

Dear

Our libraries are once again hosting “Drag Queen Story Hour” events which is being presented to families as fun and child-friendly entertainment even though drag queens are adult entertainers and overtly sexual in their presentation. Mirian Cates, in a recent speech, pointed out the implicit safeguarding risk of outsourcing. There is a clear safeguarding risk here, as well as the risk of consequential [reputational damage](#).

Drag Queen Story Hour (DQSH) is currently very fashionable and is presented as a way of teaching children about diversity and inclusion and building LGBT acceptance.

I question how this is achieved by DQSH which does not challenge stereotypes, offering instead a narrow and unrepresentative introduction to the LGBT community. Furthermore, it is [homophobic](#) to suggest that gay men like to dress as women.

I am also concerned about the potential for DQSH to have negative impacts on women and girls. Presenting young children with adult men dressed up and behaving as hypersexualized parodies of women will influence children’s view of women, to a greater or lesser degree.

As a performance genre, [drag essentially parodies women](#) in a way that endorses narrow stereotypes and mocks femininity. Research supports this, a 2014 study found drag to be ‘a product of a masculine world which defines the female beauty standard.’ (Laurie, 2014).

A man donning a costume of ‘woman’ doesn’t achieve the stated aim of defying ‘gender restrictions,’ rather it reinforces them. Young children will not necessarily understand that the performers are male. DQSH shows will likely reinforce sexist stereotypes about the dress and behaviour of women.

LGBT acceptance would be better achieved by choosing representatives who challenge sexist stereotypes of gay men and women. Positive role models from the LGBT community would be an inspiration for young people learning to understand about the many ways of being and loving.

That Drag Queen Story Hour is [actively fund raising for](#) Mermaids, a charity that exists only to support childhood transition, is deeply concerning.

I therefore call on you to:

1. Reject the practice of using drag queens to read to children
2. Cancel all proposed appearances by drag queens in libraries and schools
3. Commit to countering sexist messages in children’s provision

Kind regards