

Press Release

For Immediate Release

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PUBLIC STANDARDS AUTHORITY IMPOSED 'POLITICAL IDEOLOGY' AND SHOWED BLATANT DISCRIMINATION BY REJECTING INTERNATIONAL THERAPY BODY

AN International group of therapists helping people with unwanted same-sex attraction has accused the Public Standards Authority (PSA) of blatant discrimination, imposing 'political ideology', and imposing 'Conversion Therapy' definitions - even before Parliament has debated a 'draft Conversion Therapy Bill'.

Last month, the PSA turned down an application for accreditation by The International Foundation for Therapeutic and Counselling Choice (IFTCC), claiming it failed the 'public Interest test' of Standard 1 for Accredited Registers. However, the IFTCC, which has appealed, claims the PSA changed its normal application processes in that it has:

- **refused to accept evidence** of clients/patients, testifying to professional help by IFTCC therapists – evidence they allow for all other applicants in the PSA's 'Share My Experience' opportunity'
- behaved **prejudicially and perpetuates a political ideology** that may not be challenged by supportive scientific/academic evidence under any circumstances. The PSA uncritically promotes LGBT-identity ideology, and has no regard for people who are former, or non-LGBT-identified;
- **supported government-mandated sexuality**, wherein individuals who experience unwanted same-sex attractions, or gender incongruence, may not engage with practices that may assist, promote, manage, achieve, or facilitate *any level* or degree of change, and who potentially have no right to determine their own sexual identities or behaviours.

Dr Mike Davidson, Chairman of the IFTCC said: *"We applied for accreditation because our therapists want to give the professional assurance to clients, and potential clients, that the external accountability and oversight that accreditation demonstrates. There should be no need for private therapy in this field as the NHS should operate from an a-political and non-ideological base, but clients report that the NHS fails to provide appropriate care and support to patients with unwanted same sex attraction. They tell us that NHS GPs and counsellors only provide help if the person wants to live out those unwanted desires, nothing else.*

"The PSA point-blank refusal to scrutinise the scientific evidence we submitted, and their refusal to allow evidence from people helped by our therapists - when they allow such evidence in all other applications, and their responses to our detailed arguments clearly demonstrate that there is a 'government-mandated sexuality', which is being enforced by the PSA. That is harmful and unjust. It requires that no individual may be assisted to cease a LGBT identity, or practice, even if that is their stated wish. It further seeks to de-professionalise (and potentially criminalise) any professional clinician, or counsellor who might assist their person-centred goals.

"We have appealed their decision as we believe the PSA is failing to ensure that former-, and non-LGBT-identified persons have access to publicly professional care consistent with their own values and goals, on the same basis as LGBT-identified persons, and because we believe that limiting their access only to non-registered counsellors from IFTCC is discriminatory."

The IFTCC, based in London, was founded in 2005 and has associate therapists in over 20 countries. It supports and provides continual professional development for therapists who support people who say they experience unwanted relational or sexual behaviours, attitudes and patterns or, are confused with their gender or, wish to de-transition.

The PSA, in its rejection letter stated that much of what was submitted was not assessed by the applications panel because it believed it irrelevant and fundamentally that the IFTCC did not comply with their own position on 'Conversion Therapy', claiming that the IFTCC supports it.

However, Dr Davidson said: *“We fundamentally reject this. If they had read the supporting documents, or interviewed any of the statements of people we offered in evidence they would have seen that the IFTCC is fundamentally against therapist-imposed therapy goals, aversive and coercive counselling methods, and/or guarantees of therapy outcomes - wherever they may exist! Our therapists do NOT, in any way, attempt to change people, rather, through exploratory work, they help clients who at the start of therapy, and during it, state that they want to bring about change ‘in themselves’. Ours is therefore a classic ‘client-centered approach’.”*

Dr Davidson says that the IFTCC application is something of a ‘test-case’ as to the political neutrality of agencies set up as stand-alone professional bodies by the Government and yet, too often are subject to political interference. Whilst the PSA’s work is ‘overseen’ by Parliament, in effect this equates to an annual report presented to a sub-committee who approves their budget, while no deep scrutiny of its work or practices, including applications, exists. Further, publicly unelected, and unaccountable PSA Board members are in effect defining ‘conversion therapy’ before Parliament has even had a chance to consider the new Labour Government’s proposed ‘draft Conversion Therapy Ban’ Bill, mentioned in the Kings Speech.

Dr Davidson concluded: *“A Government agency should not be defining the law – that is a matter rightly for elected politicians after the promised ‘draft’ consultation promised. Further, it was clear that the application panel was not interested in the plethora of scientific evidence offered, which clearly showed, for example, that the way the NHS has been treating people with gender dysphoria is not reducing their underlying identity issues, that prescribed medicine levels, or the need for counselling sessions a year after chemical or surgical procedures to help a person transition do not lessen dysphoria. The government approved, and taxpayer funded treatment is not working. Yet even this evidence, although peer reviewed, they failed to consider as it went against their political ideology.”*

The PSA Appeals panel is due to meet on September 19, with a decision to be announced around 24 September. The IFTCC has appointed leading Human Rights Barrister Paul Diamond to represent them, and says they are prepared to take their PSA application issues to Judicial Review, if necessary, such are the public interest issues at stake.

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- For further information about the IFTCC, visit www.iftcc.org

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Editor’s Notes

A copy of the PSA’s letter saying the IFTCC Application failed Standard One (b) of the Standards for Accredited Registers, together with our detailed reply and supporting documents are available from media@iftcc.org or mike.davidson@iftcc.org

A copy of the initial application, together with supporting academic/scientific evidence related to the outcomes of those treated chemically/surgically to transition, is also available, as is a briefing zoom/interview with the IFTCC’s Chair of its Science and Research Council, Dr Laura Haynes.

Picture Note

A quality JPEG picture of Dr Mike Davidson is available from media@iftcc.org