



UNITED KINGDOM

ASYLUM

The Home Office was reported in September to have denied asylum to at least 3,100 individuals who had fled a country where same-sex relations are criminalised. In August, the story of a gay asylum seeker made headlines as the ruling immigration judge refused his claim because he did not have a “gay demeanor”.

The UK Lesbian and Gay Immigration Group (UKLGIG) launched a new campaign, featuring LGBTI people who have been in immigration detention, to urge MPs to support amendments to the Immigration Bill to bring in a 28-day limit to detention.

BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

The UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women urged the UK to combat hate crimes against trans people, ensure effective investigation and prosecution.

Police records revealed that anti-LGBT hate crimes and incidents in England and Wales increased from 5,807 in 2014-15, to 13,530 in 2018-19. However, the rate of prosecution has dropped from 20 per cent to eight per cent. The number of homophobic attacks doubled, while transphobic attacks tripled. The Home Office’s Hate Crime statistics for 2018/19, released in October, also showed a 10 per cent increase anti-LGBT attacks in England and Wales, compared to the previous year.

On 30 May, a female couple was attacked by a group of men in London. The case went viral after the victims posted a picture of their injuries. London’s mayor, Sadiq Khan, and then Prime Minister Theresa May condemned the attack.

MPs also called for increased measures against anti-LGBT hate online. In 2020 a Law Commission will start reviewing whether current hate crime laws are effective in combating online and offline abuse.

In Northern Ireland, Mr Justice Murrin is carrying out a review of hate crime legislation, looking at hate crime categories and protected groups, effectiveness of enhanced sentencing and the potential for introducing new criminal offences.

BODILY INTEGRITY

The CEDAW urged the UK to ensure support and counseling to intersex children and their parents about their options, and provide redress and remedies to those subjected to non-consensual surgeries.

DATA COLLECTION

Legislation was passed in Scotland in June and by the UK Parliament in October, to include questions on sexual orientation and trans status/history in the 2021 Census. These questions will be optional to answer, and only for respondents aged over 16.

As in 2011, the draft guidance for the England and Wales 2021 Census enables trans people to respond to the sex question in line with their gender identity. The Scottish Government proposes the same, but some MSPs oppose the change. The Scottish Government will present its final proposal to Parliament in early 2020.

DIVERSITY

The LGBTIQI Gypsy, Roma & Traveller Conference was held in Wales on 4 July, featuring activists and representatives of the government and the Council of Europe.

EDUCATION

Same-sex relationship education will be mandatory in all English and Welsh primary schools as of September 2020, thanks to the new guidance on teaching Relationships Education, adopted in April. Parents in several towns protested against the change. An injunction banned the protests in June, but they continued on a weekly basis outside the injunction zone. Education Secretary Gavin Williamson, appointed in July, affirmed that they will be supporting all schools in England and Wales in the undertaking. However, the government was criticised for its lack of appropriate response to the protests that were still ongoing in September.

The Scottish Government’s LGBT Inclusive Education Implementation Group worked during the year to create a national framework including curriculum content, teaching materials, teacher training, and schools assessment criteria, to ensure LGBT inclusion in Scottish schools. A separate Intersex/VSC/DSD Working Group considered intersex-related content for Relationships Education. The changes will be implemented from 2021 onwards.

On 16 October, the NI Education Authority published its guidance for schools on supporting trans children.

EMPLOYMENT

68 per cent of LGBT people in the UK have been sexually harassed at work, as revealed by the survey of the Trades Union Congress. This rate is 37 per cent in the general population.



EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

Following up on the National LGBT Survey, the UK Government published a [Call for Evidence](#) in January on the experiences of intersex people, looking at experiences in healthcare, education and employment.

Several objectives of the LGBT Equality Plan were [achieved](#) this year, such as recruiting a National Advisor for LGBT Health in NHS England, providing dedicated funding for tackling anti-LGBT bullying in England's schools, and supporting LGBT-inclusive health initiatives. The LGBT Advisory Panel was [established](#) in March and includes key LGBT advocates from a range of trans and LGBT organisations. A number of key objectives, set out in the Plan, still [need](#) to be achieved, including banning conversion therapy.

