

January 2023

Freedom of religion or belief and freedom from violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity: National Secular Society input

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Introduction

This response is made on behalf of the National Secular Society.

The NSS is a not-for-profit, non-governmental organisation founded in 1866, funded by its members and by donations. We advocate for separation of religion and state and promote secularism as the best means of creating a society in which people of all religions and none can live together fairly and cohesively. We seek a diverse society where all are free to practise their faith, change it, or to have no faith at all. We uphold the universality of individual human rights, which should never be overridden on the grounds of religion, tradition or culture.

More information about our organisation can be found here:

<https://www.secularism.org.uk/about.html>

We have omitted any questions which are beyond our remit.

Religion in the United Kingdom

The Church of England is the established church in England and the mother church of the Anglican Communion. Constitutionally, the monarch is not only the head of state but also the supreme governor of the Church of England and 'defender of the faith'. The monarch swears to uphold the church's doctrine and worship in their coronation oath¹. Furthermore, twenty-six Anglican bishops enjoy seats by right in the House of Lords.

One third of state schools in England are faith schools. Such schools can, by law, discriminate on the basis of religion in the admission of pupils² and hiring of staff³. They are also legally entitled to teach relationship and sex education in line with the tenets of their faith.

Clearly, religion, especially Anglicanism, enjoys a privileged position in contemporary British society. This is despite 2021 census results which demonstrate that England and Wales are, for the first time, minority Christian countries⁴. The subsequent sections will address how religions have used their

¹ <https://www.royal.uk/coronation-oath-2-june-1953>

² <https://www.secularism.org.uk/admissions-fifty-percent-cap/>

³ <https://www.secularism.org.uk/defend-equality-laws/>

⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/nov/29/leicester-and-birmingham-are-uk-first-minority-majority-cities-census-reveals>

privileged positions to discriminate against individuals based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

#1 What are the actual or perceived points of tension (if any) between the right to manifest one's freedom of religion or belief, and freedom from violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity? Are there any areas in which they are mutually exclusive?

A significant proportion of leaders and followers of the main religions in the UK, including Christianity, Islam and Judaism, believe their religion teaches that same-sex relationships are sinful. This inevitably leads to widespread discrimination against LGBT people, particularly those within religious communities. It may also lead to violence, especially as some religious texts advocate corporal or capital punishment for same-sex relationships.

We believe a secular society, in which religious people are neither privileged nor disadvantaged, is the best means of tackling these tensions. While religious people should be allowed to follow homophobic beliefs, those beliefs must not be imposed on anyone. Neither should the state in any way endorse or condone homophobia, including religious homophobia.

#2 Are there any ways in which the right to freedom of religion or belief, and freedom from violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity are mutually reinforcing?

All too often, FoRB is interpreted as the right for *beliefs* to be protected, rather than *people*. Usually, this results in more mainstream, aggressive and conservative forms of religion being allowed to dominate discourse and policy-making regarding religion, which is frequently detrimental to oppressed groups including LGBT people.

Some members of religious communities dissent from mainstream views by interpreting their religious doctrine as accepting of LGBT people. Because these people comprise a minority, they are often subject to oppression, harassment, threats and violence from others in the community who regard their views as 'blasphemy' – see the case of Khakan Qureshi in #5. They may also be targets of 'conversion therapy' (more information in #5).

FoRB must equally protect those who hold a dissenting or minority interpretation of religion as well as the majority view upheld by religious leaders. This includes protecting the rights of those who see no conflict between being LGBT and their religion to express their views without fear of persecution.

#4 What are the key trends or significant instances of discriminatory or abusive practices by individual providers of goods or services in the public sphere against LGBT+ and gender-diverse persons that rely on religious narratives?

AND

#5 Has the State adopted, in public policy, legislation or jurisprudence, norms purportedly based on protecting freedom of religion or belief that promote, enable and/or condone violence and discrimination against individuals based on sexual orientation or gender identity? If so, please give examples, with commentary as needed to explain context, scope, and application.

State-condoned homophobia is perhaps most visible in the established church, education and the charity sector.

State-sanctioned homophobia of the established church

In 1998, the decennial meeting of the global Anglican Church, known as the Lambeth Conference, declared that gay sex is a sin and same-sex marriage is incompatible with scripture⁵. The validity of this declaration was upheld last year by Justin Welby, the archbishop of Canterbury and leader of the global Anglican church⁶.

