

Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP  
10 Downing Street  
Westminster  
London  
SW1A 2AA

6 April 2022

### Confusion around conversion therapy proposals

Dear Prime Minister,

We are deeply concerned about the chaos and confusion that seems to be driving the government's approach to conversion therapy. The lack of clarity helps no-one.

The consultation process highlighted many of the issues facing the government in meeting its twin commitments – to end coercive and abusive practices while ensuring people can receive the prayer and spiritual support they choose. The decision not to proceed with a new Conversion Therapy Bill, revealed by a leak, seemed to be the right outcome delivered in the wrong way. A subsequent partial U-turn has now created further uncertainty.

The Evangelical Alliance is the oldest and largest body representing the UK's two million evangelical Christians. In response to our previous letter, you confirmed that the government "will continue to allow adults to receive appropriate pastoral support (including prayer), in churches and other religious settings, in the exploration of their sexual orientation or gender identity". We celebrate that everyone is made in the image of God and in this Easter season we are reminded of the invitation into a transformational relationship through the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Many were encouraged to hear last week that: "Having explored this sensitive issue in great depth the government has decided to proceed by reviewing how existing law can be deployed more effectively to prevent this in the quickest way possible, and explore the use of other non-legislative measures." Within hours this position was reversed. It is difficult to see how months of legal scrutiny could suddenly be found wanting.

Conversion therapy is an emotive topic. The lack of a clear definition adds to the confusion and often leads to those with different views talking past one another. For clarity, the Evangelical Alliance does not support disreputable practices claiming to 'cure' those who are gay or transgender.

CEO: Gavin Calver

Registered office: 176 Copenhagen Street, London, N1 0ST  
Tel: 020 7520 3830 Email: [info@eauk.org](mailto:info@eauk.org) Web: [eauk.org](http://eauk.org)

Scotland: Blair Court, 100 Borron Street, Port Dundas, Glasgow, G4 9XG Tel: 0141 353 0150 Email: [scotland@eauk.org](mailto:scotland@eauk.org)

Northern Ireland: First Floor, Ravenhill House, 105 Ravenhill Road, Belfast, BT6 8DR Tel: 028 9073 9079 Email: [nireland@eauk.org](mailto:nireland@eauk.org)

Wales: 20 High Street, Cardiff, CF10 1PT Tel: 029 2022 9822 Email: [cymru@eauk.org](mailto:cymru@eauk.org) / [wales@eauk.org](mailto:wales@eauk.org)

The decision not to include gender identity in any new law is a positive step meaning parents, counsellors and youth workers will not be criminalised for helping vulnerable young people. The risk is that the government press ahead with legislation on gay conversion therapy to be seen to be doing something. This would be despite acknowledging that the existing criminal law framework already protects against acts done in the name of conversion therapy.

There is widespread agreement about the need to end coercive and abusive practices. Polling shows support for personal choice when it comes to questions of sexuality and gender. There is also significant support for the Christian understanding of marriage and ensuring that everyday Christians can hold their beliefs and pastor others of every age in line with those beliefs.

We acknowledge your previous commitment not to see “clergy and church members criminalised for normal non-coercive activity” and hope and pray we can work together to make that a reality.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Lynas  
UK director, Evangelical Alliance

cc:

Rt Hon Liz Truss MP  
Mike Freer MP  
Kemi Badenoch MP

**CEO:** Gavin Calver

**Registered office:** 176 Copenhagen Street, London, N1 0ST  
**Tel:** 020 7520 3830 **Email:** info@eauk.org **Web:** eauk.org

**Scotland:** Blair Court, 100 Borron Street, Port Dundas, Glasgow, G4 9XG **Tel:** 0141 353 0150 **Email:** scotland@eauk.org

**Northern Ireland:** First Floor, Ravenhill House, 105 Ravenhill Road, Belfast, BT6 8DR **Tel:** 028 9073 9079 **Email:** nireland@eauk.org

**Wales:** 20 High Street, Cardiff, CF10 1PT **Tel:** 029 2022 9822 **Email:** cymru@eauk.org / wales@eauk.org