



Frontline Feminists Scotland

WOMEN'S VOICES MATTER

WOMEN'S VOICES MATTER IN OUR UNIONS

Frontline Feminists Scotland values the role of Unions in our society. Many of our members are also members of a Union and often look to them for guidance and support in our many roles in our communities.

Today we reach out to the membership Unions to support the voices of the vital violence against women and children services to be heard in the debate regarding single sex service provision, as protected by the Equality Act 2010.

As you may know Maya Forstater recently won her court case to appeal against an Employment Tribunal ruling. This ruling upheld her employer's decision not to renew her contract, due to her expressed beliefs that sex is an immutable fact. The Court ruling reasserted the right to hold gender-critical beliefs and protect anyone's right to express these.

In light of this decision we are asking Unions to review their current position on single sex services to ensure this reflects the law.

We hope the template motion below will support members to address this issue, and are happy to support anyone striving to protect services for women and the right to express gender-critical opinions.

Women's Voice Matter

Single Sex Provision in Women's Frontline Services

The last period has seen a rise in the dilution of single sex services that support women and girls. This move has wrongly been supported by some of the leading women's organisations in Scotland.

Many workers in frontline services are concerned about this trend which they believe is against the spirit of the founding Feminist principles of their organisations. Their concerns

extend to those that they provide services to and the impact that this trend has had on the service users and staff.

The Equality Act clearly states the position of sex as a protected characteristic and the Equality and Human Rights Commission clarify that there are legal exemptions which permit employers and services to offer services to women only. They state:

There are several situations in which an organisation can lawfully provide single sex services. In all circumstances they must be able to justify it. For example:

- offering a women-only support service to victims of domestic violence who are women is likely to be justifiable even if there is no parallel service for men due to insufficient demand.

This provision in law aligns with the original Feminist aims of most women's services in Scotland.

Conference also notes that the Scottish Government's funding policies have driven a change to the delivery of single sex spaces.

This Branch/Conference: **(amend text to suit)**

1. Supports the application of the exclusion of men to services specifically designed and tailored to women and notes the legal provision to allow single sex exclusive services as laid out by the Equality and Human Rights Commission from the Equality Act 2010.
2. Condemns the failure of leading women's organisations within Scotland to support and protect this important provision laid out in the Equality Act (2010) and in so doing fail to protect vulnerable service users and their children.
3. Calls on Employers to amend policies, employment practices and activities of women's services to align with the Equality Acts provision and to lawfully provide single sex spaces run for and by women.
4. Reaffirms the feminist principles on which the women's service sector was formed.
5. Vows to fight against cuts to service provision, to defend women only services and to argue for an extension to existing provision based on needs.
6. Calls on the Scottish Government to analyse the impact that current funding conditions have had on the delivery of single sex provision and to include guidance on the legal exemptions within future funding guidance to encourage funding and take-up for single sex provision.