Meeting Notes for Working Group: Session 1, Formal Meeting

Subject: Working Group on Banning of Conversion Practices

Date: 25 January 2023

Time: 15:00

Chair: [redacted]

Supporting officials:

- [redacted]
- [redacted]
- [redacted]

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

Members were welcomed to the first formal meeting of the working group.

Welsh Government's press release of 17 January 2023, which announced the Working Group was discussed. Positive responses as well as negative social media responses were noted. Officials checked in with the well-being of the group and resent the Welfare Support Guidance.

Short introductions from each member were given.

Notes from the previous meeting were agreed. Members were given until 25 Jan to email any amendments prior to the note being published on the Welsh Government website.

An update on action points from the previous meeting was given and members were thanked for their contributions.

<u>The outstanding action, potential expansion of membership, was discussed with a view to including a new member with expertise in engaging with marginalised Intersectional groups.</u>

- The group acknowledged the challenges associated with engaging with some groups and organisations that are primarily volunteer led. Issues such as lack of capacity, lack of resources, concerns around vulnerability and safeguarding of members were discussed.
- The option of engaging in different formats was discussed as a potential way to increase engagement, if necessary, as the work of the group progresses.
- A potential new member was suggested with experience of research into understanding the complex intersectional experiences and concerns of Black and ethnic minority groups and religious groups. The group agreed this was an area of expertise that would be of significant additional benefit and agreed to extend an invite for membership to the working group.

Members were invited to submit any further suggestions for membership expansion to Welsh Government.

TOR acceptance and clarification.

It was agreed an email would be sent to the Working Group regarding the TOR acceptance asking the group to email any suggestions by Friday 27th January 2023

Working group members discussed

- TOR updated item on agenda-point 10 still needs clarity and clarification.
- Group identified that Conversion Practices/therapies are not to be confused with support services or "Exploration/Affirmation" of gender and sexual orientations.
- Religious group to be include in point 10 of ToR.
- The group discussed the possibility of referring to the shared report definition, the Galop Report – regarding religious settings.

Agreed that a clear definition will help with this, and that the group will agree a definition over the course of future meetings.

Working group members discussed

- Group agreed public list to be published on the Welsh Government website with 3 group members still to confirm.

- Discussion with reference to social media and linking to the working group members, majority of group members have consented to the release of their names and all have received the welfare support package. Group Members thanked officials for their support and officials asked group members to keep them updated of any concerns.

Sharing of data or reports

Members to share data from research which includes figures from Wales.

Officials thanked the group for sharing of the Galop report and reminded members that any further reports or data are welcomed.

Reminder that 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 over the next month. Two presentations were given to the group:

Presentation 1-

Report sponsored by Galop- titled "There was nothing to fix - LGBTQ+ Survivors Experiences of Conversion Practices"

Presentation 2-

The Where, what, and how of Conversion Practices – The Hidden Agenda and Abhorrent Practices.

Group members discussed the presentations raising the following key points:

- Research in UK, Caribbean and Hungry demonstrated the level of understanding a person evaluating the research knows about conversion therapy/practices is crucial.
- Prayer/Exorcism is often suppressive or violent, designed to suppress who you are.
- Suppression is due to a more acceptable cis-gender or heterosexual norm.
- Intersectional with various laws: Hate Crime- VAWDASV- Safe Guarding etc
- Safeguarding – reporting framework clearer- to take on behalf of the young person or adult.
- Education for professionals is key. –
- Conversion Practices taking place in the home much more prevalent – education and training identified for children, young people and professionals-

More prosecutions needed – with greater consequences for the perpetrator

Children, young people and adults are not recognising abuse or abusive behaviour, until the damage is profound.

AOB: The group agreed for future meetings to be increased from 1hr 30 to 2 hours

Actions

1. Potential expansion of membership ahead of February 28th, with ref to various formats for dynamic engagement. **Complete, will be covered in update.**

2. Email to be sent to the Working Group re TOR point 10 **Complete, TOR is published.**

3. Officials to follow up on consent ref public list of members **Complete, list is published.**

4. Members to email through any recommendations of potential group members or questions. **Complete.**

5. Members to share data from research which includes figures from Wales to officials. **Complete.**