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Promoting God's good design

The Institute continues to work hard to promote God's moral law in the life of our nation.

Recently, this has meant challenging the Civil Service for flagrantly breaching its own rules on impartiality by participating in Pride marches and endorsing transgender ideology.

In education, it was good to see that the Government took on board some of our concerns about

safeguarding, and released positive guidance on the issue. However, while some of its guidance on sex education was helpful, other sections muddled the waters.

And the vital work to oppose Kim Leadbeater's deeply flawed assisted suicide Bill continues. It is now being examined by the House of Lords. We pray and work for proper scrutiny that will see the Bill abandoned altogether.

CI threatens judicial review over Civil Service LGBT-bias

The Christian Institute has threatened the Civil Service with legal action over its participation in LGBT Pride events.

In a pre-action letter sent in August, the Institute notified Cabinet Secretary Sir Chris Wormald of its intention to seek judicial review of Civil Service participation in Pride events. It also called for an end to other signs of LGBT activism, such as 'rainbow' lanyards and the use of 'preferred pronouns' in external emails.

Under the Civil Service Code, all employees are expected to carry out their roles with "integrity,



honesty, objectivity and impartiality". They must also "ensure individual personal and political views do not, and are not perceived to, influence our advice or actions".

Our Deputy Director Simon Calvert explained: "The law is clear that civil servants must

maintain impartiality on controversial political issues."

The legal threat follows a recent High Court ruling that Northumbria Police's participation in Pride marches breached its impartiality duties.

The court said that such participation was likely to impact

the public's trust in the force's ability to "fairly and impartially" handle disputes about sex and gender.

To challenge Civil Service practice, the CI has instructed Conrathe Gardner Solicitors and Tom Cross KC – the same legal team that led the case against Northumbria Police.

Dangerous assisted suicide Bills under fire

Assisted suicide continues to dominate our work at Westminster and Holyrood.

ENGLAND AND WALES

The Institute produced a comprehensive briefing for Peers on Kim Leadbeater's Bill ahead of its Second Reading in the House of Lords in September – the first time Peers debated the Bill.



Peers spoke out powerfully against the proposals by a majority of around two to one. The speakers included former Prime Minister Baroness May of Maidenhead. She said: "Suicide is wrong. But

this Bill effectively says suicide is okay. What message does that give to our society? Suicide is not okay, suicide is wrong, this Bill is wrong, and in my opinion it should not pass."

Baroness Prentis of Banbury, recently diagnosed with aggressive cancer, said that despite having an "excellent" prognosis, she has suffered "some very low moments". She asked the House to "think hard about me with all my advantages feeling like a burden", and consider "the vulnerable and how

easy it is for them to feel that their lives are not worth living".

Prior to the debate, two influential House of Lords committees warned that the Bill gives too much power to ministers, that there is "insufficient detail" for a "morally significant subject" and that the impact on Wales has been completely ignored.

In keeping with Upper House convention, the Bill progressed without a vote to Committee Stage, where line-by-line scrutiny will commence.



SCOTLAND

A legal opinion commissioned by the Institute has confirmed that Liam McArthur MSP's assisted suicide Bill discriminates against people with certain disabilities and could be challenged under human rights law.

Tom Cross KC concluded that, like the Leadbeater version, McArthur's Private Member's Bill is not compatible with the European Convention on Human Rights.

The top human rights lawyer explained that the Bill takes no account of the fact that suicidal thoughts are a known symptom of certain disabilities, and therefore would violate the right to life

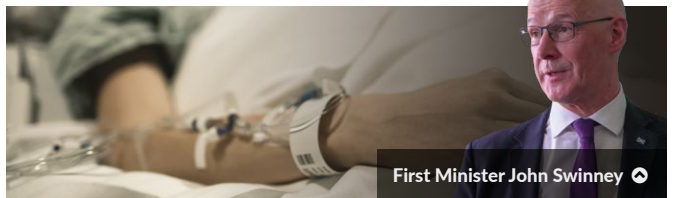
of people with such conditions.

He warned: "The time for ensuring that the Bill protects the most vulnerable is during its passage through Parliament.

"In our view, it is inadequate, on analysis, to adopt a 'wait and see' approach, by which the State may come to learn in due course whether rights of its citizens have been violated.

"By that time the Bill will be law, and the horse will have bolted."

Under pressure from disabled MSP Pam Duncan-Glancy, at First Minister's Questions in September, John Swinney agreed McArthur's Bill poses an "unsurmountable risk to disabled people's equality and human rights".



