

Rt Hon Caroline Nokes MP
Chair, Women and Equalities Committee
Via email: womeqcom@parliament.uk

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21 February 2023

Dear Caroline,

Thank you for your letter of 30 January regarding the Government's announcement on publishing draft legislation to ban conversion practices for pre-legislative scrutiny (PLS).

I am pleased that we recently set out plans to publish a draft Bill for PLS in this Parliamentary session, and that the proposed legislation will set out our approach to ban conversion practices.

I appreciate the work that the Women and Equalities Committee has carried out in relation to this important topic and your offer to undertake PLS. As you say, this is a sensitive area, and draft legislation will benefit from in-depth analysis and challenge to test the policy and drafting. Whilst we will produce a draft Bill which is, as far as possible, robust, proportionate and as effective as possible, there are difficult issues that are not fully resolved.

We are committed to ensuring this Bill protects those at risk of this practice from harm. We are also clear that the legislation should not, through a lack of clarity, harm the growing number of children and young adults experiencing gender-related distress, including those who may seek medical treatment. Great care is needed when legislating in this space.

Against this backdrop, and as set out in the consultation, legitimate talking therapies are essential especially for young people, as is the importance of parents being able to have appropriate and sometimes challenging conversations with their children. We are clear that the legislation must not inadvertently criminalise or have a 'chilling' effect on such therapy or conversations.

Parliamentarians and stakeholders, including clinicians, will want the chance to consider these issues and others, and provide input. We hope that this will provide an opportunity to ensure that we are able to address any concerns over the risk of unintended impacts on clinicians and parents.



Equality Hub

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Our view is that this process has to be a collaborative effort. That is why we are working through the usual channels and with the Liaison Committee to enable the draft Bill to be scrutinised by a Joint Committee of both Houses. Drawing on the breadth of expertise and experience in both the Lords and the Commons will aid in addressing the most complex issues in this area. Our hope is that PLS will help build more of a consensus amongst Parliamentarians in both Houses, and more widely, before introduction into Parliament. We believe this is the right approach to ensure that the legislation we subsequently introduce is effective, well understood, and has no unintended consequences.

I share your commitment to meaningfully progress this work during this Parliament, and I am keen to ensure that we continue to work collaboratively together to introduce this legislation in a timely manner.

I look forward to appearing before the Committee on 1 March.

Yours sincerely,

RT HON KEMI BADENOCH MP
Minister for Women and Equalities, Secretary of State for Business and Trade and
President of the Board of Trade