

Grievance and dispute resolution complaint form (Environment Agency)

Template: LIT 12966

Published: 31/08/2021

Audience: Environment Agency

This form is to provide details of your complaint about organisational decisions or the way you have been treated at work, please read it carefully and follow the guidance.

Part 1 - Please provide details of steps taken to deal with your complaint informally and why it was unsuccessful

I have not taken direct steps to informally resolve this dispute. Please see part 2.

Part 2 - Please provide details why you have not tried to resolve your complaint informally

I have never knowingly interacted with Laura Bown, and we have never met in person. She works in Natural England and apparently attends 2 Marsham Street in London. I work for the Environment Agency in Horizon House in Bristol.

It is clear from Laura's conduct that she holds everyone with beliefs as outlined in section 3 (in other words me and people like me) in complete contempt. She is actively engaged in trying to prevent lawful expression of my beliefs. I see no potential whatsoever of any informal solution.

I raised a very similar grievance against a Core Defra staff member last year, and the process was hugely slowed down by an abortive attempt at mediation. It became clear within moments of the mediation meeting starting that the respondent had absolutely no intention of engaging with the process. The same would happen here. The only difference this time would be that we all knew about this outcome in advance but chose to waste time on pursuing it anyway. Laura's views are obviously entrenched to such an extent that there is no prospect of a mediated solution. From Laura's output it is clear that there is no realistic hope of just approaching her informally. Furthermore, I am certain that any information of whatever kind I would exchange with her as part of such a process would be used against me.

I have discussed approaches with my line manager, and we agree that informally pursuing this matter will serve no purpose other than to slow the process down.

Part 3 - Give a description of your complaint starting with the most important or significant event.

I am a co-chair of the Defra Group Sex Equality and Equity Network (SEEN). I believe that sex is binary and immutable, and that in some contexts it matters (some call these beliefs 'gender critical' [GC]). Not everyone may agree, but those beliefs have been found to be 'worthy of respect in a democratic society' and are therefore legally protected under the 2010 Equality Act, under the protected characteristic of belief. The network has approval at Cross-government level from the Cabinet Office (granted in 2022) and Defra SEEN was approved by Defra group in 2023, meaning both networks have the same status as other staff networks, for example those focussing on veganism, Islam, Judaism, disabilities and so on.

For holding and respectfully expressing our beliefs, GC people are relentlessly bullied and vilified. For example, several Defra Group organisations have hosted external speakers (despite being alerted in advance) who equated gender critical people with the Ku Klux Klan. A number of Defra staff have made, and continue to make, disparaging and sinister posts on internal noticeboards about gender critical people, often without consequence. In late 2022, a yammer post containing a torrent of slander about gender critical people by one of our detractors was seen by over 20,000 people and elicited 700 likes and 100 comments, many of which contained further inappropriate attacks on gender critical people.

On a personal level, I have been the subject of several baseless complaints, all of which were investigated and determined to be unfounded, but which were very stressful. Twice in the last 12 months, people from within Defra Group have taken me to Employment Tribunal, claiming that the fact that I am openly gender critical (again, a completely legal belief, just Christianity or Judaism) makes them 'unsafe' at work. I was 'dropped' from the first tribunal because the claimant and I don't share an employer. In the second case, which is about to begin in earnest, the claimant is from the Environment Agency. This is unbelievably stressful and massively costly. These vexatious lawsuits are designed to bankrupt me, ruin my life and drive me out of the public sector, or at the very least, to stop me from expressing my lawful belief.

I think it's easy to see how attacks on gender critical people in general and myself personally (as someone who has in the eyes of some become synonymous with gender critical thought) have combined to create near-intolerable levels of stress for me. In July 2024, I had to take 3 weeks off work with stress. I am now forced to use our processes in defence of myself, my sanity and other gender critical people who are at risk of being cowed into silence or have their employment put at risk.

For nearly two years, Laura Brown, along with others, has joined in this sustained campaign of bullying and harassment against gender critical people. Laura has consistently publicly portrayed gender critical views as bigoted and dangerous, attacked gender critical people and incited others to attack them. She has incited complaints to be made about gender critical people.

Since October 2023, Laura has made over 70 Freedom of Information requests about the Sex Equality and Equity Network (a gender critical staff network in the Civil Service) in its various forms, at least partially in support of vexatious Employment Tribunal claims against me and others, based on the fact that we have founded a gender critical network and lead it. This irrational and oppressive conduct is designed to scare members and leads into silence, no longer expressing their lawfully held beliefs. It is part of a wider campaign waged by a number of people across the civil service at destroying the network and cowing its members.

Personally, I have been subjected to numerous complaints and investigations, culmination in not one but two Employment Tribunals where I have been named as an individual respondent alongside my employer. Laura Brown openly participates in the Employment Tribunal effort on the claimant's side, as can be seen by the specific nature of the FOI request referred to in part 4, particularly those about Mumsnet, Viva Engage posts and interactions with Cabinet Office.

The cumulative effect of this continuing, systematic and co-ordinated campaign of harassment and bullying cannot be overstated. For example, in July 2024, I had to take several weeks off work due to stress. I am also receiving counselling to manage my own state of mind better.

Part 4 - Specific events and details

I attach a separate document ('part 4') which shows all of Laura Brown's relevant conduct to the best of my knowledge. This consists of:

- Posts on Viva Engage (or 'Yammer', as the system was known before the late spring of 2023)
- Posts on the Defra intranet
- A list of Freedom of Information Requests made by Laura Brown via the 'What Do they Know?' website, almost all of which concern the Sex Equality and Equity Network (SEEN)

Where necessary, I have added **red text** to explain what I believe the problem with the individual event is.

