

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

30th March 2021

Dear Constance,

RE: CAMPAIGN TO BAN CONVERSION THERAPY.

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of banning conversion therapy and your concerns for the LGBT+ community. I have read your comments with interest.

Like you, I take this issue very seriously and I know that my colleagues in the Government Equalities Office remain committed to tackling conversion therapy in the UK. I am absolutely clear that this practice has no place in our civilised society. Being lesbian, gay, or bisexual is not an illness to be treated or cured.

I am encouraged that this view is shared by the head of the NHS, the Royal College of Psychiatrists, the UK Council for Psychotherapy, the British Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy and the British Medical Association. Each of these bodies have concluded that such therapy is unethical and potentially harmful.

The Government Equalities Office commissioned a large-scale LGBT survey in 2017. Sadly, two percent of respondents to this national survey said they had undergone conversion therapy in an attempt to 'cure' them of being LGBT. Unfortunately, in this survey, what conversion therapy entailed was not defined, nor were the respondents asked whether or not the conversion therapy referred to in their answer was offered in the UK.

I welcome the firm commitment to preventing these activities from continuing. Led by colleagues in the Government Equalities Office, research is underway to look at the experiences of those subjected to conversion therapy. I have received assurances that Ministers - who I have spoken to about your concerns - are thoroughly considering all legislative and non-legislative options in order to end conversion therapy practice for good, and will bring forward plans to do so shortly.

I am positive about the steps that have been made so far in the UK to achieve LGBT equality, where we have made huge strides forward in recent years, and I am confident that this will continue. You can be assured that I will follow this work on banning conversion therapy very closely and press for the earliest possible progress.

Once again, thank you for having taken the time to contact me and if I can ever be of any further assistance to you, then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

With best wishes,

With best wishes,
Tom

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE