

Reference: 1092479

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Information Rights  
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## Freedom of Information: Right to know request

Thank you for your request for information about Ofcom's membership of Stonewall.

We received this request on 4 January 2021 and have considered it under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ('the FOI Act').

You asked:

- 1. The first date in which Ofcom became a member of Stonewall England Diversity Champions Programme and confirm if you are still a member.*
- 2. The amount of membership fees paid to Stonewall England since joining their Diversity program.*
- 3. Benefits received by Ofcom from this Membership.*

## Background

Before responding to your request, it may be helpful to briefly explain the different capacities in which Ofcom engages with Stonewall:

- In the context of our responsibilities as an employer, we engage with Stonewall on our internal LGBT diversity and inclusion work, for example through our participation in the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index.
- In the context of our regulatory role in relation to diversity in the broadcasting sector, we have some contact with Stonewall, as well as a variety of other organisations, as part of our work with broadcasting stakeholders to improve the diversity of workforces in that sector.
- In the context of our role as the UK's broadcasting content regulator. In this area our regulatory role requires us to apply standards that provide adequate protection to audiences from the inclusion of offensive and harmful material (which we enforce by way of the Ofcom [Broadcasting Code](#)).<sup>1</sup> Ofcom is an independent regulator. No third party directs, or otherwise advises, Ofcom on how it exercises its statutory functions relating to broadcast standards. However, as an open regulator, Ofcom does engage with a range of different organisations to gather input and perspectives on all aspects of diversity in broadcasting, including issues that broadcasters may seek to make programmes about.

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<sup>1</sup> If you would like to learn more about Ofcom's Broadcasting Code and published guidance for broadcasters, please visit: <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/manage-your-licence/tv-broadcast-licences/guidance-for-tv-broadcast-licensees>

Ofcom's Chief Executive recently had an introductory meeting with the CEO of Stonewall on 24 November 2020. At this meeting one of the topics raised by the CEO of Stonewall was the coverage of trans issues by broadcasters. As part of our ongoing stakeholder engagement, there are likely to be future discussions with Stonewall about this issue. We also expect to continue our discussions with a range of other organisations to gather input and perspectives on all aspects of diversity in broadcasting. For example, we are also in conversation with the LGB Alliance on trans issues, an organisation which is widely recognised to have a very different viewpoint to that of Stonewall.

### **Our response**

We have now conducted searches for information that Ofcom holds within the scope of your request and set out our responses to your questions below:

- 1. The first date in which Ofcom became a member of Stonewall England Diversity Champions Programme and confirm if you are still a member.*

Ofcom became a member of Stonewall's Diversity Champions programme in 2007, and we continue to be a member.

- 2. The amount of membership fees paid to Stonewall England since joining their Diversity program.*

For the period 2007 to 2021, we have paid a total of £26,750 plus VAT in membership fees for the Diversity Champions programme.

- 3. Benefits received by Ofcom from this Membership*

As a member of the Stonewall Diversity Champions programme, Ofcom has access to a range of benefits, as outlined on Stonewall's website [here](#), including an account manager, member resources and guidance on different areas of LGBT inclusion and people policy reviews. Through our membership, we have used Stonewall to give views on our transitioning at work policy, dignity and respect at work policy (bullying, harassment and victimisation), and family friendly policies from a sexual orientation and trans perspective. We have also asked Stonewall questions around the use of pronouns and prefixes, best practice language to use on diversity monitoring forms, advice on best practice wording around medical questions relating to sex (for private medical cover), and considerations to take into account when thinking about setting workforce targets. Stonewall is not the only organisation who has provided views to us on these areas.

I hope this information is helpful. If you have any further queries, then please send them to [information.requests@ofcom.org.uk](mailto:information.requests@ofcom.org.uk) quoting the reference number above in any future communications.

Yours sincerely,

Julia Snape

If you are unhappy with the response you have received in relation to your request for information and/or consider that your request was refused without a reason valid under the law you may ask for an internal review. If you ask us for an internal review of our decision, it will be subject to an independent review within Ofcom.

The following outcomes are possible:

- the original decision is upheld; or
- the original decision is reversed or modified.

#### **Timing**

If you wish to exercise your right to an internal review **you should contact us within two months of the date of this letter**. There is no statutory deadline for responding to internal reviews and it will depend upon the complexity of the case. However, we aim to conclude all such reviews within 20 working days, and up to 40 working days in exceptional cases. We will keep you informed of the progress of any such review. If you wish to request an internal review, you should contact [information.requests@ofcom.org.uk](mailto:information.requests@ofcom.org.uk).

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office

Wycliffe House

Water Lane

Wilmslow

Cheshire

SK9 5AF