Information about the person (s) against whom the complaint is made (if applicable)

Name: **Laura Bown**

Job title & grade: **Higher Officer for Health and Environment**

Area / Directorate: **NEG 10 Thames Solent**

Location: **Defra Group Marsham Street**

Contact number: **[redacted]**

E-mail address: **[redacted]**

Desired outcome

Please provide an explanation of what outcome or solution you are seeking in the resolution of your complaint.

I want the concerted campaign of Bullying and Harassment to stop. I hope the evidence I've attached clearly shows Laura's part in this campaign. I want Natural England, Defra Group and the Environment Agency to take steps to ensure that Laura Brown or others cease to harass gender critical Public and Civil Servants for exercising their legal right to respectfully express their lawfully held views, in line with protections enjoyed by any other legally held belief. I want the compulsive nature of Laura's conduct to be taken into account.

Information about me

Name: **Andreas Mueller**

Employee number: **[redacted]**

Job title & grade: **Adviser, G5**

Area / Directorate: **Incident Management & Resilience**

Contact number: **[redacted]**

Address: **Horizon House, Bristol**

E-mail address: **[redacted]**

Trade Union Representative: **[redacted]**

Date: 28/10/2024

I am aware that I am giving consent for copies of this form to be sent to the person(s) about whom I am making the complaint and that extracts of it may be shared with relevant witnesses.

1. [Summer 2022 – Elspeth’s pre-SEEN post](#)

Posted in All Company



Duemmer-Wrigley, Elspeth

2h ago • Edited

Seen by 117

This is a personal post about being ‘gender critical’: a shout out, a welcome and a reach across the barricades.

Diversity of belief makes our organisation stronger and our lives more interesting. Inclusivity makes us feel welcome and able to be our authentic selves. Those who are lesbian, gay, transgender, disabled, BAME, neurodiverse, from different social backgrounds and religions, and those with other experiences all enrich our organisation.

There are many protected beliefs in our organisation, some religious (such as Christianity) and some philosophical (such as veganism). Some people believe that we all have a gender (sometimes ‘gender identity’) separate from our biological sex; that sex is a spectrum, and that biological sex is an idea that first emerged with white European colonisation. Such beliefs are protected by law.

Other people, such as myself, hold that sex is binary (male and female), fundamentally biological and an important category to recognise in language, laws, sport and workplace. These beliefs, sometimes called ‘gender critical’, are also protected by law.

A number of organisations and charities cater specifically for those with protected beliefs about gender identity (for example, [Mermaids](#), [Stonewall](#), and [Gires](#)). Writers and activists with these beliefs are posted on Yammer. However, despite occasionally taking positions some may consider controversial, the exploration of different views is to be welcomed. We are an organisation with many different perspectives, after all.

For those interested in learning more about what it means to be ‘gender critical’ there are also a range of charities and organisations that speak for those of us with this protected belief. These include [Sex Matters](#), [LGB Alliance](#) and [Transgender Trend](#). I’d also be happy to talk directly with anyone interested, especially to dispel some of the myths that this is a position rooted in ignorance, bigotry or hate, or that those such as myself have any ill-will towards those in other communities.

I am sure there is more common ground than difference in this sometimes heated debate.

Brown, Laura 11m ago • Edited

Just to add - I'm also planning to take advice on this situation from my trade union, so if you're a Prospect member and would like to team up, please get in touch. (Trade union membership is also a protected characteristic, btw.)



Brown, Laura 8m ago • Edited

That post is slightly out of date, as a higher court has since ruled that "sex is binary and immutable" is indeed a protected belief (though that doesn't mean that every opinion a person forms based on that belief is necessarily protected). However, these paragraphs remain true and highly relevant:

A protected belief is not a blank cheque for an employee to make demands, however, and employers may have legitimate reasons in certain circumstances for treating employees with a protected belief in the same way as other employees, even if the employee perceives that as putting them at a disadvantage. Caution should always be taken in such cases.

Employers should also take comfort in remembering that merely holding a belief and proselytising about that belief at work are two separate things, with the latter not being protected (see our article [here](#) for further discussion).

I think it's time for external experts to have a look at this. As mention, I'll be approaching my trade union in the first instance, and then seeking further legal advice if necessary.



15m ago

Hi. Could I ask you to remove this post (I am searching for the official way to request this). I am LGBT+ senior sponsor for RPA and whilst this starts under the guise of inclusion it then becomes excluding in relation to gender. This is against all the codes by which we work in the civil service and all the really positive working towards being truly inclusive. This post is quite understandably causing offence. Therefore i ask for this to be removed from this forum.



Brown, Laura 20m ago

We tried and were told it couldn't be removed. Apparently all claims to protected status carry equal weight, and people can create as hostile an environment as they like as long as they claim to be expressing sincere beliefs in good faith. Happy to share further details over email.



2m ago

Brown, Laura being transphobic (or "gender critical" as some people like to describe it) is not a protected status. Can I assume that on that basis if someone claimed to sincerely hold racist views it would be considered acceptable for them to be put forward in a forum supported by the Department?



Brown, Laura Just now

You're preaching to the choir - this is something to be raised with HR. As I mentioned, I'm seeking independent advice



The original post by my colleagues was an attempt to reach out to colleagues who don't know the views of gender critical people. In her replies to the post, Laura is indicating she's taking

action against colleagues who have lawfully expressed gender critical beliefs within Defra group policy. This is deeply sinister and caused distress to both my colleague and myself.

