



22nd September 2021

WPG Statement of Support for Transgender Women in Northern Ireland

Dear Colum Eastwood MP, Leader of the SDLP,

We are writing to you as a matter of urgency on behalf of the [Women's Policy Group](#) NI. The WPG is a platform for women working in policy and advocacy roles in different organisations to share their work and speak with a collective voice on key issues. It is made up of women from trade unions, grassroots women's organisations, women's networks, feminist campaigning organisations, LGBTQ+ organisations, migrant support groups, support service providers, NGOs, human rights and equality organisations and individuals. The WPG are endorsed as policy experts across Northern Ireland through our extensive work highlighting the adverse impact of policy decisions on marginalised groups of women and through making evidence-led policy recommendations for women's equality.

Following the rise in transphobic messages, both online and across Northern Ireland through the appearance of harmful transphobic stickers across Belfast and transphobic messaging online, we would like to write to you to ensure your party is aware of the breadth of support within the women's sector, and within our broader voluntary and community sector membership, for the trans community in Northern Ireland. We are a group of women that are opposed to the rolling back of trans rights in any way in the name of women's rights and we absolutely do not support the harmful narrative growing across social media against trans women. We urge your party to fully support the trans community in Northern Ireland and reject any proposals that claim to be 'gender critical' or target the trans community, particularly trans women, as they are extremely harmful and not reflective of the women we work with.

We would like to extend an invitation to you, as Party Leader, and your colleagues to meet with the Women's Policy Group to discuss the importance of ensuring that trans rights are not rolled back in the name of women's rights. If you accept our invitation to meet with the WPG, please contact Rachel Powell, Women's Sector Lobbyist, to arrange a suitable time and date – rachel.powell@wrda.net.

Trans women are women, and they are amongst the most marginalised groups of women in our society. We reject the removal of trans rights being framed as the protection of women's rights, and we do not want this done in our name. We are a group of experts on women's rights, and work with women across Northern Ireland, including LGBTQ+ women. We fundamentally oppose anti-trans policy making and we support reform to the GRA. The women's sector has worked in collaboration with the trans, and broader LGBTQ+, sector in Northern Ireland for years, and we will continue to do so.

The Women's Policy Group NI opposes the rollback of trans rights, and this should never happen under the guise of women's equality. We hope your party will back us in supporting the trans community in Northern Ireland. We hope you will accept our invitation to meet with you and your party colleagues to discuss this matter.

Signed:

Women's Policy Group NI
Women's Resource and Development Agency (WRDA)
Raise Your Voice
Transgender NI
Northern Ireland Rural Women's Network (NIRWN)
Northern Ireland Women's European Platform (NIWEP)
Women's Support Network
HERE NI
Alliance for Choice
Reclaim the Agenda
Belfast Feminist Network
Reclaim the Night
Amnesty International UK
Northern Ireland Women's Budget Group (NIWBG)
Cara Friend
Women's Aid Federation NI
UNISON NI Women's Committee
50:50 NI
Victim Support Northern Ireland
Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance (NIPSA)

Please send any responses to Rachel Powell, Women's Sector Lobbyist, Women's Resource and Development Agency, rachel.powell@wrda.net.