



United Kingdom

ACCESS TO GOODS AND SERVICES

In late April, following a ruling by the UK Supreme Court on the interpretation of "sex" under the Equality Act 2010 (see also under Legal Gender Recognition), the Equality and Human Rights Commission warned that public authorities, including the National Health Service, could face enforcement action if they failed to update guidance on the provision of single-sex services. Shortly afterwards, the Commission published an interim update for public bodies and businesses, stating that workplaces were required to provide single-sex toilets and that access to single-sex spaces should be determined in line with "biological sex" as defined in the ruling.

In late May, the EHRC issued a more detailed update to its draft code of practice on service and launched a public consultation. The code advised that service providers, including sports clubs and hospitals, could request a birth certificate where there was a "genuine concern" regarding eligibility for single-sex services, and reiterated that access to such facilities should be determined on the same legal basis of "biological sex at birth". Following criticism, the EHRC amended its interim update in mid-May to clarify that toilets, showers, and changing facilities may be mixed-sex where provided in separate, lockable rooms.

In response, the Good Law Project launched a legal challenge to the interim update, arguing that it exceeded the scope of the Supreme Court ruling and was incompatible with the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998. In July, the High Court granted permission for the challenge to proceed. The claimant argued that the guidance amounted to a de facto exclusion of trans people from facilities, risked breaches of privacy and equality rights, and went beyond what the Court had required.

During the consultation period, Museums Galleries Scotland warned that the proposed EHRC code could leave trans people without access to appropriate facilities and, in some cases, force smaller institutions to close if they were unable to implement the required changes. In early September, the EHRC submitted its proposed final code of practice to the UK Government, which

had not adopted it by year's end. In November, the High Court heard the Good Law Project's judicial review challenge. After two days of hearings, the Court reserved its judgment. In November, the High Court heard the Good Law Project's judicial review challenge to the EHRC's interim update. In February 2026, the High Court issued judgment. It ruled that the interim update was not unlawful, but that service providers could lawfully choose to operate trans-inclusive sex-segregated services such as toilets. On that basis, it appears that the EHRC's proposed code of practice is inaccurate, but that is still to be decided.

In July, Sex Matters announced plans to sue the City of London Corporation for £50,000 over its policy of allowing trans women to use the Hampstead Heath Ladies' Pond. In line with the opinion of regular swimmers, the corporation has permitted trans women to swim at the Ladies' Pond since 2019 and reaffirmed the policy following April's Supreme Court's ruling (See also under Legal Gender Recognition). In response LGBTI rights groups, local residents, and allies have taken to social media and community forums to express solidarity with trans swimmers while praising the Corporation's inclusive stance. In November, Sex Matters formally filed its High Court claim seeking a judicial review of the City of London Corporation's policy allowing trans women to use Hampstead Heath's Ladies' Pond. In response, civil society announced that a commemoration of trans joy and community celebration will take place to "reclaim Hampstead Heath from the TERFs".

In January 2026, the High Court refused permission for Sex Matters to pursue its legal challenge at that level, with Mrs Justice Lieven ruling that an individual alleging direct discrimination, rather than the charity itself, would be the appropriate claimant and sending the matter back to the county court for any further action.

BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

In January, a man appeared in court in London after verbally abusing comedian Matt Lucas with homophobic slurs while he was on his way to a football match. The defendant was also charged

with racially aggravated harassment of police officers. He was granted bail, with the case set to continue at Crown Court.

In March, the Football Association launched an [investigation](#) into homophobic abuse allegedly directed at Crystal Palace defender Ben Chilwell by Millwall fans during a match. Chilwell was targeted with homophobic chants from a section of the away support. The FA confirmed it will examine the incident under anti-homophobia rules.

In April, Tranmere Rovers midfielder Sam Finley [received](#) a 13-match ban after admitting to using a homophobic slur against Walsall's Jamille Matt during a league fixture. The sanction was lengthened due to two previous aggravated breaches of FA Rule E3 on his record.

In May, comedy writer Graham Linehan [pleaded](#) not guilty to charges of harassment and criminal damage against a 18-year-old trans activist. The charges relate to abusive social media posts made in October 2024 and the alleged destruction of the activist's phone during a conference in London, where Linehan was a speaker. He was granted bail on condition that he has no contact with the complainant. In September, Linehan faced [trial](#) in London over accusations that he persistently posted abusive comments online targeting a trans woman. Nonetheless, in late November, he was [cleared](#) of harassing the victim on social media but found guilty of criminal damage of their mobile phone outside a conference in London and ordered to pay costs of £650 (approximately €760) and a statutory surcharge of £200 (approximately €235).

