

Sanctuary Safety Solidarity

A guide for service providers working with
LGBT asylum seekers and refugees



Sanctuary Safety Solidarity

**A guide for service providers working with
LGBT asylum seekers and refugees**

Contents

Introduction	5
Differences Between Asylum Seekers and Refugees	7
Sanctuary	8
Building Language Bridges	9
Creating an Inclusive and Welcoming Environment	12
Navigating the Asylum Process	14
Safety	18
Poverty	19
Employment	21
Health and Wellbeing	22
Housing	24
Solidarity	26
Forging Links	27
Sharing and Collaboration	28
Unity and Diversity through Arts and Culture	30
Helpful links	31

Introduction

Sanctuary, Safety, Solidarity is a guide for service providers on how to better support LGBT asylum seekers and refugees. The original research for this guide, in the report ‘Sanctuary, Safety and Solidarity — Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, trans Asylum Seekers and Refugees in Scotland’, was published in 2011 by the Equality Network, BEMIS and GRAMNet and in three separate short resources called ‘Sanctuary’, ‘Safety’ and ‘Solidarity’. But nearly ten years after its original publication, no new research has been conducted in the subject.

Unfortunately, the overall situation of asylum seekers and refugees in Scotland has not undergone any significant improvement in the last decade. In 2020, twenty-nine asylum seekers died in the UK while in the care of the asylum support system. Although details for all of those cases have not been made public, at least some of those deaths were due to neglect and isolation. Furthermore, many destitute asylum seekers were not given a place to live until lawyers took the Home Office to court to force them to act (and so asylum seekers who have no means to contact a lawyer were presumably left homeless). This led to a high court ruling that the Home Office was in breach of its obligation to safeguard asylum seeker’s human rights against homelessness.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the situation was made even worse when asylum seekers in Glasgow were moved from individual accommodation into hotel rooms at a moment’s notice, without proper assessment of their vulnerability, and while having their support payments cut. This sudden relocation meant asylum seekers were isolated from their support networks, unable to comply with social distancing guidelines, and had to rely on charities to access food and other basic provisions. The damaging consequences of this mistreatment became clear in June 2020, when a knife attack in a hotel housing asylum seekers in Glasgow left one person dead and six injured. Although there is no data on whether LGBT asylum seekers were among those relocated, the previous ‘Safety’ research pointed to

issues around isolation and safe accommodation being even more prominent for LGBT asylum seekers. So it is likely that LGBT asylum seekers were particularly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In light of these events, and to ensure continued work with and support for LGBT asylum seekers and refugees, the original 'Sanctuary', 'Safety' and 'Solidarity' resources are being updated and joined in a single document to serve as a guide for organisations seeking to take action during particularly difficult times.

This book is divided into three sections as detailed below. However, many of these issues overlap, and solutions will not work as well if implemented in isolation, so it's worth reading the whole section before deciding that you have found the correct solution to an issue.

Sanctuary

Guidance for organisations advising LGBT asylum seekers with asylum applications on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity. It includes advice on assisting LGBT asylum seekers in Scotland and creating safe spaces.

Safety

Guidance for organisations supporting asylum seekers regarding the specific needs of LGBT asylum seekers in areas such as housing, mental health, poverty, and exploitation.

Solidarity

Building links between different organisations working with LGBT asylum seekers (e.g. LGBT, asylum and refugee support, human rights campaigning organisations).

Differences Between Asylum Seekers and Refugees

Although asylum seekers and refugees are all defined as people fleeing persecution and looking for a safe place to rebuild their lives, there are key differences in their legal status that impact on the level and kind of support needed. Here are the key differences:

Asylum Seekers

Asylum seekers are people whose asylum application is still being processed (either still being assessed by the Home Office or in the process of appealing a decision). Asylum seekers are not allowed to work or claim benefits and are supposed to be given a place to live (though they are not allowed to choose where). At the time of writing, they receive £37.75 per week on a payment card to buy food and other essentials. If asylum seekers refuse the offered place to live, they are not given this payment.

When an asylum seeker's application is successful, they are granted refugee status.

Refugees

Refugees are people whose application for asylum has been accepted.

When an asylum seeker becomes a refugee, they stop receiving the weekly allowance and, if they had been given accommodation as an asylum seeker, they have to move house. Refugees are permitted to work in the UK in any profession and at any skill level, and can apply for benefits. The refugee status lasts for five years, after which they can apply for indefinite leave to remain.




