



STATEMENT ON EHRC GUIDANCE

Frontline Feminists Scotland welcome the new practical guide to the law for the providers of single-sex spaces published by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), “Separate and single-sex service providers: A guide on the Equality Act sex and gender reassignment provisions”.

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 EHRC’s new guide now confirms this.

We now call on the Boards of Scottish Women’s Aid, Rape Crisis Scotland and Engender to review their position and respond appropriately to the requirement under the law. We expect all groups in the violence against women (VAW) sector to review their policies and approaches and to adjust to ensure adherence.

We believe the Scottish Government has displayed a complete lack of leadership on this matter. Further we believe that any Ministers involved in the dilution of the VAW sector provision of single-sex services by and for women over the past five years should be answerable and held accountable for their former position.

We believe Delivering Equally Safe funding, brokered by Inspiring Scotland, should remove all reference to ‘Trans inclusion delivery plans’ and instead ensure recipients have Equality Policies for ALL protected characteristic groups, in adherence with the Equality Act 2010.

Finally, it is with great disappointment that we have to call on the Boards of the National women’s groups, Rape Crisis Scotland, Scottish Women’s Aid and Engender to consider their position. It is clear that their representation of the VAW sector has been woefully inadequate and has cost the sector capacity, money and staff during this period. It is also apparent that relevant, updated training and information on the provisions of the Equality Act and the new EHRC guidance will now be urgently required for VAW staff and Boards, particularly those who have displayed an inadequate understanding of the law. The Boards of the VAW sector-services should now ensure that any member of staff purposefully misrepresenting the law and misleading Scottish Ministers on this issue is held to account.