8/11/22 – All Company [redacted] anti-SEEN

Posted in All Company

[redacted] Nov 8 • Edited

Seen by 18,673 ...

Hi All,
I'm one of the scary trans women that other posts would like to erase or suggest that perhaps I don't have all my faculties in line.

Trans people literally just want to come to work without having our entire existence debated on a work forum. Nobody else has to come in to work to find there's an entire cross government network now geared towards my erasure.

How do you think this makes trans people feel? Does this deliver any solutions for the business or is it just creating all new problems. It's not needed. Regardless of your views on sex and gender, we're here to deliver for the UK.

DEFRA are meant to believe in providing a work environment that is free from bullying, harassment, and victimisation, and that recognises the dignity of all our employees. I call on you DEFRA to start delivering on this!

I call on all our staff, everyone who knows someone that's trans, who knows someone that's been punished just for being themselves, to call this out. Leave the trans community alone! People are free to believe anything they want to believe. That doesn't mean you have to bring that conversation to work.

Whats next, an anti BLM network, an anti abortion network? Where does this end? Is this honestly the organisation we want to create, one where the best things we have to deliver are divisive?

Like Share

👍❤️👏 [redacted] and 673 others

Brown, Laura Nov 8
I stand with you and all our trans colleagues. I hope it helps a little to know this is on the radar of several unions and staff networks across Defra group.

The original post was clearly a massive case of bullying and harassment. It caused huge distress to gender critical people, including myself, equating them with racists and homophobes. 20,000 people saw it, 700 liked it and there were 100 comments. Most of them constituted bullying and harassment in their own right. The only correct response to this post would have been for the moderators to immediately delete it and the poster to be disciplined. Replying to it in an

approving manner, and adding that she's pursuing avenues through the unions and staff networks to persecute us, the way Laura did, is to join in the bullying and harassment. Any right-thinking person would have been mindful of the distress that this onslaught was causing gc people and realised that joining in the abuse was unprofessional.

2. 8/11/22 – RPA Yammer on SEEN

Posted in RPA LGBT+ Network



Nov 8

2 shares • Seen by 351 • ...

I would like to bring to your awareness to a cross gov endorsed network called SEEN. One of its stated beliefs is **We also hold the protected belief that biological sex is binary and immutable and that biological sex matters for both women and men in our everyday lives.** And it has been published on yammer. It is extremely concerning that a network which serves to exclude has been given space in a culture where we have proud inclusive and equality principles. It must be extremely upsetting for all... see more

Like Comment Share and 22 others

Show 2 previous comments



Brown, Laura Tue at 9:06 PM • Edited

People concerned about this network and its effect on working relationships in Defra group should probably be aware of this current thread on Mumsnet (please be warned that it does include Defra employees disparaging specific colleagues, as well as intentionally misgendering transwomen):

[Page 12 | Sex Equality and Equity Network - Gender crit network for civil servants. | Mumsnet](#)



Yesterday at 9:30 AM

Brown, Laura - As subtle as a brick through a window... I'm aware this is very much an invisible bigotry (in that it's pretty clear no one is going to make a big scene in the office - no one wants a dreaded fuss), but this is genuinely unnerving. These people are so caught up in their own grain silo of fear it's wild.



Brown, Laura Yesterday at 9:45 AM

[Redacted] I'm very doubtful as to whether this is allowed by Defra's social media policies. I've passed it on to my HR contact and union rep, as well as the Respect at Work and LGBT+ networks at Natural England.

Again, on the very day of the announcement of SEEN as a new staff network, Laura announces she has already taken steps against SEEN. This is unprofessional and threatening. She's also pointing to a thread on mumsnet, which has absolutely nothing to do with Defra Group. This is obsessive behaviour and all the more sinister. I was shocked when I saw this post.

3. 29/11/22 – All Company - A Mueller Violence against Women

Posted in All Company



Mueller, Andreas
Fri at 9:58 AM • Edited

1 share • Seen by 12,991 • ...

On **International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women**, please read a post by a member of the Sex Equality and Equity Network (SEEN) on [Ending Violence Against Women](#).

Like Share

👍❤️🙄 [redacted] and 33 others



[redacted] Mon at 9:10 AM

👍❤️ | 29

Question, because the article seems to suggest otherwise, does this include the elimination of violence to transwomen too?

Like Share



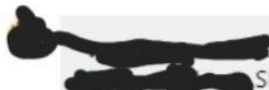
[redacted] Yesterday at 10:46 AM

👍 | 3

[This article](#) seems to suggest that International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women is designed to support the following, here is a quote from the UN website.

"While gender-based violence can happen to anyone, anywhere, some women and girls are particularly vulnerable - for instance, young girls and older women, women who identify as lesbian, bisexual, transgender or intersex, migrants and refugees, indigenous women and ethnic minorities, or women and girls living with HIV and disabilities, and those living through humanitarian crises."

Like Share



[redacted] Yesterday at 11:00 AM

👍 | 9

[redacted] SEEN only seem to be concerned with women who have a "female reproductive system". Ending violence against women, but only the ones that they deem woman enough.

Like Share



Brown, Laura Yesterday at 12:15 PM

[redacted] A Trojan horse must have a womb.

Like Share



██████████ Yesterday at 3:31 PM • Edited

👍 4

Highlighting groups of women is not the issue. The deliberately inflammatory remarks inaccurately framed as statements of fact are the issue.