While the archbishop has stated he will remain silent on the issue while in post⁷, some Anglican bishops have spoken out against this state-sanctioned homophobia⁸. Kelvin Holdsworth, the provost of St Mary's Cathedral in Glasgow, has called for the church to pay reparations for the "terrible and cruel" discrimination it inflicted on generations of LGBT people. He claimed the harms of the church's dogma on homosexuality were manifold:

*"I can easily think of people whose relationships have been spoilt, who have lost their homes and living and who have suffered mental health breakdowns — and that is to say nothing of those whose personal faith in all that is holy has been ruined."*⁹

All 26 Anglican bishops in the House of Lords used their *ex officio* positions to vote against legislation permitting same-sex marriage in 2013¹⁰.

In August 2022, the National Secular Society wrote to Prince Charles, as he then was, and Prince William asking them, as future heads of state and church, what message they had for their future LGBT subjects given the church's position on homosexuality¹¹. No reply was received.

The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse heard evidence from Anglican bishop Martin Warner, who said the church's stance on homosexuality had created a "culture of fear" amongst

⁵ <https://www.anglicancommunion.org/resources/document-library/lambeth-conference/1998/section-i-called-to-full-humanity/section-i10-human-sexuality>

⁶ <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/aug/02/justin-welby-affirms-validity-of-1998-declaration-that-gay-sex-is-a-sin>

⁷ <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/archbishop-of-canterbury-justin-welby-chooses-silence-on-gay-marriage-st9tlk37s>

⁸ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-oxfordshire-63502725>

⁹ <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/senior-anglican-urges-church-to-consider-payouts-for-cruel-treatment-of-gay-people-v5h2mnf9c>

¹⁰ <https://www.secularism.org.uk/opinion/2020/01/the-church-of-englands-position-on-sex-is-yet-another-reason-for-disestablishment>

¹¹ <https://www.secularism.org.uk/news/2022/08/nss-probes-future-monarchs-over-gay-marriage-stance>

clergy with regards to open discussion of sexuality. This fear “may have prevented those in authority from challenging sexual abusers”¹².

The Inquiry also found that members of the Church conflated homosexuality with “a tendency to abuse children”. In some cases of same-sex clerical abuse, concerns over homosexual practice were given primacy over the fact that sexual abuse had taken place¹³.

Recommendation: If the Church of England maintains its homophobic doctrine, the UK government should take the necessary steps towards disestablishment. It is unacceptable for any institution acting as part of the state to uphold homophobic values.

LGBT discrimination in schools

Government guidance on relationships and sex education (RSE) indicates schools must teach about LGBT relationships, in order to comply with the Equality Act 2010¹⁴.

However, the same guidance states faith schools, including those which are state funded, “may teach the distinctive faith perspective on relationships”.

Because most major religions teach that same-sex relationships are wrong, this guidance gives faith schools the green light to inculcate homophobic values. A 2018 National Secular Society report has found many faith schools, especially Catholic schools, teach that homosexual acts are wrong and that homosexuality itself is “disordered”¹⁵.

There was even a case last year of Catholic schools, at the instruction of their governing diocese, disinviting a gay author to give a book talk to their pupils. The diocese was criticised by the school inspectorate Ofsted for its actions¹⁶.

There have also been conflicts between religion and LGBT equality in state schools without a religious designation. The RSE guidance says: “In all schools, when teaching [RSE], the religious background of all pupils must be taken into account when planning teaching”¹⁷.

Some religious fundamentalists have used this to attack schools which teach about LGBT issues. In 2019, Parkfield Community School in Birmingham suspended lessons on LGBT rights following criticism and protests from predominantly Muslim parents who were opposed to their children being taught about same-sex couples¹⁸. The implementation of the school’s ‘No Outsiders’ programme led to mass withdrawal of children from the school¹⁹ and the assistant head teacher,

¹² <https://www.iicsa.org.uk/reports-recommendations/publications/investigation/anglican-chichester-peter-ball/case-study-1-diocese-chichester/b11-culture-church>

¹³ <https://www.iicsa.org.uk/reports-recommendations/publications/investigation/anglican-chichester-peter-ball/case-study-1-diocese-chichester/b11-culture-church>

¹⁴

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1090195/Relationships_Education_RSE_and_Health_Education.pdf

¹⁵ <https://www.secularism.org.uk/uploads/unsafe-sex-report-april-2018.pdf>

¹⁶ <https://inews.co.uk/news/catholic-state-school-john-fisher-southwark-diocese-governors-cancel-visit-gay-author-simon-james-green-1505735>

¹⁷

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1090195/Relationships_Education_RSE_and_Health_Education.pdf

¹⁸ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-birmingham-47452904>

¹⁹ <https://no-outsiders.com/about-us>

Andrew Moffat, was subjected to threatening e-mails²⁰. Five other schools subsequently suspended the programme.

