

Continued membership of Stonewall: Our Response

The University of Kent is committed to fostering a positive working environment where all staff are treated fairly, with dignity, courtesy, respect and consideration. We strive to build a community in which open debate and robust argument about difficult questions are openly valued and celebrated. We are also wholly committed to creating a diverse and inclusive culture for everyone.

We value all members of our community and we recognise that the current debates relating to Stonewall and their champions are placing our trans colleagues at an increased risk of harm. We do not and will not tolerate discrimination and harassment within our institution. All our memberships of charter marks and equality schemes are annually reviewed to ensure they are of continued value to the University and that we are best serving our staff and students. Stonewall has assisted the University with valuable policy creation and decision making in relation to protecting, celebrating and including our LGBT+ community and we will be continuing our membership.

Alongside this, the University equally values education and research, believing that one enhances the other. Freedom of speech within the law and freedom of inquiry are fundamental to our work as a community and we will continue to work within the legal framework. We believe that Academic Freedom is an equal and inalienable right of academic staff and students, and a key foundation of academic research and teaching recognised both in culture and in law. Academics need the freedom to articulate and argue within their field of expertise to promote a plural and democratic society, countering hidden biases in research, teaching, the functioning of the University and public discourse, and allowing all ideas to flourish.

More widely we encourage all staff and students to actively engage in increasing their understanding of the issues facing the trans and non binary communities and to take action to create a more inclusive environment.