Meeting Notes for Working Group

Session 0, Informal Meeting: Introduction

Subject: Working Group on Banning of Conversion Practices

Date: 7th December 2022

Time: 15:00

Chair: [redacted]

Supporting officials:

- [redacted]

Opening and Welcoming the Working Group for Banning of Conversion Practices:

Members were thanked for agreeing to be part of the working group.

Banning of conversion practices was highlighted as a key area of work for Welsh Government and a programme for Government commitment. The purpose of the meeting was clarified: to agree the Terms of Reference.

The Group were optimistic that their commitment and contribution will support Welsh Government with what can be achieved now, with the given powers. It was noted that although Legislation takes time, there is action that can be taken to work towards a ban. Looking at what we can do with interventions for the LGBTQ+ community on these practices/therapy's is crucial.

Welsh Government's commitment to transparency was discussed with the group. A summary of meetings, which do not attribute comments to individuals, will be published on the Welsh Government website.

It was highlighted that topics which could impact the well-being of members might be discussed. A list of welfare and mental health organisations who offer support had been shared with members in advance and was briefly referenced.

[redacted] attended the meeting.

Welsh Government is currently looking at legal advice on what can be done and achieved withing our current powers: what existing legislation might be used and the possibility of a request for further powers, if necessary.

The role the group will play in supporting Welsh Government with what can be achieved now, and in the future was discussed. Given the time it can take for legislation, what we can do now with interventions for the LGBTQ+ community on these practices/therapy's is paramount.

Group members were asked to introduce themselves, including a summary of the knowledge or experience they bring.

Terms of Reference:

The draft terms of reference were discussed, and some proposed changes agreed. These would be circulated in preparation for agreement at the first formal meeting.

Main discussion points on the TOR included:

- Data of Conversion Practices within Wales: Members will share data from research which includes figures from Wales.
- Group believe both terms, practices and therapy are important, and are included. Of particular importance for refugee and asylum seekers – clarity is needed around language with clear definitions.
- Group consensus of exploration "being a two-way process", "whereas practice and therapy are one way". Fundamental to make this clearer at point 10 ToR.

  Agreed that a clear definition will help with this.

- People who are working as healthcare practitioners, particularly in mental health settings, the term "practice" is problematic. Feels it doesn't need to be either or, use of both can be helpful. In some settings, the terms "practice" is useful and for others is problematic.
- Predetermined purpose (mindset) to want to change someone's Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity.
- Group identified that Conversion Practices/therapies are not to be confused with support services or "Exploration/Affirmation" of gender and sexual orientations.
- Group raised engaging with survivors and support: clarity given that there would be time at the start and at the end of each meeting to check in with members if they needed support. Welfare and Support list was emailed to Members at the start of the informal meeting.
- Group requested clarity on Welsh Governments direction- Full Ban, Policy, or Law. Oral Statements delivered in April and June 2022 were referred to.

Membership:

- Discussed membership of the group: discussed that not all invites were accepted due to capacity/availability to take on additional work, or that some members will join from the new year. Welsh Government were open to suggestions and recommendations from the Working Group.
- Identified areas for potential membership to broaden, officials asked for suggestions in terms of professional expertise.

AOB: Comms

- Discussion over social media and comms with reference: when will the group be announced. Officials to confirm/clarify.

Actions

1. Potential expansion of membership ahead of 25 January.
2. Email to be sent to the Working Group re TOR acceptance:
3. Consent to be mentioned in a public list of members; and discuss sharing of email addresses within group;
4. Comms re social media and linking to the working group.
5. Welfare and Support Guidance was sent to group ahead of the informal meeting – to note.
6. Members to email through any recommendations of potential group members or questions.
7. Members to share data from research which includes figures from Wales.