Protestors claimed the lessons focussed disproportionately on LGBT issues and were not age-appropriate. A subsequent Ofsted inspection refuted this assertion and went on to say the school promoted “tolerance, acceptance and mutual respect” and described it as a “cohesive community”²¹. It added a “very small, but vocal, minority of parents” opposed the lessons. Ofsted upheld the school’s ‘outstanding rating’.

And in 2022, LGBT Muslim advocate Khakan Qureshi received online death threats which forced him to consider moving house after saying it is possible to be both gay and Muslim during a talk at Wood Green Academy in Birmingham²².

Anti-LGBT discrimination is a recurrent problem in independent faith schools. Many, if not most, strictly-orthodox Jewish schools refuse to teach about LGBT issues because of religious views about same-sex relationships. Although they consistently fail school inspections as a result²³, they are permitted to continue operating regardless.

Homophobia has also been an issue at some Islamic independent faith schools. In 2021, an independent Islamic school in Dewsbury failed its Ofsted inspection after a book calling for gay people to be killed was found in its library²⁴. In 2022, Ofsted banned a former faith school proprietor from managing schools after he published hateful sermons about gay people²⁵.

Recommendation: The government must ensure schools are empowered to teach LGBT-inclusive RSE without intimidation from religious fundamentalists. The role of state-funded faith schools in promoting anti-LGBT+ attitudes should be examined. The UK government must ensure that independent faith schools are fulfilling their legal requirements regarding the teaching of LGBT issues.

Religious charities, homophobia and conversion therapy

“The advancement of religion” is a recognised charitable purpose in all UK charity laws. This has the effect of allowing religious organisations which exist solely to promote religion to register as charities, and receive significant tax benefits, without serving a tangible, recognisable public benefit.

Because so many religious organisations are opposed to same-sex relationships, this means religious charities are allowed to promote homophobic religious dogma. Because charities receive tax breaks, this can be considered a form of state-sanctioning of homophobia. Please see the Annex for some of the worst examples the NSS has found.

When the NSS complained about a charity which posted highly homophobic memes on Facebook to the Scottish charity regulator OSCR last year, OSCR refused to act because it concluded the views expressed by the charity “are in accordance with their religious beliefs”²⁶.

Disturbingly, some religious charities promote or condone so-called ‘gay conversion therapy’, which the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy condemned in 2017 as “unethical”,

²⁰ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-birmingham-47158357>

²¹ <https://files.api.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50062382>

²² <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2022/12/31/heckling-gay-muslim-speaker-school-prompts-government-send-investigators>

²³ <https://www.secularism.org.uk/news/tags/Independent+schools>

²⁴ <https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50166642>

²⁵ <https://www.secularism.org.uk/news/2022/06/islamic-school-leader-banned-for-misogynistic-and-homophobic-sermons>

²⁶ <https://www.secularism.org.uk/news/2022/06/regulator-fails-to-act-on-religious-charitys-homophobic-anti-vax-memes>

“potentially harmful” and “not supported by evidence”²⁷. One such charity is the ‘Core Issues Trust’ in Northern Ireland (See Annex)²⁸.

Despite concerns raised by the NSS, Northern Ireland’s charity regulator has failed to take action, noting the Core Issues Trust presents its therapy as “beneficial” and “contests the view that this practice is inherently harmful”²⁹.

Recommendation: The government must work to end the practice of conversion therapy in the United Kingdom. Organisations that promote conversion therapy and other forms of homophobia must not be entitled to charitable status.

#6 Has there been any legal challenge to these policies/provisions under any domestic, regional, or international human rights provisions? If so, state the outcome and rationale of the case. If not, provide your opinions as to why such a challenge has not yet been brought.

Bans on conversion therapy are being considered in the UK. But Westminster’s proposals do not consider charities which promote the homophobia fuelling conversion therapy.

While there is increasing public opposition to the Church of England’s stance on homosexuality, no legal challenges have yet been raised.

There have been no legal challenges raised against the promotion of homophobic religious doctrines in schools.

