“Only six beds”

Emergency and temporary accommodation for LGBTQ+ victims and survivors in England and Wales

With just six dedicated beds for trans+ victims and survivors

Galop 2026

the LGBTQ+ anti-abuse charity

galop

About Galop

Galop is the UK's LGBTQ+ anti-abuse charity. We work directly with thousands of LGBTQ+ people who have experienced abuse and violence every year.

We specialise in supporting LGBTQ+ victims and survivors of domestic abuse, sexual violence, hate crime, 'honour'-based abuse, forced marriage, and conversion practices. We are a service run by-and-for LGBTQ+ people, and the needs of our community are at the centre of what we do.

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Credits

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1 Foreword

A home should be somewhere that all of us feel safe and able to be ourselves. But for many LGBTQ+ people, home can be a violent place they desperately need to escape.

1 MHCLG 2025: DA4

Last year, Galop's frontline services responded to more than **4,000 cases** of LGBTQ+ victims and survivors of domestic abuse, almost a third of whom were trans+. Yet there are **only six beds** specifically for **trans+ victims and survivors** in the UK – across any type of accommodation. This is against a backdrop in which at least 500 trans+ adults needed support in domestic abuse safe accommodation in England in 2024-25.[1] There are also just **nine LGBTQ+ specialist, by-and-for accommodation** services in England and Wales.

2 ONS 2025b: Table 4

It shouldn't matter who you are or who you love, anyone escaping abuse should be able to access safe accommodation. This isn't the case for thousands of people. Our research highlights the unique barriers and structural inequalities facing LGBTQ+ victims and survivors, who are more than twice as likely to experience domestic abuse as heterosexual and cisgender people.[2]

In the wake of this government's welcome commitment to halve violence against women and girls (VAWG) over the next decade, we believe tackling the shortage of LGBTQ+ safe accommodation is complementary to this agenda. Specialist and by-and-for provision works best alongside strong general needs refuges, and many LGBTQ+ victims and survivors rely on both. Though it is not acceptable that some LGBTQ+ people seeking safety in shared general needs accommodation found themselves exposed to homophobic, biphobic and transphobic harassment, threats and in some cases, physical assault. We must address the shortage of emergency and temporary accommodation for LGBTQ+ victims and survivors.

Foreword

The Supreme Court ruling in 2025 has made it almost **impossible for trans+ people** escaping domestic abuse to access refuge accommodation. In the past year, there has been a 28% decrease in the number of trans+ adults supported in domestic abuse safe accommodation in England.[3] We know that the challenges when seeking refuge have forced some trans+ victims and survivors to make the unimaginable choice about whether to stay living with their alleged perpetrator or having no home. While the government must act to resolve the untenable current legal limbo for trans+ people, we urge immediate measures to protect our community's most vulnerable members. This is why we are asking Prime Minister Andy Burnham and his government to set up an **emergency national fund** for trans+ specialist accommodation.

We hope our findings, alongside the recommendations of this report, help inspire constructive dialogue and meaningful action by government, local authorities and accommodation providers, so these lifesaving services get the investment they need and every victim and survivor can be safely looked after.



Ben Kernighan & Jasmine O'Connor OBE, Co-CEOs, Galop

3 MHCLG 2025: DA4; MHCLG 2026c Table 4

2 Acknowledgements

We are grateful to the Lloyds Bank Foundation for funding this project and enabling the Policy and Research team at Galop to produce this evidence-based research at a time of growing uncertainty for the sector. The additional support from City Bridge Foundation – London's biggest independent charity funder – has contributed to making this report possible.

We are greatly indebted to the victims and survivors who trusted in our research team and shared their experiences in research interviews. We would also like to thank Galop's Lived Experience Research Group who have shaped this project through co-creation activities and by sharing their lived expertise.

We are also grateful for the expertise provided by the stakeholders and service providers who took part in research interviews, as well as our own frontline teams whose commitment continues to improve the lives of LGBTQ+ victims and survivors seeking safe accommodation.

Finally, we benefitted from the generous input of the project's Stakeholder Reference Group, which included members from akt; the Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government; Refuge; the Local Government Association; Welsh Women's Aid; Women's Aid Federation of England; the Domestic Abuse Commissioner's Office; and the Chartered Institute of Housing. Standing Together Against Domestic Abuse provided additional helpful guidance. Their feedback helped inform the development of the research, though the final analysis and recommendations are those of the authors.

Content warning

This report contains references to domestic abuse, sexual violence, hate crime, anti-LGBTQ+ discrimination, ableism, substance use, and suicide.

3 About the study

This report explores the availability, safety and suitability of temporary and emergency accommodation[4] for LGBTQ+ victims and survivors of abuse in England and Wales.

Between May and June 2026, Galop conducted 32 semi-structured interviews with LGBTQ+ victims and survivors of abuse about their experiences of accessing, or trying to access, emergency and temporary accommodation in England and Wales since 2023. Our sample included people with a range of identities and experiences in terms of sexual orientation, gender identity, and types of accommodation accessed.