If this were Twitter, people might expect to be able to make unchallenged glib, spiteful and dog-whistly statements aimed at individuals and groups. This is not Twitter, those remarks are *not* welcome, and people making them should expect to be challenged.

I'm shocked that a post marking the International Day of Elimination of Violence against women could be hijacked by unfair and inaccurate politically-motivated swipes at the Sex Equality Network. It's not OK.



Brown, Laura Yesterday at 3:46 PM • Edited

👎 1





DE

Duemmer-Wrigley, Elspeth Yesterday at 4:00 PM

👍 | 2

Laura, Please consider the importance of tone and mutual respect on Yammer, especially among those with different perspectives. I would be extremely grateful if you could consider deleting your posts here, which could be construed as glib and mocking, especially given the extremely personal subject matter others have shared here. If you have specific concerns please contact either me or the network.



Yesterday at 4:09 PM

👍 | 1

Duemmer-Wrigley, Elspeth Thank you, Elspeth



Brown, Laura Yesterday at 4:11 PM • Edited

👍 | 1

Duemmer-Wrigley, Elspeth Hi Elspeth. If "extremely personal" experiences are the price of admission to this thread, let me start by saying that my husband's stepmother, [REDACTED] was murdered by a man in 2018. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] It's partly because of this personal connection to its ostensible subject that I find this thread to be so despicable (although I'm pretty sure I would anyway). I won't be deleting my comments; if you think the Yammer admins should, feel free to let them know in the usual way. Please do not address me directly again. Thank you.

P.S. For an example of the "tone and mutual respect" shown by SEEN members when they think no one's looking, check out this external thread (or contact me for a PDF): [Page 12 | Sex Equality and Equity Network - Gender crit network for civil servants.](#) | Mumsnet



This is a thread about an article written by a SEEN member about violence against women. It had nothing whatever to do with trans people. Trans Rights Activists promptly hijacked the thread, implying that transwomen are excluded from our definition. Laura posted several grossly insensitive replies in the chat. Laura's aggression on a post dedicated to stopping violence against women was unbelievably offensive to me - I simply couldn't believe anyone could do this. Laura did this not because she cares (or doesn't care) about violence against women. She did it because the fact a known GC person was speaking out riled her beyond all control.



Brown, Laura 45m ago



[REDACTED] Even if majority opinion were the best guiding principle in these matters, your claim that "the majority of the population would agree with me" isn't supported by the evidence.

[Where does the British public stand on transgender rights in 2022? | YouGov](#)



Where does the British public stand



Brown, Laura 33m ago • Edited

[REDACTED] Not sure if you read the whole page or just the title, but if your specific claim is that transwomen don't count as women, then you should amend your comment to say "40% of the population agrees with me."



Brown, Laura 21m ago



[REDACTED] Just FYI, the admins don't read these threads - we're supposed to report problematic content to o365businesssupportteam@defra.gov.uk. You can also hover over someone's screen name here to see their reporting line if you need that info. Hope this helps.



Trans activists hijacked yet another thread about violence against women. A discussion of GC views ensued. **[REDACTED]** spoke in defence of GC beliefs. In the last post, Laura suggests looking up people's line managers to make complaints about them. I was just flabbergasted at the naked aggression on show.

Faith and Belief: Embracing Diversity

In addition to being Defra Director of Strategy, I am really pleased to have been appointed as the Senior Faith and Belief Champion for Defra group. I am proud to be one of a group of senior Champions all working together to advance our Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) objectives, each bringing a perspective from a different characteristic.

The 'Faith and Belief' network provides a great example of the vast range of diversity falling under the umbrella of one characteristic. Across Defra group we have colleagues from a number of religious groups, including Sikhs, Jews, Muslims, Christians, Buddhists and pagans. I am enjoying learning more about how different faiths impact upon the working lives of our colleagues, identifying where needs differ, but also how much we all have in common and how we share our common humanity.



Brown, Laura

18 October 2023

The Act also has detailed definitions for each category which can be found online, starting on this page: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/4> (click the "next" arrow to navigate through all the characteristics). The section on gender reassignment says: "A person has the protected characteristic of gender reassignment if the person is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning the person's sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex." While the phrase "gender identity" doesn't appear, it's hard to see how a trans or non-binary person could express their gender identity without meeting the definition for gender reassignment.

Like 8 people liked this



Brown, Laura

16 October 2023

thanks for this interesting look at your work. One question that comes up frequently is where to draw the line between harmless expressions of belief in the workplace, and proselytising or harassment of colleagues who don't share those beliefs (or whose identity or life choices are considered unacceptable in the belief system). Have you developed any guidance on this topic for belief-based networks?

Reply Like 10 people liked this



Brown, Laura

27 October 2023

Since "gender reassignment" covers anyone who has proposed transitioning from the gender they were assigned at birth, I'm not sure that a distinction between "gender identity" and gender reassignment" is particularly meaningful.

↩ Reply 👍 Like 2 people liked this

This intranet post was about a number of things, but included mention of SEEN. It neither elaborated, endorsed or condemned our beliefs. Laura was clearly offended by the mere mention of our network. She immediately latched on to the post to make all about how gender critical beliefs shouldn't be tolerated in the workplace, which is contrary to how expression of legally held views in workplace works. We are very much entitled to express our views, the same way other faiths and beliefs can be expressed at work. Laura continues to attempt to make it appear as if this isn't the case, crating an atmosphere where GC people have to fear for their job security for doing things anyone else is perfectly entitled to do. I found these statements very oppressive.