The lack of legal challenges in these areas may reflect the difficulties of raising legal challenges in general, especially against established mechanisms of the state in which religion is privileged.

#7 Are there any examples of State restrictions based on preventing violence and/or discrimination against LGBT+ persons that prohibit or limit practices undertaken in the name of the religion or spirituality, such as public accommodation non-discrimination protections? If so, have they been legally challenged on the basis of freedom of religion or belief? If yes, explain the outcome and rationale of the case(s).

In Britain, hate crime laws make crimes motivated by the perceived sexual orientation or gender reassignment status of the victim aggravated offences. Moreover, the Equality Act 2010 provides significant protection against discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender reassignment.

However, the Act includes extensive religious exceptions which do permit some forms of discrimination against LGBT people based on religion.

Some of these may be reasonable. For example, without these exemptions, every religious organisation would be compelled to perform same-sex marriages. Many people, including those supportive of LGBT equality, would consider this an intolerable interference of the law within religious doctrine.

²⁷ <https://www.bacp.co.uk/events-and-resources/ethics-and-standards/mou>

²⁸ <https://www.charitycommissionni.org.uk/charity-details/?regId=105095&subId=0>

²⁹ <https://www.secularism.org.uk/news/2021/03/regulator-decides-not-to-act-against-conversion-therapy-charity>

But other exemptions are more questionable. For example, sections of the Act protecting school pupils from harassment do not apply to the protected characteristics of sexual orientation or gender reassignment. This may enable faith schools to teach homophobic religious values (see #5 above).

There have been a number of high-profile legal cases involving clashes between religion and sexual orientation in the UK. Increasingly, courts rule in favour of the right of LGBT people to be treated equally. A recent example was in 2021, when the Court of Appeal upheld a ruling that inspectors were correct to penalise a Christian adoption and fostering agency for failing to comply with the Equality Act by barring gay people from using their services³⁰.

But there are other cases where the courts have ruled against LGBT people and in favour of religious organisations. In 2015, a gay vicar who claimed that his bishop had discriminated against him by denying him a post as a hospital chaplain lost his claim at an employment tribunal³¹.

Recommendation: The government should review exceptions in the Equality Act which result in unequal treatment of LGBT+ people.

#8 What role (if any) has the concept of conscientious objection played in limiting the full enjoyment of the right to freedom from violence and discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity?

AND

#9 Has the scope and application of conscientious objection been sufficiently defined, limited, and/or regulated so as to strike a fair balance between manifestation of one's freedom of religion or belief, and freedom from violence and discrimination based on SOGI? Where the doctrine is invoked to permit the withholding of goods or services to members of the LGBT+ community (such as in the context of sexual and reproductive healthcare, provision of marriage licences, access to consumer goods, etc.), do State laws provide alternative access to goods or services?

In general, UK laws strike a reasonable balance between the right of LGBT+ to live without discrimination and violence, and the freedom for members of religious communities to express conservative views about same-sex relationships. However, there are still serious problems which are limiting the right of LGBT+ people to enjoy full equality with other UK citizens, as described above.

Additionally, there are concerns that 'genuine occupational requirement' exemptions from the Equality Act 2010 may pose unnecessary barriers to LGBT people in employment. Organisations are permitted to discriminate on the basis of religion or belief when hiring people for certain positions where there is a requirement for that person to be a particular religion or belief. While this is reasonable in principle, we believe these exemptions are frequently over-exploited, as we have found many examples of job adverts requiring people to be Christian where it was unclear why this

³⁰ <https://www.secularism.org.uk/news/2021/09/nss-welcomes-ruling-on-christian-foster-agency-case>

³¹ <https://www.secularism.org.uk/news/2015/11/churchs-right-to-veto-hospital-chaplaincy-upheld>

was necessary to do the job. More information can be found in our 2020 report *Faith-shaped holes: How religious privilege is undermining equality law*³².

This may put LGBT people at an additional disadvantage, as many Christian organisations maintain that a ‘real’ Christian cannot be LGBT.

Marriage laws in England and Wales also put LGBT+ people at a disadvantage. While civil marriages and civil partnerships are always options for same-sex couples, the number of venues which can hold civil ceremonies (approximately 7,500³³) is vastly outnumbered by those which can hold religious weddings (39,773³⁴ – over 80% of all wedding venues) – and most of these (about 98%) refuse to conduct same-sex marriages. This means only about 18% of marriage venues in England and Wales can accommodate same-sex marriages. Same-sex couples therefore have considerably fewer options.