We carried out a further 22 interviews with stakeholders from across the emergency and temporary housing system about the pressures and opportunities in the sector. This included providers of LGBTQ+ specialist accommodation, which is designed to support, but not necessarily led or run by LGBTQ+ people; and by-and-for accommodation, which is both designed for, and run by, LGBTQ+ people. We also spoke to representatives from general needs refuges, housing associations, homelessness charities, local authority housing teams and commissioners, and three of Galop's independent advocates. All interviews were assigned a numerical identifier and an alphabetical prefix indicating the participant group: A for victims and survivors and S for external stakeholders (we have not included any quotes from Galop staff).

Alongside qualitative interviews, we used desk-based research to map LGBTQ+ specialist and by-and-for emergency and temporary accommodation in England and Wales. A second map on general needs refuge services offering LGBTQ+ specialist support was formed using data from Routes to Support, the UK-wide online database for domestic abuse and other violence against women developed by Women's Aid.[5]

The project received a favourable opinion from the Social Research Association following an independent ethics review process.

Throughout the report, we use several sector-specific terms and have defined these in our footnotes where relevant, alongside a glossary at the end.

4 Defined as accommodation commissioned by local authorities to fulfil their legal duties to people experiencing homelessness. This includes refuges; annexes, dispersed accommodation, and safehouses; hotels, B&Bs, and other nightly let accommodation; hostels; self-contained flats; sanctuary schemes; and move-on accommodation.

5 Women's Aid 2026

6 MHCLG 2025: DA4

Key findings

1 There are only **six dedicated trans+ specific bedspaces** for people fleeing abuse across the country in any type of accommodation, all in one refuge in England. But we know at least 500 trans+ adults needed support in domestic abuse safe accommodation in England in 2024-25.[6]

2 There are just **nine LGBTQ+ specialist** and **by-and-for accommodation** services in England and Wales for people fleeing abuse including the trans+ specific refuge, providing 106 bedspaces, with no provision across the entire east coast of England.

3 Just **0.5% of total refuge bedspaces** in England and Wales are specifically for LGBTQ+ people, as there are only 23 of these and they are all based in England.

4 A quarter of our research participants felt that local authorities did not believe they had experienced domestic abuse. There was poor recognition of abuse affecting LGBTQ+ communities, especially familial abuse, and a culture of gatekeeping in local authorities.

5 Anti-LGBTQ+ harassment and assault frequently take place within accommodation itself. Experiences of deadnaming[7], misgendering[8] and being asked invasive questions about medical transition are common.

6 Many participants described feeling safer, better understood and more able to access support without explaining their identities through LGBTQ+ specialist and by-and-for services.

7 Participants stressed a need for a **range of safe housing options**: specialist LGBTQ+ and general needs services, and both refuge and self-contained accommodation.

7 Calling a (trans+) person by their birth name after they have started using a different name.

8 Referring to someone by words, names or pronouns that do not reflect their gender identity. For example, referring to a woman by the pronoun "he".

Recommendations

National government

- **Create an emergency national fund for trans+ specialist accommodation:**
  - As a short-term, critical measure that would enable local authorities to commission trans+ specific safe accommodation.
- **Strengthen guidance on Equality Act responsibilities to trans+ survivors and victims:**
  - Reinforce local authorities' Equality Act 2010 obligations to prevent discrimination based on gender reassignment, including Part 4 (Domestic Abuse Act 2021) duties in England.
- **Incentivise commissioning of specialist and by-and-for accommodation:**
  - Increase funding for safe accommodation, with ringfenced allocations for by-and-for LGBTQ+ services.
  - Embed the value of commissioning specialist and by-and-for services, including through the new National Commissioning Statement and Best Value Duty.
- **Commission a national LGBTQ+ referral pathway:**
  - Create and fund a new LGBTQ+ referral pathway, connecting general needs services with a network of LGBTQ+ specialist accommodation provision.

5 Recommendations

Ensure homelessness and Violence Against Women & Girls strategies deliver for LGBTQ+ people:

- Ensure the forthcoming toolkit on homelessness prevention and support for survivors of domestic abuse addresses the needs of LGBTQ+ victims and survivors.
- Address the disproportionate risk of homelessness for LGBTQ+ young people in the Homelessness Code of Guidance and the national Youth Homelessness Prevention Toolkit.
- Revise the Homelessness Codes of Guidance in England and Wales to explicitly recognise familial abuse and hate crime as drivers of LGBTQ+ people's experiences of homelessness, and require housing assessments to consider risks of harassment, discrimination and hate crime in placement decisions.

Local government

Deliver LGBTQ+ specialist accommodation on regional or mayoral levels:

- Combine funding to commission LGBTQ+ specialist services which cover a wider geographical spread, such as regional or mayoral areas.

Develop and fund creative models for delivery:

- Establish innovative models that support the commissioning of LGBTQ+ specialist provision, including partnership models between general needs and by-and-for services which combine capital and revenue funding.

