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# Proclaiming the truth

Protecting the freedom to proclaim biblical truth in the public square is vital. We are grateful that God continues to enable The Christian Institute to equip Christians to do this.

Christians all across the UK are deeply concerned about the laws to introduce abortion and same-sex marriage in Northern Ireland. Many think these are the most regrettable things done by the last Parliament.

Those who oppose same-sex marriage or reject radical gender ideology must remain

free to speak out. The most vulnerable in our society must also be protected from the twin scourges of abortion and assisted suicide.

We have helped parents expose extreme Relationships Education materials used in hundreds of English primary schools. This is simply sex education by another name.

All these challenges and more face us in the months ahead. We give thanks that God remains in control. Thank you too for your continued support.

# CI warns Govt over lack of free speech safeguards for NI same-sex marriage

The Christian Institute has warned the Northern Ireland Office that it will seek to take legal action if opponents of same-sex marriage are put in jeopardy because of their beliefs. Proper safeguards are missing from the plans to impose same-sex marriage on the Province from 13 January.

When same-sex marriage was introduced in other parts of the UK, protections were put in place to protect those who believe that marriage is between a man and a woman. This includes religious charities, teachers and other public sector workers as well as church ministers.

Acting on behalf of the Institute, Belfast solicitors Carson McDowell wrote to NI Secretary Julian Smith in November. They said regulations should offer "no less in the way of legal



➤ NI Secretary Julian Smith was contacted by the Institute's lawyers.

protections than is provided for in the rest of the UK". They added: "We also expect similar assurances to be given by ministers in relation to the impact on education and for similar appropriate guidance to be issued to schools."

In response, the Northern Ireland Office said it will carry out a consultation, but this would be

limited to religious ceremonies for same-sex marriages. Wider protections would not be put in place before the law changes.

The leaders of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, The Church of Ireland, and the Methodist Church of Ireland have all confirmed that they will uphold the biblical definition of marriage.

[See inside for our briefing](#) ➤

# CI calls on Christians to pray for culture of life in Northern Ireland

On 22 October Northern Ireland's strong protections for women and unborn children were repealed. It follows Westminster's July decision to impose abortion on the Province.

The Institute's Northern Ireland Officer Callum Webster called it "desperately bad news".

"In the wake of this terrible decision, we must continue to pray for leaders to take wise actions; for medics to be protected; and for the precious culture of life to remain. Abortion is not 'good healthcare' for women and destroys the lives of the most vulnerable people in our society", he said.

A Government consultation on how the law should operate closed on 16 December. It put forward extremely permissive plans which go far beyond the rest of the UK. The new legislation will be introduced by 31 March 2020.



In September, hundreds of medics wrote to Northern Ireland Secretary Julian Smith calling for conscience protections.

The health professionals said it is their sincerely-held belief that abortion is the "unjust and violent taking of human life" and sought reassurances over their freedom to refuse to be involved.

A poll taken before abortion was introduced found most people in NI opposed the radical change. And a

petition organised by NI Peer Baroness O'Loan challenging Westminster's move was signed by more than 25,000 people.

**For more information on abortion, see our online Choose Life resources**  
▶ [the.ci/choose-life](https://the.ci/choose-life)  
and read our publication *When does human life begin?*

▶ [the.ci/human-life](https://the.ci/human-life)



# 'New relationships lessons a major worry for GB parents', says Institute

Parents across Britain are increasingly concerned about new primary school lessons on 'relationships' being used as a "vehicle for very inappropriate sex education". The Christian Institute is warning.

Relationships Education will be a statutory subject in all English primary schools from September 2020 with no automatic



right of withdrawal for parents.

Most of the content is uncontroversial, addressing areas such as bullying and friendships. However, LGBT activists have pushed for it to include homosexuality,

transgenderism and same-sex marriage.

A new Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood curriculum in Scotland and proposals for Relationships and Sexuality Education in

Wales are raising similar concerns.

Institute Director Colin Hart said "Every day we're helping parents deeply worried about their children being exposed to highly inappropriate material.

"Campaigners are using the new emphasis on relationships to promote LGBT issues. Good concepts are being twisted to fit a pro-LGBT agenda."

# Hundreds of young trans people now regretting 'gender switch'

Hundreds of young people who 'transitioned' to the opposite sex say they question their choice, and are contemplating changing back.

Charlie Evans was born female but lived as if she were a man for nearly a decade before accepting her true sex and 'detransitioning' last year. After going public she was contacted by hundreds of young adults who similarly doubt their decision to 'change sex' and are looking for help.

Evans said they were often women "who have had full gender reassignment surgery who wish they hadn't". One told her she had felt shunned by the LGBT community for "being a traitor".

Separately, a woman who lived as a man for eleven years has spoken about how she came to accept her biological sex after first accepting Christ.

From a young age, KathyGrace believed that she had been born in the wrong body. She started calling



🕒 Detransitioner Charlie Evans

herself Keith, took male hormones and underwent surgery.

But now she says: "I really want to help others to understand

who they are. Not who they might falsely believe they are, but who they truly are, as God created them to be."

Would you like us to visit your church?



We visit around 100 churches a year in Northern Ireland to talk about the work of the Institute.

If you would like your church to be one of them, email us at: [development@christian.org.uk](mailto:development@christian.org.uk)

## Latest bid to weaken assisted suicide law fails at High Court



🕒 Phil Newby

The High Court in London has rejected the latest attempt to weaken the law on assisted suicide.

Phil Newby - who has Motor Neurone Disease - argued that the current ban interfered with his rights under the European Convention on Human Rights.