6. Nov 23 [Introducing the new Defra group Sex Equality and Equity Network \(SEEN\) \(sharepoint.com\)](#)



November 27, 2023

There appears to be some confusion and myths being promoted here. We are not 'anti-trans', we do not seek to erase the protected rights of others, nor do we debate the existence of trans folk. Do check out this 'myth busting' article on the SEEN website <https://seen-network.uk/myths/> if you'd like some more information.

↩ Reply 👍 Unlike You and 8 people liked this



Brown, Laura

January 15

 To clear up misunderstandings and help us understand SEEN's purpose better, could you please explain what SEEN would focus on if trans people didn't exist?

👍 Like 6 people liked this

Context: A number of inflammatory comments were made under the original post – several were removed.  was replying in this context. Laura is implying members of SEEN want trans people to not exist. This is slanderous, and I was very upset to have to read it.

7. [12/3/24, Elspeth's post – equality and respect](#)



Brown, Laura

35 minutes ago

I understand that on 1 March, SEEN's Executive Committee confirmed to its membership that both its cross-governmental chair and the chair of Defra SEEN had been named as respondents in an employment tribunal. The tribunal relates to very serious allegations of harassment, which they deny. While I appreciate that this matter is ongoing, I'm concerned about the message Defra is sending to its staff (particularly transgender nonbinary and intersex colleagues, but also anyone who values their safety and wellbeing at work) in providing a platform to those involved before a verdict has been reached.

↩ Reply 🍷 Like 1 person liked this

Under a post by Elspeth Duemmer-Wrigley about respect between people, regardless of their differing beliefs, Laura announces to all Defra that 2 members of SEEN (namely Elspeth and myself) are defending an Employment Tribunal claim and suggests that we're not safe to be around and shouldn't be allowed to speak. If any evidence was needed that the entire campaign of harassment is designed to silence us, here it is in writing. The claimant later withdrew their claim against us, making this post even more offensive to us. Laura invited people to condemn us on the basis of a vexatious legal claim and made a connection between our legally protected rights to voice our beliefs and the 'safety and wellbeing' of others (i.e. our views were making people unsafe).

8. [2/8/24 DEI - tickle v giggle](#)

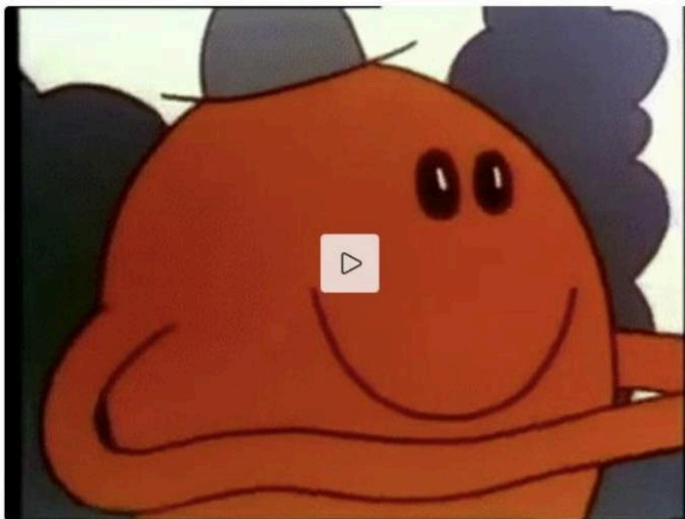


Brown, Laura

Aug 23

Seen by 57 ...

I know it isn't the point, but Tickle v Giggle must surely be the best name for a court case ever. Happy Friday all!



🍷 Like 💬 Comment 📄 Share

❤️ Stevenson, Naomi

Context: a natal male (Roxy Tickle) who identifies as a woman won a court case in Australia. The case was to determine whether an all-female app (Giggle) could exclude biological males. The court ruled against the app in a decision that supporters of women's sex-based rights across the world find completely

shocking. The news caused a great deal of consternation. This is shameless gloating, designed to cause maximum offence to people Laura disagrees with. I was horrified that someone would go out of their way to make a post that could only have the purpose of angering GC people.

9. 9/10/24 Defra EDI On women wearing red in support of women's rights



Brown, Laura

Yesterday at 1:48 PM

Seen by 6 ...

Apologies if anyone sees this twice (as well as the upsetting content) ...

Just thought it was worth making people aware - unfortunately I've just heard about a very unpleasant campaign (started online naturally) for people to wear red tomorrow, 10 Oct, if they're "bored with trans and gender nonsense" (the organisers' words, not mine!). I don't know how much traction this has gained, but organisers may count anyone wearing red tomorrow as a supporter, so may be worth considering your wardrobe choices tomorrow.

Like Comment Share

Be the first to like this



Brown, Laura Yesterday at 5:10 PM • Edited

Please note - this shouldn't be confused with the Wear It Red campaign run by St Basil's charity for World Homeless Day, which is also tomorrow.

Here, Laura makes a post (which the moderators deleted) that

1. Demonises women wearing red for women's rights
2. Misrepresents what the campaign in question was about (namely about the recognition that male and female are different sexes and one shouldn't be conflated with the other, particularly in public life)
3. Is also completely incoherent, given that wearing red on this day, by Laura's own admission, could have meant something completely different. An average person would have deleted this, given the obvious contradiction. Laura kept it up, purely so she could show her disdain for women's sex-based rights.

