

## **Murphy and Coveney meet to discuss new trading opportunities**

Economy Minister Conor Murphy today met with Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Employment Simon Coveney TD at InterTradeIreland's office in Newry.

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## **Statement by Health Minister Robin Swann on NI Children's Hospice**

I recognise and applaud the vital work of the NI Children's Hospice and all hospices in Northern Ireland.

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## **Long welcomes pilot scheme for filming in courts**

Justice Minister, Naomi Long has welcomed a pilot scheme to film the delivery of judgments in the Court of Appeal in Northern Ireland.

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## **Shahrar Ali case response**



Green Party

## 9 February 2024

The Chair of the Green Party executive, Jon Nott, said:

“We are pleased that the court has recognised that a democratic political party has the right to select those who speak for it on the basis that they can and will communicate and support party policy publicly.

“We welcome the findings in the judgment that members of political parties have ‘fundamental party rights’ which include the right to disagree, to advocate for and against policies and positions adopted or proposed in the party, and to organise for those who agree with them and against those who do not, and that the Equality Act is not intended to interfere with those rights.

“The party acknowledges that there were procedural shortfalls in how we deselected one of our spokespeople. We apologise for failing in this instance to live up to the standards that both we and the court expect.”

### NOTES TO EDITORS

You may wish to refer to this article written by lawyers in the case on the wider issues involved.

<https://bateswells.co.uk/updates/discrimination-belief-and-the-fundamental-party-rights-the-judgment-in-ali-v-green-party-of-england-and-wales/>

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## [It's time to ban conversion therapy for good](#)

Tomorrow, my bill to ban conversion therapy will be debated in the House of Lords.

It's too easy to think of these practices as a remnant from the past. Sadly, this is far from the reality. The Government's own research has shown that 7% of LGBT+ people had undergone or been offered conversion therapy.

This is an appalling statistic. Sexual orientation or gender identity is not a problem to be treated and 'cured'. It's who we are – and these practices have got to stop.

But time and again, the Conservative Government has broken their promise to deliver a conversion therapy ban. Five years on, we cannot afford to waste any more time.

We cannot leave the LGBT+ community unprotected against these harms for any longer.

That's why I have tabled a bill which will make it an offence for any person to practise, or offer to practise, conversion therapy.

My bill seeks to be as comprehensive as possible, to make sure that all LGBT+ people are protected and no loopholes can persist. And it will focus on the intended purpose of the practice – ensuring that genuine psychological or religious support without a predetermined goal isn't caught up in a ban.

Of course, this isn't the first time us Liberal Democrats have been at the forefront of the fight for LGBT+ equality.

From Ed Davey moving the clause to repeal Section 28, to Lynne Featherstone's tireless work in getting the Same Sex Marriage Act passed, we have a long, proud history of delivering change for the LGBT+ community.

It is my sincere hope that we can do the same with this bill.

There is still a long road ahead. The only way to get this bill passed is with support from the Government. So we will be pushing Conservative ministers to do the right thing and back our bill.

In the past weeks, I have been amazed to see a positive response from so many of my colleagues in the House of Lords. I have been busy meeting with parliamentarians from all parties and none to discuss how we can work together to deliver a ban.

It's clear that there is cross-party consensus. So we will keep working together on this.

Because it isn't about party politics. **It's about finally delivering the change the LGBT+ community deserves.** And I will keep doing everything in my power to make this a reality.

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