

Banning Conversion Therapy Consultation

10.12.2021

Submitting organisations

Learning Disability Wales, Mencap Cymru, All Wales People First, Supported Loving

Our Response

Question 1. To what extent do you support, or not support, the government's proposal for addressing physical acts of conversion therapy? Why do you think this?

We agree with this proposal. Everyone deserves to live free from violence and this will help enable that.

Question 2. The government considers that delivering talking conversion therapy with the intention of changing a person's sexual orientation or changing them from being transgender or to being transgender either to someone who is under 18, or to someone who is 18 or over and who has not consented or lacks the capacity to do so should be considered a criminal offence. The consultation document describes proposals to introduce new criminal law that will capture this. How far do you agree or disagree with this?

We agree with the ban on conversion practices in the form of talking therapies.

Question 4. Do you think that these proposals miss anything? If yes, can you tell us what you think we have missed?

We have several concerns we would like to raise

- We agree wholeheartedly with the ban on conversion therapies for under 18s but question whether it is possible for people over 18 to consent to conversion practices. Since these practices are harmful in themselves and promise the recipient something that is unachievable (eg changing a person's sexual orientation or gender identity through specific techniques) we recommend a complete ban on conversion practices for people of any age.
- If the UK government is intent on allowing some forms of conversion therapy to continue, we would like to see a far more stringent definition of what informed consent would mean in this situation. If it is up to the providers of conversion practices to ensure that informed consent is given, we have grave concerns that people will not receive

appropriate information to make their decision. If UK government insists on allowing conversion practices if adults consent to it (which, again, we disagree with) there should be specific requirements to ensure that consent is truly informed. This includes information that is accessible to people with a learning disability.

- We are concerned that some people might be worried that the ban on conversion therapy may impact the way that LGBTQ+ people can be given support. There may be some worry, for example, that if someone is unsure about their sexual orientation or gender identity, those supporting them on this journey might get into trouble. We realise that this is not the intention and that the planned legislation explicitly will not apply to therapy or support that helps people explore their identity. We suggest that the implementation of this policy go hand in hand with an information campaign that explains the necessity of affirmative support for LGBTQ+ people and explains the boundaries of the legislation.

For any further questions please contact Grace Krause at Learning Disability Wales: grace.krause@LDW.org.uk.