Judges refused to hear the challenge, saying the court was

"not an appropriate forum for the discussion of the sanctity of life".

Care Not Killing - which campaigns against assisted suicide - welcomed the ruling and described the challenge as "unnecessary".

A spokesman warned: "If you change the law, vulnerable people will feel pressured into ending their lives."

## John Humphrys criticises BBC's LGBT bias

John Humphrys (pictured) has accused the BBC of "institutional liberal bias" following his retirement from Today, Radio 4's flagship news programme.

The veteran broadcaster wrote that the corporation was afraid of "the politically correct brigade and the most fashionable pressure groups". He singled out the BBC's promotion of LGBT issues for criticism, calling it a form of "social engineering".



## Christian printer wins 7-year legal battle in US

A Christian printer sued after he declined to produce T-shirts for an LGBT festival in 2012 has won his case.

Blaine Adamson (pictured) runs Hands On Originals in Kentucky. He turned down the request because it conflicted with his sincerely-held religious beliefs. He won at two lower courts and the state Supreme Court has now also sided with him.



## Equipping Christians: Same-sex marriage in Northern Ireland

When homosexual marriage was introduced in England, Wales and Scotland, specific legal safeguards were created to protect those who disagree.

- 1 Teachers and other public sector workers are free to disagree with same-sex marriage**
- 2 Schools cannot indoctrinate children into agreeing with homosexual marriage**
- 3 Free speech is explicitly upheld in public order law**
- 4 There is no compulsion on churches, church ministers or chaplains to endorse homosexual weddings**
- 5 The ethos of religious organisations is protected**



Download now at [the.ci/ni-ssm](http://the.ci/ni-ssm)

It will be essential for gospel freedom that the same protections are provided if marriage is redefined in Northern Ireland. Citizens here should have no less freedom than those in the rest of the UK.

## Stonewall rebuked by ex-staff over trans ideology promotion



LGBT lobby group Stonewall has come under fire from former supporters over its promotion of radical transgender ideology.

Campaigners – including one of the group's co-founders Simon Fanshawe – accused Stonewall of undermining "women's sex-based rights and

protections". They called on it to commit "both to freedom of speech and to fact instead of fantasy".

Fanshawe later went on to criticise Stonewall for supporting a self-identification law that "defies biology" and for shutting down debate on the issue.

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## Sermon on the Mount



This twelve-part video series sees renowned theologian Dr Sinclair Ferguson (pictured) explain how the famous Sermon on the Mount equips Christians to live a kingdom life in a fallen world.

It is provided courtesy of Ligonier Ministries and is available to watch now at [christian.org.uk/theology](http://christian.org.uk/theology)

## COMMENT

# Reality check: medicinal cannabis



By Senior  
Communications  
Officer Sam Wylie



schizophrenia, impaired brain development and cancer. Potential cannabis-based medicines need thorough testing.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) recently issued a carefully-worded and narrow endorsement for a very small number of medicines derived from cannabis.

Inevitably, the announcement was grossly exaggerated by campaigners attempting to use 'medical cannabis' as a Trojan Horse for legalising recreational use. They deliberately blur the vital distinction between cannabis and its potentially medically useful components. Cannabis contains over 100 unique compounds, known as cannabinoids. A few of these have been shown to offer medical uses but this does not mean smoking a joint can be equated to using a prescribed medicine.

Despite what you may have read recently, your GP is not about to advise you to smoke cannabis to ease your recurrent back pain. Cannabis is dangerous, being linked to depression,

NICE has previously said "potential benefits offered were small compared with the high and ongoing costs". Now it is reminding clinicians to take into account any history of mental health issues and to consider the potential impact on the "psychological, emotional and cognitive development" of children.

This approach is far too cautious for some. One group which supports the widespread use of 'medicinal cannabis' called on NICE to lower its standards in checking drugs to speed up widespread change.

The Managing Director of Sapphire Medical Clinics said NICE "should consider refining its approach and take a broader view of what evidence to consider when making its recommendations".

NICE should refuse to be cowed into weakening its stance, and the Government should continue to resist legalising or decriminalising cannabis.

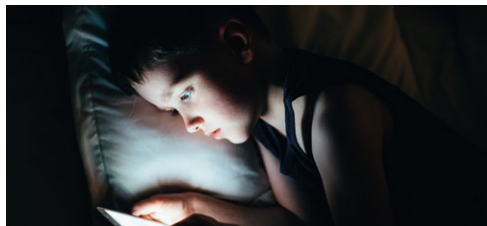


# Christian Institute: Govt dropping age-verification 'a victory for pornographers'

Plans for blocks on children viewing pornography online were dropped in October following years of delay.

The Christian Institute called the decision a "big victory for pornographers and the campaign of the Adam Smith Institute".

Director Colin Hart said: "It's a warning for Christians about the values of the libertarian right. Their influence could also lead to other



radical changes like the legalisation of drugs."

A law on age-verification was first mooted by David Cameron in 2015. The Digital Economy Act – containing the checks

– was passed in 2017 but the age-verification aspect was postponed in April 2018 and again in June 2019.

The checks would have required users to prove their age

using ID such as a credit card or passport. Pornography sites that refused to follow the regulations would have been blocked by UK internet service providers.

The Adam Smith Institute complained the restrictions would "reduce access to pornography produced for sexual minorities". The Government said the objectives of the Bill would be delivered through other means.

Your legacy can help Christians to be salt and light

None of our work would be possible without the generosity of our supporters. Leaving a gift in your will to The Christian Institute will help us to continue working to preserve Christian freedoms for future generations.



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