

Item 1

From: [redacted] @inspiringscotland.org.uk

Sent: 15 September 2021 09:21

To: [redacted]@gov.scot>; <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]@gov.scot>;[redacted]@gov.scot>

Subject: Mridhul Wadhwa - RCC Edinburgh

Hi All

Just for info, there is another twitter storm brewing around Mridul Wadhwa, as she spoke at a conference in England yesterday. If you want to read about it -Jean Hatchet is leading the complaints and transcribing Mridul's input to the meeting. Nicola Sturgeon might have been tagged in one of the comments, and someone made reference to the 100 days funding going to the Rape Crisis Centres, but we haven't seen anything about SG Equalities or DES yet.

We'll keep an eye on it and let you know if there is any reference to SG Equalities and/or DES. No action needed, just for info. It may kick off again when the amounts come out as people see what RCC Edinburgh received. All easily explained but worth being ready.

[redacted]

Item 2

From: [redacted] @gov.scot>

Sent: 17 May 2021 12:55

To: [redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]@inspiringscotland.org.uk>; [redacted]@gov.scot>;

[redacted]@gov.scot

Cc: [redacted] @inspiringscotland.org.uk>; [redacted] @inspiringscotland.org.uk>; [redacted] @inspiringscotland.org.uk>

Subject: RE: [External Email] Edinburgh Rape Crisis Centre - a beneficiary - questions.

Hi [redacted]

Please see the attached response from the Scottish Government to this query, issued today.

Thanks,

[redacted]

Attachment to email 17 May 2021 – 12:55 (Item 2)

Our Reference: [redacted]

17 May 2021

Dear [redacted]

Thank you for your correspondence.

We note your comments in relation to the appointment of a new CEO for the Edinburgh Rape Crisis Centre, Mridul Wadhwa.

As regards your concern around discrimination it is not appropriate for the Scottish Government to offer views on employment law issues but if an unsuccessful applicant considers that they have been discriminated against in any recruitment process, we would recommend seeking independent legal advice. For initial advice we would signpost to the Equality and Human Rights Commission's Equality Advisory and Support Service.
Phone: 0808 800 0082
Textphone: 0808 800 0084

On matters of funding, we are confident that the funding provided to Edinburgh Rape Crisis Centre is in line with our funding provisions for the safety and dignity of survivors.

Yours sincerely

From: [redacted] @gov.scot>
Sent: 11 May 2021 12:17
To: [redacted] @inspiringscotland.org.uk>; [redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]@gov.scot>
Cc: [redacted] @inspiringscotland.org.uk>; <[redacted]@inspiringscotland.org.uk>; [redacted]@inspiringscotland.org.uk>
Subject: RE: [External Email] Edinburgh Rape Crisis Centre - a beneficiary - questions.

Hi [redacted]

Thanks for your email.

We have received exactly the same email. We are exploring with colleagues at the moment and we can confirm next steps once cleared.

Thanks, [redacted]

From: [redacted] @inspiringscotland.org.uk>
Sent: 10 May 2021 14:23
To: [redacted] @gov.scot>; [redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]@gov.scot>
Cc: [redacted]@inspiringscotland.org.uk>; [redacted]@inspiringscotland.org.uk>; [redacted]@inspiringscotland.org.uk>
Subject: FW: [External Email] Edinburgh Rape Crisis Centre - a beneficiary - questions.

Hi

Hope you had a good weekend.

We received the complaint below over the weekend [redacted] position of CEO at Edinburgh Rape Crisis. She was previously CEO at Forth Valley Rape Crisis.

The email raises 2 issues – one which is for RCC Edinburgh regarding the process for recruiting Mridhul into the role. The other is whether or not ESVAWG and potentially DES should be funding

an organisation where it is felt that there is an issue with the organisation meeting the requirements of the Equality Act in their recruitment process.

Given that Forth Valley & Edinburgh are being funded through RCS, there is clearly no issue from the SG perspective to funding an organisation where the CEO or any other member of staff is transgender. I assume that you were happy with the process for recruitment previously. Have you been challenged on this previously? If you have, do you have an agreed statement?

