

**From:** [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** 06 June 2020 10:54  
**To:** First Minister <[firstminister@gov.scot](mailto:firstminister@gov.scot)>  
**Subject:** Make gay conversion therapy illegal

Dear first minister Nicola Sturgeon,

I am writing to you because I am shocked and appalled. In this lockdown and period of self education there has been mass media coverage on the BLM movement, due to this, I felt encouraged to read up on the history of previous oppression of the LGBTQ+ community and the riots that ensued for the gain of equality among these groups. It was during my research of this that I came across the fact that conversion therapy has not been outlawed in the UK. Despite statements by the government in 2018 saying it would correct this, no action towards this has been taken. Both the NHS and the Church of England has strongly condemned the practise. Many petitions have been launched and the most recent was responded to by the government with a vague and not committal statement.

The Practise of conversion therapy has been shown to be emotionally, and in some cases physically abusive. There is no evidence that it works nor that it would ever work as being homosexual is not a choice. I am horrified as a 18 year-old Scottish gay man to find out that the practice has not been outlawed. How can I be proud and accepted of who I am in a country where my sexuality is seen as a problem to be fixed. I urge this to be a priority of yours and your government.

Yours sincerely,  
[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

Our Reference: 202000045017

11 June 2020

[REDACTED]

Thank you for your e-mail of 6 June 2020 addressed to the First Minister regarding the practice of conversion therapy. I have been asked to respond.

Scotland is considered to be one of the most progressive countries in Europe regarding LGBTI equality and has a very clear position on promoting LGBTI rights. I can confirm that the Scottish Government does not support or advocate the practice of conversion therapy in the UK, regarding it as unethical and potentially harmful as there is no place for this within Scotland. We are engaging with the UK Government as they develop proposals to seek to ban this practice across the UK.

In addition, you will wish to be aware that the [Memorandum of Understanding on Conversion Therapy in the UK](#) was signed by Scotland's Chief Medical Officer and includes support from the Department of Health in England plus a range of other professional bodies, such as the Royal College of Psychotherapists, the UK Council of Psychotherapy and many more.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]  
**EHRTS : Equality Unit**

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**From:** Private - Rennie W (Willie), MSP <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** 08 July 2020 13:02  
**To:** Minister for Older People and Equalities <[MinisterOPE@gov.scot](mailto:MinisterOPE@gov.scot)>  
**Subject:** Gay Conversion Therapy in Scotland

Dear Christina

**Re: Gay Conversion Therapy in Scotland, Ref: A9243/2020/SM**

I have been contacted by one of my constituents highlighting their concerns regarding gay conversion therapy in Scotland.

My constituent has explained,

***The UK Government has committed to make Gay Conversion Therapy illegal. However, this has been planned for around two years and it still remains legal. Just days ago, the Catholic Church in Scotland was found to be carrying out “therapy” for groups of LGBT church-goers. This can cause serious and permanent psychological harm to those subjected to it, who are vulnerable and severely struggling with their identity. These predatory actions based on twisted doctrine cannot be part of legal life in a civilised Scotland. A petition has been signed by more than 166,000 people calling for the banning of such groups. This UK government has taken far too long, and Scotland must lead the way.***

***I urge the Scottish Government to:***

- ¶ Make running conversion therapy in Scotland a criminal offence***
- ¶ Criminalise coercing or encouraging people into attending such groups***
- ¶ Criminalise sending people abroad to undergo any form of conversion therapy***
- ¶ Protect vulnerable people from conversion therapy***
- ¶ Bring prison sentences coupled with extensive educational courses on LGBT issues for those who commit these crimes***
- ¶ Commit to bring these into law before the end of 2020***

I would be very grateful if you could clarify what plans the Scottish Government have to address this issue.

Yours sincerely

Willie Rennie  
Liberal Democrat Member of the Scottish Parliament for North East Fife

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E : scottish.ministers@gov.scot

Willie Rennie MSP  
The Scottish Parliament  
Edinburgh  
United Kingdom United Kingdom EH99 1SP  
Willie.Rennie2@parliament.scot

Our Reference: 202000060284  
Your Reference: Gay Conversion Therapy in Scotland

15 July 2020

Dear Willie,

Thank you for your email of 8 July 2020.

