Twitter Thread by Jo Maugham



Jo Maugham
@JolyonMaugham

We need to talk about the 'expert' witness statement evidence led by Ms Bell in her successful case before the Tavistock. THREAD

You can see who gave evidence in her support from these extracts from the Tavistock's Skeleton Argument.

Helpful for you to bear in mind that her solicitor was a man called Paul Conrathe, who has a long association with the religious right in the US (I have talked about him a number of times but this is as good a starting point as any).
https://t.co/GqoBNcRaEA

> In this thread, I noted the lawyer acting against the Tavistock, Paul Conrathe, is using very similar arguments (those under 18 cannot consent at all; or cannot lawfully consent without x conditions) as he has run/is running in a number of cases challenging abortion rights. https://t.co/gJk4c9bUED
>
> — Jo Maugham (@JolyonMaugham) June 21, 2020

I am not going to address here other criticisms that might be made of the form in which that evidence was given or the timing of its service before the court. I am just going to address, in alphabetical order, the individuals whose evidence Mr Conrathe led on Ms Bell's behalf.

The first witness, alphabetically, was Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of Oxford, Michael Biggs.

Mr Biggs was exposed for posting transphobic statements online under a fake twitter handle: @MrHenryWimbush according to this report.
https://t.co/EDPCZt6Mih

The tweets posted under that account include “transphobia is a word created by fascists, and used by cowards, to manipulate morons." It also accused The Lancet, amongst the world's oldest and best-known general medical journals, of "endorsing eugenics".

The second, alphabetically, is Professor Neil Evans.

Although he was described as an “internationally recognised neuroendocrinologist” he is in fact a Professor at the Institute of Biodiversity Animal Health & Comparative Medicine: https://t.co/42WlwZ4NBe

Amongst his papers on veterinary medicine are a study on puberty blockers in sheep which was taken up by the Christian Institute which describes itself as "committed to the truths of historic, biblical Christianity" https://t.co/tYHpxYmIE8.

The third, alphabetically, is Professor Gene Feder. He is plainly an eminent academic and practising GP (https://t.co/1VrW5hyElU) but he doesn't seem to have any particular expertise in this field.

The fourth is Professor Gillberg, a professor of child and adolescent psychiatry, Gillberg Neuropsychiatry Centre, University of Gothenburg.

Professor Gillberg was involved in a major scandal in Sweden involving the shredding of evidence. https://t.co/B6lpLvRSqA

The fifth, is Professor Paul Hruz. Professor Hruz's evidence was explicitly relied on by the Divisional Court.

Paul Hruz is linked with the religious hate group, the Alliance for Defending Freedom https://t.co/1skuO8GRiP

Professor Hruz is also linked with the US Heritage Foundation. https://t.co/N4i0ULnB4T

According to this report, Professor Hruz's own university entirely disavows his notional expertise in the field (https://t.co/bEV2wtt4BG) but that did not stop the Divisional Court from placing considerable reliance on it.

There is a lot more to say about Professor Hruz but let me move on to the sixth in alphabetical order, Professor Stephen Levine (whose evidence was also relied on by the Divisional Court).

Stephen Levine has given evidence for the ADF.

As the ADF puts it here: "aggressive pro-abortion and LGBT activists aren’t just targeting churches and creative professionals. They’re also targeting our children—and they’re lying about it" (https://t.co/I3lIwrXkw2).

The seventh was Professor Patrick Parkinson.

He is a Professor of the University of Queensland. So far as I can see, his evidence should not have been before the Divisional Court at all but nevertheless it was.

According to this report (https://t.co/cd0jTdWsuQ) "Parkinson compared transgender people to the coronavirus, declaring it an 'epidemic.' Previously, he has... campaigned against LGBTQIA+ adoption and has ties to Freedom For Faith and The Australian Christian Lobby."

Parkinson has written in favour of conversion therapy https://t.co/f7trpOYGvo

He chairs or chaired the conservative think tank Freedom for Faith and was commission by the Australian Christian Lobby but stepped down from his role as head of the Law School. https://t.co/eobAtU88JS

Freedom for Faith were recently angered by a decision to stop LGBT conversion practices in Australian churches https://t.co/37LMspdeG7

The eight witness was Professor Sophie Scott. You can see her academic specialisation here https://t.co/kEJ0U5oJ14. Plainly she is an eminent academic but she does not claim any particular expertise on the question before the Divisional Court.

The final witness was Professor John Whitehall, Professor of Pediatrics and Child Health, Western Sydney University Medical School. Whitehall is another particularly interesting individual.

You can read about Whitehall here.

He has admitted that that, in 50 years in medicine, he has never treated a child for gender-related issues and has (or had) published no papers to do with gender dysphoria or trans healthcare. https://t.co/v9PD1VGLZg

Whitehall was listed as a speaker in support of gay conversion therapy for the Australian Christian Lobby. https://t.co/CdxibDKR3m

He was Vice-President of the US-based Christian Anti-Communism Crusade https://t.co/smlpcbXHAW

He was former Deputy Present of the Christian Democratic Party whose is Fred Nile. Nile has said homosexuality is a “mental disorder” and is “immoral, unnatural and abnormal.”

Summing up on John Whitehall, he has multiple links to right-wing, anti-LGBT, anti-abortion and anti-trans groups.

These are the people whose evidence Ms Bell's lawyer placed before the Divisional Court, and at least some of which influenced it in the decision it made.

However, the Court shamefully refused to hear from any trans voices. It rejected (at least) three would be interventions.

Even if you do not care to listen to the views of the trans community you should be deeply alarmed that these or some of these highly marginal figures in world medicine are influencing the law around healthcare for children in the UK.

And if you do not care about the trans community - but you do care about abortion rights or gay rights - you should be deeply alarmed at the influence those who are no friends of 'progressives' are gaining in the UK.

If you'd like to support our efforts to protect perhaps the most vulnerable community in the country from the attentions of the US Religious Right (shamefully propped up by some who call themselves progressive) you can do so here. https://t.co/75Zjv7MQJi