In June, Tottenham Hotspur were [fined](#) £75,000 (approximately €87,750) by the Football Association over homophobic chants from their supporters during a September 2024 match against Manchester United. The chants, directed at Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta and United midfielder Mason Mount, prompted the FA to charge Spurs with misconduct in November.

BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

In January, four teenagers were [jailed](#) for luring an 18-year-old trans girl to a roller disco in Harrow,

north-west London, where they stabbed and beat her while shouting transphobic slurs. The attackers later boasted about the assault on Snapchat. All admitted causing bodily harm with intent, with one also pleading guilty to possession of a knife. Nonetheless, the judge described the attack as only partly motivated by the woman's gender identity.

In early May, the Scottish government [confirmed](#) it would not introduce the bill to criminalise misogyny before the next Holyrood election in May 2026 (Scotland's parliamentary elections), citing a lack of time to draft legislation. Instead, ministers said they would amend existing hate crime laws to extend protections on the basis of sex. In August the Scottish Government started a [consultation](#) on proposed secondary legislation to do this. The proposal defined "sex" as "biological sex at birth". In January 2026, the secondary legislation was [laid in the Scottish Parliament](#). As secondary legislation, there is very little opportunity for members of parliament to debate it. It will come to a vote in March 2026. If it is agreed by the Parliament, Scotland will be the first part of the UK to write "sex means biological sex at birth" into statute.

In October, the UK Home Office released its latest hate-crime [statistics](#) for England and Wales (year ending March 2025), including updated data on offences recorded by the police across all monitored strands, such as sexual orientation and trans identity. According to the report, police forces outside London's Metropolitan Police Service recorded 115,990 hate crimes during the year, a 2% increase compared with the previous year. Race-based offences rose by 6%, while religiously motivated hate crimes increased by 3%. By contrast, recorded hate crimes linked to sexual orientation fell by 2%, disability-related offences by 8%, and crimes targeting trans people by 11%.

In late December, UK police leaders [indicated](#) that the current system of recording "non-crime hate incidents" could be abolished, arguing that it is no longer fit for purpose. A forthcoming review by the National Police Chiefs' Council and the College of Policing will recommend replacing the category with a new, more limited framework based on what they describe as a "common-sense" approach. Under

the proposed model, only the most serious cases would continue to be formally logged, and then as antisocial behaviour rather than as a separate hate-incident category. Non-crime hate incidents refer to behaviour perceived as motivated by hostility or prejudice towards characteristics such as race or gender but which does not meet the legal threshold for a criminal offence.

EDUCATION

In January, the University of Brighton launched a new PhD [scholarship](#) dedicated to advancing trans and non-binary inclusion. The scholarship is designed to support a researcher committed to improving the wellbeing and dignity of trans and non-binary people by providing financial assistance and access to resources.

In July, the UK Government published its [update](#) to the Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) guidance for England. The guidance, which will become statutory in September 2026, introduces expanded content on consent, respectful relationships, and mental health. The document reaffirms that schools must teach about different kinds of relationships, including same-sex relationships, and that this should be delivered in an age-appropriate and respectful manner. However, the new framework adopts more cautious language when addressing gender identity. LGBTI organisations have welcomed the continued commitment to ensuring that same-sex relationships are part of the curriculum, but have also voiced concern that the softened language around gender identity could embolden schools to avoid or minimise trans-inclusive education.

EMPLOYMENT

In January, more than 700 current and former employees launched [legal action](#) against McDonald's over allegations of discrimination, homophobia, racism, ableism, and harassment across more than 450 restaurants. The lawsuit followed the company's [failure](#) to uphold a legally binding agreement with the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) to protect staff from sexual harassment and discrimination. Appearing before MPs, UK chief executive Alistair Macrow [admitted](#)

that McDonald's had received 75 allegations of sexual harassment in the past year, 47 of which led to disciplinary action and 29 to dismissals. The proceedings were ongoing at the end of the year, with no final outcome reported.

In February, a tribunal heard the [case](#) of a nurse who had been suspended from Victoria Hospital in Kirkcaldy after objecting on Christmas Eve 2023 to a trans woman colleague, who was a doctor, using the women's changing room in the A&E department. Following the incident, the doctor [lodged](#) a complaint alleging bullying and harassment, and the nurse was suspended. The nurse subsequently brought a tribunal claim alleging sexual harassment or harassment related to a protected belief under the Equality Act. In June, NHS Fife [cleared](#) the nurse of gross misconduct at a disciplinary hearing, concluding that none of the allegations against her were substantiated. In December, the employment tribunal [ruled](#) that the nurse had been harassed by NHS Fife in relation to her beliefs. But all allegations against the trans doctor were dismissed, and the tribunal said that the nurse had unlawfully harassed the doctor.

