

4 May 2023

Rt Hon Steve Barclay MP  
Secretary of State for Health and Social Care  
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Dear Secretary of State

Thank you for your letter dated 24 March 2023 regarding membership of Stonewall and broader diversity and inclusion matters. Here at the NHS Business Services Authority, we passionately believe in the importance of creating a great place to work where everyone can give and be their best and hence we share your view about the importance of diversity and inclusion being everyone's responsibility.

As requested, we have reviewed the issue raised in your letter and have discussed and agreed our conclusions with the NHS Business Services Authority Board at its meeting on 13 April 2023.

By way of context, you will be aware of the NHSBSA's track record of, and relentless focus on, delivering value for money, validated by the recent Arm's Length Bodies Review of our organisation. Since our inception we have reduced our operating costs by around a half and have delivered over £2bn in savings to the wider NHS. We provide platforms, products and services that support the NHS workforce, Primary Care and millions of UK citizens and are responsible for safeguarding over £88bn of spend that flows through these platforms. Delivering value for money is at the heart of what we do and that should be no different for diversity and inclusion activity.

Equally, we recognise – as I know you do – the importance of our people and an engaged workforce in driving productivity and investing discretionary effort. That's why we were delighted to be recognised by Best Companies as delivering outstanding staff engagement and topping the UK wide list of not for profit/public sector organisations to work for. Our commitment to being a diverse and inclusive workplace is fundamental to this and I am pleased to be able to confirm that our approach has, as you highlight, very much been about how we embed this as everyone's responsibility across the organisation. It's a message I have repeated time and again since taking up the role of Chief Executive in 2019. To that end, we have sought to optimise the use of our volunteer staff networks, ensured line management are appropriately equipped for such matters and we have reorganised the small section of our People Team who have responsibility for legal compliance on inclusion issues to have a much wider remit which includes sustainability, safeguarding, accessibility, colleague experience, health and safety, social mobility and wellbeing. This has created much more rounded and rewarding roles and moved away

from having discrete, dedicated and more limited positions and is driving greater efficiencies.

Likewise with regard to Stonewall, one of our challenges in continuing to deliver across our full range of services, is the attraction and retention of talented individuals especially in some of the technical, digital and data roles which are in such high demand. We have had continued success with both recruitment and retention recently and the evidence from our recruitment events highlights that people are genuinely attracted to an organisation that they feel is inclusive and supportive. It has been in this context in which we have used our membership of Stonewall (£2,600pa) and our rating as a top employer. Equally, we have memberships of Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion (ENEI) (£1,500pa) and Disability Confident which is a free Government backed scheme. Additionally, in support of the Government's Women's Health Strategy and plans for supporting people to remain and return to the workforce we are also in the process of being accredited as menopause champion (£395pa ongoing costs) and Carers Accreditation (£500pa ongoing costs).

However, we fully accept your point around the need to ensure continued value for money and therefore we will be reviewing the need for, and value of, our continued participation at the end of our current memberships which is towards the end of this calendar year for all schemes. I have promised to update the Board on the outcome of that review and can update your office too if that would be helpful.

I trust this response has been helpful and supportive and I am more than happy to speak further should that be necessary.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael Brodie". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Michael Brodie CBE  
**Chief Executive**