



Banning conversion therapy

Academy statement

The healthcare system serves diverse patient communities and employs a diverse workforce. All should be supported and valued. As strong proponents for equality, diversity and inclusion among our colleagues and patients, the Academy is concerned about the damaging effects of 'conversion therapy' for LGBTQ+ people.

'Conversion therapy' is an umbrella term that is used to describe a range of practices and methods which seek to promote heterosexual and cisgender identities as preferable to all others. They attempt to change the sexual orientation or gender identity of people, or their expression of these aspects of themselves.

Reports from people who have undergone 'conversion therapy' and investigations into it have highlighted the significantly detrimental physical and mental impact on those involved. An [assessment](#) by the Government Equalities Office and Equality Hub concluded that 'there is no robust evidence that conversion therapy can change sexual orientation or gender identity' and that 'conversion therapy is frequently associated with harm'.

In line with advice from the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Academy feels that this abhorrent practice has no place in our society. No sexual orientation or gender identity is a pathology and everyone has the right to be respected and treated equally.

We fully support an inclusive ban on 'conversion therapy' across the UK. In the May 2022 Queen's Speech, the Government committed to legislation on this in England and Wales. We call on the Government not to lose sight of this important work and to ensure that any legislation is inclusive to protect all people from harm.

Any legislation should ban 'conversion therapy' for all groups, including transgender people and adults, even where 'consent' may be provided, to ensure full protection is given to patients across private and non-private healthcare settings.

In line with the [Memorandum of Understanding](#) committing to the banning of LGBTQ+ 'conversion therapy', the Academy's position is 'not intended to deny, discourage or exclude those with uncertain feelings around sexuality or gender identity from seeking qualified and appropriate help' nor to 'stop psychological and medical professionals who work with trans and gender questioning clients from performing a clinical assessment of suitability prior to medical intervention.'

The NHS should be inclusive of and welcoming to people regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity. There are many valued and vital members of the current workforce who work tirelessly to look after patients and who are members of the LGBTQ+ community. There must also be continued engagement and investment in work to ensure that healthcare services and medical training programmes are inclusive of the LGBTQ+ community and that the issues that impact and affect them are listened to, considered and addressed, ensuring a fair and equitable environment for both staff and patients.

This statement was produced in consultation with and with input from GLADD, The Association of LGBTQ+ Doctors and Dentists, and Dr Jo Hartland (they/them), lead author of the GLADD Charter on So-Called Conversion Therapy.