5 Recommendations

Urgently review accommodation options for trans+ victims and survivors:

- Urgently assess provision for trans+ victims and survivors and provide targeted emergency funding to address unmet need.

Improve data collection, needs assessments and local strategies:

- Improve local data collection on sexual orientation and gender identity and proactively consider other data sources to mitigate impacts of data gaps.
- Explicitly address LGBTQ+ peoples' needs in local strategies and needs assessments addressing homelessness and accommodation.

Accommodation providers

Explore partnership models to increase LGBTQ+ specialist accommodation:

- Consider opportunities to partner with LGBTQ+ services to co-deliver new LGBTQ+ and trans+ provision.

Expand provision of self-contained units:

- Expand the availability of self-contained units, which is often the most accessible option for trans+ victims and survivors.

Invest in an LGBTQ+ competent workforce:

- Deliver training for frontline staff, in partnership with LGBTQ+ specialist organisations, to improve awareness of LGBTQ+ people's experiences of abuse, sensitive data collection, risk assessment and referral pathways.

The national context

LGBTQ+ people were more than twice as likely to experience domestic abuse as heterosexual and cisgender people, according to government statistics for the year ending March 2025.[9]

- **Gay and lesbian people were twice as likely (14.5%) compared to heterosexual people (7.2%).**
- **Bisexual people were almost three times as likely (19.9%) compared to heterosexual people (7.2%).**
- **Trans+ people were two and a half times more likely (19.3%) compared to cisgender people (7.7%).**

These comparisons sit within a wider understanding that domestic abuse is highly gendered: women and girls remain disproportionately affected across the whole population. Highlighting the particular risks facing LGBTQ+ people is not intended to diminish this. Meeting the needs of LGBTQ+ victims and survivors, many of whom are women, is part of the work to end violence against women and girls.

Domestic abuse is a key driver of homelessness for LGBTQ+ people, and we know LGBTQ+ people are twice as likely to experience hidden homelessness than non-LGBTQ+ people.[10] More than one in five (22.9%) LGBTQ+ people living in temporary accommodation[11] provided by a council in England were homeless or threatened with homelessness because they were a victim of domestic abuse, or due to violence or harassment.[12]

9 ONS 2025b: Table 4

10 Tunåker et al. 2025: 8

11 Households in temporary accommodation where the main applicant is recorded as being LGBTQ+.

12 On 30 June 2025. See: MHLCG 2026b

6 The national context

New research shows that LGBTQ+ people continue to 'face particular challenges',[13] yet the latest government data still shows serious gaps in specialist safe accommodation services for LGBTQ+ victims and survivors across the country, particularly the North East, East Midlands, West Midlands, East of England and the South West,[14] and a decrease in by-and-for services being commissioned.[15] Together, this data emphasises the gap between the need for LGBTQ+ specialist, safe accommodation and the options available.

13 Ipsos & Ecorys 2025: 13, 36.

14 MHCLG 2026c: Table 2

15 MHCLG 2025: DA2; MHCLG 2026c: Table 2

The lack of safe accommodation options is particularly pressing for trans+ victims and survivors following the Supreme Court ruling[16] which interpreted the terms 'sex', 'man' and 'woman' in the Equality Act 2010 to refer to biological sex (sex assigned at birth). The ruling, alongside the Equality & Human Rights Commission's revised Code of Practice,[17] has severely limited trans+ people's access to single-sex services.

16 UK Supreme Court 2025

17 Equality and Human Rights Commission 2026

Our mapping has identified **only six bedspaces** dedicated for trans+ victims and survivors. Yet we know that at least **500 trans+ adults** needed support in domestic abuse safe accommodation in England in 2024-25.[18] With trans+ victims and survivors increasingly being denied access to single-sex accommodation services, including a 28% decrease in the number of trans+ adults supported in domestic abuse safe accommodation in England in the past year,[19] specialist trans+ provision is desperately needed.

18 MHCLG 2025: DA4

19 MHCLG 2025 DA4; MHCLG 2026c: Table 4

Research shows that by-and-for services often contribute to better outcomes for people from marginalised backgrounds, including LGBTQ+ victims and survivors.[20] Despite this, the Domestic Abuse Commissioner found that by-and-for services were six times less likely to receive statutory funding than specialist domestic abuse/VAWG organisations.[21] These challenges result in a shortage of the specialist services required, creating a postcode lottery that often leaves LGBTQ+ victims and survivors with no LGBTQ+ specialist support in their area.

20 Domestic Abuse Commissioner 2022: 11-13; Ipsos & Ecorys 2025: 49, 62; Loving Me 2026: 41-42

21 Domestic Abuse Commissioner 2022: 73

Without access to safe accommodation, LGBTQ+ victims and survivors face impossible choices about whether to stay living with alleged perpetrators, move into accommodation where they are subject to further abuse, or become homeless. Systems-wide improvements are urgently needed to ensure that all LGBTQ+ victims and survivors have access to safe emergency and temporary accommodation.