Scotland is considered to be one of the most progressive countries in Europe regarding LGBTI equality and the Scottish Government will continue to promote and protect LGBTI rights. The Scottish Government considers so-called "conversion therapy" to be unethical and potentially harmful, and we are engaging with the UK Government as they develop proposals to ban this practice across the UK.

In addition, you may wish to make your constituent aware that a [Memorandum of Understanding on Conversion Therapy in the UK](#) was signed by Scotland's Chief Medical Officer and includes support from the Department of Health in England along with a range of other professional bodies including the Royal College of Psychotherapists and the UK Council of Psychotherapy.

Yours sincerely

**CHRISTINA MCKELVIE**

**From:** [REDACTED] <[Redacted]>  
**Sent:** 16 July 2020 14:50  
**To:** First Minister <[firstminister@gov.scot](mailto:firstminister@gov.scot)>  
**Cc:** [Redacted]  
**Subject:** Fwd: Come Out for Trans Equality and call for a ban on conversion therapy

Dear First Minister,

Please see me email below, redirecting from you're MSP mail box to FM.

I hope you will be able to add your support to these deeply concerning matters. I thank you and your governments support on LGBT community.

I look forward to hearing your response to my email FWD below.

Kind Regards,  
[REDACTED]

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>  
**Date:** 16 July 2020 at 14:37:30 BST  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]

**Subject: Come Out for Trans Equality and call for a ban on conversion therapy**

Dear Rona Mackay, Kenneth Macintosh, Neil Bibby, Maurice Golden, Maurice Corry, Mary Fee, Jamie Greene, and Ross Greer

Trans people in the UK still experience profound discrimination in every area of their lives; from things like unemployment to health services. A crisis like COVID-19 poses a greater risk in deepening those inequalities. It's been over two years since plans to reform the Act were announced and nearly a year and half since the Government's GRA consultation closed, and we're still waiting to hear about the results.

The UK Minister for women and equalities did announce the Government will be putting forward proposals for GRA reform 'by summer'. However, she also made some worrying points that the wider LGBT community - need to understand more about urgently. The Minister commented on trans people's access to single-sex services and the 'checks and balances' that will be in the new system. For many years, trans people have been using services that match their gender without issue and this should not change.

She also spoke about something that, as she acknowledged, 'is not a direct issue concerning the Gender Recognition Act', and that's access to medical care for trans children and young

people. While we don't know exactly what the Government will propose, the Minister said she wants to make sure 'that the under 18s are protected from decisions that they could make, that are irreversible in the future'. This is concerning because it sounds similar to how young lesbian, gay and bi people were spoken about in the 1980s.

Two trans people that I have been in contact with, are deeply concerned about the UK Government slow action on this matter and have said that they felt safer in UK 20 years ago and are now considering moving to Ireland. As an LGBT member and ally of the Trans community i am too deeply worried for the future of trans rights in the UK. Being an active ally of the LGBT community does not have to be a time intensive commitment. It could be making a promise to be visible, knowledgeable, being understanding and influencing others by standing up to homophobia, transphobia & biphobia.

As you may have already noticed earlier this month the UK Government responded to Petition regarding conversion therapy - They said; "The Government is committed to ensuring all citizens feel safe and protected from harm. We will work to deepen our understanding and consider all options for ending the practice of conversion therapy." They state that conversion therapy is a very "complex issue" and put the question to the Public "Should it be made illegal?".

What are the Scottish Government willing to commit to banning this Scotland and stand up for basic human rights? The fact the UK Government are even questioning its legality is shocking and speaks volumes. The UK say they are world leaders in LGBT rights, but they are certainly not in my opinion.

MSPs have been instrumental to the progression of LGBT equality in Scotland: from repealing Section 2A in 2000 to passing marriage equality in 2014.

As my MSP, I would urge you to show your public support for improving the Gender Recognition Act in line with international best practice.

Trans communities have described the process as humiliating and invasive, while trans people under 18 and non-binary people are strictly excluded from obtaining legal gender recognition. Reforming the Gender Recognition Act in line with Stonewall's proposals would improve the lives of your trans constituents.

You can read about proposed reforms to the Gender Recognition Act [in Stonewall's briefing here](#).

There is lots of misinformation about what Gender Recognition Act reform would mean – so please look at [Stonewall's Truth About Trans resource](#) if you have any questions.

