

Equality Impact Assessment

Part A

Initial Impact Assessment

Proposal name

**Conversion Practice Position Statement –
Sheffield Adult Safeguarding Partnership**

Brief aim(s) of the proposal and the outcome(s) you want to achieve

The Sheffield Adult Safeguarding Partnership Board (SASP) is seeking endorsement from the Council and other organisations of its position statement on Conversion Therapy or Practice and to note its direction of travel. The position statement has been developed through a multi-agency approach, which includes representatives from Adult Health & Social Care, Children's Services, partner organisations from the public, voluntary, community and faith sectors, and the Equality & Human Right Commission.

In seeking endorsement, SASP recognises that, as a public authority, the Council has organisational decision-making governance processes and legal duties under the Equality Act.

Conversion Therapy or Practice is any intervention that seeks to change a person's sexual orientation or gender identity. It works towards the goal of 'curing' someone from being LGBT+.

The position statement adopts the recommended definition of The Expert Advisory Group on Ending Conversion Practices in Scotland, which states that conversion practice:

- *refers to any treatment, practice or effort that aims to change, suppress and/or eliminate a person's sexual orientation, gender identity and/or gender expression, and*
- *is abusive and unethical, therefore, any person being subjected to this cannot consent to that practice being carried out on them.*

The Expert Advisory Group's wording is considered to be authoritative and informed. It is consistent with other definitions, including the Memorandum of Understanding on Conversion Therapy in the UK, endorsed by around 30 professional organisations. There is a high degree of shared terminology and understanding in relation to Conversion Therapy or Practice.

The position statement aims to support the rights and autonomy of all people, regardless of sexual identity, and takes a gender-affirming perspective. It adopts a specific stance in relation to what it identifies as Conversion Therapy or Practice and condemns its harmful and unethical effects.

This EIA considers the position statement within the wider context of the Council's duties under the Equality Act 2010. It also notes the Equality & Human Rights Commission view¹ on this matter, which states that:

- *The Equality Act 2010 protects people from direct and indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation because of protected characteristics.... Where adverse impact for people sharing a particular protected characteristic is detected (in this case, mostly likely to be the characteristics of sexual orientation, gender reassignment and religion or belief), public bodies must consider whether there are ways they could reasonably mitigate that impact...*
- *[EIAs should] explain how the proposals have been developed and changed in response to evidence of impacts, including consideration of responses to this consultation. Equality impact assessment should continue after measures to end conversion therapy and support victims are implemented to continually monitor whether they are having the intended or expected impact.'*

This EIA will continue to be reviewed and updated to reflect changing information and any developments in the position statement itself. In particular, it notes the Government's recently-announced intention to introduce a ban on conversion therapy, following its consultation. This will be monitored closely.

Proposal type

- Budget Non Budget

If Budget, is it Entered on Q Tier?

- Yes No

If yes what is the Q Tier reference

Year of proposal (s)

- 21/22 23/23 23/24 24/25 other

Decision Type

- Coop Exec
 Committee (e.g. Health Committee)
 Leader
 Individual Coop Exec Member
 Executive Director/Director
 Officer Decisions (Non-Key)
 Council (e.g. Budget and Housing Revenue Account)
 Regulatory Committees (e.g. Licensing Committee)

Lead Committee Member

Janet Kerr, Chief Social Worker

Lead Director for Proposal

Alexis Chappell, Director ASC

Person filling in this EIA form

Jeanette Munday

EIA start date

11/01/2023

Equality Lead Officer

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Adele Robinson | <input type="radio"/> Beverley Law |
| <input type="radio"/> Annemarie Johnston | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Ed Sexton |
| <input type="radio"/> Bashir Khan | <input type="radio"/> Louise Nunn |

Lead Equality Objective ([see for detail](#))

- | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Understanding Communities | <input type="radio"/> Workforce Diversity | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Leading the city in celebrating & promoting inclusion | <input type="radio"/> Break the cycle and improve life chances |
|---|---|--|--|

Portfolio, Service and Team

Is this Cross-Portfolio

- Yes No

Portfolio

Is the EIA joint with another organisation (eg NHS)?

- Yes No Please specify

SASP, partners

Consultation

Is consultation required (Read the guidance in relation to this area)

- Yes No

If consultation is not required please state why

Engagement has been undertaken via a multi-agency task and finish group and with the LGBT+ community to develop the position statement.

Are Staff who may be affected by these proposals aware of them

- Yes No

Are Customers who may be affected by these proposals aware of them

- Yes No

If you have said no to either please say why

Engagement has taken place with key stakeholders thus far, but that does not include all staff or all customers. Fuller communication, information and training will follow if there is endorsement of the position statement.

Initial Impact

Under the [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) we have to pay due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- advance equality of opportunity
- foster good relations

For a range of people who share protected characteristics, more information is available on the [Council website](#) including the [Community Knowledge Profiles](#).