Mapping

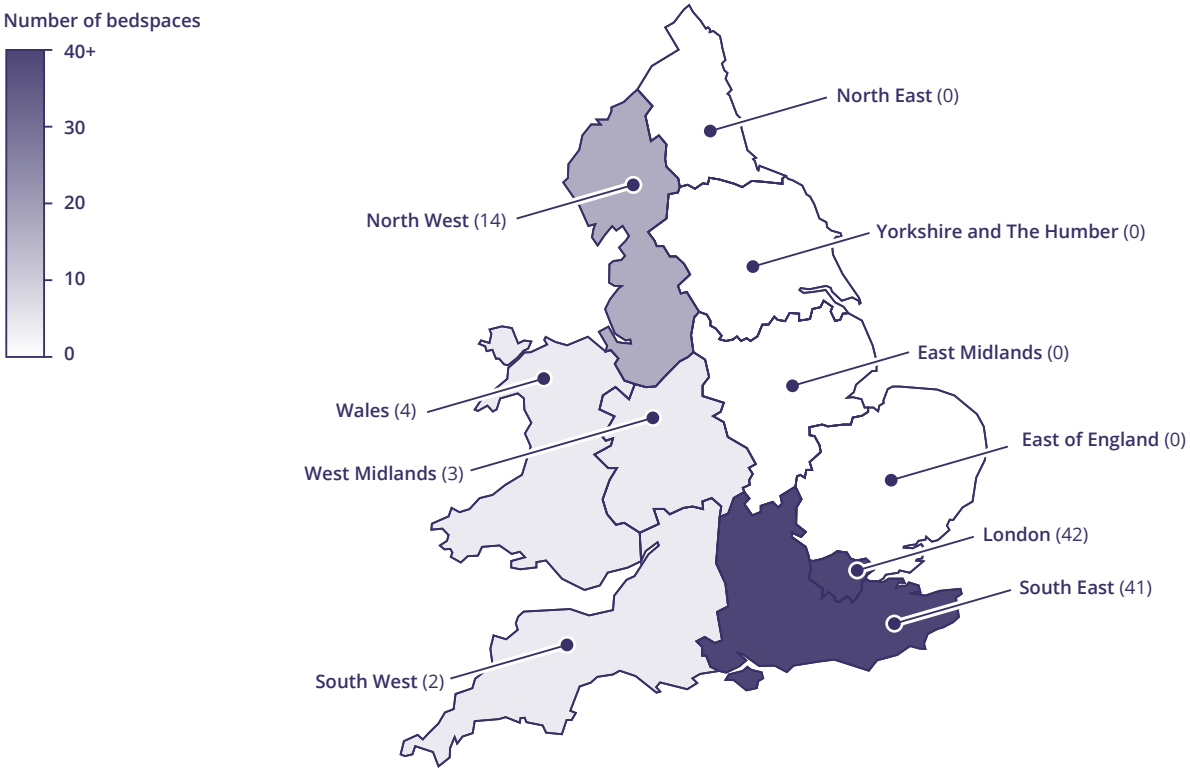
Our maps expose the scarcity of specialist emergency and temporary accommodation that exists across England and Wales for LGBTQ+ victim and survivors of abuse.

Where this provision does exist, it is highly concentrated in London and the South East of England.



7 Mapping

Figure 1. LGBTQ+ specialist or by-and-for accommodation designed for LGBTQ+ people



