A Simple Guide to the Conversion Practices Bill

"Conversion practices" sound obviously bad. So why is a gay rights charity asking you to oppose a Bill that claims to ban them?

Because abuse is already against the law.

It will put parents, therapists and detransitioners at risk for having honest, caring conversations about sex, sexual orientation, and medical transition. It will make it safer to affirm a child's ideas about their gender identity than to help them explore if they might just be growing up gay.

We've set out some of the arguments in their simplest form here. You can find more detail on our website, alongside the real experiences of parents, clinicians and detransitioners.

1. Abusive practices are already illegal

Assault, sexual offences, harassment, coercive control and child abuse are already crimes.

Rape and grievous bodily harm carry tougher sentences than the Bill's maximum penalty of five years in prison. Abusers should be prosecuted under existing law, rather than given lighter penalties because their victim is LGB.

What this could mean for you and your family: If someone abuses you or your child, the police already have the powers they need to act. This Bill risks ending ordinary, caring family conversations.

2. The Bill is unclear

Key terms are undefined. Parents and clinicians will have to guess whether a court could view their actions as abusive.

A parent who refuses to buy puberty blockers could be accused of applying "economic pressure", which the Bill says courts may consider.

Therapists will also be left uncertain. The healthcare exemption applies only where treatment does not fall "far below" expected standards, without making clear what that means. Some may decide it is safer not to treat patients with gender-related distress at all.

What this could mean for you and your family: You could be made to feel that setting boundaries, asking questions or seeking the right therapeutic support for your child carries a legal risk.

3. It puts LGB young people at risk

The Bill treats attempts to change sexual orientation and attempts to change a person's stated gender identity as equivalent. They are not.

If a girl says she is a boy, her parents may think she needs time to work out whether she is uncomfortable with sexist expectations of girls, or whether she may grow up to be lesbian.

If they encourage her to live as a boy, this could mean treating a future lesbian as a heterosexual boy. But if they ask questions or suggest that she may be a girl who will grow up to be lesbian, they could be accused of trying to change her gender identity.

Gender non-conforming children often grow up to be lesbian, gay or bisexual. This Bill could make it legally safer to affirm a trans identity than to explore whether a young person may grow up LGB.

What this could mean for you and your family: If your child says they are trans, you could be accused of conversion practices for helping them consider whether they might just be growing up lesbian, gay, or bisexual.

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4. Detransitioners could be silenced

Detransitioners who speak about stopping medical treatment, or living again as their actual sex, could be accused of influencing someone else to do the same.

The risk of legal action may make people afraid to tell their stories or offer support to others questioning transition.

What this could mean for you and your family: If you or your child begins to have doubts about medical transition, people who have been through it and later stopped may be afraid to share their experiences or help you think things through.

5. Protection Orders could be misused

The Bill creates Conversion Practice Protection Orders (CPPOs). No criminal conviction is needed. An order can be sought by the person said to need protection, the police, a local authority or another party with the court's permission.

Courts can impose whatever restrictions they consider necessary. Breaching an order can lead to an unlimited fine or up to two years in prison.

These orders could be weaponised in hostile custody disputes or used to keep parents away from their children, even where no crime has been committed.

What this could mean for you and your family: You could face severe restrictions on contact with your child without first being found guilty of a crime.

It's OK to talk. It's OK to question. It's OK to be gay.



What you can do

Write to your MP. Ask them to raise these concerns with the Joint Committee scrutinising the Bill.

Write to your MP today!