Identify Impacts

Identify which characteristic the proposal has an impact on tick all that apply

<input checked="" type="radio"/> Health	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Transgender
<input checked="" type="radio"/> Age	<input type="radio"/> Carers
<input checked="" type="radio"/> Disability	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Voluntary/Community & Faith Sectors
<input type="radio"/> Pregnancy/Maternity	<input type="radio"/> Cohesion
<input type="radio"/> Race	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Partners
<input checked="" type="radio"/> Religion/Belief	<input type="radio"/> Poverty & Financial Inclusion
<input checked="" type="radio"/> Sex	<input type="radio"/> Armed Forces
<input checked="" type="radio"/> Sexual Orientation	<input type="radio"/> Other
<input type="radio"/> Cumulative	

Cumulative Impact

Does the Proposal have a cumulative impact

- Yes No

<input type="radio"/> Year on Year	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Across a Community of Identity/Interest
<input type="radio"/> Geographical Area	<input type="radio"/> Other

If yes, details of impact

In seeking wide endorsement, the position statement aims to support LGBT+ adults and young people in different aspects of life, enabling them to live, work, learn or worship in the city free of abuse – i.e., bullying discrimination, homophobia or transphobia, social isolation and rejection.

Proposal has geographical impact across Sheffield

- Yes No

If Yes, details of geographical impact across Sheffield

There is no specific geographical impact but the position statement aims to send out a strong message of support to the wider LGBT+ community of equality and inclusion.

Local Area Committee Area(s) impacted

- All Specific

If Specific, name of Local Committee Area(s) impacted

Initial Impact Overview

Based on the information about the proposal what will the overall equality impact?

The Equality Act gives legal protection to its protected characteristics. Most directly, people sharing the protected characteristics of gender reassignment, sexual orientation and/or religion or belief are affected. This EIA also considers impacts relating to age (principally in relation to young people) and disability (principally in relation to mental health).

The position statement is assessed as having an overall positive impact in helping to address widely acknowledged harmful effects of Conversion Therapy or Practice on physical and mental health and wellbeing and personal identity.

SASP recognises the value of having a clear, unambiguous and empowering statement about Conversion Therapy or Practice, irrespective of the legal position. However, it will monitor Government stated plans to introduce a total ban on the practice and will reflect this in further development of this EIA.

Is a Full impact Assessment required at this stage? Yes No

If the impact is more than minor, in that it will impact on a particular protected characteristic you must complete a full impact assessment below.

Initial Impact Sign Off

EIAs must be agreed and signed off by the Equality lead Officer in your Portfolio or corporately. Has this been signed off?

Yes No

Date agreed

Name of EIA lead officer

Part B

Full Impact Assessment

Health

Does the Proposal have a significant impact on health and well-being (including effects on the wider determinants of health)?

Yes No *if Yes, complete section below*

Staff

Yes No

Customers

Yes No

Details of impact

There are evidenced detrimental effects of Conversion Therapy or Practice on health and wellbeing. These may include physical, mental, emotional and psychological effects or harm. Conversion Therapy or Practice can cause or exacerbate existing mental health problems. However, a critical intention of the position statement is to state, in the clearest terms, that the personal choice and identity of being LGBT+ is not a mental health issue to be treated or cured.

It highlights talking therapies as an example that potentially falls in the category of Conversion Therapy or Practice. However, the position statement needs to ensure it adequately distinguishes between the intention of such therapies from other forms of psychotherapy or intervention that legitimately and ethically support people experiencing mental health problems or feelings (e.g. of distress) that impact on their health and wellbeing.

It should also be acknowledged that SCC staff may be impacted by the position statement, although this is not assessed as likely to be significant. For some staff, there may be positive impacts, in recognition of the empowering aims of the position statement for people, (e.g. clients they may be working with). Some staff may experience conflicts and negative feelings. SCC needs to ensure it has effective mechanisms in place – through HR processes and in other ways – to ensure that staff are able to adhere to the position statement in their employment with SCC.

Comprehensive Health Impact Assessment being completed

Yes No

Please attach health impact assessment as a supporting document below.

Public Health Leads has signed off the health impact(s) of this EIA

Yes No

**Name of Health
Lead Officer**

Age

Impact on Staff

Yes No

Impact on Customers

Yes No

Details of impact

SASP has a remit of adult safeguarding but is also seeking endorsement for its position statement from services and organisations supporting children and young people. The position statement is therefore assessed as having a positive impact for people of all ages potentially exposed to Conversion Therapy and Practice.

There may be positive impacts in particular for some children and young people who could be more vulnerable or susceptible to influence or coercion. The position statement aims to recognise and protect personal identity and could be especially supportive and empowering for children and young people, for whom identity, self-expression and personal discovery may be of particular and central importance.

Disability

Impact on Staff

Yes No

Impact on Customers

Yes No

Details of impact

Mental health conditions may generally come under the category of disability in the Equality Act. As highlighted under Health above, the position statement is assessed as having a positive overall impact on mental health and wellbeing.

There may be other positive impacts for people whose disabilities in some way make them more vulnerable or susceptible to influence or coercion. This might include some people with learning disabilities, profound or severe physical disabilities, neurological or developmental disabilities.

