



Nationality and Borders Bill 2021

Briefing for House of Lords Second Reading

The Nationality and Borders Bill 2021 (‘the Bill’) makes sweeping changes to the UK asylum system. This briefing highlights the particular and significant impact these suggested changes may have by endangering LGBT+ people who are fleeing persecution in other countries and seeking sanctuary (“asylum” or “refugee protection”) in the UK.

Many people who have been welcomed into this country’s LGBT+ community would not be here under this potential law, and would not have had the chance to rebuild their lives free from homophobia, biphobia and/or transphobia.

According to the UN High Commission for Refugees, the proposals would “undermine the 1951 Convention and international protection system, not just in the UK, but globally”. UNHCR also states that “if States, like the UK, that receive a comparatively small fraction of the world’s asylum-seekers and refugees appear poised to renege on their commitments, the system is weakened globally and the role and influence of the UK would be severely impacted”¹.

Enacting this Bill as it stands would also undermine the UK Government’s commitment to being a global leader in advancing the rights and dignity of LGBT+ people by convening of a global LGBT+ summit in 2022 and co-chairing the international Equal Rights Coalition of 42 states.

We recommend that the below mentioned clauses are removed from the Bill.

¹ Para 4, p 1. UNHCR Observations on the New Plan for Immigration policy statement of the Government of the United Kingdom, May 2021. <https://www.unhcr.org/uk/60950ed64/unhcr-observations-on-the-new-plan-for-immigration-uk>

Clauses 11 and 36

Clause 11, together with clause 36, provides for the differential treatment of recognised refugees, with a requirement that a person “presented themselves without delay to the authorities”, in order to be granted the current 5-year refugee leave to remain (which includes family reunion rights and the ability to apply for permanent residence at the end of the period).

The requirement to claim asylum “without delay” does not take account of the experiences of LGBT+ people in need of asylum. This group has characteristics that mean their experience of claiming asylum is different to others. For example, many LGBT+ people do not know that it is possible to claim asylum on the basis of their sexual orientation or gender identity, often saying that they thought it was only possible to be recognised as a refugee if you were fleeing war or because of one’s political beliefs. Rainbow Migration frequently sees people who only learn that it is possible to claim asylum due to their sexual orientation and/or gender identity after spending months or even years in the UK. Further, many people in need of asylum don’t have the language or confidence to disclose their sexual orientation and/or gender identity immediately.

Case study: Samir

When Samir was coming to terms with his sexuality as a gay man in Kosovo, he knew there was no way that he could live openly in his home country. Still to this day Kosovo is recognised by human rights organisations as incredibly dangerous for LGBTQI+ people. *“I felt like every day I had to look over my shoulder because you never knew what could happen.”*

Samir was attacked because of his sexual orientation. He says, *“I didn’t know my attackers, I don’t know if they knew I was gay or just assumed I was gay. I felt like it was going to be my turn now to be attacked and for my life to be in danger if I keep staying there.”*

When Samir was offered work experience outside of Kosovo not long after his attack, he took it. Securing a visa to leave Kosovo was very difficult at the time and he knew he had to take the opportunity to leave. *"I had fully realised by that time I was a gay man and that my life is not going to be easy living in Kosovo,"* Samir says.

However, Samir didn't know much about claiming asylum and didn't know you could claim asylum on the grounds of your sexual orientation. Samir overstayed his visa in the UK rather than go back to Kosovo and was arrested by immigration officials on a bus in London. *"It was very scary...I remember them cuffing me, I felt very vulnerable. I felt like a criminal but without having done a crime,"* says Samir.

