



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

13<sup>th</sup> June 2022

*Dear Constance,*

**RE: CONVERSION THERAPY**

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of the Conversion Therapy Bill. I have read your comments on this important issue with interest.

Like you, I take this issue very seriously and I know that my colleagues in the Government Equalities Office (GEO) remain committed to tackling conversion therapy in the UK. I am absolutely clear that this practice has no place in a 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 and 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 the national LGBT 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.

As such, I welcome that the Government has delivered on its promise and introduced the Conversion Therapy Bill as part of The Queen's Speech. I understand that the Bill will strengthen existing criminal law by ensuring that violent conversion therapy is recognised as a potential aggravating factor upon sentencing, as well as making sure those found guilty of conversion therapy offences have any profit obtained from those crimes removed.


Furthermore, it will protect freedom of speech, ensuring parents, clinicians and teachers can continue to have conversations with people seeking support. I have been assured that the legislation will not impact upon the existing professional frameworks that guide clinicians' ability to support people. As such, robust, exploratory and challenging conversations which are part of regulated care do not fall within the scope of the ban. It will protect under-18s, regardless of circumstances and over-18s who do not consent and are forced, or coerced, to undergo conversion therapy practices.



Alongside this, I have been assured that the Government is carrying out separate work on the issue of transgender conversion therapy - this is to ensure that any legislative measures brought forward will not have any unintended consequences. I understand that this is a legally complex area, and the Government has a responsibility to ensure that these unintended consequences are not written into legislation, particularly in the case of under-eighteens. As such, Ministers will be carrying out separate work to consider the issue of transgender conversion therapy further.

I am positive about the steps that have been made so far in the UK to achieve LGBT equality, and am confident that this good work will continue.

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,*  


**TOM PURSGLOVE MP  
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT  
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**