If you don't, do you have a response you would like to make through us to this complaint.

On the issue around the recruitment process, we would propose that we let RCS and Edinburgh RCC Board know that we have received this complaint. We could ask them to give us reassurance that the appropriate processes were followed particularly in relation to the gender recognition statement.

We've given a holding message to the complainant so far.

Once we have the reassurance from RCS/RCC Edinburgh, we could go back to the complainant with an email clarifying that.

Any thoughts on next steps? I haven't as yet contacted RCC Edinburgh or Sandie at RCS.

Best

[redacted]

From: [redacted]@inspiringscotland.org.uk>

Sent: 10 May 2021 09:13

To: [redacted]@inspiringscotland.org.uk>

Cc: [redacted]@inspiringscotland.org.uk>; [redacted]@inspiringscotland.org.uk>

Subject: FW: [External Email] Edinburgh Rape Crisis Centre - a beneficiary - questions.

Importance: High

Hi [redacted]

We received this email into DES enquiries over the weekend.

For background, Mridul Wadhwa, is currently the CEO at Forth Valley Rape Crisis Centre, and [redacted]. She then announced that she had been successful in the getting the CEO post at Edinburgh Rape Crisis Centre. She is staying with FVRC until the end of this month to focus on their DES application and Meg Wright, who was the interim CEO is staying on until recruitment for a new CEO can take place. Rape Crisis Scotland is aware of this

[redacted]. She is well known in the sector and has worked with Rape Crisis Scotland previously (as part of the national helpline I think). She has been subject to online abuse in the past (as has FVRCC), presumably along similar lines.

I am sure that RCS will have had a similar email.

Both FVRCC and Edinburgh RCC [redacted]. Can we discuss how best to respond to this?

From: [redacted]@gmail.com>

Sent: 08 May 2021 22:34

Subject: [External Email] Edinburgh Rape Crisis Centre - a beneficiary - questions.

Dear Sirs,

It is with sadness, that I must write to note my grievance that funds are being directed at a charity, though wholly worthy in intent and purpose, that has been willfully ignorant of the law.

Edinburgh Rape Crisis Centre has recently appointed a new CEO, Mridul Wadhwa.

Overarching the lack of credentials, this person did not obtain a Gender Recognition Certificate and so at the time of appointment, was legally male. They may have obtained one since, I do not know, but this does not alter the malicious obstruction throughout the appointment process for a role that specifically cited Schedule 9 Equality Act exceptions in the job listing, and further application forms that the individual lied on. As Lynee Walsh of the Equality and Human Rights Commission in Scotland stated, obtaining a GRC does not alter one's sex for the purposes of the Equality Act.

Should this person continue in this role I believe there to be a case for direct discrimination on the basis of sex by the female candidates who were not offered the role.

I would suggest due consideration is given to you funding this crisis centre while this individual remains in their new role. It is a partnership that may eventually cause reputational damage to yourselves given their blatant disregard to safeguarding proceedings and upholding the dignity of these survivors.

Regards

[redacted]

Item 3

From: [redacted]

Sent: 13 January 2022 12:16

To: [redacted]@gov.scot>

Cc: [redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]@gov.scot>

Subject: Single Sex Exceptions and Trans Inclusion

Hi [redacted],

Further to our discussions earlier, here are some lines provided from the VAWG team. I am also copying in [redacted] who will have more information on funding conditions.

The team are frequently asked in MiCases about Mridul Wadhwa's appointment at Edinburgh Rape Crisis and this would be a typical response:

“We note your comments in relation to the appointment the CEO for the Edinburgh Rape Crisis Centre, Mridul Wadhwa.

As regards your concern around discrimination it is not appropriate for the Scottish Government to offer views on employment law issues but if an unsuccessful applicant considers that they have been discriminated against in any recruitment process, we would recommend seeking independent legal advice. For initial advice we would signpost to the Equality and Human Rights Commission's Equality Advisory and Support Service.

Phone: 0808 800 0082
Textphone: 0808 800 0084

Rape Crisis Scotland provides support to survivors of all genders, including men and all trans and non-binary people. The Government strongly supports the single sex exceptions in the 2010 Equality Act which allow services to utilise the single sex exceptions in the Equality Act where that is a proportionate approach to achieving a legitimate aim.

