



Equality Hub

Rt Hon Stuart Andrew MP

Minister for Equalities

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Sir George Howarth MP

Our reference: MC2023/00681

By email at: george.howarth.mp@parliament.uk

9 February 2023

Dear Sir George,

Thank you for your email of 20 January, addressed to the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, and Minister for Women and Equalities, on behalf of your constituents, regarding the Government's proposals to ban conversion practices. I am replying as the Minister for Equalities.

Please be reassured that the Government is committed to keep those at risk of this practice from harm. We will be publishing a draft Bill to ban conversion practices which will go through pre-legislative scrutiny this parliamentary session.

As you may be aware, the Government consulted the public for views on its proposals to ban conversion practices. Since then, we have been analysing and considering the responses and developing draft legislative measures informed by these.

We are clear that the legislation should not, through a lack of clarity, harm the growing number of children and young adults experiencing gender related distress, including those who may seek medical treatment. Great care is needed when legislating in this space.

Against this backdrop, and as set out in the consultation, legitimate talking therapies are essential especially for young people, as is the importance of parents being able to have appropriate and sometimes challenging conversations with their children. We are clear that the legislation must not inadvertently criminalise or have a 'chilling' effect on such therapy or conversations.

We also recognise that we will need input from Parliamentarians and stakeholders, particularly LGBT people, clinicians and parents. We therefore intend to publish a draft Bill to facilitate this, recognising that some of these issues are not fully resolved.

Undertaking pre-legislative scrutiny on this legislation will ensure that the final legislation does not cause unintended consequences, is robust and receives appropriate scrutiny. It will ensure the Bill is designed in such a way as to provide strong protections whilst ensuring faith leaders, parents, teachers or counsellors continue to be able to have exploratory conversations with people about their sexual orientation, sex or gender identity. The freedom to express the teachings of any religion, as well as everyday religious practice, will not be affected by the ban.

We intend to publish an independent analysis of responses received alongside a full Government response, before introducing a Bill for pre-legislative scrutiny.

I hope this information is helpful. Please thank your constituent for writing on this important matter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stuart Andrew', written in a cursive style.

Rt Hon Stuart Andrew MP
Minister for Equalities