

# Why the ex-gay movement provokes rage and censorship

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*In the light of Vue Cinemas cancelling the premiere of 'Voices of the Silenced', Carys Moseley looks at the fervent opposition to the ex-gay movement and shows the need for the freedom to seek help for unwanted same-sex attraction.*

This week the private screening of *Voices of the Silenced*<sup>1</sup>, the film produced by Core Issues Trust<sup>2</sup> interviewing a number of ex-gay people from different countries was cancelled by the host Vue Cinemas in Piccadilly<sup>3</sup>, central London. This was after the LGBT news site Pink News wrote an 'exclusive' story on Tuesday 6 February revealing details of the private screening<sup>4</sup>. On Wednesday 7 February Pink News revealed the screening had been cancelled<sup>5</sup> following 'a Pink News investigation'.

This isn't the first time Core Issues Trust and its director, Mike Davidson, have been hounded and censored by the press. The important question though is why. It is clear from the original article that Pink News supports not only the Memorandum of Understanding<sup>6</sup> signed by several mental health organisations opposing clients' right to choose therapy for unwanted same-sex attraction but also making this illegal, against the government's publicly-stated view.

## Baroness Barker thinks society should send therapy supporters 'packing'

Pink News were quick to obtain quotes from LGBT members of the House of Lords, with Lord Black of Brentwood condemning all such therapy as 'wicked', and Baroness Barker making the following statement<sup>7</sup>:

"People who preach gay conversion therapy are zealots who are prepared to cause great harm to LGBT people in order to perpetuate their warped view of the world. Happy, healthy societies should send them packing."

The question is where would she like people who support therapy, along with clients who are now leading happier, healthier lives because of it, to go? This is relevant because she is a member of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Global LGBT Rights<sup>8</sup>. As this group is closely involved in influencing the diplomatic affairs of the UK post-Brexit by keeping up the

pressure on the government to spread LGBT rights worldwide, it is important to say that the Baroness' utterly undiplomatic language does them and the government no credit. Will the government officially distance itself from her illiberal and sinister comments?

## Most British people do not believe LGB people are 'born that way'

The irrational and baseless belief that LGB people are 'born that way' is the cornerstone of LGB opposition to the ex-gay movement. Unfortunately for them, their own best evidence has recently shown them the general public don't believe this to be true.

In October 2016 the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Intersex Association (ILGA), one of the largest LGBT campaign coalition groups in the world, conducted what was to date the largest ever global survey on attitudes to LGBT issues<sup>9</sup>. The results were broken down by country and clearly show that only a third (35%) of people in the United Kingdom agree with the claim that 'people attracted to the same sex are born that way'.

It is no accident that every single LGB group and every single British newspaper was **completely silent** on these results when they were published. There is a huge and really rather embarrassing chasm between official propaganda, both from government and third sector LGB organisations that dominate public debate on the one hand, and the reality of public opinion on the other.

## Most British people accept the right to choose therapy

In 2014 ComRes conducted a public opinion poll on behalf of Core Issues Trust<sup>10</sup> ahead of Labour MP Geraint Davies' private member's bill<sup>11</sup> aimed at outlawing 'conversion therapy'. The findings were not reported by the press as they clearly showed the public did not share the LGBT lobby's view.

Less than a quarter (24%) of British people supported a ban in 2014, and less than a third (31%) of adults under 25. Nearly two thirds of people (64%) and over half (55%) of adults under 25 supported a married man's right to receive help to reduce unwanted same-sex attraction in order to help keep his marriage

together. Only 12% of the public thought such a man should be refused such help.

All this is good news in that it proves the public is broadly tolerant and respectful of people's right to choose therapy, and respectful of people who want to preserve their marriages.

### **Respect for private and family life is at stake**

Perhaps Vue cinemas are unfamiliar with this poll, but it is very doubtful that Pink News is unaware of it. In any case, what both should realise is that people who choose therapy are exercising their fundamental right to respect for private and family life under Article 8 of the Human Rights Act 1998<sup>12</sup>. This matters because some people interviewed in the film are married to members of the opposite sex, and have children.

In view of this, it is obviously untrue that therapy which is in any way connected with diminishing unwanted same-sex attraction is necessarily harmful to clients who choose it. Would gay activists at Pink News have the arrogance to say this to the wives or husbands or biological children of ex-gays?

