

PETER GIBSON MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

January 2023

*Dear ConAunt*

Thank you for your previous correspondence to me regarding so called 'conversion therapy', or as I consider it 'Abuse'.

I take this issue very seriously and have worked extensively with a team of Conservative MPs on this since arriving in Parliament. I know that my colleagues in the Equalities Office remain committed to tackling conversion therapy in the UK. I am absolutely clear that this practice has no place in a civilised society.

I am encouraged that this view is shared by the head of the NHS, the Royal College of Psychiatrists, the UK Council for Psychotherapy, the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy and the British Medical Association. Each of these bodies have concluded that such therapy is unethical and potentially harmful.

The Government Equalities' Office commissioned a large-scale LGBTQ+ survey in 2017. Sadly, two per cent of respondents to the national LGBTQ+ survey said they had undergone conversion therapy in an attempt to 'cure' them of being LGBTQ+. Unfortunately, in this survey, what conversion therapy entailed was not defined, nor were the respondents asked whether or not the conversion therapy referred to in their answer was offered in the UK.

As such, I welcome that the Government is delivering on its promise and introduced the Conversion Therapy Bill. I understand that the Bill will strengthen existing criminal law by ensuring that violent conversion therapy is recognised as a potential aggravating factor upon sentencing, as well as making sure those found guilty of conversion therapy offences have any profit obtained from those crimes removed. Further, it will protect freedom of speech, ensuring parents, clinicians and teachers can continue to have conversations with people seeking support. I have been assured that the legislation will not impact the existing professional frameworks that guide clinicians' ability to support people. As such, robust, exploratory and challenging conversations which are part of regulated care do not fall within the scope of the ban. It will protect under-18s regardless of circumstance.

I also welcome that the Government has now confirmed that this will be a fully inclusive ban and that transgender conversion therapy will be included in the ban. The Bill will be published shortly and will protect everyone including those targeted on the basis of their sexuality or being transgender.

*Member of Parliament for Darlington*

Constituency Office: 34 Duke Street, Darlington, Co. Durham, DL3 7AQ Telephone: 01325 711711

Email: [peter.gibson.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:peter.gibson.mp@parliament.uk) Website: [www.petergibson.org](http://www.petergibson.org)

    @gibbo4darlo



I am positive about the steps that have been made so far in the UK to achieve LGBTQ+ equality and am confident that this good work will continue. Rest assured as a member of the LGBTQ+ community, I personally am committed to seeing all forms of abuse for LGBTQ+ people banned and will continue to work towards that in Parliament.

Once again, thank you for taking the time to contact me and if I can ever be of any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again. If you would like to keep up to date with my activities as your Member of Parliament then please subscribe to my Darlington Matters newsletter using this link: [www.petergibson.org/signup](http://www.petergibson.org/signup)

Yours sincerely  
Peter Gibson

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