It was there that police officers told Samir he had a right to claim asylum and where he first asked for asylum. Samir says, *"I remember crying a lot that day in the cell because I had never been in prison before. I had never been in a cell before, or even in a police station. I just remember being scared and also worried that they are going to take me to a detention centre."*

Samir remembers how hard it was to take the first steps in his asylum process. He had to recount the traumatic things that had happened to him in Kosovo. He had also never openly discussed the fact he was a gay man before: *"It was the first time talking about my sexuality...just saying aloud the word gay in Albanian, it was very surreal. I knew that although I was scared, this was my only chance for me to tell my story... and if I didn't, I knew that my case would be dismissed and they would send me back."*

It was after claiming asylum that Samir found Rainbow Migration. He still didn't know much about claiming asylum or what to expect from the interviews. He attended a Rainbow Migration monthly meeting and met lawyers, support workers and other LGBTQI+ people seeking asylum. Samir was very nervous about attending his first meeting, he had been hiding his sexual orientation for most of his life. However, he found support and a community that he is still part of to this day. Rainbow Migration *"helped me come to terms with who I was and seeing other people in the same situation as mine helped me understand that I'm not alone,"* Samir says.

Rainbow Migration also found Samir a lawyer that understood his case and the sensitivity of his claim. When Samir's asylum claim was initially rejected, they prepared his appeal and helped him so he was eventually granted refugee status.

The consequences of not meeting the requirement to claim "without delay" are:

1. People will be granted a shorter period of leave (unspecified in the Bill), with very limited family reunion rights and subject to a restriction on their ability to access public funds.
2. Significant impact on the ability of LGBT+ people to integrate into the UK. They are likely to be less inclined to live openly, in the knowledge that the UK will be reviewing their status regularly with a view to returning them, as this could open them up to additional risk on return to their country of origin. Further, the homophobia, biphobia and transphobia that fuel the persecution of LGBT+ people causing them to seek asylum are decades-long realities of discrimination and oppression, and it is extremely unlikely that most LGBT+ refugees would be safe to be returned after only a few years in the UK.
3. They will need to wait a longer period of time (ten years) before they are eligible for permanent residence in the UK.²

This provision is designed to penalise people who arrive via 'irregular' routes, the reason being that the government expects people to arrive via 'regular' routes. For refugees this means via a resettlement scheme, as it is not possible to apply for a refugee visa outside the UK. The New Plan for Immigration said: "We will maintain clear, well-defined routes for refugees in need of protection, ensuring refugees have the freedom to succeed, ability to integrate and contribute fully to society when they arrive in the UK."³

² Paragraph 19 of the Explanatory Notes to the Bill

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https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/972472/CCS207_CCS0820091708-001_Sovereign_Borders_FULL_v13_1_.pdf page 11

The stated aim is to 'resettle genuine refugees directly from regions of conflict and instability'.⁴ Though some LGBTQI+ refugees will be in these areas, many will not. Many LGBTQI+ refugees come from areas where there may be no conflict and no perceived international crisis. There is, though, a severe and systematic persecution of LGBTQI+ people. For example, Nigeria, Pakistan, Iran would not be seen as regions of conflict or international crisis at present, but they clearly have many individuals who are persecuted because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. '

Further, as we have seen with the events in Afghanistan this year, safe routes are not a straightforward solution.

The Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme was announced on 18 August 2021.⁵ Over two months later, on 27 October 2021 the Home Secretary told the Justice and Home Affairs Committee that "We are not able to operationalise that scheme... We simply do not have the infrastructure or the accommodation."⁶ It remains unclear if or when the scheme will open, and people who do not feel that it is safe to wait should not be penalised for this.⁷

Even where such programmes do exist, it can be very difficult for LGBT+ people to access resettlement. Many organisations engaged in resettlement do not have LGBTQI+ inclusive approaches or the awareness required to process such claims effectively. This represents a perilous gap for ensuring the protection of LGBT+ people in flight. Unless there is the expertise to provide appropriate consultations, a safe environment for self-disclosure, physical security from exploitation and abuse, legal advice, and informed evaluation of LGBTQI+ claims for protection and resettlement, many will not be able to get the protection they need and deserve.