### **LGB activists know that a lot of people are unhappy with same-sex attraction**

Evidence published by three academic gay activists back in 2009 in the British Journal of Psychiatry<sup>13</sup> found 17% of mental health professionals in the UK had helped a client or patient diminish or change same-sex attraction. The researchers had taken a random sample from the complete membership of the British Psychological Society, British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy, United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy and the Royal College of Psychiatrists. Roughly three quarters of questionnaires were returned, and of those 222 professionals (17%) said they had helped clients or patients deal with unwanted same-sex attraction. Together these 222 professionals described a total of 413 clients or patients. Interestingly 35% of these were referred by their GPs but the largest number – 45% - referred themselves.

### **Most British health professionals who had seen clients agreed with therapeutic choice**

The survey found that 159 (72%) quarters of those mental health professionals who had seen clients for unwanted same-sex attraction

agreed that such therapy should be available to them. **This is a very clear majority of those who had been approached.** Only 23 (13%) believed such therapy should not be available. Interestingly a further 35 (15%) gave no answer, perhaps smelling a rat, as the survey was subsequently used to argue for banning therapy. Eventually this resulted in the publication of the Memorandum of Understanding<sup>14</sup> on the subject.

### **Are gay activists making homosexuality compulsory?**

LGBT activists in academia used to complain about 'compulsory heterosexuality'. In reality what we have here is the opposite. The attack on therapy really conveys the message that if people experience homosexual attraction they should not be allowed to stop experiencing it. This is not simply about the spurious theory that people are 'born that way'. It is about making homosexuality compulsory for those who experience same-sex attraction. This goes against the principle of individual freedom.

### **The evidence gives hope**

Here we have three pieces of evidence showing the British public and most British mental health professionals who have ever been approached by clients unhappy with same-sex attraction support therapeutic choice. Mostly this evidence has either been ignored or downplayed by LGB activists, the mainstream press and politicians. The result has been censorship of therapy and the accompanying prohibition on any training in this field.

However all this evidence, along with of course the much more personal and engaging matter of the film itself and the interviews in it, provides much hope for those affected by unwanted same-sex attraction and their loved ones.

"Voices of the Silenced" will be released soon, with subtitles available in several different languages. Activists cannot truly stop the ex-gay movement because by doing so they contradict public opinion, academic evidence, the opinion of experienced professionals and the principle of the right to respect for private and family life.

They may have managed to get the initial private screening cancelled this time but they have not won over people's hearts and minds.

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- <sup>1</sup> <http://www.voicesofthesilenced.com/>
- <sup>2</sup> <https://www.core-issues.org/>
- <sup>3</sup> <https://www.myvue.com/cinema/piccadilly/whats-on>
- <sup>4</sup> <http://www.pinknews.co.uk/2018/02/06/exclusive-vue-cinema-to-screen-documentary-advocating-gay-cure-therapy/>
- <sup>5</sup> <http://www.pinknews.co.uk/2018/02/07/exclusive-vue-cinemas-blocks-screening-of-pro-gay-cure-therapy-documentary/>
- <sup>6</sup> <https://www.psychotherapy.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Memorandum-of-understanding-on-conversion-therapy.pdf>
- <sup>7</sup> <http://www.pinknews.co.uk/2018/02/07/exclusive-vue-cinemas-blocks-screening-of-pro-gay-cure-therapy-documentary/>
- <sup>8</sup> <https://www.appglgbt.org/>
- <sup>9</sup> [http://ilga.org/downloads/Ilga\\_Riwi\\_Attitudes\\_LGBTI\\_survey\\_Logo\\_personal\\_political.pdf](http://ilga.org/downloads/Ilga_Riwi_Attitudes_LGBTI_survey_Logo_personal_political.pdf)
- <sup>10</sup> [http://www.comresglobal.com/wp-content/themes/comres/poll/Core\\_Issues\\_Trust\\_Therapy\\_Poll\\_April\\_2014.pdf](http://www.comresglobal.com/wp-content/themes/comres/poll/Core_Issues_Trust_Therapy_Poll_April_2014.pdf)
- <sup>11</sup> <https://services.parliament.uk/bills/2014-15/counsellorsandpsychotherapistsregulation.html>
- <sup>12</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/42/schedule/1/part/I/chapter/7>
- <sup>13</sup> <https://bmcpsychiatry.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/1471-244X-9-11>
- <sup>14</sup> <https://www.psychotherapy.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Memorandum-of-understanding-on-conversion-therapy.pdf>