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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.

We have also been advocating for marriage. Proposals to introduce 'no-fault divorce' in

Northern Ireland would strip victims of abuse of their right to have their voices heard in court.

And the CI continues to oppose Sian Mulholland MLA's attempt to liberalise gambling by expanding lottery laws.

Loving our neighbours means seeking legislation that protects people from addiction and other behaviours that can harm them.

# CI threatens Civil Service with judicial review over LGBT bias

The Christian Institute has threatened the UK 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 Wormall of its intention to seek judicial review of Civil Service involvement in Pride. It also called for an end to other signs of LGBT activism, such as 'rainbow' lanyards and the use of 'preferred pronouns' in emails to the public.

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 NI Civil Service has been under fire for taking part in Belfast

Pride this summer, despite Head Jayne Brady being warned by a senior advisor that doing so would leave it "open to the charge of acting politically". Timothy Gaston MLA said it had caused "deep unease" among Christian civil servants.

# 'Last thing Northern Ireland wants is more gambling' amid lotteries push

Plans to weaken restrictions on lotteries in Northern Ireland risk fuelling addiction while diverting money away from charities.

Only the National Lottery and small lotteries are exempt from current restrictions. But under Alliance MLA Sian Mulholland's 'Lotteries for Communities Bill', large-scale lotteries,

such as the Postcode Lottery, would be allowed to proliferate.

In response, our NI Policy Officer James Kennedy said: "The last thing Northern Ireland needs is more gambling. This Bill would put vulnerable people at greater risk while delivering a net loss to the charitable sector."

The Bill comes as the industry-funded

charity GambleAware urged National Lottery operator Allwyn UK to put health warnings on its advertising and products, after a survey revealed widespread concern among British people that its games are not "risk free".

At Westminster, backbench MPs are calling on the Government to urgently update gambling

legislation in order to better protect individuals.

The APPG on Gambling Reform proposes replacing Britain's Gambling Act 2005 with new legislation that will place greater restrictions on gambling operators, and reduce gambling advertising.

And Labour MP Dawn Butler has called for an end to laws that allow gambling companies to prey on vulnerable and deprived communities.



# 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."



# 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.

That was the concern raised by Timothy Gaston over the Northern Irish Civil Service's participation in Pride marches. He was right to state that, "the

civil service, as a publicly funded and supposedly apolitical body should not be endorsing what is an overtly political and highly divisive campaign".

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.

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



# 'Suicide is wrong and so is this Bill': Peers denounce dangerous Leadbeater plans

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. 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, 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 Lords committees warned that the Bill gives too much power to ministers and that there is "insufficient detail".

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

## 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.

Our Director Ciarán Kelly said this was “another misguided attempt to drive Christianity out of public life”.



## ‘No-fault divorce plans risk silencing victims of violence’

Female victims of marital abuse are at risk of being silenced by proposals to liberalise divorce laws in Northern Ireland.

The Department of Finance’s consultation on making divorce quicker and easier closed in September. It claimed that a range of options could make the experience of divorce ‘less stressful and challenging’.

The CI’s James Kennedy said: “Making divorce quicker will mean we see more of it, more family breakdown and more children left disadvantaged.”

Mr Kennedy also questioned whether removing ‘fault’ grounds for divorce was compatible with the Executive’s commitment to end violence against women.

“Under the current divorce law, those who have suffered

ill treatment can make their case and have their suffering recognised in court. The proposal to remove ‘fault’ grounds would make this impossible.”

A review of Northern Ireland’s divorce laws in 2017 recommended maintaining ‘fault’ grounds to allow a victim of domestic abuse – usually female – “to exercise the right to a public hearing of what she has suffered”.

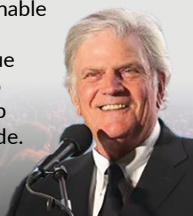


## 17,000 flock to ‘God loves you’ Gospel event

Franklin Graham has shared the Bible’s precious message of forgiveness with over 15,000 people in London, as part of his ‘God Loves You’ tour.

Over 550 churches participated, and attendance greatly exceeded the ExCel Centre’s 15,000 capacity.

Around 2,000 who were unable to enter the packed venue remained to sing worship songs outside.



