

**United Nations Human Rights Council, 50th Session  
(13 June - 8 July 2022)**

**Item 3: Interactive dialogue with the Independent Expert on protection against  
violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity**

**Speaker: Humanists UK Representative: Tallulah Gordon<sup>1</sup>**

This intervention is made jointly by Humanists UK and Ozanne Foundation.

It has been over four years since the UK Government, in line with its obligations to the sustainable development goal to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all, committed to banning the abhorrent practice of so-called 'conversion therapy.' Yet not only has it failed to do so, it has backpedalled on this commitment by excluding trans people from future protections.

In April, the UK Government performed a double u-turn in less than 48 hours. First, it announced the abandonment of all plans to ban conversion therapy in England and Wales.<sup>2</sup> Quickly retracting this, it declared that a criminal ban would go ahead but protections would only extend to gay, lesbian, and bisexual people – but not for trans people.

The Government's own research found that trans people are twice as likely to have been offered conversion therapy compared to gay and bisexual people.<sup>3</sup> An investigation into gender identity conversion therapy carried out by the Ozanne Foundation found that trans people faced beatings, deprivation, verbal abuse, sexual abuse, forced prayer, and exorcisms.<sup>4</sup> Many of the trans respondents endured this abuse during adolescence, a critical time of development, causing lasting damage to their mental health.

The UK Government should think again. Uruguay and Canada are examples of the successful implementation of conversion therapy bans protecting both sexual orientation and gender identity.<sup>5</sup> Will the Independent Expert visit the UK to observe its performance on protecting the health and well-being of LGBT individuals, and the implementation of a conversion therapy ban?

Thank you.

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<sup>1</sup> Humanists UK is the operating name of the British Humanist Association.

<sup>2</sup> Paul Brand, 'Government ditches ban on conversion therapy, according to leaked document', ITV News, 31 March 2022. <https://www.itv.com/news/2022-03-31/exclusive-government-ditches-ban-on-conversion-therapy-leaked-document-shows>

<sup>3</sup> Sophie Gallagher and Josh Parry, 'Conversion Therapy: Ban to go ahead but not cover trans people', BBC News Online, 1 April 2022, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-60947028>

<sup>4</sup> '2020 Conversion Therapy and Gender Identity Survey', Ozanne Foundation, 2022, <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1btEZsu2TOXhwIS-wGrQwIJuxTudtBbZU/view>

<sup>5</sup> 'Which countries have already banned conversion therapy?' Stonewall, 1 April 2022, <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/about-us/news/which-countries-have-already-banned-conversion-therapy>