



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

**Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local
Government**

Fry Building
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London
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Tel: 0303 444 0000

www.gov.uk/mhclg

C Griffiths
Via email

Date: **15 March 2021**

Dear C Griffiths,

Freedom of Information Act 2000 - 10338076

Thank you for your request for information which was received on 8 February 2021 and has been considered under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

You requested:

- 1. Any application you made in 2019 or 2020 to be a "Stonewall Diversity Champion" or to be included on Stonewall's "Workplace Equality Index," including any attachments or appendices to those applications. Please redact personal details if necessary.*
- 2. Any feedback you received in 2019 or 2020 from Stonewall in relation to either application or programme.*
- 3. Any other communication you have received from Stonewall in 2019 or 2020 unless privileged or otherwise exempt from disclosure (but if you claim privilege or exemption in relation to any material, please say in broad terms what the material is and the basis on which you claim to be entitled to withhold it).*
- 4. Full details of any equality impact assessment you carried out connected with any of these applications (including any equality impact assessment carried out prior to an earlier application of the same kind, if no further assessment was done).*
- 5. Details of the total amount of money you paid to Stonewall (i) in 2019; (ii) in 2020, whether or not as payment for goods or services.*
- 6. Whether you intend to continue your membership of any Stonewall scheme in the future, and if so which.*

We can confirm that some the information requested is held by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and we are able to provide you with some of this information below, in the order that you pose.

1. Any application you made in 2019 or 2020 to be a "Stonewall Diversity Champion" or to be included on Stonewall's "Workplace Equality Index," including any attachments or appendices to those applications. Please redact personal details if necessary.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) became a member of Stonewall Diversity Champions in 2010 up until 2019. MHCLG is no longer a member of the Stonewall UK Diversity Champions Programme. It concluded its membership with the 2018/19 subscription, which was also the year MHCLG last applied to be included on Stonewall's "Workplace Equality Index".

2. Any feedback you received in 2019 or 2020 from Stonewall in relation to either application or programme.

3. Any other communication you have received from Stonewall in 2019 or 2020 unless privileged or otherwise exempt from disclosure (but if you claim privilege or exemption in relation to any material, please say in broad terms what the material is and the basis on which you claim to be entitled to withhold it).

With regards to parts 2 and 3 of your request, we can confirm that this information is held by MHCLG. However, we consider that this information is exempt under section 43(2) of the FOI Act as disclosing it would likely cause harm to the commercial interests of a third party.

Information falling within this exemption must still be provided however unless it is not in the public interest to do so.

There will always be some general public interest in the disclosure of information to promote transparency and accountability of public authorities. The Department recognises that this public interest includes allowing for increased understanding of the Department's processes and policies concerning LGBTQ+ diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

However, the disclosure of this information may lead to a detrimental impact on the commercial activities and revenue of Stonewall, as other public bodies may be less willing to engage in its services if detailed submission and feedback information were shown to be subject to disclosure. Disclosure may also weaken the competitive position Stonewall by disclosing sensitive information which would likely be used by competitors to gain a competitive advantage in providing measurements and advice on the progress of LGBTQ+ diversity and inclusivity in public authority workplaces.

As such, the public interest is not served by public bodies becoming less willing to engage in programmes and services which assist in promoting LGBTQ+ diversity and inclusivity, which is a likely consequence if MHCLG favours disclosure of the information which falls in scope of your request.

We have therefore decided that, on balance, it is not in the public interest to disclose this information at this time.

4. Full details of any equality impact assessment you carried out connected with any of these applications (including any equality impact assessment

carried out prior to an earlier application of the same kind, if no further assessment was done).

This information is not held by MHCLG.

5. Details of the total amount of money you paid to Stonewall (i) in 2019; (ii) in 2020, whether or not as payment for goods or services.

As mentioned above, MHCLG concluded its membership to the Stonewall UK Diversity Champions Programme with the 2018/19 subscription. The fee was £3,000 in that last year

6. Whether you intend to continue your membership of any Stonewall scheme in the future, and if so which.

MHCLG does not intend to continue its Stonewall membership.

Complaints procedure

If you are unhappy with this response, we will review it and report back to you. (This is called an internal review.) If you want us to do this, let us know by return email within two months of receiving this response. You can also ask by letter addressed to:

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
Knowledge and Information Access Team
4th Floor SE, Fry Building
2 Marsham Street
London, SW1P 4DF

If you are unhappy with the outcome of this internal review, you can ask the independent Information Commissioner to investigate. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at email address casewoxx@xxx.xxx.xx or use their online form at ico.org.uk/concerns or call them on 0303 123 1113.

Kind regards,

MHCLG FOI Team