# Foreign Office gets flak for displaying bisexual awareness week flag



The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) has attracted attention by raising two pink, purple, and blue flags in the courtyard of its Grade I-listed headquarters in Westminster. These flags, symbolising Bisexual Awareness Week, have sparked a debate over the priorities of the department, particularly during a period of intense global conflicts.

The FCDO is currently the only Whitehall government department that is visibly marking Bisexual Awareness Week. Observers have voiced concerns about the appropriateness of this focus given the ongoing tensions in the Middle East and the war in Ukraine. Critics argue that the ministry should concentrate more on pressing international diplomatic issues rather than promoting Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) events.

The display comes shortly after Foreign Secretary David Lammy emphasised that climate change poses a more fundamental threat than terrorism or autocratic leaders like Vladimir Putin. This statement, coupled with the recent flag display, led critics to call for Mr Lammy to reassess his departmental priorities.

Senior civil servants within the FCDO have, however, welcomed the initiative. Corin Robertson, Director-General of Finance and Corporate at the FCDO, shared a photo of the flags on social media, captioning it, "Happy bisexuality awareness week." Sarah Lingard, Deputy Director of Delivery, Projects and Consultancy, echoed these sentiments by stating, "Now this is a workplace I can be proud to be myself in."

Kate Barker, Chief Executive of the LGB Alliance, presented an alternative perspective by challenging the FCDO to display the bisexual flag in countries where individuals face persecution for their sexuality. She remarked, "We would love to see UK embassies proudly flying the flag in countries where people are criminalised and even murdered by the state for being same-sex attracted."

A spokesperson from the Conservative Party also criticised the move, stating, "Labour have revealed their real priorities when it comes to foreign affairs. In an incredibly dangerous, unstable world the first and foremost job of the Foreign Office must be standing up to those who threaten us. Labour ministers should be flying the flag for Britain abroad, not spending taxpayers' money on woke virtue-signalling."

In related international news, conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East continue to escalate. On September 15, 2024, a missile fired from Yemen caused a fire in the open area of Lod near Tel Aviv. Two days later, on September 17, 2024, Russian attacks heavily damaged and partially destroyed houses in the village of Komyshuvakha in Ukraine's Zaporizhzhya region.

Questions have also arisen regarding whether the FCDO sought the necessary planning permission from Westminster City Council for the flag display, as the bisexual pride flag is not on a list of permitted flags that can be flown without consent. The FCDO has not confirmed whether it pursued this consent, but a spokesperson mentioned, "The FCDO stands for inclusivity, diversity and acceptance, both at home and abroad. We celebrate the diversity of our staff throughout the year."

As the debate unfolds, the focus of the Foreign Office continues to be scrutinized amidst global instability and domestic discourse on the role of government agencies in promoting inclusivity.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)