This disparity between the number of civil ceremony venues and places of worship registered for marriage is probably in part due to the considerably simpler and cheaper process for places of worship to register. We are working with the Law Commission to reform marriage laws to make them fairer for all, including same sex couples³⁵.

#10 Where State legislation or policy requires the reasonable accommodation of religious beliefs, practices, and/or institutions, are there instances where such laws or policies limit freedom from violence and discrimination against LGBT+ and gender-diverse persons? These may include but are not limited to exemptions from non-discrimination legislation, and/or accommodations within the workplace, educational institutions, healthcare-settings, the justice system, etc. Are there reports of violence, spiritual abuse, and/or other forms of discrimination against LGBT+ and gender-diverse persons because of these practices?

Please see our examples in #5 regarding schools and charities.

³² <https://www.secularism.org.uk/defend-equality-laws/faith-shaped-holes-how-religious.html>

³³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/civil-marriages-and-partnerships-approved-premises-list>

³⁴ <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2020-10/2019StatisticsForMission.pdf>, <https://www.churchinwales.org.uk/structure/places/churches/>, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/places-of-worship-registered-for-marriage>

³⁵ More information on this issue can be found here: <https://www.secularism.org.uk/opinion/2018/06/just-how-equal-is-marriage-now>

Appendix – examples of charities which have promoted or signposted homophobia

Charity name: **Al-Mawrid UK**

Charity number: SC045039

Year registered: 2014

Summary: This charity's homepage links to the website of Al-Mawrid Global as an affiliate³⁶. Al-Mawrid Global's website says: "Lesbianism is obviously one of the practices whose abomination is ingrained in us. Only women whose nature have become perverted indulge in it. The fact that this is against universal moral principles is evident from the fact that barring a very very small minority, a vast majority regard it to be abominable thereby showing that the collective conscience of mankind has always considered it to be immoral."³⁷

Charity name: **Bolton Central Islamic Society**

Charity number: 1041569

Year registered: 1994

Summary: In 2019 this charity's website was found to link to external sites that say gay people should be executed.³⁸

Charity name: **Christadelphian Advancement Trust**

Charity number: 1080393

Year registered: 2000

Summary: In 2019, NSS reported this charity to the Charity Commission for content on its website equating homosexuality with bestiality, disease, masochism and Nazism: "The life of sexual impurity is an "ever increasing" downwards path; the endless quest for new relationships and sexual novelty doesn't need to be described. It is significant that having "left the natural use of the woman"(Rom. 1:27), male homosexuals descend on an "ever increasing" path of perversion; they rarely remain where they are, in moral terms. At least two independent surveys of gay men found that around 20% admitted having sex with animals, compared to 3% of heterosexual man (2). The majority of homosexuals have literally thousands of encounters over a lifetime (hence the rapid spread of disease between them), with very few developing stable relationships (3). There is also well documented connection between homosexuality and masochism. The top six male serial killers in the US were all gay; as were many Nazi concentration camp operators."³⁹

Charity name: **Christadelphian Bible Mission**

Charity number: 1020558

Year registered: 1993

Summary: The NSS found this charity's website equated gay people with rapists and child abusers: "From lack of discipline has come corruption, immorality, violence, drug and alcohol abuse, hijacking, kidnapping, theft, child abuse, homosexuality, rape and murder."⁴⁰

Charity name: **The Christadelphian Sunday School Union**

Charity number: 1097921

Year registered: 2003

Summary: This charity is a Sunday school for children. The contents of their website reflect what they teach children. Their website says: "Homosexual practices are clearly condemned (Leviticus 18:22; 20:13; Romans 1:27; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10). Discuss the challenges, and the importance, of

³⁶ <https://www.almawriduk.org/>

³⁷ <https://www.al-mawrid.org/Question/60a204a3923f0b12074d842e/lesbianism>

³⁸ <https://www.secularism.org.uk/news/2019/04/nss-refers-islamic-charities-promoting-extremism-to-regulator>

³⁹ <https://www.secularism.org.uk/news/2019/11/christadelphian-charities-condoning-violence-and-promoting-misogyny>

⁴⁰ <https://www.secularism.org.uk/news/2019/11/christadelphian-charities-condoning-violence-and-promoting-misogyny>

staying loyal to Bible teaching when many people view homosexual practices as normal, and homosexual relationships as of equal merit as heterosexual ones.”⁴¹