In August, a permanent rainbow crossing was [unveiled](#) in London.

FAMILY

Following eight years of civil society campaigning by Love Equality and others, the UK Parliament [passed](#) the Northern Ireland Bill on 9 July, introducing same-sex marriage in the region within three months, if the devolved NI government did not return by 21 October. The devolved government did not return and parliament must now pass legislation before 13 January, 2020. The first marriages could take place early in 2020.

A trans man, who gave birth to his child, took the UK government to court for not allowing him to be featured on his child's birth certificate as the father. Freddy McConnell [lost](#) the case at the High Court in September. McConnell legally transitioned before accessing IVF treatment and becoming a parent. He is appealing the judgment.

In September, the Scottish Government [introduced](#) the Civil Partnership Bill, which will open civil partnership to mixed-sex couples, and allow trans people in civil partnerships to change their legal gender without ending the partnership. Similar legislation for England and Wales came into effect on 2 December.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

London's first ever Trans Pride March was [held](#) on 14 September and attended by 1,500 participants.

NGO Imaan [announced](#) that it will hold Britain's first LGBT Muslim festival next year. Imaan celebrated its 20th anniversary this year.

FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION

Marking the start of LGBT History month, the government [announced](#) in February that 12 LGBT groups were granted a total of [2.6 million GBP](#) state funding as part of the LGBT Action Plan.

HEALTH

In January, the NHS England launched a new [Long Term Plan](#) that sets out its goals for the next decade. Under the remit of "Making sure everyone gets the best start in life" the NHS will fund Mental Health Teams working in 20-25 per cent of schools and colleges across the country. These teams will receive training to support LGBT young people.

In March, the government [appointed](#) Michael Brady, Medical Director of the Terrence Higgins Trust and a sexual health and HIV consultant at King's College Hospital, as its first National Adviser for LGBT Health.

The NI Department of Health commissioned research into trans healthcare. The Health & Social Care Board are working on a project to improve services, but did not address issues such as long waiting times. CSOs are exploring launching community based services at the Belfast Trans Resource Centre.

LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

Following the 2018 public consultation, the legal gender recognition (LGR) reform process in Scotland was delayed in June for a year, to allow an additional consultation on a draft bill. Social Security Secretary Shirley-Anne Somerville [announced](#) that she wants to reach "maximum consensus" on the issue. Although the SNP Government supports reform, 15 national and local SNP politicians [published](#) a letter calling on the government to not rush into "changing the definition of male and female". This ties into an increase in anti-trans rhetoric and the formation of anti-trans groups. The government also confirmed that they would not provide legal recognition for non-binary people.

The law reform process in England and Wales has been stalled following the consultation process launched last year. Incoming Minister for Women and Equalities, Liz Truss [stated](#) they would continue the process, but would not [rush](#) it.

The government has been criticised by civil society for failing to publish the results of the consultation that was expected in mid-2019. Civil society has called for a process of LGR based on



self-determination with a simple statutory declaration, the legal recognition of non-binary identities, and for the minimum age to be lowered from 18 to 16.

PUBLIC OPINION

Results of the British Social Attitudes survey revealed that the acceptance of same-sex relationships has slowed down in UK, with a significant minority remaining hostile. Fewer respondents felt that prejudice against trans people is wrong in principle than in the case of anti-LGB prejudice.

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

On 9 July, the UK Parliament passed the Northern Ireland Bill, decriminalising abortion in Northern Ireland. Regulations are currently being developed.

On 15 October, a pardon came into effect for everyone convicted in Scotland of sexual offences between men that are no longer crimes. The pardon applies to all those convicted, whether still living or not.

SOCIAL SECURITY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Almost half of young homeless LGBT people become homeless because of family rejection. Of them, half come from religious backgrounds, primarily Christian or Muslim, as shared by the Albert Kennedy Trust (AKT). The country's first permanent LGBT Shelter opened in London in May, run by the Outside Project.

The UK's first retirement home for LGBT people is planned to be set up next year.