

To: Equality and Human Rights Commission
Fleetbank House
2-6 Salisbury Square
London
EC4Y 8JX

Sent via email to:
Alastair Pringle, Interim Chief Executive
Kishwer, Baroness Falkner of Margravine, Chair
Copy to Melanie Field

As leaders of Trans and LGBTQ+ organisations we are writing to express our frustration and disappointment at the Equality and Human Rights Commission's (EHRC) recent record on LGBTQ+ people's rights and trans people's rights specifically.

Hate crime against LGBTQ+ people has been rising for years. We continue to experience grave injustice and inequity at school, at work, in the healthcare system, within homelessness and in our communities. These poor experiences are particularly stark for trans people, LGBTQ+ people of colour and for those of us who live in poverty.

The EHRC has a wide range of powers it could use to make equality a reality for our communities, whether influencing public policy debates, strategically litigating to advance our rights, catalysing change in complex policy areas like healthcare or providing guidance that resolves uncertainty and ambiguity about delivering our rights in reality.

We are disappointed that, despite the realms of possibility to improve LGBTQ+ people's lives and our access to our human rights, the EHRC has driven forward very little for our communities in recent years. Against that backdrop of a lack of support for LGBTQ+ people, we are frustrated that you then chose to intervene in a case to say that so-called 'gender critical' beliefs should be a protected philosophical belief.

It was a kick in the teeth to trans people to see the EHRC appear to put their organisational weight behind a movement that has only contributed to rising hate for trans people in communities, creating a policy environment where it is harder for trans people to access their rights.

That the EHRC chose to add their weight to this intervention has sent a deeply damaging message to trans people about their validity and worth. This intervention has lost the trust of trans people and LGBTQ+ people more broadly.

We urge the EHRC to engage with our communities and review how the EHRC can truly play an effective role in making our human rights a reality. As leaders of trans and LGBTQ+ organisations, we want to see a strategic programme of activity to support our communities and address the inequities we experience in healthcare, at work, at school, within homelessness and in our communities. Trust can only be rebuilt with effective action and good community engagement.

It's time to step up.

Signatories to this letter:

Susie Green, Chief Executive Mermaids
Helen Belcher, Chair TransActual CIC
Dr Jay Stewart, CEO Gendered Intelligence
Paul Roberts OBE, Chief Executive LGBT+ Consortium
Nancy Kelley, Chief Executive Stonewall
Paul Martin OBE, Chief Executive LGBT Foundation
Phyll Opoku-Gyimah, Co-Founder & Executive Director UK Black Pride
Sue Sander, Chair Schools Out UK
Andy Hunt, CEO Intercom Trust
Maurice Greenham, Chair North Midlands LGBT Older People's Group
Jenny-Anne Bishop OBE, Chairperson Unique Transgender Network / TransForum Manchester
Jane Fae, Chair Trans Media Watch
Adam McCann, Chief Executive Officer Diversity Role Models
Helen Jones, CEO MindOut LGBTQ Mental Health Service
Heather Paterson, Chief Executive Officer SAYIT (Sheena Amos Youth Trust)
Helen Walsh, CEO Space Youth Project
Lee Clatworthy, Acting Chair Sparkle - The National Transgender Charity
Karen Skipper, CEO Spectra
Capt Catherine S Burton FRAeS, Chair GIREs
Harvey Kennedy-Pitt, CEO & Founding Director Black Beetle Health CIO
Lucie Brooke, Director Free2B Alliance
Tim Sigsworth, Chief Executive akt (formerly the Albert Kennedy Trust)
Maruska Greenwood, Chief Executive LGBT Health and Wellbeing
Freya Finch, Co-facilitator TransLondon
Hannah Pittman, Campaign Founder TRACE: Trans Respect Advocacy in Care Employment
Alice Wallace, Director Opening Doors
Teresa Sharpe, Chief Executive Officer ELOP
Siddhi Joshi, Founder and Chairperson British Asian LGBTI
Maya Price, Co-founder Proud2Be CIC
Max Price, Co-founder Proud2Be CIC
Salim Khalifa, Interim CEO Trade Sexual Health
Anna Kear, CEO Tonic Housing Association
Steven McIntyre, Chief Executive Officer Stonewall Housing Association
Lukasz Konieczka, Executive Director Mosaic LGBT+ Young Persons' Trust
Pip Gardner, Chief Executive The Kite Trust
Lewis Turner, Chief Executive Lancashire LGBT
Monty Moncrieff MBE, Chief Executive London Friend
Christopher French, Chair LGBT+ Consortium