Sanctuary

This section provides practical guidance for organisations advising LGBT asylum seekers about asylum applications on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity. It includes advice on assisting LGBT asylum seekers in Scotland and creating safe spaces.

Here you will find a collection of common issues and how your organisation can work to improve the situation for both staff and service users.

Building Language Bridges



Asylum seekers are often unfamiliar with Western European terminology, such as 'lesbian', 'gay', 'trans', 'bisexual', 'sexual orientation', and 'gender identity'. Asylum seekers' primary languages may not distinguish between biological 'sex', sexuality, and gender identity in the same ways as English does. Home Office officials, LGBT services, and other organisations have been known to overestimate asylum seekers' familiarity with English concepts that describe sexual orientation and gender identity. Linguistic and cultural misunderstandings about terminology can lead to cases being fast tracked or unfairly dismissed.

Trans asylum seekers are often misclassified as gay or lesbian. This can occur for the reasons described above or due to differences between people's own view of their gender and officials' visual perceptions of their gender, lack of documentation in their self-identified gender, and fear of greater persecution from sharing information about their gender identity or gender history.

What You Can Do


Explain these concepts clearly and make sure that you are understood. Clarify whether an asylum seeker who is using English terms like 'gay' or 'trans' means what you expect. Ask whether an asylum seeker prefers for you to use a term from their home language. If so, make sure that you understand what this term means.

If you feel that an asylum claim may have been classified inaccurately, discuss the situation with the asylum seeker and offer to advocate with the Home Office on their behalf.



Before contacting the Home Office, ask about terminology in their country of origin to assist you in addressing possible cultural misunderstandings.

Trans asylum seekers may also want assistance making sure that officials address them using language that respects their gender identity. Make sure that your staff check with asylum seekers and consistently use their preferred gender pronouns in written and verbal communications, including any contact with officials on their behalf.




LGBT asylum seekers often report problems with the use of interpreters. LGBT asylum seekers have reported experiencing prejudice or hostility from interpreters due to their sexual orientation or gender identity. Some interpreters have refused to translate important information related to sexual orientation or gender identity. Some asylum seekers have also expressed concerns that interpreters from their religious or ethnic community will endanger their safety by breaching confidentiality.

Some LGBT asylum seekers may have difficulty finding interpreters who speak their language of origin, but who are not connected to their own local ethnic or religious community. It may not be possible to find interpreters from outside of their local community due to limited availability.

What You Can Do

When possible, use an interpreter on the phone instead of in person. You can have prepared statements interpreted to asylum seekers at the beginning of a session that address confidentiality, UK recognition of asylum on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity, and UK legal protections for sexual orientation and gender identity. Make sure asylum seekers are aware from the start that

they can ask for a different interpreter at any time and that they do not have to share their name or specific identifying information with interpreters. Some asylum seekers may prefer to switch to an interpreter who is not from their own religious or ethnic group. You can also provide the asylum seeker with a double-sided card (red for unsafe, green for safe). Provide a translated card to the asylum seeker before the interpreter joins the meeting to let them know that they can signal their desire to end the meeting and request another interpreter if they feel unsafe or have concerns about the interpreter at any time, and that you will politely call the meeting to an end and arrange another meeting with a different interpreter. Of course, this is easier if the interpreter is on the phone rather than in the room.




Some asylum seekers lack the English language skills and cultural familiarity with the UK to advocate for themselves effectively.

What You Can Do

Ensure that people know you will support them with contacting the Home Office and complaining about prejudice they experience, including from interpreters.


Creating an Inclusive and Welcoming Environment



Asylum seekers may be afraid to share information about their sexual orientation or gender identity with you and your staff, sometimes due to past experiences of state-sponsored and/or community based violence motivated by prejudice. They may be unaware of their legal rights in Scotland.

What You Can Do


People may look for “clues” that an organisation is aware and sensitive to their situation before they are open about it, e.g. look at the organisation’s website. It is therefore important to have LGBT and asylum friendly information in your office and on your website. Highlight the key points of Scottish equality law on sexual orientation and gender identity with all asylum seekers, whether or not they have been previously identified as seeking refuge due to their sexual orientation or gender identity. Work with LGBT organisations, such as LGBT Youth Scotland and LGBT Health and Wellbeing, to ensure that your service is truly safe for LGBT asylum seekers and refugees.



