

Written evidence submitted by Mike Freer MP [HAB0386]

Dear Caroline,

Following my recent appearance at the Women and Equalities Committee's oral evidence session on "The Rights of Cohabiting Partners", I am writing in response to your request on the headcount of the Equality Hub, and your additional question regarding marriage and civil partnership potentially not being a viable alternative option to cohabitation for some trans or non-binary people.

Firstly, under current law marriage and civil partnership is permitted between a couple of the opposite or of the same sex. The law also permits transgender individuals to get married or enter into a civil partnership in their acquired gender after obtaining a Gender Recognition Certificate. The introduction of opposite-sex civil partnerships has meant that people who wish to change their legal gender no longer have to bring their relationship to an end or convert it to a different relationship in order to do so.

There are no plans across the Government to introduce a third gender category. The Government is however, committed to ensuring the UK is a welcoming place for all people, regardless of their background or identity, so that they are able to pursue their goals and ambitions without fear of discrimination. The Government continues to monitor emerging data and research on the experiences of non-binary people to better understand how future policy can be developed.

Secondly, as you will know, the work of the Equality Hub is vast and officials work across a wide range of important topics. This is alongside delivering on our ODP commitments, providing assistance to other Departments with their equality objectives, ensuring they are effectively implemented across government.

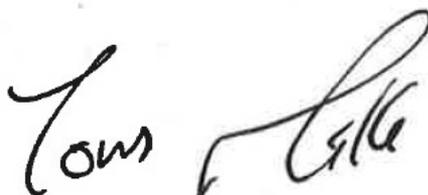
There are currently 198 FTE in the Equality Hub. This is split across the Government Equalities Office, Race Disparity Unit, Disability Unit, Social Mobility Commission and Cross-Hub work. Cross-Hub staffing refers to provision of streamlined services across the Hub in the areas of operations (finance, business support, correspondence), communications, strategy and digital. These members of staff are across GEO, RDU and DU.

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With regards to your request for historical staffing information within the Equality Hub, we do not have the information available in the same format, as this was prior to the Equality Hub forming. However, I have provided a breakdown of historical establishment figures for each organisation in the table below.

Organisation	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Government Equalities Office	116 FTE	124 FTE	117.5 FTE
Race Disparity Unit	28 FTE	28 FTE	28 FTE
Disability Unit	17 FTE	17 FTE	17 FTE

I hope this is useful, but please do get in touch if you need any further information.



MIKE FREER MP
Minister for Equalities

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