The post is sinister in the extreme. Imagine similar words being used about any other protected characteristic (e.g. 'some unpleasant people are going to wear crosses/hijabs/yellow/white ribbons in the office – act accordingly'). This was the post that prompted me to finally raise a grievance about Laura's conduct because of how angry it made me feel.

a. Viva Engage Moderators removed the post, 17/10/24:

As IAO of the Viva Engage Group; Defra Group Equality, Diversity and Inclusion I have reviewed your complaint regarding the post made by Laura Brown on our Group pages and found that the post in question does contravene the Principles of Communication and, more broadly, other standards that we expect within this EDI community.

The post is not appropriate commentary for the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion VE page, which must at all times maintain impartiality and support balanced discussion. It is not the platform to promote or repeat unsubstantiated comments or, in this case, hearsay relating to a particular perspective.

To refer to a campaign and encourage consideration of 'clothing choices', effectively amounts to activism in and of itself, albeit in opposition to the suggested theme of the original (external and unpublicized within Defra) campaign, which in and of itself would not have been acceptable either. This is not appropriate on workplace platforms, where neither the original campaign, nor the author's opposition to it, are appropriate topics for workplace discussion in this instance.

In addition, the Principles of Communication are clear that abusive or derogatory comments are not permitted, including spreading harmful rumours, re-posting inappropriate comments or making or re-posting statements which may be harmful to the reputation of the department, its employees, customers, or suppliers.

The comment has been removed.

10. What do they know – LB FOI requests concerning SEEN

a. [Full List of requests](#)

I suggest a leisurely scroll through all of Laura's requests. They're practically all about SEEN. The thought alone that someone would spend this amount of time pursuing just one group of people on account of a belief one doesn't agree with is sinister and oppressive. I feel as if, despite the fact that I've done nothing wrong, eventually Laura is going to find something she'll use against me or the SEEN network. It is clear that, if Laura gets any 'interesting' responses, they will be used in the tribunal where I'm currently defending myself

b. Examples:

i. [Transphobia HSW reports:](#)

"For the years 2019-2024, please provide a year by year breakdown of the number of reports referencing transphobia or transphobic behaviour.

Additionally, for the years 2022-24, please say how many reports specifically mentioned the recognition and/or activities of the Sex Equality and Equity Network (SEEN)."

Here, Laura is trying to get data regarding alleged complaints about our network, in the hope they can be used as evidence against me at employment tribunal.

ii. [Cabinet Office – SEEN correspondence](#)

Please provide copies of all correspondence between members of the Inclusive Practice Team regarding the formation and/or operation of the private limited company Sex Equality and Equity Network Limited (company number 15610099), from 2 February 2024 to today.

The SEEN Ltd Company was specifically formed for one purpose: to be able to represent SEEN in an Employment Tribunal without having to name all its members (it should be obvious why that wouldn't be a good idea). The only reason this FOI could be of any interest is that the information could be considered of use to the tribunal claimants.

iii. [Mumsnet](#)

“Please supply copies of all correspondence, minutes or other documentation held by your Human Resources department, dating from 1 November 2022 till today, regarding posts made on Mumsnet by Defra staff.”

NOTE: When SEEN was launched, and when Elspeth and I launched Crowdfunders (as no one would come to our support), these events were discussed on the Mumsnet site, largely by people who agree with us. Laura Brown has purposely sought out places where people disagree with her views to find incriminating evidence. She's also made several (totally pointless, given Mumsnet is anonymous and outwith employers' control) complaints that employers weren't investigating Mumsnet commentary on the SEEN network or our tribunal cases. Information from Mumsnet features prominently in my Employment Tribunal claim. Again, this conduct is obsessive and oppressive – nowhere seems to be safe from the Laura Brown 'thought police'.

iv. [SEEN – Yammer posts](#)

“Please provide copies of all posts and comments made on the Defra-owned Viva Engage (formerly Yammer) community "Sex Equality and Equity Network" from 13 June 2023 till the present. If for any reason it isn't possible to go back this far, please provide copies of forum content going back as far as is practicable within time and technical limits.”

When refused on grounds of volume, Laura pared the request back to:

“Please provide copies of posts and comments appearing on the Defra-owned Viva Engage for the "Sex Equality and Equity Network" between 1 March and 11 September 2024 that relate to the following topics:

1. Employment tribunals (which users may describe as lawsuits or "being sued")
2. Crowdfunding campaigns
3. Formation of private limited companies
4. Establishment of SEEN networks outside the Civil Service
5. Discussion of staff blog posts on Defra's intranet.”

Note: all these matters can only be of interest to someone who wants to supply the claimants in the various employment tribunals with evidence, in support of legal action Laura is not (or isn't supposed to be) party to.

I'd like to add that Laura, according to Defra policies, is entitled to simply join our Viva Engage Community and find all the 'incriminating evidence' she wants. The difference is that information gleaned that way can likely not be disclosed in employment tribunals, whereas FOI information obtained via WhatDoTheyKnow is simply placed on a public facing website for all to see, which must be very helpful for ET claimants as no one needs to secretly share it. Laura is openly collaborating with people suing me for expressing my lawfully held beliefs. She has the option of submitting FOIs privately, away from public gaze. Instead she chooses to make these requests out in the open,. I consider this an attempt at making sure any gender critical discourse in Defra group is suppressed for fear of disciplinary or legal action. This massively adds to the stress that comes with being the 'public face' of gender critical people in Defra Group. I can't in my right mind advise people to say anything gender critical at all anymore, given that even if it is completely innocuous, people who speak may find themselves in trouble with moderators or litigants all the same. This dilemma is causing me huge stress.

v. [SEEN in the Police](#)