Charity name: Church of God in Romford

Charity number: 1188545

Year registered: 2020

Summary: This is the most recently-registered branch of an evangelical church. Its website says those who practice “homosexual activity” can “have no part in God's Kingdom” and that it is the duty of church members to support those who come out as gay in “what will have to be for them a celibate lifestyle, at least as far as relationships with the same sex are concerned”. In discussing AIDS, it contrasts those who have been infected “quite innocently (e.g. when receiving health-care)” with those who are infected as a “consequence” of “non-biblical sexual practices”.⁴²

Charity name: Core Issues Trust

Charity number: 105095 (Charity Commission for Northern Ireland)

Year registered: 2016

Summary: Core Issues Trust (CIT) advocates what it calls “change orientated therapies” for people “who want to move away from homosexual feelings, behaviours and attractions”. The trust says the therapies it promotes “support client goals to prioritise conservative religious values over their same-sex attractions in identity development”. Under its objects of association, it encourages “lifestyle choices consistent with Christian living” and upholds the view that sexual relationships outside heterosexual marriage are “inconsistent with” the Bible. Although CIT rejects the term 'conversion therapy' this activity falls under the definition of ‘conversion therapy’ as set out by the UK Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP).

In 2020 the NSS wrote to the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland to urge it to review CIT’s status as a registered charity. The Charity Commission responded by saying it would not take any action, as it is “not the role of the commission to adopt a position on the charity's conduct in this matter”. It noted that the Core Issues Trust presents its therapy as “beneficial” and “contests the view that this practice is inherently harmful”. It added: “We note that the practice of conversion therapy / change orientated therapy is not among the purposes of the charity.”

The response appeared to suggest it was not the commission's role to take a position on such therapy while it is legal.⁴³

Charity name: East Kilbride Christadelphian Ecclesia

Charity number: SC010420 (OSCR)

Year registered: 1977

Summary: In 2021 and 2022 this charity promoted several homophobic memes on its Facebook page. One suggested Bible stories about God destroying gay people should be taught as "LGBT history" and another implied gay people are 'wolves in sheep's clothing'.

OSCR launched an investigation into the charity after the NSS made a referral in 2022. OSCR concluded that the views expressed by the charity "are in accordance with their religious beliefs" and therefore action cannot be taken. The charity has continued to make homophobic Facebook posts following OSCR's decision – shortly afterwards, it posted a picture of a Pride parade with the caption: "Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire"⁴⁴.

Charity name: The Faith Movement

Charity number: 1188137

⁴¹ <https://www.secularism.org.uk/news/2019/11/christadelphian-charities-condoning-violence-and-promoting-misogyny>

⁴² <https://churchesofgod.info/article-homosexuality-an-alternative-lifestyle/>

⁴³ <https://www.secularism.org.uk/news/2021/03/regulator-decides-not-to-act-against-conversion-therapy-charity>

⁴⁴ <https://www.secularism.org.uk/news/2022/06/regulator-fails-to-act-on-religious-charitys-homophobic-anti-vax-memes>

Year registered: 2020

Income: This charity has been recently registered - it does not need to update its information until 10 months after its first financial period ends.

Summary: An editorial on the charity's website says that the "correct response" to any young person who comes out as gay is to say "No, you are not 'gay', what you are is a human being created by God". It says homosexual "temptations" result from "a confusion of the affective and the erotic faculties" that "may be deeply rooted in neurosis". According to the writer, such urges "must be faced with humility and overcome with the tried and tested formula of prayer, self mastery through grace and, most crucially, with the help of chaste and supportive friendship".⁴⁵

Another blog on the website compared the arguments of those who support equal civil rights for LGBT+ people with "those of slaveholders and those involved in the slave trade". It said "reparative therapy" (another term for the harmful practice of 'gay conversion therapy') is an "option" for gay people, and homosexuality "seems to result from fragmentations within the child/father/mother relationship". This content has since been removed from the website.