Trans asylum seekers may have additional needs related to their gender identity. Some trans people have reported negative experiences with accessing “LGBT” organisations. Adding a “T” to “LGB” does not automatically mean trans people will feel safe accessing your resources. Trans asylum seekers may have privacy concerns that require specific understanding of their needs and legal rights.

What You Can Do

Include specifically trans friendly information in your office and on your website, not just resources that mention “LGBT”. Make sure your staff respects people’s preferred gender, name and pronouns. Be aware of language barriers and cultural differences that may affect your understanding of the situation and sensitively ask for clarification as needed. Contact a trans equality organisation, such as the Scottish Trans Alliance, to arrange trans specific training for your staff. Ask for help to ensure that your policies are fully inclusive of trans people and their privacy needs and rights.




Each LGBT asylum case is unique. LGBT asylum seekers often have complex needs that relate to their religion, ethnicity, health, age, and other factors. LGBT asylum seekers have reported gaps in areas of need, when agencies tried to develop one-size-fits-all policies.

What You Can Do

Train staff and volunteers to deal with diverse LGBT asylum cases. Include information about multiple areas of need and about issues faced by asylum seekers with multiple protected characteristics. Work with specialist organisations to do this effectively. Develop person-centred policies and procedures that explicitly include the diverse needs of LGBT people, asylum seekers and refugees and people with intersectional identities.


Navigating the Asylum Process



'Fast-tracking' is often used for rapid processing of asylum claims that Home Office officials feel can be decided 'easily'. Asylum cases on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity can often appear deceptively simple to those with limited understanding of the complex issues involved.

What You Can Do


Anyone who is being recommended for fast-tracking needs specialist legal advice as soon as possible. Provide all staff with a list of contact information for legal specialists who deal with asylum and LGBT issues. Instruct all staff regarding the importance of swift referrals.



Trans asylum issues can be difficult to understand for Home Office officials and organisations that seek to provide assistance. Well-meaning staff can easily mishandle these cases through lack of sufficient knowledge and training in trans issues.

What You Can Do


Alert all staff that every aspect of people's identity needs to be respected equally and that this includes trans identities. Be aware that trans asylum seekers may not have documentation to prove that they are trans. They may not visually appear to you as the gender with which they identify. Respect people's gender identity and confidentiality, whether or not they have had hormones or surgical intervention and whether or not they require any medical intervention. Seek specialist training from trans equality organisations.



Numerous LGBT asylum seekers have reported experiencing ignorance and prejudice from Home Office officials. Many felt that officials lacked sufficient understanding of key facts about their sexual orientation or gender identity.

What You Can Do

Recommend that asylum seekers take a pen and paper with them to all meetings with officials. Recording names and details from these meetings may help them to address negative experiences and correct cultural misunderstandings early on.




Trans asylum seekers may require particular assistance dealing with Home Office officials in terms of pronoun use, gender classification, and practical needs. They may require assistance with obtaining official documentation that lists their preferred name and self-identified gender. Some trans asylum seekers will also want to manage which agencies know the gender they were assigned at birth. Trans asylum seekers who can 'pass' as the gender with which they identify may want to be 'stealth' about their gender history. Those who have not been able to live publicly in their gender identity may wish to keep their gender identity private from some or all agencies.

What You Can Do

Discuss issues of privacy and disclosure at the very beginning with all asylum seekers. Make sure you have enough information to respect their wishes regarding which agencies and authorities should know their gender identity and gender history. Connect trans asylum seekers to trans-specific services as early as possible.




When necessary, and only with the consent of the person involved, keep a confidential record available to all involved staff that lists the name and pronouns they prefer to use with each agency. If officials do not use correct pronouns or gender classifications for trans asylum seekers, offer to advocate on their behalf and seek assistance from trans equality groups.



Some trans asylum seekers may be visually perceived as 'butch lesbians' or 'feminine gay men'. Some cultures do not differentiate between sexual activity and gender role. They may not have documentation of their gender identity. They may not have lived publicly as their identified gender and may not have had any medical interventions.

What You Can Do


Some trans asylum seekers may find it easier to seek asylum on grounds of sexual orientation, particularly if they can document harassment due to being perceived as gay or lesbian. Connecting them to trans advocacy organisations and seeking expert legal advice is important to ensuring that they apply under the most appropriate grounds.



Lesbian asylum seekers have often been married to men and/or have had children. This can lead to asylum claims being fast-tracked or rejected, even in cases where marriages were forced, essential for survival, or where children were products of rape. Lesbian asylum seekers with marital histories or children may also not be believed or have their identities disrespected.

