# The Long Road to Banning Conversion Therapy: UK's Political Divide on LGBTQ+ Rights



In 2018, the UK's Conservative Party pledged to ban conversion therapy, a practice aimed at changing an individual's sexual orientation or gender identity, which is widely regarded as pseudoscientific and harmful. Despite initial promises, legislative efforts to impose the ban have been mired in delays and debates, particularly over whether to include practices related to transgender individuals.

As of May 2023, the ban has not been enacted, with Prime Minister Rishi Sunak indicating further delays due to the election.

In contrast, the Labour Party has committed in its manifesto to advancing a comprehensive ban on conversion therapy, explicitly including practices involving transgender individuals. Additionally, Labour plans to classify hate crimes against LGBTQ+ and disabled individuals as aggravated offenses.

On gender recognition, Labour proposes to reform existing laws deemed "intrusive and outdated" to provide trans people with legal acknowledgment of their gender. However, this proposal retains the requirement for a medical diagnosis of gender dysphoria. Trans individuals already have the ability to change their names and gender markers on certain identification documents, though the UK does not legally recognize non-binary identities.

Since opening a consultation in 2018, the topic of gender recognition law reform has been a focal point in the broader debate over trans rights within the UK.