In February, the Court of Appeal [ruled](#) in favour of a Christian school worker dismissed in 2019 from Farmor's School in Gloucestershire after posting on Facebook criticising plans to teach LGBTI relationships in primary schools. The claimant, who served as a pastoral administrator and work experience manager, had previously won an appeal in June 2023, but the case was sent back to an employment tribunal for reconsideration. The court found that the decision to remit the case back to an employment tribunal was "unlawfully discriminatory". In May, Farmor's School sought to [challenge](#) the ruling with the Supreme Court, but three justices denied permission, holding that most grounds were outside the Court's jurisdiction and the rest did not raise an arguable point of law.

In March, a teacher lost a High Court [challenge](#) against findings that she had acted unprofessionally by telling pupils during a lesson at Bishop Justus Church of England School in Bromley that being LGBTI is "a sin" and that trans people are "just confused." The remarks, made in February 2022,

led to her suspension and dismissal two months later. A professional conduct panel concluded her comments lacked respect for others' rights and risked upsetting pupils, though she was not prohibited from future teaching. The claimant argued that publication of the findings of the panel was unlawful and harmed her privacy and job prospects, but the High Court rejected her case, ruling that the decision was lawful and proportionate.

In late May, an employment tribunal dismissed claims of unfair dismissal and religious discrimination brought by a teacher who was dismissed after accessing and transcribing a trans pupil's safeguarding report onto her personal computer. The teacher had previously refused to use the male name and pronouns requested by the child's parents. Suspended in September 2021 and later dismissed after the safeguarding breach was uncovered, she argued her treatment amounted to detriment, wrongful dismissal, and discrimination on grounds of religion or belief. The tribunal rejected all claims.

In July, the Welsh Government faced criticism for continuing to identify trans women as women in its official HR guidance on trans inclusion, despite April's UK Supreme Court ruling (see also under Legal Gender Recognition). The Welsh Government stated that its policy remains that "trans women are women, trans men are men, and non-binary identities are valid," framing this as part of its commitment to an inclusive and diverse workplace.

In February 2026, in the case of Good Law Project vs Equality and Human Rights Commission (see above), the High Court ruled that employers who provide separate toilets for women and men employees must do so based on "biological sex at birth". But the court said that trans people should not be required to use the toilet for their biological sex, and other arrangements - although unspecified by the Court - should be made for trans employees.

EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

In late January, plans drafted by the Home Office proposed longer sentences for offenders

convicted of hate crimes against LGBTI and disabled people in England and Wales. Currently, hostility towards LGBTI and disabled people can be treated as an aggravating factor at sentencing, but it is not embedded in the charge itself. In June, the government pledged to equalise sentencing for anti-LGBTI and anti-disability hate crimes by treating them as aggravated offences. The move followed a debate on an amendment introduced by Labour MP Rachel Taylor, backed by over 100 cross-party MPs, which aims to strengthen legal recognition and sentencing in cases where crimes are motivated by hostility towards sexuality, trans identity, or disability. In February 2026, the UK Government introduced legislation to implement this. Scotland has had such legislation since 2021.

In January, England Hockey announced that from the next season trans women would no longer be eligible to compete in the female category. Under the new participation policy, competitions will be divided into a female category and an open category. In May, the Football Association introduced a ban on trans women competing in women's football in England, aligning its policy with the UK Supreme Court ruling defining "woman" in the Equality Act by biological sex (see also under Legal Gender Recognition). Similar restrictions had previously been introduced in cricket, where the England and Wales Cricket Board barred trans women from the top two tiers of elite women's cricket.

In March, the University of Edinburgh adopted a policy allowing staff to use toilet facilities in line with their gender identity, irrespective of possession of a gender recognition certificate. In April, eight nurses from County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust brought legal proceedings challenging the Trust's decision to permit a trans colleague to use female changing rooms. The claims include sexual harassment, discrimination, victimisation and alleged violations of Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights. In May, the Scottish Parliament announced that some toilet and changing facilities would be converted to gender-neutral use, while access to remaining single-sex facilities would be restricted on the basis of sex assigned at birth, following the UK Supreme Court ruling on the definition of "sex" under the

Equality Act 2010. In July, the Scottish Government confirmed it would meet with Sex Matters, which had threatened legal action, and stated that the policy remained under review.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

In February, the High Court heard arguments in the case involving the British pop-rock band The 1975, after Malaysian authorities shut down the Good Vibes Festival in July 2023 when frontman Matty Healy kissed bassist Ross MacDonald on stage in protest of the country's anti-LGBTI laws. Festival organisers, Future Sound Asia (FSA), allege the band breached its contract and that members owed a duty of care. However, the band's lawyer argued that Healy and his bandmates should not be personally liable for the authorities' decision to cancel the festival and blacklist the group from performing in Malaysia.

