

## Document 5

**From:** Minne, Jill [Redacted Section 40(2)]  
**Sent:** 26 March 2025 18:14  
**To:** Brady, Jayne [Redacted Section 40(2)]  
**Cc:** Gibson, Neil [Redacted Section 40(2)]; Byrne, Jayne [Redacted Section 40(2)]; McLaughlin, Mark (DOF) [Redacted Section 40(2)]  
**Subject:** Minister's decision - Belfast pride

Hi Jayne

I've spoken to SpAd today and she has confirmed that it is Minister O'Dowd's view that as one of the largest employers committed to being having an inclusive workforce, the Civil Service Civil Service LGBTQ+ Staff Network staff (alongside supportive family, friends, and colleagues) should participate in the Belfast Pride parade as it has done since 2018.

**From:** Minne, Jill  
**Sent:** 26 March 2025 13:19  
**To:** McNabb, Chris [Redacted Section 40(2)]  
**Cc:** McLaughlin, Mark (DOF) [Redacted Section 40(2)]  
**Subject:** RE: Belfast pride

Hi Chris, thanks for this.

DoF's proposed line was :

"As one of the largest employers here with over 24,000 staff the NI Civil Service is committed to being an inclusive employer.

"Alongside supportive family, friends and colleagues, the Civil Service LGBTQ+ Staff Network has participated in the Belfast Pride parade since 2018. The Staff Network plans to participate in the Pride parade as it has done since then."

**From:** McNabb, Chris [Redacted Section 40(2)]  
**Sent:** 26 March 2025 12:31  
**To:** Minne, Jill [Redacted Section 40(2)]  
**Cc:** McNabb, Chris [Redacted Section 40(2)]  
**Subject:** Belfast pride

Jill

Had a meeting with HOCS this morning re Pride. She has asked for a line which we could use once there is a decision to attend. Have a look at the line at the end of this email and amend accordingly.

Thanks

Chris

Jayne

As discussed this morning re Belfast Pride. The NICS attendance or not at this year's parade will be of significant interest to the media and you will be the focus of the story. It is fair to assume that there will be criticism for any decision the NICS takes.

Attending the parade leaves the NICS and you open to the charge of acting politically – it could be suggested by some that your attendance at the parade shows that the principal policy adviser to the Executive disagrees with the decision by ministers to ban puberty blockers or others may suggest that the NICS is acting politically by attending the parade and that underlines the need for immediate reform.

Not attending also leaves you open to the charge that we are not living up to our commitments to be a fair and equitable employer that supports diversity.

We haven't been asked by the media for a line yet and as I said this morning, there should be engagement at a political level before a final decision is taken. I also suggested that we will need a line to deploy if we are attending which the Ministers are sighted on.

You said that you are going to engage with Minister O'Dowd who I suspect will be supportive of the NICS attending. I also advised of the need to discuss with FMdFM and follow that up with a sub.

As a starter and working on the basis that the NICS attends this year's parade, I would suggest the following from a NICS spokesperson:

The NICS is one of NI's largest employers and the attendance of civil servants at Belfast Pride reflects our position as an employer that values the diversity of our workforce. Ministers have been informed of our decision to attend this year's parade and [accept/have been informed] that this is solely an employment matter and as such, an issue for NICS management.