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-nationality-and-borders-bill-factsheet/nationality-and-borders-bill-factsheet>

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/afghan-citizens-resettlement-scheme>

⁶ In response to Q2 <https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/2914/html/>

⁷ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/dec/12/fears-grow-that-home-office-has-lost-will-to-resettle-afghans-under-threat>

Again using Afghanistan as an example, there is a long history of LGBT+ people in Afghanistan being disproportionately targeted and subject to homophobic, biphobic and transphobic sexual violence, forced marriages, honour killings, conversion practices and execution. Taliban officials have been publicly clear about their stance on the death penalty for same-sex relationships. In an interview with German newspaper *Bild*, in July 2021, a Taliban judge, Gul Rahim, stated “for homosexuals, there can only be two punishments: either stoning, or he must stand behind a wall that will fall down on him. The wall must be 2.5 to 3 metres high.”⁸ This is not hyperbole. In August 2015, a parallel justice court sentenced two men and a 17-year-old boy to execution by wall-toppling for homosexuality in Ghor province. According to the report, the falling wall killed the two men and injured the teenager, who they allowed to live.⁹

LGBT+ people who have escaped Afghanistan to neighbouring countries are still at risk – Iran, Pakistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan are all countries that persecute LGBT+ people. LGBT+ people will also not feel safe coming forward and identifying themselves as a person who is eligible for resettlement as their families and communities can be the source of their persecution and officials in host countries may also be a danger. The UK government worked with Stonewall and Rainbow Railroad, among others, to safely evacuate 29 LGBT+ Afghan nationals,¹⁰ and should be strongly commended for doing so, however those who were left behind must not be penalised if they manage to make it to the UK themselves.

If the UK is truly committed to being a LGBT+ human rights leader and ensure the protection of LGBT+ people seeking asylum, clause 11 and 36 must be removed.

⁸ <https://www.bild.de/politik/international/bild-international/this-taliban-judge-orders-stoning-hanging-hands-chopped-of-77067554.bild.html>

⁹ UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, [Afghanistan Annual Report 2015: Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict](#), February 2016, 51.

¹⁰ <https://www.rainbowrailroad.org/the-latest/rainbow-railroad-assists-29-lgbtqi-afghans-to-safety-in-the-u-k>

Clause 12

This clause relates to the provision of asylum accommodation.

At paragraph 20 of the Explanatory Notes to the Bill, it is stated that the intention is to expand the current asylum estate to include basic full board accommodation centres. Clause 12(9) gives the Secretary of State the power to remove the current time limit of six months for which a person can be made to stay in an accommodation centre. Accommodation centres such as Napier barracks are analogous to immigration detention¹¹, and as set out in our report “No Safe Refuge” this is a setting where LGBT+ people are particularly at risk of harm.¹² Accommodating LGBT+ people with others from the communities they have fled means that many are at high risk of being subject to the same discriminatory abuse that forced them to flee their homes in the first place. LGBT+ people in this situation are unlikely to be able to live openly in these accommodation centres due to fear of this abuse, which can in turn then make it extremely difficult for them to evidence their asylum claims.

Case study: Maria

“I suffered physical and sexual harassment on a regular basis in the accommodation I was given as an asylum seeker. Someone threw a pot at me once. I just could not sleep properly, I was always on the lookout for someone to try to hurt me.

The first thing I did when I arrived at Micro Rainbow’s LGBTQI safe house was crying of relief. I then unpacked my dresses and high heel shoes. I had not been able to even look at them for months.”

¹¹ See e.g. [\(NB & Ors\) v Secretary of State for the Home Department \[2021\] EWHC 1489 \(Admin\)](#) at [74]

¹² <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/resources/no-safe-refuge-2016>

If the UK is truly committed to being a LGBT+ human rights leader, to ensure the protection of LGBT+ people seeking asylum clause 12 must be removed.

Clauses 17 and 18

Clause 17 allows the Home Office to serve an “evidence notice” on a person, requiring them to provide evidence in support of their claim by a certain date.

Clause 18 then amends section 8 of the Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants, etc) Act 2004 (claimant’s credibility), to include that, where evidence is provided on or after the deadline given in the “evidence notice”, this may be considered to have damaged the person’s credibility.

