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### **Conversion Practices:**

So-called conversion 'therapy' is an abhorrent practice. People must be able to explore their sexual orientation and gender identity, but that must not include any therapy that seeks to convert them.

I agree we need a ban on conversion practices that is inclusive of all LGBT people, including trans people. It must not allow loopholes or exceptions, for example on the spurious grounds of 'consent'. At the same time, it must protect the provision of psychological support and treatment, non-directive counselling, and the pastoral relationship between teachers and pupils or religious leaders and worshippers.

It has been almost six years since the Government promised a ban on conversion practices. Since then, there have been U-turns, claims and counter claims. The Government is now saying there are complexities that still need to be addressed, yet Ministers have not been able to present evidence or statements from external bodies supporting their concerns. LGBT+ people need a Government that will not use complexity, which is common to all legislation, as an excuse for inaction.

A Private Members' Bill, the Conversion Practices (Prohibition) Bill, received its Second Reading in Parliament on 1 March. Given the Government's continued failure to publish its own draft proposals, I pay tribute to my colleague, Lloyd Russell-Moyle MP, for his attempts to move the discussion forward via this Bill. However, the Bill did not make the progress required to continue to the next stage and is unlikely to advance further.

More widely, I would like to assure constituents of my commitment to working to end discrimination against all LGBT+ people. I want to see every victim of a hate crime treated equally, with anti-LGBT+ and disability hate crimes treated as aggravated offences. I also support proposals to tackle the sexual harassment of LGBT+ people at work, with new laws to crack down on this, including third-party harassment. Above all, I want all LGBT+ people to be treated fairly, with dignity, respect and equality.

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