First Minister John Swinney

Pray continually

1 Thessalonians 5:17

SUNDAY

PRAY For God's blessing upon his Church in the UK.

MONDAY

PRAY That schools would respect the views and wishes of parents.

TUESDAY

PRAY Giving thanks that the Gospel can be freely proclaimed in the UK.

WEDNESDAY

PRAY That society's eyes would be opened to the harms caused by gambling.

THURSDAY

PRAY For our leaders, that they would restrain evil and promote what is good.

FRIDAY

PRAY That dangerous legislation on assisted suicide would be rejected.

SATURDAY

PRAY That the Lord will bless the staff and work of The Christian Institute.

COMMENT

'A clear breach of impartiality': why we're challenging the Civil Service



By Simon Calvert,
Deputy Director

'Rainbow' lanyards, pronoun declarations and official participation in 'Pride' all give the public the distinct impression that civil servants have taken sides on controversial issues on which they ought, by law, to be impartial.

I have been working in public policy for decades. I've been shocked by how many civil servants wear Pride lanyards in our meetings with them, even when those meetings are specifically about the clashes between LGBTQ politics and the Christian faith.

Sitting in front of a phalanx of civil servants with their rainbow lanyards and badges sends the message that their minds are closed on the issues we are discussing.

It certainly does not communicate the kind of

neutrality that taxpayers expect of civil servants.

The law is clear that civil servants must maintain impartiality on controversial political issues. No one can deny that the LGBTQ Pride movement and its hard-line gender ideology are profoundly political.

Pride London, for example, attended by Whitehall-based civil servants, has even banned political parties because they don't support its political demands, which include puberty blockers and gender self-ID. Other Pride marches around the UK have taken a similar approach.

The association between Pride flags and controversial positions like these is so strong that many identifying as gay and lesbian have rejected it. Similarly, declaring preferred pronouns to members of the public in official email signatures is a pointed display of allegiance to an ideology the public increasingly rejects.

Our case follows the success of gender-critical activist Linzi Smith, who took legal action

against Northumbria Police over its participation in Pride events.

The court agreed this undermined public trust. It ruled that Pride is "political", and so official participation breached laws on police impartiality. As a result, forces have begun to stop officers attending marches unless on duty, and removing LGBT branding from police cars.

And rightly so. Involvement in Pride signals support for a highly contentious set of political demands. It is inappropriate for public servants, whether in the police or in the Civil Service, to officially endorse it.

The police found out that you can't just ignore the law on impartiality. They lost their case, and I'm quite confident the courts will take the same view of Civil Service participation in Pride parades.

We know we have a strong case and it's going to be difficult for them to wriggle out of the fact that official participation in a political campaign looks like a straightforward breach of the law on Civil Service impartiality.



CI: 'Defining Islamophobia threatens to undermine healthy, legitimate debate'

The Institute has warned the Government that a vague definition of 'Islamophobia' could undermine "healthy debate and democratic discussion".

In response to the Islamophobia Working Group's Call for Evidence, we emphasised that laws "already protect people of all faiths and none from discrimination, hatred and violence". We argued a specific term would fuel calls for other "religion-phobia" definitions, which could

stifle debate between beliefs".

The working group has been given six months to agree suitable wording, but the Labour Party's current definition, which has been criticised for being too broad, claims: "Islamophobia is rooted in racism and is a type of racism that targets expressions of Muslimness or perceived Muslimness."

In a letter signed by 36 members of the House of Lords, Peers said creating any

definition would be "misguided" and would increase division in communities.

The Peers highlighted how the term 'Islamophobia' has already been misused, noting: "Sarah Champion, the Labour MP who exposed the grooming gangs in Rotherham, was shortlisted by the Islamic Human Rights Commission for

'Islamophobe of the Year'".

Following "widespread public concern" about freedom of expression in Britain, the Commission for Countering Extremism's Robin Simcox emphasised: "As we work to counter extremism, we must ensure we are doing so while not only defending free speech, but promoting it."



Parliament rejects calls to axe Christian prayers

The Leader of the House of Commons has refused to scrap parliamentary prayers.

Humanists UK claimed the prayers were discriminatory, saying they allow parliamentarians to reserve seats for debates. Lucy Powell MP dismissed the criticism, noting that seats can be reserved regardless.

The Institute's Director Ciarán Kelly said this was simply "another misguided attempt to drive Christianity out of public life".

Anglicans dismayed as the Bible's teaching is scorned

Archbishops in Africa have expressed dismay at the appointment of a woman in a same-sex civil partnership as the Archbishop of Wales.

