protecting wellbeing and understanding where our policies, guidance etc may need improvement

Over the next couple of weeks a few things are happening which may lead to escalations and require your leadership support:

- Meetings 7-8 November between my team, HR and [REDACTED] EDI teams and the [REDACTED] leads for SEEN ([REDACTED] and [REDACTED]). I and my team are working with others to support the new network, as we do our existing networks, and to advise them on how to avoid escalation of conflict/ minimise wellbeing impacts on all sides. [@Marks, Kate](#) one thing we will explore is whether the Network want to align themselves with Faith & Belief and /or if they need an Exec Champion/Sponsor within Defra group/ EA
- Likely 'launch' of SEEN via All Defra Group Yammer channel post between 8-11 Nov. We hope to use the Yammer post as an opportunity to trial a 'moderation panel' approach to ensure virtual conversation happens respectfully
- LGBT+ Network committee meeting 9-10 November
- Transgender Awareness Week and Transgender Day of Remembrance 13-20 Nov
- All staff call 24 Nov (Lucy, John L and James on the panel). I've been asked to prepare a briefing note for the panel by 17 Nov.

James had been made aware of the new Network and [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and I helped [REDACTED] prepare a briefing for him today—see attached, along with his response.

Beyond the next few weeks we have the following in train in hopes of further de-escalating:

- My team pursuing external expert advice from BiTC, in hopes they can help facilitate a session between relevant Network leads. [REDACTED] is helping lay groundwork for this.
- Ongoing work with HR EDI team and others on the 'communication principles'. I hope by early Dec we will have a full package that improves on the draft shared with ExCo and Networks this week, along with a 'phase 2' document which outlines escalation and moderation approach, clearer links to our existing people policies etc. I would like to arrange a meeting with you all around that time to review the draft together. My team will then lead consultation with EA Networks (including SEEN) and use this feedback to produce a final draft, ideally in December. Rob will support me in engaging our Trade Unions as well. We will then bring this for signoff to Communication Customers and Engagement Portfolio governance group ideally in January—date tbc with Anna Burns' team—and enlist Defra Internal Comms team support to roll out
- Exploring review of some relevant policy documents with HR
- Exploring advance publication of information regarding our involvement with Stonewall to reduce FOI burden

Please can you let me know if you have any concerns or suggestions re the above, and whether you would value a meeting to discuss?

@Nicola Lawton please can you update Lucy and let me know if she needs further briefing beyond the note we'll prepare for the all staff call?

Many thanks

[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

Manager – [Redacted]

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Location: Brampton, Cambridgeshire (working from home for foreseeable future)

**Please note** I work a flexible schedule, with longer hours Mon-Thurs and shorter Fridays (details in my Outlook calendar / out of office message )


Pronouns: [Redacted] ([why is this here?](#))

[Redacted]

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How to pronounce my name  
([phonetic spelling](#))  
[Why is this here?](#)

[Redacted]  
[Redacted]


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