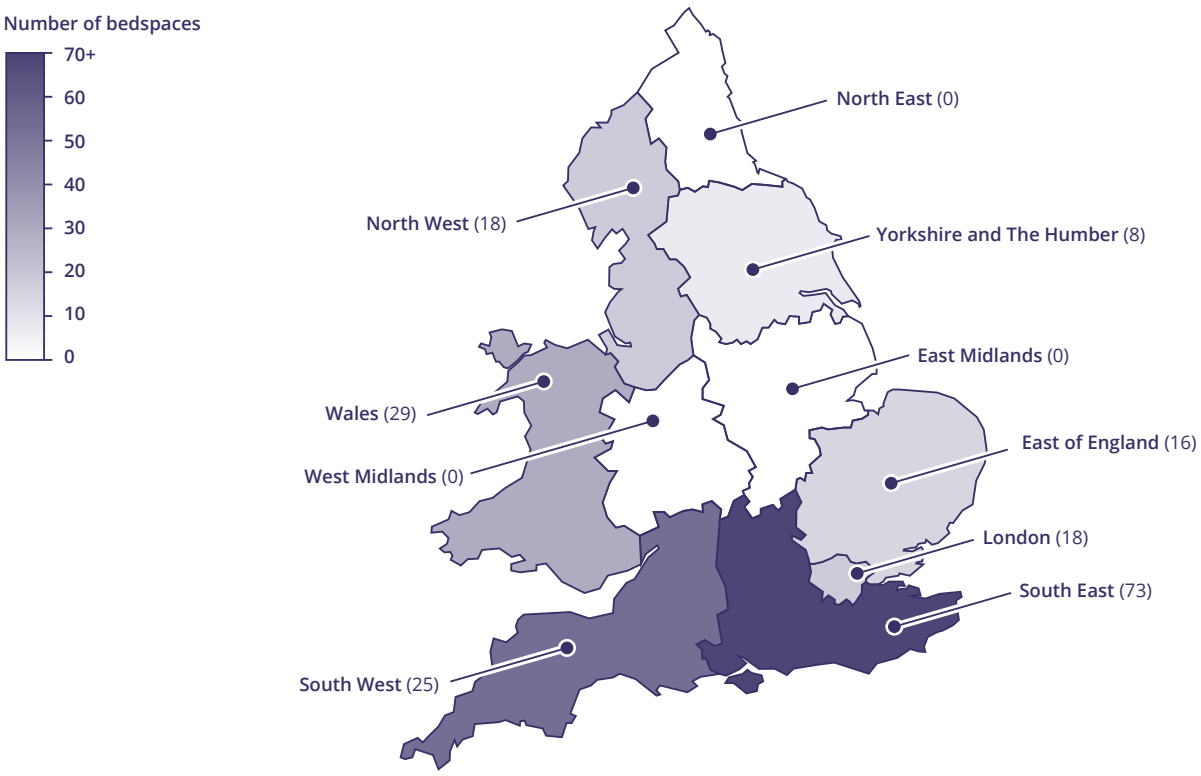
- There are 106 LGBTQ+ specialist[22] and by-and-for[23] bedspaces in England and Wales across nine service providers.
- 23 of these bedspaces are based in refuges, representing a tiny proportion of total refuge bedspaces in England and Wales (just 0.5%).
- Exclusion criteria also mean that in practice many specialist or by-and-for bedspaces are inaccessible to different parts of the LGBTQ+ community:
  - There are only six bedspaces dedicated for trans+ victims and survivors, all of which are operated by one provider in England.
  - All four of the bedspaces in Wales and six of the 42 bedspaces in London are only available to younger people aged 18-25.
  - 63% (n=67) of bedspaces are only available to individuals with low to medium support needs.
- There is no LGBTQ+ specialist or by-and-for provision across the entire east coast of England.

22 Accommodation that is specifically designed to support LGBTQ+ people.

23 Accommodation that is led and run by LGBTQ+ people and is specifically designed to support LGBTQ+ people.

7 Mapping

Figure 2. General needs refuge accommodation with LGBTQ+ specialist support



24 From 5,074 units of general needs refuge accommodation across 335 refuge services. This data was exported on 1st May 2026 from Routes to Support (Women's Aid 2026). Specialist support was self-defined by services but could include support such as specialist LGBTQ+ Independent Domestic Violence Advocate roles within their service.

- **Of all refuge services listed on Routes to Support, just under 4% (n=187) of bedspaces across 14 services offer specialist LGBTQ+ support.[24]**
- **LGBTQ+ victims and survivors in the North East and East Midlands have no specialist support options.**
- **Services here are also subject to exclusion criteria:**
  - Just 22% (n=42) of the bedspaces listed on this map are available to men.

Interview findings

This section presents the findings from our interviews, revealing barriers for LGBTQ+ victims and survivors at every stage of the housing journey, and their recommendations on how to improve provision.

Barriers to accessing local authority accommodation

People in England and Wales who are homeless because of domestic abuse and other forms of violence or exploitation are in 'priority need' for accommodation.[25] However, a quarter of the LGBTQ+ victims and survivors we spoke to felt that local authorities did not believe they had experienced abuse and did not take domestic abuse in LGBTQ+ relationships seriously.

Our interviews found that this was particularly common for victims and survivors of familial abuse, whose experiences of violence were dismissed as normal family disputes, as well as GBT+ men and victims and survivors of hate crime and sexual violence.

25 Housing Act 1996 s 189(1)(c)(e); Homelessness (Priority Need for Accommodation) (England) Order 2002 art 6; Housing (Wales) Act 2014 s 70(1)(c)(e)(g).

8 Interview findings

> **I think the domestic abuse being caused by my mother is what [led] them to accuse me of lying. I think being a man also contributed as [men] don't get seen as being vulnerable.** (A20)

Despite specific guidance that housing authorities should not approach an alleged perpetrator,[26] two participants had been asked for the contact information of alleged perpetrators to verify the abuse. One told us, ***"they're asking me the details of what went on with my mum and then asking for confirmation from her afterwards"*** (A11). Other local authorities denied LGBTQ+ victims and survivors emergency accommodation until they provided evidence of violence.

Additionally, some LGBTQ+ victims and survivors experienced discriminatory responses from their local authority at the point of first seeking help, with staff telling one participant that they ***"chose to be gay"*** (A8) and another that asexuality ***"doesn't exist"*** (A25).

Referrals are also made difficult by the lack of information about what services are open to LGBTQ+ people, making applying for accommodation time-consuming and exhausting. LGBTQ+ victims and survivors must research available options, contact multiple agencies, fill in numerous forms and repeatedly tell their stories. One participant told us that this is particularly challenging when ***"you've sort of been taught to not advocate for yourself because you've been in abusive situations for so long that you feel totally worthless"*** (A23).

