

Leeds LGBT+ Minds stands against the recent statements made by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) on conversion therapy and the Gender Recognition Act. The recommendations they have made exclude trans people from proposed improvements to human rights laws and therefore do not defend equal rights across all LGBTQIA+ communities. As a respected national organisation, excluding trans people's basic human rights is unacceptable and risks promoting the idea that some people's human rights are less important than others.

On its website, the EHRC states that its purpose is "promoting and upholding equality and human rights ideals and laws across England, Scotland and Wales". As a powerful national body, which has influence over government decisions, the EHRC has a responsibility to protect *all* members of society. However, the recent statements fail to uphold this.

The EHRC released two statements relating to LGBTQIA+ rights in January 2022. In the first, it claims that more consideration is needed before making changes to the Gender Recognition Act – a delay which would mean that trans people continue to face difficulties in having their identities legally recognised. In the second, it recommends that a ban on conversion therapy should initially focus only on practices that attempt to change a person's sexual orientation, rather than gender identity. This means that trans people would not be legally protected from conversion therapy, a practice which has been shown to be harmful (see <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1186/s13643-020-01563-8> for multiple articles on this topic).

Leeds LGBT+ minds have decided to write a response to the statements made by the EHRC as we feel that they may result in a delay in legislation to improve the wellbeing of LGBTQIA+ communities. If the recommendations of the EHRC are followed, trans people will be at risk of abusive practices and psychological harm through conversion therapy. Furthermore, they have the potential to be actively damaging to trans individuals, putting them at risk of "loneliness, substance use, depression, anxiety, suicidal ideation, and suicide attempts" (<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0706743720902629#bibr1-0706743720902629>). Much of the language used in both statements echoes rhetoric from transphobic activists. We are concerned about the implications of these messages coming from such an influential organisation and the impact that this could have on wider society, at a time when trans people are already at a higher risk of experiencing violence.

The statements made by the EHRC have been condemned by both Stonewall and Gendered Intelligence. Their stance on the laws around conversion therapy also go against the views of the NHS Confederation, British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy, the UK Council for Psychotherapy, and the British Psychological Society.

EHRC statements:

[consultation-response-banning-conversion-therapy-26-january-2022.docx \(live.com\)](#)

[letter-to-cabinet-office-our-position-gender-recognition-act-2004-reform-january-2022.docx \(live.com\)](#)