

Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee

32nd Meeting, 2021 (Session 6), Tuesday, 13 December 2022

Note by the clerk

Petition PE1817: End Conversion Therapy

Background

1. [PE1817: End Conversion Therapy](#) was lodged in August 2020. It calls on the Scottish Parliament “to urge the Scottish Government to ban the provision or promotion of LGBT+ conversion therapy in Scotland”.
2. In the previous session of the Parliament (Session 5) the Public Petitions Committee received written evidence from: [the Scottish Government](#) and jointly from [Stonewall Scotland, Equality Network, Scottish Trans Alliance, and LGBT Youth Scotland](#)
3. In its submission the Scottish Government noted that the UK Government published its LGBT Action Plan in 2018, which included a commitment to ban conversion therapy in the UK.
4. The Session 5 Public Petitions Committee referred the petition to the Session 5 Equalities and Human Rights Committee. That Committee received [further written evidence](#) jointly from Stonewall Scotland, Equality Network, Scottish Trans Alliance and LGBT Youth Scotland and agreed to keep the petition open and to refer it to its successor committee for this parliamentary session.

Committee inquiry

5. At the start of Session 6, the Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee agreed to hold an inquiry on this issue. This included a Call for Views which ran from 6 July to 13 August 2021 and a number of oral evidence sessions throughout September and November 2021.

6. The Committee published its [report](#) on 25 January 2022 in which it considered it is important to bring forward legislation promptly (paragraph 170).
7. In its [response](#) (10 March 2022) the Scottish Government reiterated the commitment made in its 2021-22 Programme for Government that it would bring forward legislation that is “as comprehensive as possible within devolved powers by the end of 2023” and confirmed that it was “actively pursuing legislation which will fit the legislative needs for ending conversion practices in Scotland”.
8. The Scottish Government confirmed the establishment of an independent [Expert Advisory Group on Ending Conversion Practices](#).
9. The Expert Advisory Group published its [report and recommendations](#) on 4 October 2022.
10. The Minister for Equalities and Older People wrote to the Committee on [4 October 2022](#), indicating the Scottish Government would “carefully analyse and reflect on the report” and indicating a commitment to work closely with the Committee by providing regular updates on progress on developing policy and establishing a Bill.
11. As part of the ongoing dialogue between the Committee and the Scottish Government, the Committee held an informal briefing with the Bill Team Leader on 8 November and subsequently wrote to the Minister on [9 November 2022](#).
12. At this meeting the Committee will take evidence from representatives of the independent Expert Advisory Group to —
 - Nick Bland, Chair
 - Dr Paul Behrens
 - Dr Rebecca Crowther
 - Richy Edwards

Action

13. **The Committee is invited to consider what next steps to take with regards the petition. Options include—**
 - **To formally close the petition on the basis that the Scottish Government has confirmed its commitment to bring forward legislation**
 - **In closing the petition, agree to receive updates from the Scottish Government on progress, with a view to identify where the Scottish Government and Committee can work closely together to**

avoid any re-traumatising of individuals and duplication of previous work.

- **Any other action.**

**Committee Clerks
December 2022**