



# **Banning Conversion Therapy**

**Submission from the  
National Pensioners Convention**

**February 2022**

Cabinet Office - Government Equalities Office  
Sanctuary Buildings  
20 Great Smith Street  
London SW1P 3BT  
ctconsultation@cabinetoffice.gov.uk

04 February 2022

Dear consultation team

## **NPC evidence for the consultation Banning conversion therapy**

### **Introduction**

The National Pensioners' Convention (NPC) is Britain's biggest independent organisation of older people, representing around one thousand local, regional, and national pensioner groups with a total of 1.1 million members. The NPC is run by and for pensioners and campaigns for improvements to the income, health and welfare of both today's and tomorrow's pensioners and this response is based on the views and experiences of our members.

We wish to submit views to the Cabinet Office for the consultation on 'Banning Conversion Therapy'. Our response has been compiled by our LGBT Group and will concentrate on the experiences and concerns of our members who are, by definition, in the older age range.

### **Consultation Methodology**

The NPC hold deep concerns about the way in which the consultation has been conducted. The only way to find out about the consultation is via online methods. This will exclude millions of people from potentially giving their views on this important subject matter. The digital first approach must not be a digital only approach.

The NPC is campaigning for 'Connections For All', meaning that those who want go online and use the internet, computers and modern technology, should be given the access, help and training to do so to help digitally include them. However, we firmly believe that traditional forms of communication and services such as face to face, over the telephone and via post must remain in place. This is so as not to digitally exclude those who cannot use more modern technologies, those who do not wish to use them, and those who are priced out by equipment, broadband and upkeep costs, from our society.

It may be suggested that people who do not have access to the internet should use local libraries, which are likely to have computer facilities, or get help from a friend or relative, however this completely misses the point. Many people do not feel comfortable asking for others to respond on their behalf and not everyone has a family or someone they can trust to help them with technology – even if they wanted to. People who are not online have a right to be able to find out about government

consultations and a right to respond. Traditional methods of publicising consultations and allowing people to respond by offline means, must be maintained.

### **LGBT Working Group Response**

The National Pensioners Convention is a campaigning organisation representing the interests and welfare of all pensioners and older people in the UK, is totally opposed to the abhorrent practice of using Conversion Therapy to deny the fundamental rights of all human beings to freely determine their own sexuality, sexual orientation and gender identity.

Among the many testimonies to the devastating consequences on the lives of survivors of Conversion Therapy are the growing number of Gay men now seeking formal apologies from Birmingham University for the use of electric shock therapy by their Psychology Department in an attempt to “cure them” of their sexual attraction towards members of the same sex. Including the testimony of a 74-year-old Gay man “I would be sat in a room with a projector screen, an electrode was attached to my ankles and wrists. A photograph of a man would appear and if I did not press a button to remove the photograph, I was given an electric shock. When a photograph of a women appeared on the screen there were no such consequences.

We do not know how many LGBT+ people have been subjected to electric shock therapy and other Conversion Therapy practices over the many decades when such practices have been condoned and considered as legitimate and ethically acceptable “treatments” by professionals working in our NHS and Mental Health services. There is now clearly a need for a much-needed Public Inquiry into the use of Conversion Therapy and the impact on the Survivors, their partners, and families.

The National Pensioners Convention welcomes the Government Consultation but remains concerned that their present proposals on Conversion Therapy, while welcome, do not go far enough. In order to protect all LGBT+ people living in England and Wales from the use of Conversion Therapy practices, and respecting their right to determine their own sexuality, and sexual and gender identity without fear of abuse, exclusion or isolation; the ban on Conversion Therapy must extend to the use of such practices by religious and faith groups.

We have one further testimony, from a member of the National Pensioners Convention own LGBT Working Group.

“When I was, I went to Baptist church and became a “Born Again Christian”. The elders of the church said I was very effeminate and should behave as a Male would do. They forcibly prayed over me, threw me in a church pool to wash away my sin of wanting to be a woman. They commanded that the “demons inside of me” be cast out.

Due to the fact I felt strongly and would not back down from changing my gender, I was kicked out of the church. A lot of good friends both from Church and school, turned their backs as they thought I had either gone mad or it was a “phase”. My family disowned me, for 25 years my Mum would not speak to me.

I fully support the total ban on Conversion Therapy both in this country and internationally, and firmly believe that those who were subjected to Conversion Therapy on the NHS, should be compensated.”

Should you require any further information, please use the contact information supplied below.

Yours sincerely

*Jonathan Safir*

Jonathan Safir  
National Administration & Information Manager  
National Pensioners Convention

**National Pensioners Convention  
Marchmont Community Centre  
62 Marchmont Street  
London  
WC1N 1AB  
info@npcuk.org**