



18 July 2018

Mr Mark Serwotka

PCS
160 Falcon Road
London
SW11 2LN

Dear Mark,

We are writing in response to your letter of the 12th July having considered the points you have raised and additional information that has come to light since.

Firstly though we wish to state publicly, both for yourself and those reading this letter, that Proud is, and always has been, an independent, self organised group within PCS by and for LGBT members.

We are aware there are some within our Union who believe raising this issue is motivated by some of the ongoing internal debates within our Union, notably in regards to the position of Assistant General Secretary.

To be absolutely clear, Proud has no interest in the internal politics of PCS, or of those groups within PCS. Our primary concern is, and will always be, our members and representing their interests.

We condemn any attempts to diminish or otherwise reject our members concerns on this, or any other issue, regarding LGBT equality.

In regards to your letter of the 12th July there are a number of points we would seek to raise with you for clarification and response;

1) It has been brought to our attention that contrary to our belief in our initial letter that the letter which appeared in the Morning Star was done not in a personal capacity but as General Secretary of our Union, therefore on behalf of PCS and our members.

This does not appear to be clear in either the original letter or in your response to us on the 12th July. Can you clarify why this was not stated prior to today?

2) In your response to us you recognise that “The PCS position is clear and a matter of public record. We condemn all discrimination against trans people and fully support the fight for trans people.” You also state “The letter is specifically, and only, about issues concerning the way in which debate should be conducted within the labour movement.”

You further state “I have no hesitation in unequivocally condemning discriminatory behaviour against trans people, the belittlement of their everyday suffering from hate crimes, and the denial of the authenticity of their personal experience.”

We would like to draw your attention to the tweet below, which was tweeted on Friday 13th July by Paul Embury, a fellow signatory of the Morning Star letter, which reads

“This (*a letter from LGBT Labour*) landed in my inbox. I will not be withdrawing my name from the Morning Star letter. I consider it dangerous and wrong - ultimately biologically illiterate - for the law to force us to recognise a man as a woman simply because he says he is one #Orwellian #Stand WithWomen”

This tweet was liked by, among others, Woman’s Place UK, one of the groups organising around proposed GRA reform, whose founders also signed the Morning Star letter and to whom you will already be familiar.

We are disgusted at this language and dismayed that our Union should be signed up to any letter alongside those who would refer to, or support those who refer to, transgender people, including our own members, in such a way.

Motion A18 to this year’s ADC instructed the NEC to “...use our voice in support of our trans and non-binary comrades in the press and media in the hopes of breaking down some of the stigma and lies that are circulated there.”

We believe that your actions in aligning our Union’s support with individuals who hold views, such as that transgender people are “biologically illiterate” are in breach of the policies agreed by Annual Delegate Conference, in particular A18 as per above.

We call on you to remove your signature, and our Union’s support, of the Morning Star letter and offer a public apology to our members for associating our Union with those who clearly hold views contrary to the principles of our Union.

3) In our original letter we asked what discussions, if any, took place between yourself and others within PCS prior to the publication of the letter on the 4th July given our Union's position on this issue was previously known?

We note with disappointment that no answer appears to have been offered to this point. We would ask again, particularly given we are now aware your signature was provided as General Secretary, for a response to this question?

As evidenced by the debates at ADC over the past two years, you are well aware of the sensitivity of this issue and would have been well aware of any potential response to your signing of the letter among our Union's members.

We believe members deserve to know what action, if any, you took to protect our Union and our reputation following your signing of the letter, particularly as your signature was being provided on their behalf?

4) In our original letter we also asked why no comment has been made publicly following, or prior to, our request for this on Wednesday 4th July, causing unnecessary hurt and upset to many of our Union's members?

As above, no response appears to have been given to this point and we would ask again that a response is provided.

As of the date of this letter, there continues to be no acknowledgement of this request and nothing has been posted on the PCS website per our request now two weeks after our request was originally made.

Unite provided a public response on the same day as publication of the Morning Star letter, following a decision made at their Policy Conference earlier that day.

Given our Union's policies were already well established, and a matter of public record, we have to question why no steps were, and are yet to be, taken which publicly acknowledges our Union's position on the matter?

We would also ask that this is rectified as soon as possible and a public statement is made to reaffirm our Union's position on the matter.

We understand the National Executive Committee will be discussing the issue of Motion A18 this week and hope that members of the NEC will reflect fully on the issues set out above on behalf of our Union's LGBT members when this debate takes place.

We note your invitation to meet in order to discuss this issue, and motion A18, further. Notwithstanding the above, we agree that this would be beneficial and look forward to arranging this at the earliest convenience.

We also believe it would be beneficial to improve awareness of trans issues within our Union, including among the National Executive Committee and PCS staff.

As you will be aware, our Union has created and offers Trans Awareness training to all PCS reps and members.

We would invite you, and all NEC members who have not already done so, to attend one of these courses as a show of good faith to engaging on the issue of trans equality among our transgender members, and cisgender allies, who have questioned PCS' commitment in recent weeks.

As with our previous letter, we will be publishing this letter publicly in the interest of transparency for Proud members.

We look forward to your response in due course regarding the points outlined in this letter and to arrange a meeting with you at the earliest convenience.

Sincerely yours,

Richard Jones

Proud Chair

Saorsa Tweedale

Proud Trans Members' Rep