What You Can Do

Advise women to explain their marital situation upfront and try to provide available data about women's lack of marital choice in their country. Make sure your staff respect women's identities as lesbian, whether or not they have been married or had children.



The Home Office officially accepts asylum claims on the grounds of bisexual orientation. However, few cases by bisexual asylum seekers have been accepted due to stereotypes and assumptions about bisexual people. Some people who have faced persecution because of bisexual behaviour patterns or identity may describe themselves as gay or lesbian. People with bisexual behaviour patterns or identity may have been perceived as gay or lesbian and targeted for violence and discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in their country of origin.

What You Can Do


Respect people's identities and understand that the terms people use to describe their sexual orientation are underpinned by many complex factors. Recognise that, in many places, people who are perceived to be non-conforming to expected gender roles may experience discrimination regardless of which Western terms they use to describe themselves. Seek specialist legal advice as early as possible in the asylum process, as bisexual asylum cases can be particularly complex.



Safety

This section provides practical guidance for organisations supporting asylum seekers regarding the specific needs of LGBT asylum seekers in areas such as housing, mental health, poverty, and exploitation.

Poverty




Asylum seekers have very limited financial resources and may lack funds for basic necessities. This is important to remember when discussing the issues around providing evidence to the Home Office. The Home Office can look for “evidence” that a person is LGBT such as attending LGBT clubs, buying LGBT magazines, travelling to support groups, or buying items like clothes, makeup, chest binders, or breast forms to express their gender identity. These demands can create additional financial hardship for LGBT asylum seekers struggling to afford basic necessities like food, clothing, and household items.

What You Can Do

Provide asylum seekers with contact information for local services that provide free or low cost items, such as food banks or clothing drops. Check that these services do not require participants to already have refugee status. Offer to go with them, even if the services are specifically aimed at LGBT people or asylum seekers, as not all staff at all services will understand the needs of LGBT asylum seekers. Trans asylum seekers may be particularly vulnerable to harassment, discrimination, or violence when trying to shop for clothes, makeup, or other items that people use to express their gender identity. If you are unable to send staff with people who express concerns about seeking these services on their own, offer to call ahead if they wish to have staff at the other site briefed in advance on how to support and respect the LGBT asylum seeker. Staff providing these services are also more likely to treat people respectfully when they are aware that another organisation is monitoring how they treat people.




Work with LGBT organisations to find ways to make it easier for LGBT asylum seekers and refugees to access their support groups (for example by assisting with transport costs and writing letters of support).



Many services that provide free or low cost services are faith-based and may not be welcoming or safe for LGBT asylum seekers. Some may openly discriminate against LGBT people. At the same time, some people within LGBT organisations may not be welcoming or safe for people of faith and/or migrants. The result is that LGBT asylum seekers and refugees can become very isolated and less able to access support.

What You Can Do

Faith can be a very important part of a person's identity and way of life, so it is as important to be led by each person's needs as with any other aspect of identity. If a person requests to be signposted to faith-based organisations, find out which organisations in your area are positive about including LGBT people. If the person asks to be signposted to an LGBT organisation, find out what groups in your area are positive about including asylum seekers and people of faith. In both cases, ask asylum seekers to report back to you about their experiences with these services and address any concerns that they raise.




LGBT asylum seekers may not yet be connected with possible sources of financial and other support in the UK. They may be unaware of LGBT-specific support.

What You Can Do

Check not only whether asylum seekers understand their potential eligibility for financial support, but also their knowledge of the range of services provided by LGBT specific organisations.

Employment




LGBT refugees are at higher risk of unemployment and/or predatory employment situations, such as unofficial work (including those associated with sex work), due to multiple discrimination and intersectional barriers to accessing employment. Trans refugees are even more likely to encounter discrimination due to visual perceptions of their gender and/or lack of documentation in their self-identified gender. Fear of greater persecution may deter trans refugees from applying for jobs with application procedures that could reveal sensitive information about their gender identity or gender history. This inability to provide for themselves financially can lead people to accept undocumented work in unsafe or predatory conditions. Some LGBT asylum seekers may be at risk of physical violence or sexually transmitted illnesses due to unsafe sex work.