The difficulty that many LGBT+ people have in disclosing their experiences is well-recognised, and even acknowledged in the Home Office guidance “Sexual orientation in asylum claims”¹³. Further, where a person is unaware of the ability to claim asylum based on their sexual orientation and/or gender identity, which is often the case, it is unclear how they could have the opportunity to comply with the evidence notice and yet are at high risk of being penalised for this by having their claim disbelieved. This is in the context of where even under current laws LGBT+ people often struggle to get the Home Office to accept their accounts.¹⁴

If the UK is truly committed to being a LGBT+ human rights leader, to ensure the protection of LGBT+ people seeking asylums clauses 17 and 18 must be removed.

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https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/543882/Sexual-orientation-in-asylum-claims-v6.pdf pages 13-14, and 34-35

¹⁴ https://www.rainbowmigration.org.uk/sites/default/files/2021-03/Still-Falling-Short-Jul-18_0.pdf

Clauses 19 to 21

These clauses allow the Secretary of State for the Home Department to issue a person with a “Priority Removal Notice”, which includes a cut-off date, requiring them to provide a statement as to the basis on which they should be allowed to remain in the UK and any supporting evidence.

Clause 21 sets out the consequences for missing that cut-off date, which is that the Secretary of State must take it as being damaging to the person’s credibility, unless there are ‘good reasons’ as to why it was provided late.

It is unclear what the Home Office would consider to be a “good reason”. At Committee stage in the House of Commons the Minister said that *“Good reasons may also include subjective factors, such as a claimant’s particular vulnerabilities relating to their age, sexual orientation, gender identity or mental health. Decision makers, including the judiciary, will be better placed to identify and assess those factors on an individual and case-by-case basis.”*¹⁵

This does not provide reassurance, as the current position is already that where a person has delayed in claiming asylum, this *may* be taken by the Home Office as being damaging to their credibility.¹⁶ In our report “Still Falling Short”, Home Office refusal letters for LGBT+ asylum claims were analysed, and in all *“refusals where delay was relied on [by the Home Office] and where the person claimed no knowledge of the asylum process as an explanation for not having claimed previously, the Home Office did not accept that as an explanation.”*¹⁷ The report also noted that *“It is of concern that this study found that there were refusals in which there is very little reason to refuse the claim, other than delay. On the other hand, where delay arose, the disbelief of reasons for delay very often followed.”*¹⁸ The

¹⁵ [https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-10-26/debates/fa4cf2ea-9af7-4ac5-8a9d-828f060d58d8/NationalityAndBordersBill\(NinthSitting\)#](https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-10-26/debates/fa4cf2ea-9af7-4ac5-8a9d-828f060d58d8/NationalityAndBordersBill(NinthSitting)#)

¹⁶ s.8 Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants, etc.) Act 2004

¹⁷ https://www.rainbowmigration.org.uk/sites/default/files/2021-03/Still-Falling-Short-Jul-18_0.pdf page 21

¹⁸ https://www.rainbowmigration.org.uk/sites/default/files/2021-03/Still-Falling-Short-Jul-18_0.pdf page 21

report was published in 2018, however the issues identified in the report in relation to Home Office decision-making unfortunately continue.

If the UK is truly committed to being a LGBT+ human rights leader, to ensure the protection of LGBT+ people seeking asylum, clauses 19 and 21 must be removed.

Clause 22

Clause 22 provides further consequences for missing the Notice cut-off date, namely that the person will lose the ability to appeal a refusal to the First-tier Tribunal. Instead, they will have to appeal directly to the Upper Tribunal, thereby *losing a vital layer of appeal rights* which safeguard against incorrect decisions made in the Tribunals. Incorrect decisions are often seen in LGBT+ asylum appeals.

Again, this is subject to the Secretary of State being satisfied that there were good reasons for missing the cut-off date, in which case the right of appeal to the First-tier Tribunal may be retained.

If the UK is truly committed to being a LGBT+ human rights leader, to ensure the protection of LGBT+ people seeking asylum, clause 22 must be removed.

Clause 25

Clause 25 sets out further penalties for those who are unable to provide their evidence at the time determined by the Secretary of State as set out in clauses 17 and 19, namely that any evidence provided after the required date will be given minimal weight when considering the asylum or human rights claim.

