

Freedom of Information Act 2000 disclosure log entry

Reference

23-24024

Date response sent

22/05/23

Subject

Books withdrawal from Trust Library 2003-2023

Details of enquiry

I understand the book 'Inventing Transgender Children and Young People', which includes a foreword by ex-Tavistock clinician Dr David Bell, was banned from the Tavistock and Portman library in 2020*:

<https://cambridgescholars.com/product/978-1-5275-3638-8#tabs-2>

1. *If this date is incorrect, please provide a correct date.
2. Could you please share the number of complaints that were made about this decision (I'm aware of at least one formal complaint, dealt with by then-CEO Paul Jenkins),
 - a. the category of complainants (i.e., Trust staff or students),
 - b. the dates of these complaints and
 - c. what actions were taken as a result of the complaints.
3. Additionally, please include any book requests that students or staff have made, that have been declined,
 - a. and whether this led to a complaint from the person requesting the book

Response sent

I understand the book 'Inventing Transgender Children and Young People', which includes a foreword by ex-Tavistock clinician Dr David Bell, was banned from the Tavistock and Portman library in 2020*:

<https://cambridgescholars.com/product/978-1-5275-3638-8#tabs-2>

1. *If this date is incorrect, please provide a correct date.
It would be incorrect to state that the book was banned. This particular book, in light of two complaints received about it, was temporarily withdrawn from the library to allow for a formal investigation to take place. Once that investigation concluded, it's findings were that the book should be returned to the library shelves, and accordingly the book was returned to the library shelves and made available for loan.
2. Could you please share the number of complaints that were made about this decision (I'm aware of at least one formal complaint, dealt with by then-CEO Paul Jenkins),
There were two complaints made directly to the Chief Executive at that time,
 - a. the category of complainants (i.e., Trust staff or students),
We understand that both complaints had been made by staff, with the second complaint linked to any decision to withdraw the book.
 - b. the dates of these complaints
We cannot respond to this question as we do not hold the dates of these complaints, as both the Chief Executive and Director of DET, who managed these complaints at the time, have left the Trust.

c. what actions were taken as a result of the complaints

To establish forums on specialist subjects to advise the Library on recommended purchases, and to gather a list of staff members who would read through these titles. For Gender subject matter, this task was allocated to the Gender Steering Group, and all purchases continued to be made in line with the then prevailing Library Acquisition and Collection Development Policy, issued June 2021.

Since November 2022 all proposed books on transgender subject matter were initially referred to the Gender Steering Committee for evaluation of suitability.

3. Additionally, please include any book requests that students or staff have made, that have been declined,

New book requests were systematically evaluated using the Trust's Academic Freedom policy; [Academic Freedom and Freedom of Speech Policy](#) and prevailing [Library Acquisition and Collection Development Policy – superseded in March 2023 \(attached\)](#).

In January 2022, the Gender Steering Committee advised the library that it could not recommend the book purchase 'Gender Dysphoria: A Therapeutic Model for Working with Children, Adolescents and Young Adults by Susan and Marcus Evans'.

Please note this is quite different from a ban, the Trust does not ban books, though it might not always recommend the purchase of all requested titles..

We do not hold records prior to 2019 relating to book requests for acquisition whether requested via email or via the library management system.

- a. and whether this led to a complaint from the person requesting the book

We do not hold evidence which suggests that complaints about this have been made. No records on book requests were kept prior to 2019, whether requested via email or via the library management system. However, we have anecdotal evidence from long serving library staff, that no books have ever been banned and that no other book requests have been rejected.

Library staff have further confirmed that no-one has sent in anything via a feedback system which has been in place since 2020 and reviewed annually