26 MHCLG 2018: 21.24, 26.15.

8 Interview findings

Three participants were also told they were ineligible for housing because they lacked a local connection, despite government homelessness guidance stating that local authorities should extend the same level of support to victims and survivors from other areas as they do to their own residents.[27] These bureaucratic barriers combined with discriminatory attitudes towards LGBTQ+ identities by staff can discourage LGBTQ+ victims and survivors from seeking further help.

LGBTQ+ victims and survivors explained that having professional support to navigate referrals is essential. However, the Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVAs) in specialist and by-and-for organisations who we interviewed, including at Galop, experienced some of the same barriers as their clients, such as anti-LGBTQ+ prejudice and delayed responses from local authorities.

Without support, LGBTQ+ victims and survivors, particularly those from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds and from the global majority, are forced into hidden homelessness, such as squatting, sofa surfing and 'sex for rent' scenarios, contributing to higher rates of homelessness among people compared to the general population.[28]

In light of these experiences, the LGBTQ+ victims and survivors we interviewed wanted more empathy from staff, better access to in-person support, and more easily accessible information on rights, options and available support services. Professionals added that person-centred support and bespoke pathways for LGBTQ+ victims and survivors are necessary to improve the current system.

27 MHCLG 2018: 21.17

28 England & Turnbull 2024: 31

8 Interview findings

Victim and survivor needs are not met

Only one of our 32 participants felt they had been appropriately asked about their LGBTQ+ identity during the referral process. More commonly, LGBTQ+ victims and survivors reported that sexual orientation and gender identity were not discussed. Stakeholders observed that professionals are often reluctant to ask about these characteristics, especially as the DASH (Domestic Abuse, Stalking and 'Honour'-based Violence) risk assessment checklist frontline practitioners use does not include LGBTQ+-specific questions.[29]

29 Coaction Hub 2025: 20

This leads to gaps in data collection where information on whether applicants are cisgender or transgender is missing or incomplete in over three quarters of cases.[30] Without this information, many general needs services lack a clear understanding of the specific experiences and risks faced by LGBTQ+ victims and survivors, limiting their ability to tailor support effectively.

30 MHCLG 2026a: A13

Furthermore, despite government data showing that LGBTQ+ people are more likely to be disabled, neurodivergent,[31] and experience mental ill-health,[32] compared to the general population, our interviewees explained that services did not consider their mental health conditions or neurodivergence. One stated that ***"there were no discussions about reasonable adjustments or awareness"*** (A17). Instead, participants were frequently placed in noisy and unclean accommodation, and had to move location multiple times, all of which can exacerbate poor mental health. Though LGBTQ+ victims and survivors are also more prone to high-risk drug and alcohol consumption,[33] placement options are especially limited for this group.

31 ONS 2023; Welsh Government 2024

32 ONS 2025a; Bachmann & Gooch 2018: 6–9

33 Meads, Zeeman, Sherriff & Aranda 2023; Bachmann & Gooch 2018; Catterall & Goodier, 2024

As our mapping demonstrates, of 106 LGBTQ+ specialist and by-and-for bedspaces, 67 are exclusively for individuals with low-medium support needs. Meanwhile, a local authority stakeholder told us, ***"we've only got one high support needs hostel, which is full with a waiting list"*** (S12). This echoes broader research which shows that demand for supported housing in England and Wales outstrips supply.[34] With services unable to address multiple needs at once, LGBTQ+ victims and survivors have to seek support from numerous different services.

34 Beatty et al. 2024

8 Interview findings

One participant hid their non-binary identity because it was too complicated to explain alongside their other needs:

> **There's too many different things wrong. So, the thing I will drop first is pronouns because that's the thing that's going to need the least support... There was just very little point where I felt like any agency saw the whole picture.** (A12)

Additionally, five participants had been housed near alleged perpetrators and two were consequently found by them. One participant's concerns around this were dismissed by their local council: ***"He shouldn't have been near us, but what the council did was put us closer to him. I raised it to the council and they just ignored it, they did nothing"*** (A22). Others were forced to move far from their personal and professional support networks, particularly those living in the North East, East Midlands and West Midlands.

LGBTQ+ victims and survivors want staff who ask about their experiences, listen closely and develop person-centred support packages that address their different needs at once. Participants also emphasised the importance of accessible, quiet and stable accommodation near to their support networks (where this is safe), while stakeholders added that services must be better equipped to deal with multiple compound needs.

