

The Joint Committee on the draft Conversion Practices Bill, UK Parliament

By email

22 October 2026

Dear Chair,

I am writing to welcome you and your colleagues to your roles on the Joint Committee scrutinising the UK Government's draft Conversion Practices Bill, and to provide an update on the Scottish Government's work to end conversion practices.

The Committee's work represents an important milestone in the development of legislation intended to end conversion practices within the United Kingdom. Given the significance and sensitivity of these issues, the Committee's scrutiny will play a valuable role in ensuring that any future legislation is robust, workable and capable of delivering effective protections while appropriately safeguarding fundamental rights and freedoms.

The Scottish Government remains firmly committed to ending conversion practices and to advancing equality and human rights for LGBTQI+ people in Scotland.

The Scottish Government notes the publication of the UK Government's draft Bill for pre-legislative scrutiny and is committed to working constructively with the UK Government to explore extending the legislation to Scotland following the scrutiny process. Scottish Ministers believe there is considerable value in a coherent legislative approach across Scotland, England and Wales, bringing together governments across the UK to advance equality and provide effective protections from conversion practices. We will continue to engage closely with the UK Government as the legislation develops to support a framework that is robust, workable and capable of delivering its intended objectives.

As the Committee undertakes its scrutiny, I thought it may be helpful to share details of the significant work already undertaken in Scotland in developing proposals for our own legislation. Over recent years, the Scottish Government has undertaken extensive policy development, stakeholder engagement and evidence gathering on this issue, generating a substantial body of analysis that may be relevant to the Committee's consideration of the draft Bill.

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In March 2022, the Scottish Government established the Expert Advisory Group on Ending Conversion Practices to provide recommendations on the legislative and non-legislative measures required to end conversion practices in Scotland. The Group brought together expertise from LGBTQI+ organisations, faith and belief organisations and communities, legal and human rights experts, mental health professionals, academics and people with lived experience of conversion practices.

The Expert Advisory Group's report, published in [October 2022](#), provided detailed recommendations on measures that should be considered to end practices which seek to change or suppress a person's sexual orientation or gender identity. The group explored the complex balance between providing effective protections from harm while safeguarding freedoms of thought, conscience, religion, belief and expression.

Building on that work, the Scottish Government launched a public consultation in January 2024 seeking views on a proposed Scottish approach, including draft provisions for a Scottish Bill. The consultation generated 5,811 responses from individuals and organisations across a broad range of sectors and perspectives. Faith and belief organisations constituted the largest category of organisational respondents, alongside responses from LGBTQI+ organisations, medical and counselling bodies, campaign groups, think tanks, trade unions and political organisations.

The consultation findings, published in [October 2025](#), provide a detailed insight into stakeholder views on many of the issues that are also relevant to the Committee's consideration of the UK Government's draft Bill.

More recently, we have continued to engage with stakeholders across Scotland to gather views on the UK Government's draft Bill and to understand the implications of extending its provisions to Scotland. This engagement will continue throughout the scrutiny process and will help inform the Scottish Government's ongoing discussions with the UK Government. The Committee may also find it valuable to hear directly from Scottish stakeholders who have contributed to the development of policy and legislation in this area. Their perspectives, informed by Scotland's experience of considering legislative proposals, may assist the Committee in its deliberations.

Given the extent of the work already undertaken in Scotland, the Scottish Government would be keen to engage with the Committee to discuss the evidence and analysis gathered through our policy development process, and our ongoing engagement with the UK Government. We would be happy to nominate the most appropriate officials to support any further discussions the Committee may wish to have.

I hope this information is helpful and I look forward to continuing engagement as the Committee progresses its important work.

Yours sincerely,

John Somers

Director for Equality, Inclusion and Human Rights

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