## Christian Institute: ‘DfE’s new sex ed guidance a mixed bag’

England’s Department for Education has finally published its guidance on Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE).

Positively, it guarantees the right of parents 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 has removed proposals made in 2024’s draft guidance to protect under-9s from sex education, and prevent under-13s hearing about

explicit sexual acts.

Westminster’s safeguarding guidance for schools, which helpfully highlighted the risks associated with ‘social transition’, was also published during the summer.

**WATCH** What does new RSHE guidance mean for parents and schools? [the.ci/newsrshguidance](https://the.ci/newsrshguidance)







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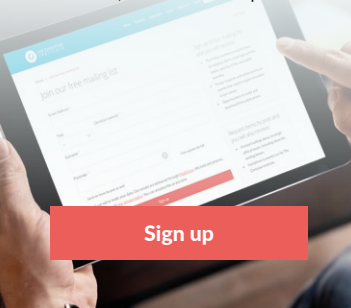
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# Watchdog dithers over defining biological 'sex'

The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (ECNI) has been criticised for stalling over implementing the Supreme Court's April judgment on biological sex.

The UK's highest court ruled that the terms 'woman', 'man' and 'sex' in the Equality Act 2010 refer to biological sex in a unanimous decision.

But the ECNI stated that because Northern Ireland has different equality laws to Great

Britain, the ruling does not apply. It published a paper on its response to the judgment, opened a consultation, and intends to ask the High Court of Justice in Belfast to provide further 'clarity'.

Geraldine McGahey, the watchdog's Chief Commissioner, said that the situation in Northern Ireland "is much more nuanced and complicated".

The ECNI's paper argued that "equality legislation in Northern Ireland must be interpreted in light of European law" and claimed it is "far from certain that European Union Law sees 'sex' as being limited to biological sex only".



# Safeguarding chief warns MPs about kids' porn use

The head of the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland has raised concern that online pornography has become "normalised" among young children.

During an NI Affairs Committee session on violence against women and girls, Bernie McNally told MPs it is "just beyond belief" that "kids as young as nine" have watched pornography on social media.

McNally shared that "some kids in school are asking

their teacher how do you choke a woman", while some 16 to 18-year-olds have experienced it themselves.

"So something has changed to normalise this and for young people, and some of it can be down to influencers".

Since 25 July, social media platforms have

been required to implement "highly effective age assurance" measures to identify under-18s. Companies in breach will be fined up to £18 million or 10 per cent of their qualifying worldwide revenue. In "extreme cases", a court could block a website or app in the UK.



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**Callum Webster,**  
Northern Ireland Officer 

# Promotion of radical gender ideology at Belfast Pride slammed by Institute

Scouts Northern Ireland's push for cubs, scouts and leaders to march in summer's Belfast Pride parade was deeply concerning.

The event was billed as a protest against the Province's ban on puberty blockers for gender-confused children. Members as young as eight were invited to join the contentious political rally, which also backed a 'conversion therapy' law and opposed the Supreme Court's April ruling upholding biological sex.

Shockingly, taxpayers' money was also used to fund the



wider programme, which included a show portraying Jesus Christ as 'transgender'.

Presented as a "theatrical piece in which Jesus has returned to earth as a trans woman", Northern Ireland Policy

Officer James Kennedy said the show "goes out of its way to cause gratuitous offence to Christians by deriding the Lord Jesus Christ".

For taxpayers to foot the bill, he remarked, "adds insult to injury".

Further controversy surrounded the hosting of a drag queen story time at a public library. Gordon Lyons MLA said the event had compromised the reputation of Libraries NI and regretted that it had taken place.

## 'Redacted' FOI response reveals Council tried to hide cost of £10m 'LGBTQ+ hub'

Belfast City Council has been accused of attempting to hide the fact that it may cost millions of pounds to create its 'LGBTQIA+ hub'.

In its response to a freedom of information request from the Belfast News Letter, the Council attempted to redact the estimated cost, claiming it would "prejudice the commercial

interests of the council". However the figures were still visible, indicating the price "could range from £0.5m to £10m", followed by an ongoing annual subsidy of £70,000.

The Council says the actual figure will not reach the top end of this range as it intends to scale back the project by only renovating one floor.



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