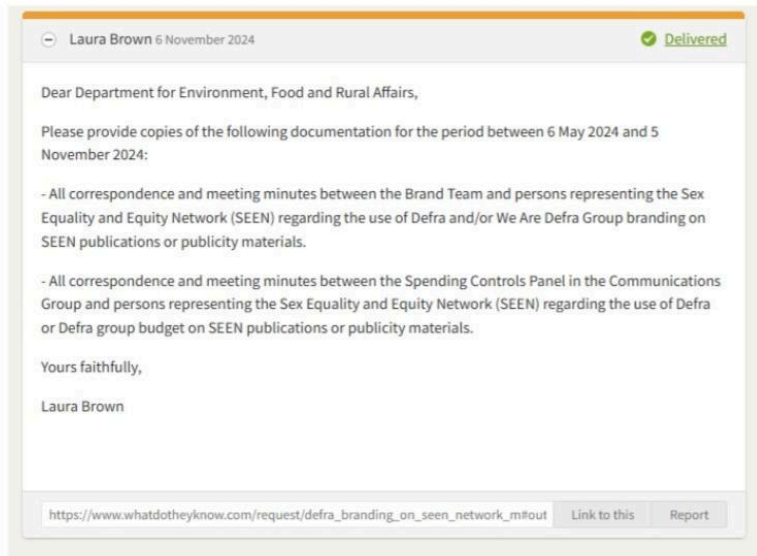
"My enquiry concerns the Police SEEN Network (<https://twitter.com/PoliceSEENUK>), a "gender critical" staff network claiming members in police forces throughout the UK.

Please provide:

- Confirmation of whether your force has formally recognised SEEN as a staff network
- Any documents relating to the granting or refusal of such recognition
- The approximate number of SEEN members within your force
- Confirmation of whether SEEN members are permitted to respond to or investigate allegations of transphobic hate crime
- Copies of any policies relating to the above."

Just for completeness' sake: Laura doesn't work for the police, but is clearly exercised by the fact that Police Officers might form SEEN networks for gender critical people, which again, on account of their beliefs having found legitimate, would be completely lawful. This is just obsessive.

vi. [Defra SEEN branding](#)

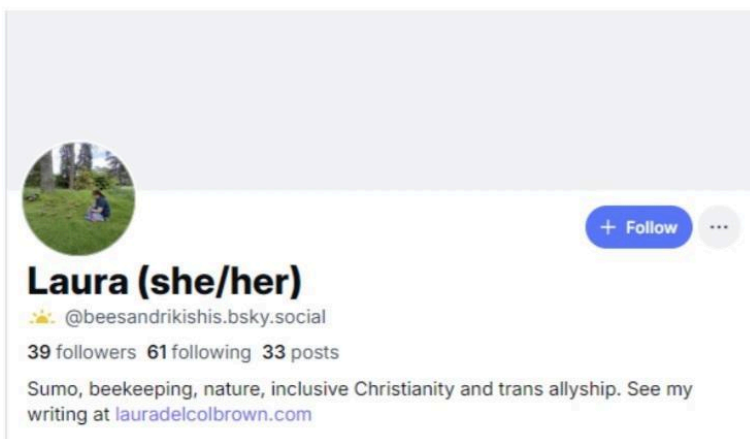


On the 5th of November 2024, Defra SEEN had a stall in Horizon House, Bristol. They used a Defra-branded SEEN banner, paid for by Defra EDI. The banner had never been seen in public before, and we have no other Defra SEEN branded publicity materials. Laura doesn't work in Bristol. Someone in Bristol saw the banner on the 5th, notified Laura, and she sent an FOI request to Defra the next day.

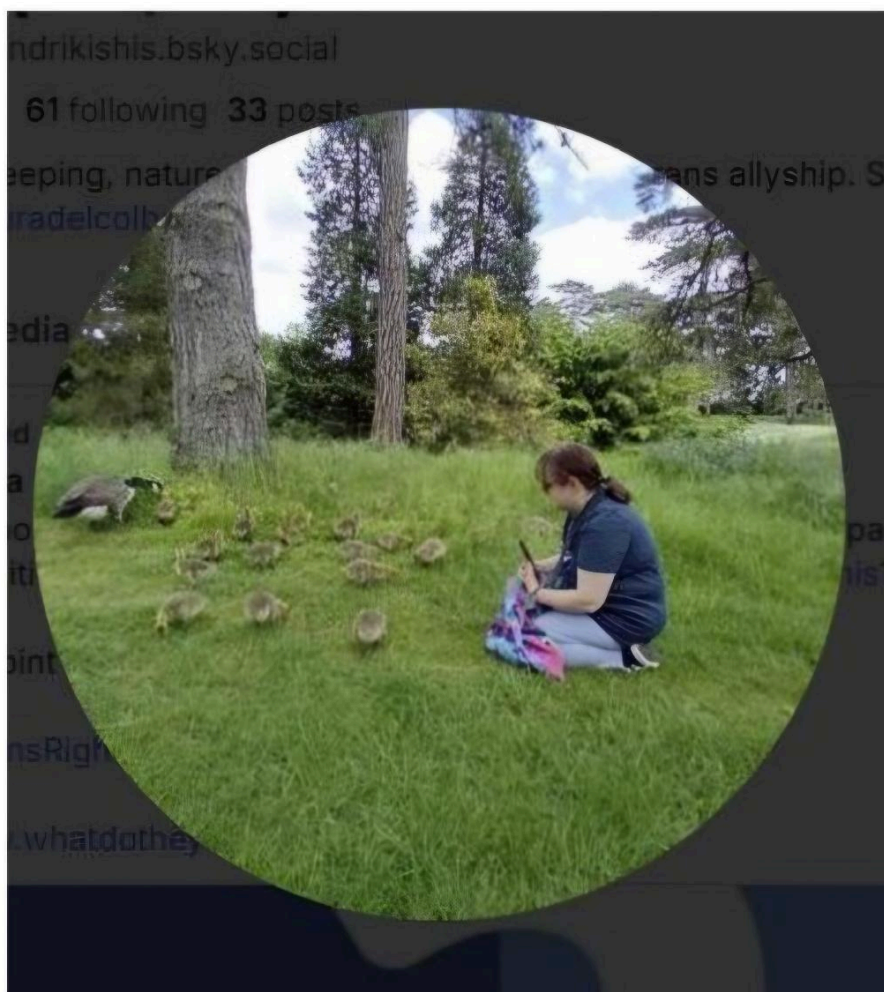
Defra EDI asked network leads earlier this year if they wanted help with publicity materials. Defra SEEN asked for a banner and supplied the design. Defra then produced the banner and sent it to us. There is no 'crime of the century' here (no crime at all, in fact) – it's easy to surmise that's exactly what happened here. This is vexatious, oppressive, and most of all obsessive behaviour.

