
MEDIA RELEASE

13 March 2024 – For Immediate Release

The Minns Government’s Conversion Practices Ban Does Not Protect Parents or Young People

Religious school groups are extremely concerned that they have not been included in the consultations about the Conversion Practices Ban Bill and are standing firm in their opposition to its current form.

The inclusion of ill-defined ‘gender identity’ in the Minns Government’s *Conversion Practices Ban Bill 2024* risks the provision of the very best care and support for young people exploring their sexual and gender identity.

The Government’s pre-election commitment to outlaw gay conversion practices should not be extended to include gender identity when the scientific and medical evidence is so contested, and the tide is turning internationally against practices that lead to extreme medical interventions that have lifelong consequences. The NHS decision yesterday to cease prescribing puberty blockers for children reflects the international concerns.¹

The examples provided in the Bill that preaching, general school rules and parents talking to their children are no substitute for a better definition of conversion practices that focusses the attention on coercive practices undertaken without consent – which everyone agrees should be banned.

The inclusion of the vague term ‘suppression’ within the definition could also draw traditional religious teaching on chastity outside marriage within the scope of the legislation, or allow actions against parents who may seek time for further advice or reflection before rushing into affirming treatment.

The Bill also introduces an unnecessary civil action regime with opens up the possibility of representative complaints by activist groups. The representative complaints provisions, and civil complaints scheme are overly broad, have a very low bar for complaints, and act as a green light to activist litigation designed to target the long-held beliefs of people of faith regarding marriage, gender, and sexual morality.

We are calling on the government to support amendments that would address these concerns.

ENDS

¹ <https://amp.theguardian.com/society/2024/mar/12/children-to-stop-getting-puberty-blockers-at-gender-identity-clinics-says-nhs-england> - “We have concluded that there is not enough evidence to support the safety or clinical effectiveness of puberty suppressing hormones to make the treatment routinely available at this time.”

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