Shared general needs accommodation contributes to harm

Nearly all of the LGBTQ+ victims and survivors we interviewed who had accessed accommodation had spent at least some time in shared general needs accommodation. Sharing spaces in general needs accommodation often exposes LGBTQ+ victims and survivors to discrimination and hate from other residents, including homophobic, biphobic and transphobic harassment, threats and physical assault. One participant stated, ***"[my roommate] would threaten me, you know, he'll slit my throat while I'm asleep"*** (A8). Five participants experienced homophobia, biphobia or transphobia from staff in general needs accommodation, including one participant who said:

> **My sexual identity was profiled to the point that I had some rash on my arms, and the [staff member] reported me as having Mpox.[35] It wasn't Mpox. It was just a rash... they kept me in the isolation ward for a week.**
> (A24)

35 Mpox (previously known as monkeypox) is an infection that usually causes a rash and flu-like symptoms and can be spread through close physical contact, including sexual contact.

This is aligned with government research which characterises anti-LGBTQ+ abuse as a key feature of LGBTQ+ people's homelessness experiences.[36] LGBTQ+ victims and survivors who did not face direct discrimination nonetheless lived in fear of it. Six participants said they did not feel safe to be open about their LGBTQ+ identity within general needs accommodation when explicit signs of inclusion were absent.

36 Government Equalities Office 2024

8 Interview findings

> **No one made any like homophobic, transphobic, queerphobic remarks or anything, but... because it wasn't, like, explicitly queer friendly... I wouldn't have felt safe being openly queer within the accommodation. Because you never know the reactions you're going to get.**
> (A1)

These experiences reinforce research findings on the importance of visible inclusion and meaningful LGBTQ+ policies for enabling victims and survivors to live safely and authentically.[37]

37 Government Equalities Office 2024; England 2021

When LGBTQ+ victims and survivors raise complaints about discrimination, these are often not taken seriously or acted on appropriately. One participant felt it would not be worth it ***"to make a fuss about it [homophobic insults] because I would have to make a fuss about it every day"*** (A24). In some cases, staff made situations worse for LGBTQ+ victims and survivors, including 'outing'[38] a trans+ participant to other service users. LGBTQ+ victims and survivors suggested improving reporting and complaints processes and establishing independent vetting of council-run properties.

38 Disclosing an LGBTQ+ person's sexual orientation or gender identity without their consent.

In contrast, all of our participants who stayed in LGBTQ+ specialist or by-and-for accommodation felt that their LGBTQ+ identity was respected and appreciated the solidarity with other residents.

> **Being around people who are like you, really makes a difference... Having that sense of community really makes a difference. There is so much hate nowadays, I think it's important to place people where they feel welcome and safe.**
> (A7)

8 Interview findings

Participants especially emphasised the value of by-and-for support, where staff are also from the LGBTQ+ community. One interviewee explained that LGBTQ+ caseworkers ***"understood the queer non-binary identity and even that little thing to respect my pronouns... I felt like I didn't need to explain it."*** (A24)

While some participants appreciated the sense of community, many expressed a preference for self-contained accommodation equipped with physical safety measures such as locks and CCTV to reduce risk of violence.

Additionally, three LGBTQ+ victims and survivors said they would not have preferred LGBTQ+-only accommodation. This was particularly true of the trans women in our sample, who identified more strongly with other women than with the broader LGBTQ+ community. In one case, a trans woman had experienced abuse perpetrated by a man, which is why she had a preference for women-only accommodation.

> **I do think that I would have felt safer in women's accommodation. There was a man in there [mixed accommodation] who was very handsy.**
> (A13)

These diverse viewpoints demonstrate that there is no one-size-fits-all approach. They highlight the need for a range of safe accommodation options for LGBTQ+ people, including by-and-for and general needs provision, and both refuge and self-contained accommodation models.

General needs accommodation lacks LGBTQ+ support

Despite the government homelessness guidance stating that local authorities should take an active role in identifying victims and survivors of domestic abuse and referring them to help and support,[39] many participants received no information or support around their experiences of abuse.

39 MHCLG 2018: 21.12

> **It very much just felt like, well, you know, 'we've given you a roof over your head, so now we don't have to do anything else.**
> (A5)

When available, support often fails to recognise LGBTQ+ experiences. A participant accommodated in an LGBTQ+-inclusive general needs refuge told us that the domestic abuse recovery programme ***"didn't really have any tools or resources geared towards LGBT people"*** (A16). Meanwhile, a non-binary participant who accessed a women's general needs refuge was given women's clothing and repeatedly referred to as a "girl", negatively impacting their sense of self:

> **I know to a lot of people that would seem like nothing, but when you've lost your whole identity, you've lost your job, you've lost your home, you've left your pets behind, it just feels like another part of your identity that's just gone.**
> (A14)

In contrast, a participant who accessed a trans+ domestic abuse recovery programme told us that it was ***"one of the best resources I have ever seen in my entire life"*** (A32). Another said that accessing LGBTQ+ by-and-for support enabled them to rebuild their identity without having to repeatedly explain themself:

> **It took a huge weight off my shoulders, thinking I don't need to do this extra education. I can just go straight in with the realities of my life, including aspects to do with gender, sexuality, sex work, and... I'm not at risk of being misunderstood and feeling shamed.**
> (A31)

These findings reinforce the importance of tailored recovery programmes for increasing feelings of safety, self-worth and belonging among LGBTQ+ victims and survivors.[40]

Mental health support remains difficult to access across all service types, with six participants unable to access it. In one case, this was even after a suicide attempt in temporary accommodation. Long waiting lists were a contributing factor, with one participant describing them as ***"trauma-inducing"*** (A8).