Religion or Belief

Impact on Staff

Yes No

Impact on Customers

Yes No

Details of impact

The position statement recognises a central impact in relation to religion or belief. It highlights that Conversion Therapy or Practice may be most commonly associated with [some] religious settings or individuals, including individuals who may bring personal religious conviction into their professional practice. The example of mental health professionals is given.

SCC needs to ensure it has effective mechanisms in place – through HR processes and in other ways – to ensure that staff are able to adhere to the position statement in their employment with SCC.

However, the position statement also needs to ensure that it does not inadvertently undermine the wider supportive and spiritual role of religion or belief in some people's lives, which is also an expression of personal identity. It should be possible for the position statement and its signatories to demonstrate a shared commitment that does not imply that one protected characteristic necessarily conflicts with another.

It is positive that the local Church of England diocese has signed-up to the position statement, giving some endorsement from Christian communities. However, it equally should be noted that representatives from Muslim and Jewish have not endorsed the position statement to date. There is the potential need to address this in further development of the position statement.

There may be negative impacts for anyone for whom the existence of the position statement and what it stands for does directly conflict with their expression of religion or belief. These needs acknowledging, even if, ultimately the core purpose of the position statement to ensure it protects LGBT+ communities means that it may be unrealistic to expect universal sign-up to its principals.

Sex

Impact on Staff

Yes No

Impact on Customers

Yes No

Details of impact

Although Conversion Therapy or Practice may not be directly associated with the protected characteristic of sex, there are likely to be indirect impacts for people whose sex assigned at birth differs from their gender identity. The position statement also recognises intersex people.

In empowering and protecting, the position statement would be expected to have a positive impact in relation to sex – e.g. for people assigned the [biological] sex of male but who identify as female. It would act as a reference point for organisations and individuals practising Conversion Therapy who are unwilling or unable to recognise the difference between sex and gender.

Sexual Orientation

Impact on Staff

Yes No

Impact on Customers

Yes No

Details of impact

A core purpose of the position statement is to challenge:

- *any treatment, practice or effort that aims to change, suppress and/or eliminate a person's sexual orientation,*

Where sexual orientation is defined as:

- *a person's emotional, affectional and sexual attraction to persons of a different gender, the same gender or more than one gender and includes the lack of such attraction or relations.*

The position statement also confirms asexuality as a sexual orientation.

Implicit in the position statement to challenge coercive practice is the wider issue of homophobia and discriminatory behaviour. The position statement is strongly consistent with the SCC's legal duties connected to sexual orientation as a protected characteristic under the Equality Act and, specifically, the Public Sector Equality Duty outlined above, to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- advance equality of opportunity
- foster good relations

Conversion Therapy or Practice implies that one protected characteristic (e.g. sexual orientation) is less important than another. As well as the other reasons that support the position statement, relating to health and wellbeing and identity, the Equality Act provides a legal rationale, irrespective of any future legal ban on the practice.

Gender Reassignment (Transgender)

Impact on Staff

Yes No

Impact on Customers

Yes No

Details of impact

A core purpose of the position statement is to challenge:

- *any treatment, practice or effort that aims to change, suppress and/or eliminate a person's gender identity and/or gender expression,*

Where gender identity is defined as:

- *each person's internal and individual experience of gender, which may or may not correspond with their sex assigned at birth, including their personal sense of the body and other expressions of gender.*

As with sexual orientation considered above, there is a wider issue of Transphobia implicit in the position statement and it is similarly strongly consistent with the SCC's legal duties under the Equality Act to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- advance equality of opportunity
- foster good relations

There is a legal rationale, as well as reasons of health and wellbeing and identity, to support the position statement and its challenging of Conversion Therapy or Practice.

Partners and Voluntary, Community

Impact on Staff

Yes No

Impact on Customers

Yes No

Details of impact

Customers and staff of partner agencies who also become signatories to the position statement may be similarly affected. A final list of signatories is to be confirmed.

Voluntary, Community & Faith Sectors

Impact on Staff

Yes No

Impact on Customers

Yes No

Details of impact

Customers and staff of VCF organisations who also become signatories to the position statement may be similarly affected. A final list of signatories is to be confirmed. As set out above under Religion or Belief, this includes places of worship and congregations.

Action Plan and Supporting Evidence

What actions will you take, please include an Action Plan including timescales

There is a Conversion Practice Delivery Plan already in place to raise awareness, encourage LGTBQ+ people to speak out with confidence where they are subjected to this practice and provide strategies within a framework to support the LGTBQ+ community.

Further actions may arise to reflect further developments in the position statement. These may include developments following the Children's Safeguarding Board endorsement of the position statement.

Supporting Evidence (Please detail all your evidence used to support the EIA)

[Equality Act 2010 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)

[Memorandum of understanding on conversion therapy in the UK \(bacp.co.uk\)](https://www.bacp.co.uk)

Detail any changes made as a result of the EIA

Following mitigation is there still significant risk of impact on a protected characteristic. Yes No

If yes, the EIA will need corporate escalation? Please explain below

Sign Off

EIAs must be agreed and signed off by the Equality lead Officer in your Portfolio or corporately. Has this been signed off?

Yes No

Date agreed

Name of EIA lead officer

Review Date

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