

E-mail request

16 September 2021

Dear

ATISN 15448 - Gender conversion therapy

Information requested

Thank you for your request which I received on 21 August 2021. You asked for:

Any information held regarding:

1. the numbers of individuals in Wales believed to have been subject to conversion therapy practices over the last decade.
2. the numbers of institutions or groups in Wales believed to practise conversion therapy.

And also:

set out the Welsh Government's understanding of what constitutes 'conversion therapy' in relation to (1) individuals who are gay or bisexual and (2) individuals with a transgender identity.

Our response

The information you requested is enclosed.

1. Welsh Government does not collect data on the numbers of individuals in Wales believed to have been subject to conversion therapy practices, however data on conversion therapy is available from the National LGBT Survey 2017: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-lgbt-survey-data-viewer> The data viewer allows for breakdowns for Wales but does not provide an answer within your requested ten year timeframe. These figures show that 2.7% of the 4800 respondents to the National LGBT Survey 2017 in Wales had had conversion therapy and that 5.5% had been offered it. It is important to note that the National LGBT Survey 2017 received 108,100 responses in total from people who self-identified as having a minority sexual orientation or gender identity, or self-identified as intersex; were 16 or above; and lived in the United Kingdom. As such, the dataset represents a self-selected sample and is not representative of all LGBT people in the UK - the results hold for respondents to the survey only. A definition of conversion therapy was not provided in the survey.

2. We do not hold information on the numbers of institutions or groups in Wales believed to practice conversion therapy. However the National LGBT Survey 2017 provides some information on who conducted/offered the conversion therapy experienced by respondents to that survey: National LGBT Survey: Summary report (publishing.service.gov.uk). Figures for Wales are available also here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-lgbt-survey-data-viewer>. As noted in point 1, the dataset represents a self-selected sample and is not representative of all LGBT people in the UK - the results hold for respondents to the survey only. A definition of conversion therapy was not provided in the survey.
3. The Welsh Government has not defined conversion therapy. However, the definitions used in the “Memorandum of Understanding on Conversion Therapy in the UK” and the Report of the Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity to the Human Rights Council in 2020 have proved useful to inform policy discussion.

Memorandum of Understanding on Conversion Therapy in the UK definition:

An umbrella term for a therapeutic approach, or any model or individual viewpoint that demonstrates an assumption that any sexual orientation or gender identity is inherently preferable to any other, and which attempts to bring about a change of sexual orientation or gender identity, or seeks to suppress an individual’s expression of sexual orientation or gender identity on that basis.

These efforts are sometimes referred to by terms including, but not limited to, ‘reparative therapy’, ‘gay cure therapy’, or ‘sexual orientation and gender identity change efforts’, and sometimes may be covertly practised under the guise of mainstream practice without being named.

Practices of the so-called “conversion therapy” Report of the Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity to the Human Rights Council in 2020:

“Conversion therapy” is used as an umbrella term to describe interventions of a wide-ranging nature, all of which are premised on the belief that a person’s sexual orientation and gender identity, including gender expression, can and should be changed or suppressed when they do not fall under what other actors in a given setting and time perceive as the desirable norm, in particular when the person is lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans or gender diverse. Such practices are therefore consistently aimed at effecting a change from non-heterosexual to heterosexual and from trans or gender diverse to cisgender. Depending on the context, the term is used for a multitude of practices and methods, some of which are clandestine and therefore poorly documented.

Next steps

If you are dissatisfied with the Welsh Government's handling of your request, you can ask for an internal review within 40 working days of the date of this response. Requests for an internal review should be addressed to the Welsh Government's Freedom of Information Officer at:

Information Rights Unit,
Welsh Government,
Cathays Park,
Cardiff,
CF10 3NQ

or Email: Freedom.ofinformation@gov.wales

Please remember to quote the ATISN reference number above.

You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

However, please note that the Commissioner will not normally investigate a complaint until it has been through our own internal review process.

Yours sincerely