

NURSES UNITED

Woman's Place UK recently submitted a petition to the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC), asking the NMC to withdraw its participation in Stonewall's Diversity Champions Programme. We have taken some time to prepare and consult with healthcare staff, including members of the trans community, regarding the petition before responding.

The [Stonewall Diversity Champions Programme](#) is the leading employer programme designed to ensure all LGBTQ+ staff are free to work as their true, authentic selves, free from discrimination.

Stonewall works with over 900 organizations across the UK to ensure that each Diversity Champion welcomes and respects LGBTQ+ employees and believes in the power of the workplace to represent them.

Woman's Place UK has outlined six areas of concern to the NMC regarding their adoption of the Programme's inclusion standards. These concerns surround Woman's Place UK's belief that increased trans inclusion will jeopardise women's rights.

Increasing the rights of one group does not diminish the rights of another.

Additionally, a healthcare system that is not inclusive will cause more harm to LGBTQ+ people and other minority groups [who already experience prejudice and adverse health outcomes, particularly those in the transgender community](#). As nurses, who believe in and are bound by a duty of care, this prejudice would not reflect our values as either a professional body or as caring individuals.

We all have inbuilt biases and no one is perfect - but what is important is that we continuously strive for improvement and work to treat everyone with respect, kindness and dignity. This is built into our code as nurses and as caring human beings.

Sadly within healthcare, as within most aspects of current society, transphobia is rife. For context, transphobia is defined as the fear, hatred, disbelief or mistrust of people who are transgender, thought to be transgender, or whose gender expression doesn't conform to traditional gender roles (taken from TransActual). It has been reported that [7/10 trans people report being negatively impacted by transphobia when accessing general health services](#). In addition, [many health and social care staff believe that their employers don't do enough to prevent discrimination or respond appropriately to poor treatment of trans people](#).

The arguments made by Woman's Place UK promote a dangerous and unfounded narrative that centres around single sex spaces. Most importantly, that potentially these women's spaces could be infiltrated by abusers by allowing trans people access to them. There is no evidence for this. In fact, extensive research has proven

that [trans people are currently most at risk of abuse and most in need of safe spaces](#).

By withdrawing participation from the Programme, the NMC would run the risk of abandoning important inclusivity standards which would negatively impact our ability to provide good healthcare to all LGBTQ+ people. It would also send the message that the NMC, and by extension all nurses and midwives, do not support LGBTQ+ inclusion in the workplace. This is not the case. We want all our LGBTQ+ colleagues to feel safe and supported. We want our LGBTQ+ patients to be able to trust us and know that we have their needs and wellbeing as the focus of our care, as all good nurses do.

Therefore we ask the NMC to remain part of the Stonewall Diversity Champions Programme. Ensuring all nurses and midwives: continue to respect the legally protected rights of all LGBTQ+ people, which unequivocally includes trans people; continue to deliver high standards of quality healthcare which meets their needs; and to show support for the trans community - especially those who work within healthcare.