



Equality Hub

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Catherine McKinnell MP
Chair of the Petitions Committee

Elliot Colburn MP
Member of the Petitions
Committee

10 June 2022

Dear Catherine and Elliot,

Thank you for your letter of 17 May about the debate on Petition 613556, which is now scheduled for Monday 13 June. I am writing in response to your request for information in advance of that debate, building on the Government response to the Petition already posted online.

May I first confirm that this Government believes that all conversion therapy practices are wrong, and we are committed to banning these practices for everyone. We ran a public consultation from 29 October 2021 to 4 February 2022, to understand a wider range of views on the topic, and continue to engage widely with victims of conversion therapy, stakeholders from across the spectrum and interested Parliamentarians from all sides. As announced in the Queen's speech, we are progressing legislation that seeks to protect everyone, including transgender people, from being subjected to practices that seek to change their sexual orientation.

Our approach recognises the complexity of the issues and the need for further careful thought, we will carry out separate work to consider the issue of conversion therapy concerning transgender status. It is key that measures complement the existing clinical regulatory framework in this space, and that clinicians feel able to deliver legitimate therapies in supporting those experiencing gender dysphoria, especially those under 18. There is no equivalent service as regards sexual orientation.

In the meantime, there are important non-legislative measures we are taking. I am pleased to confirm that the victim support service that we have recently announced will be comprehensive in support of anyone who feels they have been the victim of, or are at risk of, conversion therapy practices - whether targeting their transgender status and/or their sexual orientation. The service will be delivered by Galop, the leading LGBT anti-violence charity, and will constitute a helpline and website which will provide tailored support, information and signposting to external services such as counselling and access to emergency housing.

Finally, I can confirm that we intend to publish a response to the public consultation and my officials are continuing to analyse the responses and share emerging findings with Ministers. I will update the Committee on timelines for this, the Bill we are preparing and our wider work when I am able.

I sincerely look forward to discussing this important issue with colleagues and thank you for your work on progressing this petition.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mike Freer', with a horizontal line underneath the name.

MIKE FREER MP
Minister for Equalities