Charity name: **Free Presbyterian Church Of Scotland**

Charity number: SC003545 (OSCR)

Year registered: 1944

Summary: The Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland's website refers to same-sex relationships as "heinous", "vile", "great evil", an "abominable practice" and "a lifestyle of disease and death". It website quotes the Bible's assertion that those who wear clothes of the opposite sex are "abomination unto the Lord thy God", and says: "What fearful uncleanness ensues from 'cross-dressing' and other deliberate and extreme 'trans-gender' sins against this requirement."⁴⁶

Charity name: **Ghamidi Centre of Islamic Communication**

Charity number: 1192764

Year registered: 2020

Summary: In 2021, soon after the charity was registered, the NSS found a lecture published on the Ghamidi Centre's website entitled "Is there room for gays and lesbian (sic) in Islam?". During the lecture Islamic scholar Khalid Zaheer said homosexuality "cannot be allowed" because "there are people who lose their senses and are inclined to killing others" and that "we're not going to allow killing because of the reason that there is somebody who has a problem in his mind or is mentally ill". He said homosexuality "needs to be stopped, it needs to be curbed" and if there are "people who are suffering from diseases which are causing them to be inclined to do things which are illegitimate, we need to cure such patients".⁴⁷

Charity name: **IslamBradford**

Charity number: 1154340

Year registered: 2013

Summary: This charity's website was found in 2019 to host a link to a website that said men who have sex with other men are "to be executed" and calls homosexuality "a great and abhorrent evil". It said punishments for homosexuals include being "burned with fire", "thrown down from a high place" and "stoned to death".⁴⁸

Charity name: **Islamic Network**

Charity number: 1101603

Year registered: 2004

Summary: Despite an intervention by the Charity Commission after they posted material legitimising

⁴⁵ <https://www.faith.org.uk/article/november-december-2003-the-debate-about-homosexuality>

⁴⁶ <https://www.secularism.org.uk/opinion/2020/05/scotland-says-it-wants-to-clamp-down-on-hate-but-its-charity-law-helps-to-promote-it>

⁴⁷ <https://www.secularism.org.uk/news/2021/01/new-islamic-charitys-website-says-same-sex-attraction-is-a-disease>

⁴⁸ <https://www.secularism.org.uk/news/2019/04/nss-refers-islamic-charities-promoting-extremism-to-regulator>

the murder of homosexuals⁴⁹, the charity continues to provide a platform for extremists according to the Henry Jackson Society.⁵⁰

Charity name: Journey UK

Charity number: 1056150

Year registered: 1996

Summary: Journey UK offer courses that draw on “insights of psychology and child development” in “areas of struggle in relationships and sexual addictions.” They follow “an orthodox Christian understanding of sexuality, including God’s plan for sexual relations between a man and a woman within marriage”.⁵¹

Charity name: Living Out

Charity number: 1165572

Year registered: 2016

Summary: An article on Living Out’s website suggests the organisation regards same-sex relationships and desiring sexual encounters with someone of the same sex, as sinful⁵². It therefore seeks to help “Christian brothers and sisters who experience same-sex attraction stay faithful to biblical teaching on sexual ethics”⁵³. In other words, the organisation exists to encourage gay people to practice abstinence.

In 2015, the Charity Commission rejected an application from Living Out to the charity register, on the basis that it was not serving a public benefit and because it “was not evidenced that the organisation sought to promote the wider Christian religion rather than the specific doctrines with regard to homosexuality.”⁵⁴

Living Out sought a review, and in 2016 the Charity Commission reversed its decision and accepted Living Out on to the register⁵⁵. Critics of this decision included Conservative MP Michael Freer who expressed surprise that “the Charity Commission could remotely believe this to be of public benefit”.⁵⁶

But the commission said it was now satisfied that Living Out “was a more broadly-focused organisation, interested in promoting acceptance, love, compassion and a welcoming place in the Christian Church for same-sex attracted individuals who wish to stay true to their Christian faith”.⁵⁷

Charity name: Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries International

Charity number: 1100416

Year registered: 2003

Summary: Mountain of Fire and Miracles (MFM)’s founder Daniel Olukoya preaches that gay people are possessed by “the spirit of the dog” and believes that prayer can save those “in the bondage of homosexuality”.⁵⁸ An undercover investigation in the Liverpool Echo in 2018 revealed that an MFM church was putting these teachings into action through an extreme form of ‘gay conversion therapy’ involving starvation.⁵⁹

⁴⁹ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/446278/islamic_network.pdf

⁵⁰ <http://henryjacksonsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/HJS-Islamist-Charity-Report.pdf>

⁵¹ <https://www.journey-uk.org/faqs/>

⁵² <https://www.livingout.org/resources/articles/29/the-christian-debate-over-sexual-identity-orientation-and-labelling>

⁵³ <https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/charity-search/-/charity-details/5058286/charity-overview>