Cherry Vann (below left), describes herself as "openly lesbian" and is Patron of the pro-LGBT Open Table Network, which 'affirms' people "of every gender identity and sexual orientation". She told The Guardian she believes that

same-sex marriage in church is an inevitability.

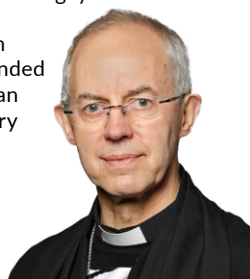
African church leaders accused the Church in Wales of compromising "God's glorious and authoritative

word on human sexuality".

Former Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby (below) also shocked faithful Christians by saying that when he previously held to orthodox biblical teaching on relationships and sexual ethics, he was simply "being thick".

He made the remarks when asked about the Church of England's decision to approve same-sex blessings, while refusing to allow 'gay marriage'.

Anglican Futures branded the words "an extraordinary insult to millions of Anglican believers".

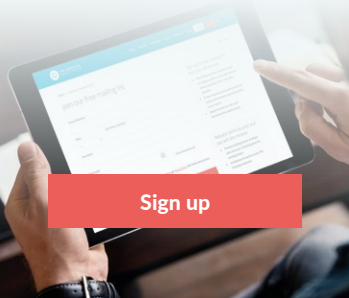


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Pressure grows for action on gambling-related harm

Backbench MPs are urging the Government to reform gambling legislation in order to better protect people from gambling-related harm.

The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Gambling Reform, led by former Conservative leader Sir Iain Duncan Smith, proposes replacing the Gambling Act 2005 with a new law placing greater restrictions on gambling operators and reducing gambling advertising.

Separately, Labour MP Dawn Butler (right), whose Brent East constituency already has more than 100 gambling venues, has called for an end to laws that allow gambling companies to prey on vulnerable and deprived communities.

Butler was among the panelists at the Peers for Gambling Reform Summit,



which brought together those with lived experience of problem gambling, researchers and psychologists to share their testimonies of how damaging gambling is to both individuals and society.

She told the Institute: "we have a public health emergency with regards to gambling, and if we don't get to grips with it now, then we are building up even more problems for the future".



Pupils taking illegal drugs in school, teachers reveal

Teachers have reported that pupils are using illegal drugs in school.

According to a NASUWT survey of nearly 4,000 teachers, one in five are aware of pupils using cannabis. Other drugs reportedly being used by pupils while at school include ketamine, cocaine, and the 'zombie drug' spice.

One teacher told researchers

that pupils "tend to present as disengaged from school once they become habitual or heavy users of cannabis or alcohol".

Cannabis psychosis is on the rise as the use and potency of the drug increases. Ketamine use has more than tripled among young people since 2016.



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CI: DfE sex ed guidance 'muddled'

The Department for Education has published long-awaited guidance on Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) for schools in England.

Reflecting some of the changes requested by The Christian Institute, the new guidance guarantees a parent's right to see sex education resources, and places a greater emphasis on the age of consent.

It also urges greater caution over the use of partisan 'third party materials', such as those promoting gender ideology.



However, it should not have removed proposals made in 2024's draft guidance which protected under-9s from sex education, and that kept under-13s from hearing about explicit sexual acts.

Updates which "strongly encourage" primary schools to teach children about "same-sex parents" and force teachers to deliver content suitable for 'lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or

gender questioning" pupils are also a concern.

Safeguarding guidance for 2025 has also been published by the Westminster Government. The Institute's Head of Education, John Denning, described its recognition of the risks associated with 'social transitioning' as "a massive step in the right direction".

Government guidance on 'Gender Questioning Children' is still awaited.

WATCH What does new RSHE guidance mean for parents and schools? the.ci/newsheguidance



Christian bookshop backed by public after newspaper's 'Pride' flag diatribe

A Christian bookshop has been subjected to abuse after it asked the local council to remove a multicoloured LGBT flag from above its shop window.

The Cornerstone Bookshop in Matlock, Derbyshire, thanked the council for the flag's "speedy removal", which had been one of several displayed across the high street for 'Pride month'.

It received negative coverage in the Derby Telegraph, in which it was branded 'bigoted' and 'homophobic' for its stance.

Despite this, numerous people backed the bookshop, with one commenter saying placing a "Pride flag above a Christian bookshop was insensitive" and another adding: "Nobody should be forced to agree with pride".

The bookshop emphasised that its "aim is solely to promote the Christian faith".

"Fortunately, we are blessed in this country with freedom of conscience and freedom of religion legislation, enshrined in



the Equality Act of 2010 which allows religion or belief as a protected characteristic."

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