

IT'S TIME TO TALK

We have long been concerned that a Conversion Practices Bill could harm vulnerable children and young people.

Specifically that a Bill may seek to outlaw the practice of asking a child or young person why they dislike their body or feel unhappy. And that therapists, doctors, teachers, youth workers and parents who help them explore the causes of their distress could be criminalised.

If that sounds far-fetched, we need only look to countries like New Zealand, Australia and Canada where the affirmation-only approach is already destroying lives.

Now that both Labour and the Conservatives have signalled their intention to table a Conversion Practices Bill, we must engage with the process in order to deliver the vital protections that children deserve.

We were the only LGB organisation to speak up about the dangers that Self-ID poses for lesbians and gay men. Supporters of Self-ID refused to discuss the issue saying “No Debate”. We debated anyway and helped to alert the public to those dangers. And, ultimately, contributed to the resounding rejection of that legislation in Scotland. We believe that ensuring robust debate around Conversion Practices can be similarly instructive.

We support:

■ **Proper pre-legislative scrutiny of this Bill**

We would urge the Government to consult widely. We will work with this Government, or any Government, that centres the needs of young people.

■ **More research and resources for detransitioners**

The number of those who detransition or desist from their trans identity will continue to rise. We must put plans in place to deliver appropriate support. Currently, there is none.

■ **Decoupling of LGB and QT+ in legislation and research**

A person's orientation as lesbian, gay or bisexual is unrelated to gender dysphoria or to those who consider themselves, for example, non-binary, gender fluid or queer. It serves neither group well to treat them as a homogeneous group with identical needs.

Thankfully, gay conversion practices are rare in the UK. And practices that might constitute gay conversion are already criminalised under existing legislation. However, we would support a tightening of the law if it is deemed necessary to add to the protections currently in place for LGB people.

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