What You Can Do

Make sure people are aware of their legal rights to various forms of financial assistance and UK laws against employment discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. Offer to advocate for LGBT refugees who are facing discrimination. Let them know they can come to you for non-judgemental support if they find themselves in an unsafe or predatory employment situation. Educate your staff about the needs and concerns that LGBT asylum seekers might have regarding subsistence sex work and keep up to date with available rape crisis and sex worker services. Make sure this information is available to your staff.

Health and Wellbeing



Asylum seekers and refugees have reported being refused NHS medical services and LGBT asylum seekers face additional forms of health care discrimination.

The NHS provides free health care services to refugees and all asylum seekers whose applications for refugee status are still being considered by the Home Office. Asylum seekers cannot legally be denied gender-related NHS medical care. Even asylum seekers whose applications have been rejected may be eligible to continue receiving some medical services deemed necessary by medical professionals.

Some trans asylum seekers have been told that they are not eligible for necessary gender reassignment medical services. This is a widespread misconception. Trans asylum seekers have the same entitlement as other trans people living in Scotland to access NHS gender reassignment medical services. Breaks in hormone access can lead to physical and mental health issues that can interfere with asylum-related interactions.

What You Can Do


Inform LGBT asylum seekers and refugees that they are eligible for free health care services and that discrimination in NHS services on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity is unlawful. Let them know that they can report any negative experiences to you and that you will help them to file an official NHS complaint, if they wish. Always ask about trans asylum seekers' medical needs and connect them to safe, trans-aware services as soon as possible. Contact trans organisations for specific advice and resources, but keep people anonymous if they prefer.



Specialist gender reassignment health services can be directly referred by agencies and self-referred to the Sandyford NHS Gender Identity Clinic by using this link:

lothiansexualhealth.scot/gender-identity-clinic/accessing-gic


Offer LGBT asylum seekers and refugees both general and LGBT-specific resources. Provide printed copies of Home Office health care guidance documents and an NHS factsheet about health care for asylum seekers and refugees in Scotland (both are available in the Helpful Links section of this publication) and offer NHS resources that address trans and LGB health. Share this information with any agency that refuses services or discriminates on the basis of immigration status, sexual orientation or gender identity, in addition to reporting them.



Many LGBT asylum seekers have experienced sexual assault and victimisation, including state-sponsored forms of torture and abuse. Trauma responses can affect people's ability to interact effectively with asylum officials. LGBT asylum seekers often have complex health and wellbeing needs.

What You Can Do

Listen to people's stories and reassure them that they are not alone and that the violence was not their fault. Keep a list of both asylum/migrant- and LGBT-friendly mental health and wellbeing services available and note which ones are specifically trans-friendly.




LGBT asylum seekers often face discrimination from Home Office officials and the UK public. They may have had negative experiences with faith-based services, LGBT organisations and other asylum seekers. These experiences can have a negative impact on people's mental health and wellbeing.

What You Can Do

Implement and advertise a reporting system for addressing hostility or discrimination disclosed by asylum seekers. Responding swiftly to incidents of discrimination within your own organisation will make your service safer for everyone and could make a daunting asylum process a little easier for those going through it.


Housing



LGBT asylum seekers are at higher risk of experiencing harassment and assault from staff and from other asylum seekers in detention facilities and other shared accommodation due to prejudice against their sexual orientations or gender identities.

What You Can Do

Inform asylum seekers of their rights and ask about their living conditions. If you feel people are experiencing harassment or abuse, assist them to complain and help them to advocate for safety improvements. Unfortunately, the current detention system and potential penalties for refusing the housing provided leaves people with few options for dealing with mistreatment. Advocating for change in this system will improve conditions for all asylum seekers, especially those who face additional marginalisation due to sexual orientation or gender identity.



Trans asylum seekers are often placed in detention centres that do not match their gender identity. This can occur if officials “fear for their safety” and/or the gender marker on their identity documents is different from how they identify.

What You Can Do


You may need to advocate for trans asylum seekers with the Home Office and other officials. Educate your staff about the legal requirement to house trans asylum seekers in the gender-specific facility they require. It is safer for trans people to be detained within the facility they identify as appropriate. Trans asylum seekers who wish to be housed with others of their self-identified gender do not legally need a Gender Recognition Certificate or any documentation in their self-identified gender to be housed appropriately. trans equality organisations may be able to advise and assist you with fleshing out these arguments. Always remember to check with asylum seekers first, to avoid disclosing information about their gender identity that they wish to keep private from detention centre staff and/or other detainees.



