

Prime Minister announces plan to ‘ban conversion therapy’

Dr. Carys Moseley, Public Policy Researcher
First Published by Christian Concern: July 21st, 2020

The government has brought forward plans to ban ‘conversion therapy’ after the it completes a ‘study’ on the issue, Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced yesterday.

He called the practice “absolutely abhorrent” and said it “has no place in this country.” However, the Prime Minister offered no definition of what the government is calling ‘conversion therapy’ and made no assurances that talking therapies and counselling would be exempt.

<https://youtu.be/eEuV2CoX4Io>

Deceitful terminology

The Prime Minister’s comments come two years after the government initially promised to ban what it called ‘conversion therapy’ and just months after an appointed UN LGBT expert demanded worldwide bans on the practice¹.

However, nowhere has the government or the UN offered any real definition of ‘conversion therapy’, and any ban would likely involve sacrificing the freedom of Christian counsellors and ministries² to offer talking therapies, counselling and even prayer to those who want to turn away from LGBT attractions and practices.

Carys Moseley points out that the term ‘conversion therapy’ is deceitful:³

“The term ‘conversion therapy’ has never been used by any therapists working with clients who have unwanted same-sex attraction. Neither have any such therapists ever developed a type of therapy which they themselves have called ‘conversion therapy’ ... [the term] is intended deliberately to mix mainstream talking therapies that have in fact been around for a century, with allegations of unusual physical treatments administered by psychiatrists, along with allegations of torture.”

Sacrificing the freedom to offer support

Core Issues Trust⁴, a Christian ministry that supports people who want to move away from same-sex attraction and behaviours, has

recently come under fire⁵ from campaigners who want to ban so-called ‘conversion therapy’. After malicious complaints from LGBT campaigners, service providers and social media platforms have begun to censor groups like Core Issues Trust⁶. Tara Hopkins, Instagram’s public policy direction for Europe, the Middle East and Africa, stated:

“We don’t allow attacks against people based on sexual orientation or gender identity and are updating our policies to ban the promotion of conversion therapy services⁷. We have removed violating content from @coreissuestrusttv. We are always reviewing our policies and will continue to consult with experts and people with personal experiences to inform our approach.”

Instagram has so far offered no explanation of how Core Issues Trust’s content ‘violates’ their policies, although it appears the organisation is claiming that therapeutic counselling counts as “attacks against people based on sexual orientation.”

Mike Davidson, director of Core Issues Trust, sat down with ITV’s Paul Brand, a journalist and LGBT campaigner, for a 20-minute interview, debunking much of the understanding about his work. He believes the government must be clear about what it says it will ban, as the idea that some can ‘turn someone straight’ is not a belief that Christian organisations like Core Issues Trust adhere to.

When asked why he doesn’t support a ban, he answered:

“Banning just simply won’t work. Regulate – I appreciate that. We should all be against poor practice and make sure that things are done in an ethical way. But when one group says to the other group, ‘your ethical position is not right and it’s because of all these organisations that agree with us,’ that isn’t true. That’s not what democracy is, and that’s not what scientific debate is.”

You can watch the full interview below:

<https://youtu.be/11GytWF9LdQ>

Mr Davidson also spoke to Christian Today, clearly defining what therapy is and isn't⁸:

He continued by saying that banning talking therapies and counselling will "ride roughshod" over Christian freedoms and identity:

"Are we really saying that a man who is married and finds himself attracted to the same sex but wants to save his marriage and protect his children is going to be forbidden from receiving help? And what about those who tell us that their feelings for the same sex arose after being sexually abused and they want help with that? Are we honestly saying that they cannot

receive that help? Because if we are, that is inhumane. A ban will ride roughshod over a minority identity. ... To be frank, if it's us now, it will be the pastors next. If the counsellors and the therapists are forbidden from doing this work, I doubt very much whether the churches will escape. I think, if we remain silent about this proposed ban, very few will be willing or able to teach in terms of orthodox sexuality and ethics as we understand it in the Bible. That's the way things are going and, sadly, many don't recognise that this is the first step in a movement of stealth that is slowly but surely locking down on the Judaeo-Christian foundations of our society."

¹ <https://christianconcern.com/comment/un-expert-report-demands-conversion-therapy-bans-worldwide/>

² <https://christianconcern.com/comment/beware-leaked-government-plans-on-gender-id-and-conversion-therapy-ban/>

³ <https://christianconcern.com/comment/un-expert-report-demands-conversion-therapy-bans-worldwide/>

⁴ <https://www.core-issues.org/>

⁵ <https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2020/07/20/northern-ireland-conversion-therapy-mike-davidson-core-issues-trust-christian-today-gay-cure-lgbt/>

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<https://www.christiantoday.com/article/twitter.instagram.facebook.ban.content.from.conversion.therapy.group/135190.htm>

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<https://www.christiantoday.com/article/twitter.instagram.facebook.ban.content.from.conversion.therapy.group/135190.htm>

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<https://www.christiantoday.com/article/if.its.us.now.it.will.be.the.pastors.next.mike.davidson.on.why.gay.conversion.therapy.should.not.be.banned/135200.htm>