This includes when considering whether a claim can be certified as clearly unfounded, or whether further submissions will be accepted. There is an exception provided, for where

there are “good reasons”, however no explanation is given as to what would be considered a “good reason”, and it is unclear how claims from LGBT+ people will be treated. The Equality Impact Assessment talks about mitigation in general terms, however the Home Office does not have a sufficiently positive record on decision-making in LGBT+ cases for this to provide sufficient reassurance¹⁹.

If the UK is truly committed to being a LGBT+ human rights leader, to ensure the protection of LGBT+ people seeking asylum, clause 25 must be removed.

Clause 28 and Schedule 3

These proposals relate to the offshore processing of asylum claims. Rainbow Migration does not support the offshore processing of asylum claims for any person.

In relation to LGBT+ people, it is important to remember that there will be additional considerations in relation to proposed “safe countries”. For example, although subsequently denied²⁰, Ghana was recently mentioned as a potential country where the UK may be looking into offshoring the processing of asylum claims. Consensual same-sex sexual acts are criminalised in Ghana, LGBT+ people are targeted by the police, and several arrests have been documented in recent years.²¹

This risk to LGBT+ people in particular with offshore processing has already been demonstrated with Australia sending gay men to Papua New Guinea, where consensual same sex acts are criminalised.²² People seeking asylum were told at their orientation at the processing centre that same sex relations are illegal, yet were then expected to disclose their sexual orientation where that was the basis for their asylum claim.²³

¹⁹ https://www.rainbowmigration.org.uk/sites/default/files/2021-03/Still-Falling-Short-Jul-18_0.pdf

²⁰ <https://twitter.com/GhanaMFA/status/1435935177964990465>

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https://ilga.org/downloads/ILGA_World_State_Sponsored_Homophobia_report_global_legislation_overview_update_December_2020.pdf page 117

²² <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/asylum-seekers-in-australia-cruel-policies-and-processes/>

²³ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/sep/24/gay-asylum-seekers-manus-island-fear-persecution-png>

Any country which is not fully supportive of equal rights for LGBT+ people, including having mechanisms available to enforce those rights, is unlikely to be suitable for them because of their unstable immigration status, vulnerability, discrimination in access to services and enforced concealment of their sexual orientation or gender identity. The risks will range from countries such as Ghana where LGBT+ people are criminalised²⁴, through to countries without sufficient protections for those who find themselves at risk. This could include where people are housed inappropriately, for example with other people from the country of origin. Any country which lacks the same level of safeguards as the UK does for LGBT+ people is unlikely to be suitable.

In addition to the human rights violations, there is a huge financial cost to offshoring which in the case of Australia is estimated to be at least one billion Australian dollars per year.²⁵ We note that the government has said they will publish an Economic Impact Assessment of the Nationality and Borders Bill, but this has not yet been provided.²⁶

If the UK is truly committed to being a LGBT+ human rights leader, to ensure the protection of LGBT+ people seeking asylum clause 8 and Schedule 3 must be removed.

Clause 31

Clause 31 raises the standard of proof for a person to show that they have a characteristic that could cause them to fear persecution.

LGBT+ people claiming asylum are required to “prove” their sexual orientation and/or gender identity to the satisfaction of the Home Office and to judges. The current standard of proof is “reasonable degree of likelihood”, however, clause 31 will raise this to “on the

²⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2021/jul/23/ghana-anti-gay-bill-proposing-10-year-prison-sentences-sparks-outrage>

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https://www.kaldorcentre.unsw.edu.au/sites/kaldorcentre.unsw.edu.au/files/Policy_Brief_11_Offshore_Processing.pdf page 9

²⁶ <https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/3008/html/> Q721

balance of probabilities". This means that LGBT+ people will face a higher hurdle than they currently do to "prove" their sexual orientation or gender identity. Even with the existing standard of proof, LGBT+ people are commonly disbelieved by the Home Office.²⁷ Almost half of Home Office refusals of LGBT+ asylum claims are successfully challenged on appeal.²⁸

