

Statement

Re: Settlement of the legal claims by Victoria Culf

Watford Borough Council is pleased to have reached an amicable settlement regarding the legal claims brought by Mrs Culf. The Council holds Mrs Culf in high regard as a community artist with whom it has enjoyed a longstanding, positive working relationship.

On 6 June 2023, Mrs Culf had a discussion with a council employee in which she expressed her beliefs about gender, particularly her opposition to the transition of children to a different gender.

The Council acknowledges that this is a complex and sensitive subject, and it respects that people hold a range of deeply held views about it, including those expressed by Mrs Culf. Watford is a community where mutual respect for our differences is highly valued, and the Council is committed to ensuring that our town remains a place where everyone can be themselves and be part of a vibrant community.

The conversation in June 2023 between Mrs Culf and the Council's employee led to some tensions. The Council now wishes to make it clear that it has no animosity towards Mrs Culf and would work with her in the future as a community artist. To this end, Mrs Culf, as a local artist of good standing, will continue to be welcome at the Museum of Watford when it is reopened and will be considered alongside other local artists for work directly or indirectly commissioned by the Council.

The Council also remains firmly committed to the principles of freedom of thought, conscience, religion, and expression, and to the fair and equal treatment of all individuals, whatever their protected characteristics and beliefs, as set out in the Equality Act 2010. The Council will continue to reflect on how it engages with and learns from these matters in ways that promote understanding, respect, and community cohesion.

Watford Borough Council looks forward to a positive working relationship with Mrs Culf in the future.

Mrs Culf has said:

“After a very difficult three years, I am pleased finally to draw a line under this unfortunate dispute – which, in a healthier society, should not have happened in the first place.

“I am grateful to the Christian Legal Centre and to all others who have stood with me through my ordeal and have now helped to bring it to an end.

“Every child struggling with gender dysphoria deserves compassion, support, and above all protection from being rushed along the dangerous path of ‘transitioning’ towards irreversible medical interventions. The fact that this protection has been denied to so many children, leaving so many young lives in ruins, is one of the gravest wrongs of our time.

“For saying no more than this in a private conversation three years ago, I was cancelled at my own exhibition and reported to the police for ‘a hate crime’. To their credit, the police promptly recognised that they should not interfere with free speech, and decided to take no action. In the meantime, many of those I worked with were told that I was under a police investigation for ‘transphobia’. Although I was cleared by the police within 48 hours, the incident had a significant and lasting negative impact on my business and professional reputation.

“Since then, however, my view has been vindicated in a series of reports by eminent experts, both in this country and worldwide, most recently in the 2025 report “Treatment for Pediatric Gender Dysphoria: Review of Evidence and Best Practices” published by the United States Department of Health and Human Services.

“The lesson for all of us is to learn to debate our disagreements, especially on such important matters as the safety of our children, with respect and tolerance of different views. I hope this experience encourages public bodies to approach disagreement with care, openness and respect for free expression.

“I am pleased that Watford Borough Council now recognises its obligation as a public authority to respect different beliefs, free speech and freedom of thought, conscience and religion. Our dispute ends on a better note than where it began.”