Solidarity

This section provides practical guidance for building links between different organisations working with LGBT asylum seekers.


Forging Links



It can be daunting to approach an organisation from a different equality strand for the first time. Organisations can feel worried that they or people who use their services will experience prejudice. But it is vital that different equality organisations work together on LGBT Asylum cases because they are complex.

What You Can Do


Remember that a variety of organisations working together will provide a much better support system for your service users. There are more organisations interested in providing better support for LGBT asylum seekers and refugees than you may realise. Be brave and take the first steps toward developing relationships with people who will ultimately make your job easier.



While most organisations do their best to understand all aspects of equality, it is difficult to find the money for the numerous types of training required.

What You Can Do

Set up a training swap with a partner organisation. This will also develop the partnership. Join partners' email lists and social media pages to more easily keep up to date with free training opportunities.




Valuable fledgling partnerships can often be severely jeopardised by even small misunderstandings and miscommunications, especially if partners expect or fear prejudice.

What You Can Do

Be patient with yourself and with your new partners, especially during the early stages. Remember that the aim of the partnership work is to learn from each other because no organisation gets all aspects of equality work right all the time. Be forgiving of partners' mistakes and gaps in knowledge as well as your own. Do not let these discourage you from continuing very valuable work.


Sharing and Collaboration



LGBT asylum seekers and refugees often need multiple referrals to meet their intersectional needs. Organisations that focus on a particular equality strand may not be aware of the latest services offered by other organisations that specialise in areas outside of their own focus.

What You Can Do

Stay up-to-date with the services offered in your area and look for possible overlaps. If you discover that another organisation provides a similar service, contact them to see whether you can collaborate to increase your expertise on different aspects of LGBT asylum cases.




Asylum seekers and refugees with intersectional needs may not feel safe to discuss all aspects of their identities with you and may have limited access to information about other organisations and equality strands. Asylum seekers and refugees often need to go through several organisations before their needs are met. It can be emotionally difficult and time-consuming for asylum seekers and refugees to repeat their stories over again for each agency.

What You Can Do

Provide an information package about other organisations or signpost users to other services during your early contact with asylum seekers and refugees and offer to connect them directly.

Discuss options for offering collaboration that would allow some meetings to take place with staff from different agencies. In some cases, carefully negotiated collaboration on services can help you to educate staff on issues from other equalities strands and create a more well-rounded response to people's intersectional needs.

Unity and Diversity through Arts and Culture




People seeking services can feel stuck between single strand organisations and be unsure if all aspects of their identities are respected by all service providers. Without visible partnership work, it is difficult for people to find out if organisations will understand and address the different kinds of prejudice they can experience in daily life and within organisations.

What You Can Do

You can find creative ways to appeal to people with needs in multiple equality strands and develop partnerships across organisations, even with limited finances. Collaborate on fundraising events, social events, spoken word performances, art shows, and talent nights that strengthen understanding of ethnic, religious, sexual, and gender diversity and promote unity across different equalities strands and make limited resources stretch further and have more impact.

Display information resources from diverse equalities strands in your office. People look for visual “clues” that you are welcoming and inclusive.



Organisations often struggle with how to address the diverse needs of people who access their services. LGBT asylum seekers and refugees often have multiple intersectional needs and can have difficulty finding environments in which all of their identities are respected and welcomed.

What You Can Do

Creative activities can be emotionally healing and help people to build friendships. Offering events such as crafts or cultural storytelling sessions can bring people from different backgrounds together and increase mutual understanding.

Helpful links

Faith

- ◆ GALVA-108 – Gay and Lesbian Vaishnava Association
galva108.org
- ◆ Imaan
imaan.org.uk
facebook.com/imaanlgbtq
- ◆ Living Out – Christian and Gay
livingout.org
- ◆ Metropolitan Community Church – Glasgow
mccinglasgow.co.uk
- ◆ Quest – Pastoral Support for LGBT Catholics – Glasgow
questlgbti.uk
- ◆ Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees
sfar.org.uk
- ◆ St Mary's Cathedral – Glasgow
thecathedral.org.uk

Health and Wellbeing

- ◆ NHS Factsheet – Healthcare for Asylum Seekers and Refugees in Scotland
nhsinform.scot/publications/healthcare-for-asylum-seekers-and-refugees-in-scotland-factsheet
- ◆ Edinburgh Rape Crisis Centre – Still I Am (SIA) Project
ercc.scot/still-i-am-sia-survivors-from-the-black-minority-ethnic-community
- ◆ LGBT Health and Wellbeing
lgbthealth.org.uk