Our support for trans rights does not impact on or conflict with our continued strong commitment to advance equality for women and to protect women's rights."

I hope this is helpful and please just give me a message if you need anything else.

Many thanks,
[redacted]

Item 4

From: [redacted]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Minister for Equalities and Older People
Sent: 24 February 2022 08:09
To: [redacted]@gov.scot>
Cc: Minister for Equalities and Older People <MinisterEOP@gov.scot>
Subject: [redacted – out of scope]

Hi [redacted]

Thanks for sending this over I've passed to Ms McKelvie for awareness. Just to mention yesterday there was a story in the press regarding Mridul's appointment which ties in to this you have probably seen it already but just sending on for awareness in case you haven't.

[redacted]

Item 5

From: [redacted]@gov.scot
Sent: 27 April 2022 10:02
To: [redacted]@gov.scot>
Subject: Times story - 27 April

Hi [redacted],

Please see the story below from the Times website. ☺

[redacted]

“The leaders of three leading national women’s organisations are facing calls to resign in the deepening row over trans rights and single-sex spaces. Feminist campaigners are urging executives at [Rape Crisis Scotland](#), [Scottish Women’s Aid](#) and Engender to “consider their positions” after being accused of failing to protect women-only spaces under the Equalities Act.

[Frontline Feminists Scotland](#) says the executives’ position on self-identification of gender had led to the erosion of single-sex spaces in refuges and rape crisis centres.

A spokeswoman said: “It has always been our position, and that of the members of the Single-Sex Services Network, that single-sex provision is essential to women’s safety and recovery and thus protected under the Equality Act 2010. The Equality and Human Rights Commission’s (EHRC) new guide now confirms this. It is with great disappointment that we have to call on the boards of the national women’s groups, Rape Crisis Scotland (RCS), Scottish Women’s Aid (SWA) and Engender to consider their position.

“It is clear that their representation of the violence against women sector has been woefully inadequate and has cost the sector capacity, money and staff during this period.”

The EHRC recently issued fresh guidance which said that trans people could be excluded from single-sex spaces such as hospital wards and refuges if the reasons were “justifiable and proportionate”. The watchdog said the justification could be for “reasons of privacy, decency, to prevent trauma or to ensure health and safety”.

The guidance — issued amid a fiercely contested battle over Scottish government plans to reform the Gender Recognition Act and its implications for single-sex spaces — is intended to help organisations such as RCS, Engender and SWA implement policies that are “legal and balance the needs of different groups”.

A spokesman for the Scottish government said: “Our support for trans rights does not conflict with our continued strong commitment to uphold the rights and protections that women and girls currently have under the 2010 Equality Act, which includes a number of exceptions which allow for trans people to be excluded when this is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. Those exceptions are important and the Scottish government supports them.”

However, in an official statement on its website the Scottish government acknowledges that trans women have gained access to single-sex services despite Equality Act exceptions.

RCS and SWA were contacted for comment. Engender declined to comment.”

Item 6-

From: [redacted]@gov.scot>

Sent: 27 April 2022 09:50

To: [redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]@gov.scot>

Cc: [redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: VAWG organisations and single sex space

Thanks [redacted], [redacted] had spotted this. Copying in Nick who'll be chairing this afternoon's meeting. [redacted] has requested the full article as it's behind a pay wall.

Best wishes

[redacted]

From: [redacted]@gov.scot>

Sent: 27 April 2022 09:21

To: [redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]@gov.scot>

Subject: VAWG organisations and single sex space

Hi

Just for information (today's Times):

Call for women's group chiefs to quit amid row over single-sex spaces

MaryWright 27 Apr 2022 00:01:00

The leaders of three leading national women's organisations are facing calls to resign in the deepening row over trans rights and single-sex spaces. Feminist campaigners are urging executives at Rape Crisis Scotland, Scottish Women's Aid and Engender to "consider their positions" after being accused of failing to protect women-only spaces under the Equalities Act.

Cheers

[redacted]