⁵⁴ <https://www.civilsociety.co.uk/news/charity-commission-registers-organisation-that-encourages-gay-christians-to-remain-celibate.html>

⁵⁵ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/501454/Living_Out_full_decision.pdf

⁵⁶ <https://www.thirdsector.co.uk/mike-freer-mp-criticises-decision-register-living-charity/governance/article/1384237>

⁵⁷ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/501454/Living_Out_full_decision.pdf

⁵⁸ <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/amazon-supports-mountain-of-fire-and-miracles-ministries-church-that-backs-gay-conversion-snczllxt0>

⁵⁹ <https://www.liverpooecho.co.uk/news/liverpool-news/echo-goes-undercover-gay-cure-13468107>

Charity name: **The Preston Muslim Cultural Centre**

Charity number: 518584

Year registered: 1987

Summary: In 2019, the NSS found this charity's website had a downloadable book that said homosexuals are "to be killed by the sword".⁶⁰

Charity name: **The Slough Islamic Trust**

Charity number: 254759

Year registered: 1968

Summary: The NSS found links on the charity's website to content that encouraged hatred of gay people, including statements such as "Homosexuality becoming wide-spread among people is the harbinger of sociological problems and asocial earthquake" and "Today, with dark propaganda spread through television, movies and the Internet, homosexuality is knocking on the door of Muslims around the world".⁶¹

Charity name: **True Freedom Trust**

Charity number: 1159015

Year registered: 2014

Summary: This charity states that its mission is to "promote a biblical pattern for gender and sexual relationships."⁶² It offers a referral service "for those who struggle with same-sex temptations and gender confusion"⁶³ to counsellors "who are sympathetic to our Basis"⁶⁴. It takes the view that same-sex relationships are "sexual immorality"⁶⁵.

Charity name: **World Mission Agency - Winners Chapel International**

Charity number: 1134421

Year registered: 2010

Summary: In November 2018, undercover work by ITV News obtained video evidence of a pastor at the Dartford branch of Winners Chapel offering "complete mind reorientation" for gay people. The pastor stated that messages about gay acceptance in society were "carefully scripted" by Satan, and compared it with Nazi propaganda. The process was described by the reporter as follows:

"I went through hours of counselling and prayer sessions, all directed at ridding me of my homosexuality. Sometimes the prayers in themselves seemed harmless, such as for God to direct me and guide me. I felt it changed from something that could have been comforting to something sinister and potentially traumatising...There was little sensitivity about how this could have been incredibly damaging to me".⁶⁶

Charity name: **York Christadelphian Ecclesia**

Charity number: 1185342

Year registered: 2019

Summary: This charity is the most recently-registered of six different charities that list ThisIsYourBible.com as their official website on the Charity Commission's register. The others are: Amersham Christadelphian Ecclesia (1167789), Bradford Christadelphians (1176497), Erith Christadelphian Ecclesia Charitable Incorporated Organisation (1170080), Morpeth Christadelphian Ecclesia (1075016), and Teignmouth Christadelphian Ecclesia (1169123).

⁶⁰ <https://www.secularism.org.uk/news/2019/04/nss-refers-islamic-charities-promoting-extremism-to-regulator>

⁶¹ <https://www.secularism.org.uk/news/2019/06/islamic-charities-push-death-for-apostates-and-female-subjugation>

⁶² <https://truefreedomtrust.co.uk/beliefs>

⁶³ <https://truefreedomtrust.co.uk/about-us>

⁶⁴ <https://secure.truefreedomtrust.co.uk/content/what-does-ftthink-reparative-therapy>

⁶⁵ <https://truefreedomtrust.co.uk/what-does-bible-teach-about-same-sex-practice>

⁶⁶ <https://www.itv.com/news/2018-11-12/an-itv-news-undercover-investigation-exposes-the-uk-church-that-claims-you-dont-have-to-be-gay>

In 2019, the NSS referred all six of these charities to the Charity Commission after finding the following statement on its website:

“As part of the rebellion of our society against God’s rules, homosexuality (sex between members of the same sex) has been declared ‘normal’, and now open same-sex relationships have become common, and even supported by law. Homosexuality is clearly condemned in the Bible. The Law of Moses said, ‘If a man lies with a male as he lies with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination. They shall surely be put to death’ (Leviticus 20 v13).”⁶⁷

⁶⁷ <https://www.secularism.org.uk/news/2019/11/christadelphian-charities-condoning-violence-and-promoting-misogyny>