- **LGBT Helpline Scotland – 0300 123 2523**
lgbthealth.org.uk/services-support/lgbt-helpline-scotland
- **Sandyford NHS Gender Identity Clinic**
sandyford.scot/sexual-health-services/gender-identity-service
- **Scottish Women’s Rights Centre – BME Women, Immigration and LGBT Support**
scottishwomensrightscentre.org.uk/bme-women-immigration--lgbt

Legal

- **GayLawNet UK LGBT – Asylum**
gaylawnet.com/laws/uk.htm#asylum
- **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**
refworld.org/docid/50348afc2.html
- **Peter Tatchell Foundation – Asylum Advice for LGBT Refugees**
petertatchell.net/asylum/asylumadvice
petertatchellfoundation.org/asylum-advice-for-lgbt-refugees
- **Rainbow Migration (formerly UK Lesbian and Gay Immigration Group)**
rainbowmigration.org.uk
- **Right to Remain Toolkit**
righttoremain.org.uk/toolkit
- **Scottish Refugee Council – New guide for LGBT asylum seekers**
www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/new-guide-for-lgbti-asylum-seekers
- **UNHCR intervention before the Supreme Court of the United Kingdom in the case of HJ (Iran) and HT (Cameroon) v. Secretary of State for the Home Department**
refworld.org/docid/4bd1abbc2.html

LGBT Asylum and Migration

- ◆ African Rainbow Family
africanrainbowfamily.org
- ◆ International Railroad for Queer Refugees
irqr.net
- ◆ Iraqi LGBT
iraqilgbt.org.uk
- ◆ LGBT Refugee Project (Glasgow)
lgbthealth.org.uk/services-support/lgbt-refugee-project
- ◆ Unity Centre Glasgow
unitycentreglasgow.org
- ◆ Unity LGBT Support Group – Glasgow
unityinthecommunityglasgow.wordpress.com/unity-lgbt-support-group

Support for Organisations

- ◆ BEMIS
bemis.org.uk
- ◆ Equality Network
equality-network.org
- ◆ Scottish Trans Alliance
scottishtrans.org

Official Statistics

- ◆ Home Office – Experimental Statistics: Asylum claims on the basis of sexual orientation (Sep 2020)
gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-statistics-year-ending-june-2020/experimental-statistics-asylum-claims-on-the-basis-of-sexual-orientation

This document is based on findings from the 2011 ‘Sanctuary, Safety and Solidarity’ report on issues facing LGBT asylum seekers and refugees in Scotland.

The ‘Sanctuary, Safety and Solidarity’ report was produced by Equality Network, BEMIS, and Glasgow Refugee Asylum and Migration Network (GRAMNet), with funding from the Equality and Human Rights Commission and additional support for printing the summary version from GRAMNet and Glasgow Human Rights Network (GHRN).

The full 202-page research report and a 22-page summary version is available to download at the Equality Network website:

equality-network.org/resources/publications/intersectional

Thanks to the Equality and Human Rights Commission for funding the original version of this resource as part of the EveryoneIN project and to the Scottish Trans Alliance for content assistance.



Authors: Y. Gavriel Ansara, Sam Rankin and updated by Mel Maguire and James H. Verardi.

First published in August 2013 in print and on the web.

Update published in print and on the web in October 2021.

Special thanks to Rowan Alison and Nathan Skye, LGBT Health and Wellbeing and CRER.

Other formats

If you need this document in larger print or another format or language, please contact us on 0131 467 6039 or en@equality-network.org.

This document is available in PDF format on our website: www.equality-network.org



The Equality Network is a leading Scottish lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) equality and human rights charity.

30 Bernard Street
Edinburgh EH6 6PR

Telephone: +44 (0) 131 467 6039

www.equality-network.org

Email: en@equality-network.org

 [LGBTIScotland](#)

 [equalitynetwork](#)

 [LGBTIScotland](#)



Scottish Trans is the Equality Network project to improve gender identity and gender reassignment equality, rights and inclusion in Scotland.

www.scottishtrans.org

Email: info@scottishtrans.org

 [ScottishTrans](#)

 [scottishtrans.org](#)

 [ScottishTrans](#)

Registered Scottish Charity: SC037852

Company limited by guarantee: SC220213

Published: October 2021