11. [Laura Brown on Bluesky:](#)

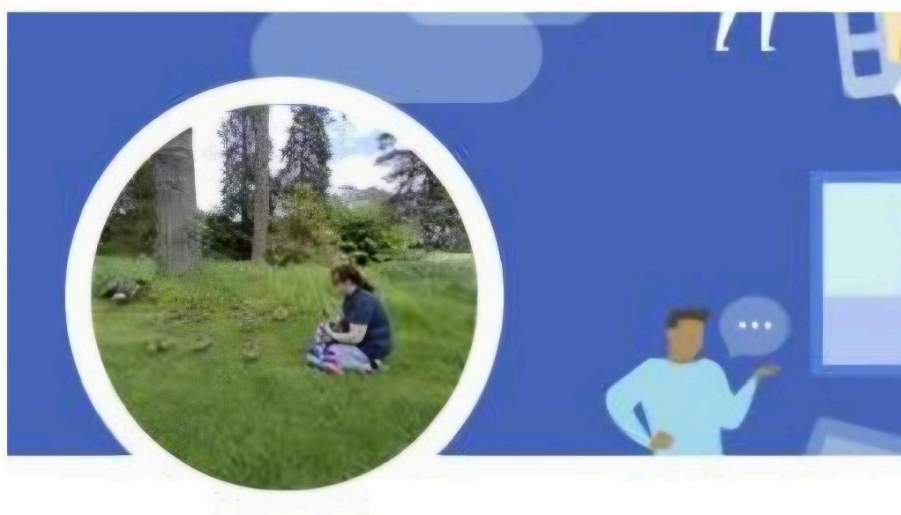
i. Profile



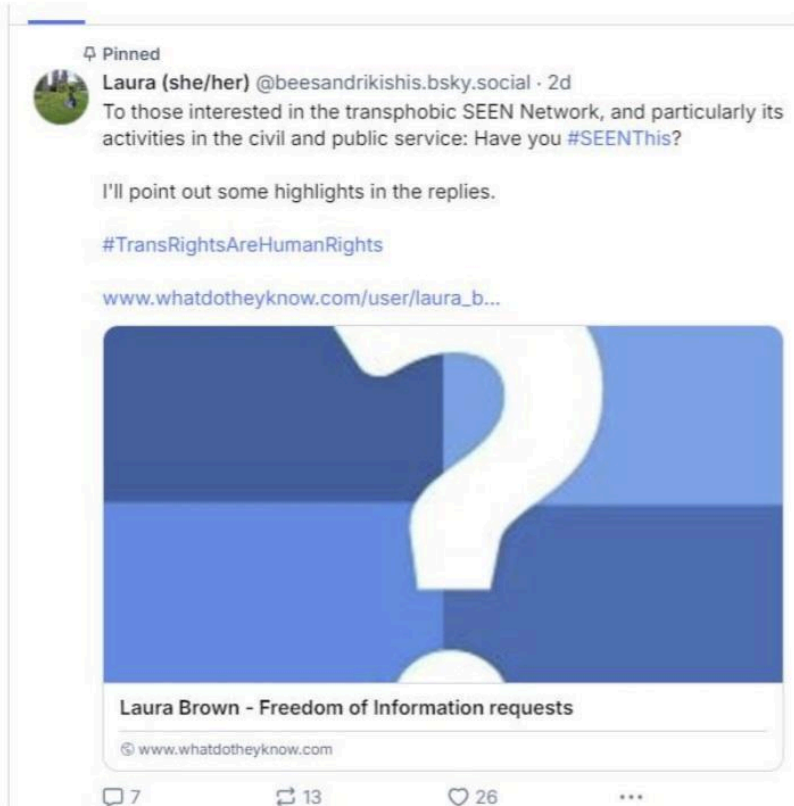
ii. Bluesky Profile pic enlarged:



iii. Matching [Viva Engage Profile](#):



iv. Laura Brown [openly accusing](#) SEEN of being ‘transphobic’:



v. Laura’s [personal website](#) (link in Bluesky bio):

My surname is Brown. Del Col is my maiden name, and comes from the Friuli–Venezia Giulia region of Italy. My pronouns are she/her.

I grew up in West Virginia, but have lived in northwest London since 2000. I became a British citizen in 2009 and renounced U.S. citizenship in 2023.