



Mrs P. J. Hasnip
Cornerstone (North East) Adoption and
Fostering Service
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Charity Commission Direct
PO Box 1227, Liverpool L69 3UG

t: [REDACTED]
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Your Ref:

Our Ref: sr/C-295723/lis

Date: 11 January 2011

Dear Mrs Hasnip,

Cornerstone (North East) Adoption and Fostering Service

Thank you for your letter of 12 November 2010.

I apologise for the delay in replying.

I note your submission that Cornerstone is not discriminating on the grounds of sexual orientation and I accept that is correct.

Cornerstone *is* limiting the services it provides to prospective parents wishing to adopt children to persons who are Evangelical Christians. I do consider this requires justification and I note that you consider this falls within what was section 57(5) of the Equality Act 2006 and is now paragraph 2 of the Schedule 23 of the Equality Act 2010.

I note that paragraph 2 relates to an organisation the purpose of which is to enable persons of a religion or belief to receive any benefit, or to engage in any activity, within the framework of that religion or belief. I agree that Cornerstone falls within this category.

Accordingly, Cornerstone is permitted to restrict the provision of services in the course of activities undertaken by the organisation or on its behalf or under its auspices where the restriction is applied for the following reasons:

- (a) because of the purpose of the organisation, or
- (b) to avoid causing offence, on grounds of the religion or belief to which the organisation relates, to persons of that religion or belief.

I would not take issue with your contention that at least one of these reasons applies in the case of your charity and that you are entitled to conduct your charity in the way you have

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chosen provided that you can justify the restriction you have made in terms of the legislation.

Please understand that this correspondence has come about from our wish to ensure all cases are treated in a similar way. I accept what you say about the differences between Cornerstone's situation and that of Catholic Care. However, the distinct approaches adopted by the two different charities each required to be justified.

Thank you for engaging with our concerns and providing us with the necessary information. We would not wish to question the value of the work Cornerstone is carrying out in providing prospective parents for children in need of adoption.

Yours sincerely,

Stephen Roberts

Stephen Roberts

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