In March, the Office for Students (OfS) fined the University of Sussex a record £585,000 (approximately €685,000) following a three-and-a-half-year investigation into its handling of the case of philosophy professor Kathleen Stock. Stock resigned in 2021 after sustained protests by students and staff in response to views she had expressed on gender identity and related policy debates. The OfS concluded that the university's trans and non-binary equality policy, which required teaching materials to "positively represent trans people" and prohibited "transphobic propaganda," had created a chilling effect on lawful speech and academic freedom. The University of Sussex rejected the ruling as disproportionate and politically motivated and, by the end of 2025, had initiated judicial review proceedings challenging the fine. The case remained pending at year's end.

In late May, the Labour Party's National Executive Committee (NEC) prepared to cancel the party's national women's conference rather than uphold its policy permitting trans women to participate. According to LabourList, the NEC was also considering preventing trans women from standing on all-women shortlists, citing concerns about potential legal challenges from groups opposing the inclusion of trans women in women-only political spaces.

HEALTH

In February, a legal challenge was filed in the High Court against a general practitioner (GP) practice concerning the prescription of hormone treatment to a 16-year-old patient. The claim, brought by the patient's father, alleged that treatment had been provided without parental consent and contrary to guidance issued by the National Health Service (NHS), the United Kingdom's public healthcare system. The challenge focused on the clinic's use of an informed consent approach and argued that it did not reflect the cautious approach outlined in the Cass Review in relation to gender-affirming healthcare for under-18s. The case remained ongoing at the end of the year.

In late April, reports revealed that the National Health Service (NHS) plans to screen all children referred to gender clinics for autism and ADHD, as well as assess their mental health, family relationships, and sexual development, including same-sex attraction.

In May, England's Health Secretary Wes Streeting announced a review into the prescribing of gender-affirming hormone treatment for trans people under the age of 18, following earlier restrictions on the use of puberty blockers. The review was intended to assess the available clinical evidence, with expert recommendations initially expected in July. However, by the end of 2025, no formal recommendations or policy decisions arising from the review had been published.

In July, the High Court dismissed a legal challenge to the registration of England's first private clinic providing gender-affirming healthcare to adolescents. The claim, brought by a former nurse and another individual, alleged that the Care Quality Commission had acted irrationally in approving the clinic. The court rejected the challenge, with Mrs Justice Eady finding that the CQC's assessment had been rational and that patient safety had been given primary consideration.

BODILY INTEGRITY

In May, Scottish ministers announced that criminalising conversion practices has been removed from the government's immediate

agenda. Instead, they committed to working with the UK Government on a "four-nations approach" to legislation banning these practices. If no UK-wide bill is introduced, ministers pledged to bring forward a Scottish bill in the first year of the next parliament, after the 2026 Holyrood elections.

In July, Amnesty International published a [report](#) revealing a sharp rise in funding and activity by anti-LGBTI groups in the UK, particularly those promoting so-called "conversion therapy." The research identified 65 active organisations, including 12 promoting conversion practices and 13 crisis pregnancy centres. UK branches of US-based organisations spent £34 million, ultra-conservative Christian advocacy groups £31.5 million, and anti-abortion organisations £28.5 million.

DATA COLLECTION

In March and July, reports were published as part of the Sullivan Review, commissioned by the previous Conservative government to examine the collection and use of data on sex and gender. The review was led by Alice Sullivan, a member of the advisory group of Sex Matters. The Review recommended that data collection should prioritise biological sex at birth. These recommendations have raised concerns among LGBTI organisations and researchers regarding the potential implications for future government policy, research frameworks, and the recognition of trans people in official data collection systems.

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

In June, culture minister Sir Chris Bryant [criticised](#) the decision by Pride organisers in Birmingham, Brighton, London, Manchester, and Oxford to bar political parties from marching, calling it a "retrograde step." He argued that political parties had been essential in advancing LGBTI rights, a view echoed by Conservative shadow culture secretary, Stuart Andrew.

LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

In February, Scottish Green equalities spokeswoman Maggie Chapman [urged](#) the UK Government to overturn its use of Section 35 of the Scotland Act, which blocked the Scottish Gender Recognition

Reform Bill from taking effect. The bill, passed by Holyrood in 2022, was designed to simplify the process of obtaining a gender recognition certificate by removing the requirement for a medical diagnosis.

In July, the High Court [dismissed](#) a legal challenge to the registration of England's first private clinic providing gender-affirming healthcare to adolescents. The claim, brought by a former nurse and another individual, alleged that the Care Quality Commission had acted irrationally in approving the clinic. The court rejected the challenge, with Mrs Justice Eady finding that the CQC's assessment had been rational and that patient safety had been given primary consideration.

In April, the UK Supreme Court [ruled](#) that the terms "woman" and "sex" in the Equality Act 2010 refer to sex as recorded at birth, rejecting arguments that trans women holding Gender Recognition Certificates (GRCs) should be recognised as women for the purposes of the Act. While the Court emphasised that trans people remain protected from discrimination under the Equality Act, the ruling [confirmed](#) that holders of GRCs may lawfully be excluded from single-sex services where this is justified under the legislation. The judgment prompted public bodies and private organisations to review policies relating to single-sex services, facilities, and quotas. The ruling was [welcomed](#) by organisations opposing the inclusion of trans women in women-only spaces, while trans communities and civil society organisations [expressed](#) concern about the implications for the legal recognition and practical effect of Gender Recognition Certificates. In August, Dr Victoria McCloud, the UK's first openly transgender judge, [initiated](#) proceedings before the European Court of Human Rights. Dr McCloud, who resigned from the judiciary in 2024, argued that the Supreme Court's refusal to permit her to intervene in the case violated her right to a fair hearing under Article 6 of the European Convention on Human Rights, on the grounds that she was denied the opportunity to demonstrate how the Court's interpretation directly affected her legal status and rights.

In June, the parents of a 17-year-old initiated a High Court challenge seeking to prevent their child from continuing gender-affirming healthcare. The claim followed the parents' discovery that the teenager had forged a parent's signature in order to access hormone treatment. The parents argued that the treatment had been provided without an adequate assessment of the child's mental and physical health and raised concerns about potential harm. The court adjourned the proceedings, with Mr Justice MacDonald noting that the teenager maintained that, under the law, they were entitled to make their own healthcare decisions.

SOCIAL SECURITY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

In June, MPs urged the government to accelerate compensation for LGBTI veterans who were persecuted under the pre-2000 "gay ban" in the armed forces. The £75 million (approximately €87.75 million) redress scheme, established in December 2024, offers payments of up to £70,000 (approximately €82,100) to acknowledge the abuse, assault, and dishonourable discharges suffered by LGBTI service members. Nonetheless, of the 1,300 who have applied, only 84 veterans have received payments so far.

POLICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

In April, the British Transport Police announced changes to its custody policy concerning strip searches following a ruling by the UK Supreme Court on the interpretation of "sex" under the Equality Act 2010 (see also under Legal Gender Recognition). The force stated that trans women arrested on Britain's railways would, as an interim measure, be strip-searched by officers in accordance with sex as defined in the ruling, rather than gender recognition status. Previously, detainees holding a Gender Recognition Certificate could be searched in line with their acquired gender. British Transport Police indicated that the revised approach would apply while the implications of the judgment were under review.

In late April, following the UK Supreme Court's ruling on the Equality Act (see also under Legal Gender Recognition), authorities were asked to clarify the

status of Downview's Prison transgender unit. The wing, created in 2019 after a trans prisoner sexually assaulted two women at another facility, houses trans women with a history of sexual or violent offending who hold Gender Recognition Certificates. Campaigners demanded that the eight inmates currently on the wing be transferred to the male estate, arguing the unit undermines single-sex protections, consumes scarce resources, and causes distress to female prisoners.

In July, the mother and stepfather of a trans teenager, who died by suicide after going missing in 2022, launched High Court proceedings against Sussex Police, alleging that the force's failings contributed to his death. At an inquest held last year, a jury concluded that Sussex Police had "responded inadequately" after he was reported missing. Jason was reported missing by his family, but according to their legal claim, around 10 hours passed before an officer first attended their home. His parents argue that the police "failed properly or at all to protect Jason against the risk of suicide," insisting there was a "real prospect of a different outcome" had a reasonable and timely response been made.

In November, For Women Scotland initiated legal proceedings challenging Scottish Prison Service guidance providing that trans prisoners may be accommodated in establishments matching their affirmed gender where this can be done safely, arguing that the policy is incompatible with the Equality Act as interpreted by the Supreme Court.