

Response to Amnesty International Report

Response from Core Issues Trust and the International Foundation for Therapeutic and Counselling Choice (IFTCC)

We reject Amnesty International's UK's characterisation of Core Issues Trust and the IFTCC as "anti-rights" organisations. The label is itself ideological because it assumes that disagreement with one contested understanding of sexuality, gender and therapeutic practice is equivalent to opposition to human rights.

Our work is founded on a very different principle: that every individual possesses inherent dignity and should be free to seek lawful, ethical, professionally accountable pastoral or therapeutic support consistent with their own beliefs, values, faith and life goals. That is not an attack on human rights. It is an affirmation of personal autonomy, freedom of conscience and freedom of choice.

[Amnesty's report](#) categorises Core Issues Trust and the IFTCC as "conversion practices" organisations without engaging with the distinction between coercive practices, which we unequivocally reject, and voluntary care freely sought by competent adults. Throughout this debate, we have consistently maintained that abuse, coercion and degrading treatment should remain prohibited. The real question is whether people should also lose the freedom to seek lawful support that reflects their own convictions rather than those preferred by the state or by professional bodies.

Today's publication of the [IFTCC's statement](#) on the proposed conversion practices legislation demonstrates precisely why Amnesty's characterisation is misplaced. The statement does not argue for coercive practices or for immunity from scrutiny. On the contrary, it unequivocally rejects abuse, coercion and degrading treatment, while asking whether a democratic society should criminalise or marginalise professionally accountable therapeutic and pastoral approaches simply because they differ from one contested professional philosophy.

That is the issue Amnesty's report does not address. Instead, it assumes that one therapeutic philosophy should become the legal standard by which all other professional and pastoral approaches are judged.

The report goes further by calling for increased scrutiny of organisations such as the IFTCC and recommending legislation that would prevent voluntary support from being defended by reference to consent or personal choice. That recommendation is profoundly significant. It suggests that the informed choices of competent adults should be overridden whenever those choices depart from one approved understanding of sexuality or gender.

A genuinely rights-based society should protect freedom in both directions. It should protect those who seek identity-affirming care, and it should equally protect those who voluntarily seek other lawful forms of therapeutic or pastoral support. Human rights should safeguard individual conscience and choice, not privilege one contested ideology while excluding all others.

For more than three years the IFTCC has been developing international standards of education, ethics, safeguarding, supervision and professional accountability precisely because we believe this work should be characterised by the highest ethical standards. We remain committed to rejecting coercion, promoting informed consent, and engaging respectfully with those who disagree with us.

Amnesty may disagree with our conclusions, but disagreement should not become grounds for delegitimising organisations committed to ethical practice, informed consent, professional accountability and freedom of conscience. In a democratic society, genuine human rights protect not only the freedom to affirm a particular identity, but also the freedom of competent adults to seek lawful pastoral or therapeutic support consistent with their own beliefs, values and life goals. That is the principle Core Issues Trust and the IFTCC will continue to defend.

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