At Committee stage in the House of Commons, the Minister provided the following response to concerns raised: *"On the concerns around LGBTQ+ individuals, we have acknowledged that it may be more difficult to prove such claims compared with individuals making applications based on other convention reasons. We already have specific asylum policy instruction on considering such claims, which sets out in detail how caseworkers should fully investigate the key issues through a focused, professional and sensitive approach to questioning. As part of the operationalisation of the programme, we will seek to update the training and guidance provided to decision makers. That will concentrate on interviews, to ensure that they are sufficiently detailed to enable claimants to meet the standard"*.²⁹

There are many reasons why proving sexual orientation or gender identity to the current low standard of proof is difficult, including:

1. Often the only evidence that many LGBTQI+ people have is their own account of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.³⁰
2. A person's social and cultural background may affect how they self-identify, and some LGBTQI+ people "may harbour deep shame and/or internalized homophobia, leading them to deny their sexual orientation and/or to adopt verbal and physical behaviours in line with heterosexual norms and roles."³¹

²⁷ https://www.rainbowmigration.org.uk/sites/default/files/2021-03/Still-Falling-Short-Jul-18_0.pdf

²⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-statistics-year-ending-june-2021/asylum-claims-on-the-basis-of-sexual-orientation-2020>

²⁹ [https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-10-26/debates/328ec7c7-97a8-4b51-b611-23fa943d325c/NationalityAndBordersBill\(TenthSitting\)](https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-10-26/debates/328ec7c7-97a8-4b51-b611-23fa943d325c/NationalityAndBordersBill(TenthSitting))

³⁰ Refugee Status Claims Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity – A Practitioners' Guide, International Commission of Jurists, 19 February 2016 <https://www.icj.org/refugee-status-claims-based-on-sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity-icj-practitioners-guide-n-11-launched/> page 21

³¹ Guidelines on International Protection No. 9: Claims to Refugee Status based on Sexual Orientation and/or Gender Identity within the context of Article 1A(2) of the 1951 Convention and/or its 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees, HCR/GIP/12/01, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, 23 October 2012 at [63i]

3. As explained by UNHCR, “Some claimants, because of the shame they feel over what has happened to them, or due to trauma, may be reluctant to identify the true extent of the persecution suffered or feared.”³²
4. Some women only form a same sex sexual orientation later in life³³, and face being disbelieved on this basis, particularly where they have been in relationships with or married to men previously.

A higher standard of proof will make it even more difficult for people in all of these common situations to evidence their claims. Raising the standard of proof will result in fewer LGBT+ people being recognised as refugees, which will mean they will face return to countries where they will be mistreated and in many cases their lives will be at risk.

If the UK is truly committed to being a LGBT+ human rights leader, to ensure the protection of LGBT+ people seeking asylum, clause 31 must be removed and the standard of proof must remain as is.

Our organisations:

Rainbow Migration supports lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer and intersex people through the asylum and immigration system. Our vision is a world where there is equality, dignity, respect and safety for all people in the expression of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

At Stonewall, we stand for lesbian, gay, bi, trans, queer, questioning and ace people everywhere. We imagine a world where all LGBT+ people are free to be ourselves and can live our lives to the full.

³² UNHCR Guidelines on International Protection: Gender-Related Persecution within the context of Article 1A(2) of the 1951 Convention and/or its 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees at [35]

³³ https://www.rainbowmigration.org.uk/sites/default/files/2021-03/Still-Falling-Short-Jul-18_0.pdf page 25

African Rainbow Family is a grassroots Charity that supports LGBTIQ people of African heritage and the wider Black and Asian Minority Ethnic groups seeking asylum and campaigns for global LGBTIQ equality. Our vision is a World without Prejudice.

At Mermaids we have supported trans, non-binary and gender diverse young people and their families since 1995. We work for a world that allows young trans people to live and thrive, without prejudice and discrimination.

Micro Rainbow's vision is to create a world where lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, gay and intersex (LGBTQI) people are safe, free from discrimination, persecution and have equal opportunities in life, including in accessing employment, training, financial services and housing.

LGBT Foundation exists to support the needs of the diverse range of people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans. We believe in a fair and equal society where all LGBT people can achieve their full potential. #EqualityWins underpins much of what we do and we aim to be; 'here if you need us.'

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