I would really appreciate a response to this email and am happy to discuss further on these urgent matters.

Kind Regards,

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

Our Reference: 202000064983

Your Reference: Come Out for Trans Equality and call for a ban on conversion therapy

31 July 2020

[REDACTED]

Thank you for your taking the time to write to the First Minister in relation to trans equality. I have been asked to respond.

I would like to assure you that the Scottish Government takes the advancement of LGBTI equality very seriously. Scotland is considered to be one of the most progressive countries in Europe regarding LGBTI equality and has a very clear position on promoting LGBTI rights.

Gender recognition is a devolved matter. This means that, while the Gender Recognition Act 2004 currently operates on a UK wide basis, reform of the 2004 Act is ultimately a matter for the Scottish Parliament. The Scottish Parliament consented to the provisions of the 2004 Act extending to Scotland by way of a legislative consent motion.

As a result of the present public health situation, work in Government has halted on a number of planned Bills which were due to be introduced in the current Parliamentary term. This includes the Bill to reform the Gender Recognition Act 2004, which was intended to streamline the process through which trans people obtain legal gender recognition. As a result, we will not bring forward a Bill to reform the gender recognition process before the next Scottish parliamentary elections in May 2021.

The Scottish Government continues to have a strong commitment to reform the Gender Recognition Act 2004 and to do so in way that ensures women's rights are preserved and protected. It also remains committed to improving the lives of trans and non-binary people more generally. Trans people

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continue to suffer poorer outcomes relative to the wider population, and this needs to change.

You have also raised the matter of Conversion Therapy. The Scottish Government is clear that we do not support or advocate this practice. It is unethical, harmful and has no place in Scotland. We fully support moves by the UK Government to end conversion therapy, and are engaging with them as they develop proposals.

In addition, a [Memorandum of Understanding on Conversion Therapy in the UK](#) was signed by Scotland's Chief Medical Officer and includes support from the Department of Health in England along with a range of other professional bodies including the Royal College of Psychotherapists and the UK Council of Psychotherapy and may be of interest to you.

We are also clear that any form of hate crime or prejudice is completely unacceptable and will not be tolerated. To tackle this, the Scottish Government introduced The Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Bill to the Scottish Parliament on 23rd April 2020. Hate crime has a hugely damaging effect on both victims and communities so it is important that everybody plays their part to challenge it.

The focus of the Scottish Government at present is the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In due course, other non-legislative work to which the Cabinet Secretary for Social Security and Older People committed in her [parliamentary statement on gender recognition](#) last year will continue, including delivering guidance on improving and enhancing trans rights and women's rights; work on identifying and improving the additional support that trans children and young people may need; and the working group on non-binary equality.

I hope that you find this information useful and that it has gone some way to reassure you that the Scottish Government are committed to protecting and enhancing trans rights and equality.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]  
**EAHR : Equality Unit**

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From: [REDACTED]  
Sent: 27 September 2019 10:05:58  
To: Scottish Ministers  
Subject: gay conversion ban

[REDACTED]

please can you create a law which bans gay conversion therapy as it is wrong to try force someone who is gay, leasbian or bisexual to be straight especially wrong for parents to force this on their kids.

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T: 0131 244 2132  
E: [paul.sloan2@gov.scot](mailto:paul.sloan2@gov.scot)

Sir/Madam  
[REDACTED]

Our ref: 2019/0028923  
01 October 2019

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for your e-mail of 27 September 2019 addressed to Scottish Ministers regarding the practice of conversion therapy. I have been asked to respond.

Scotland is considered to be one of the most progressive countries in Europe regarding LGBTI equality and has a very clear position on promoting LGBTI rights. I can confirm that the Scottish Government does not support or advocate the practice of conversion therapy in the UK, regarding it as unethical and potentially harmful as there is no place for this within Scotland. We are engaging with the UK Government as they develop proposals to seek to ban this practice across the UK.

In addition, you will wish to be aware that the Scottish Government are signed up to a 'Memorandum of Understanding' on conversion therapy which includes support from the Department of Health in England plus a range of other professional bodies, such as the Royal College of Psychotherapists, the UK Council of Psychotherapy and many more.

Yours faithfully,

[REDACTED]  
**EQUALITY UNIT**