LGBTQ+ victims and survivors also reported that staffing pressures limited the availability of longer-term support, particularly in by-and-for organisations. One participant said, ***"I basically haven't had consistent support the whole time"*** (A5), while another explained that their advocate's funding was suddenly cut, meaning valuable support ***"just disappeared within the space of a week"*** (A15). Others mentioned the need for help moving on from accommodation to avoid falling back into homelessness.

Explaining these shortfalls, all of our by-and-for stakeholder participants reported that funding insecurity was a barrier to staff retention and service development, while two had been forced to continue vital services, such as outreach, entirely unfunded.

40 Flutter et al. 2025

Stakeholders suggested that delivering support in LGBTQ+ specialist and by-and-for accommodation requires increased staffing capacity, manageable caseloads, and robust staff support to prevent burnout. In general needs accommodation, they additionally emphasised the need for more diverse teams, including LGBTQ+ staff and those with lived experience of abuse, alongside LGBTQ+ inclusion training, accreditation schemes, meaningful inclusion policies, strong signposting resources, and partnerships with LGBTQ+ specialist and by-and-for services. Stakeholders stressed that these changes require increased and longer-term funding.

Heightened barriers for trans+ victims and survivors

Many challenges facing LGBTQ+ communities affect trans+ victims and survivors most acutely. Trans+ participants noted that name changes complicate referral processes, while many experienced deadnaming, misgendering, and invasive questions about medical transition from local authority staff.

Following the 2025 Supreme Court ruling, already scarce accommodation options for trans+ victims and survivors deteriorated further, with many refuges stopping acceptance of trans+ clients. This is true even for trans+ victims and survivors who secure 'priority need' status. In the words of one participant:

> **"The first thing they asked me was 'Oh, due to the Supreme Court, they can't place me in the women's refuge.' I said, 'Why?... I've been living my life as a woman since I was 15 years old [over 20 years]'."**
> (A30)

8 Interview findings

At the time of writing, Galop has been unable to secure general needs refuge accommodation for any trans+ women escaping domestic abuse anywhere in the UK in 2026. The only trans+ people Galop has been able to securely place in refuge have been at LGBT+ or trans+ specific providers. Stakeholders also suggested that the ruling has contributed to a climate of hostility, which can deter trans+ victims and survivors from seeking support. However, at Galop we know that trans+ people urgently need help. Four in ten (40%) of our domestic abuse clients were trans+ in the 2025/26 financial year.

Many services only place trans+ victims and survivors in dispersed accommodation, which is a form of self-contained accommodation often run by a refuge and located in the community rather than a shared refuge building. However, as one LGBTQ+ by-and-for service provider explained:

> **[Dispersed accommodation] is more expensive to operate. There's less of it, there's high demand for it. So, what this basically means is that the amount of options for trans and non-binary people is contracted again. So, there's very, very few options.**
> (S7)

8 Interview findings

Consequently, trans+ victims and survivors are often placed in mixed-gender homelessness accommodation, where they can become targets of abuse from both staff and residents. Some of our participants were repeatedly misgendered by staff, while one was told ***"it would be better if [you] weren't trans"*** (A31). Another participant told us:

> **I got outed as a sex worker... A young woman in a hostel full of middle-aged men was in danger because they'd been outed as a sex worker. That was a nightmare.**
> (A5)

Such situations forced some participants to hide their trans+ identities to avoid abuse in accommodation. Experiences were so bad that one trans+ participant said of their accommodation: ***"I'd say it was better than nothing, but it's a close call."*** (A6)

In this context, trans+ victims and survivors urgently need spaces where they are safe to be themselves and where their identities are understood by staff. One of our participants said that trans+ staff in a by-and-for refuge were ***"able to understand exactly what I've been dealing with and how to best help"*** (A31). Others appreciate tailored LGBTQ+ support, such as help accessing gender-affirming healthcare and updating legal documents. As a participant who had spent time in both by-and-for and general needs accommodation summarised:

> **It was such a chasm between... the identity dedicated support and the general population homelessness support system.**
> (A24)

Conclusion

In his first address in office, Prime Minister Andy Burnham launched a national drive to end rough sleeping. This is alongside the Labour Government's commitment to halving violence against women and girls (VAWG) over the next decade. This report clearly demonstrates that achieving these vital goals cannot be done without factoring in the needs of LGBTQ+ victims and survivors, especially trans+ people, and working in partnership with the wider VAWG sector.

This means establishing an emergency national fund for trans+ specialist accommodation as an urgent priority, investing in LGBTQ+ by-and-for accommodation, creating more inclusive general needs services, and delivering wider systems change so LGBTQ+ victims and survivors never again have to choose between unsafe accommodation and the street.

10 Glossary

Cisgender people	People with a gender identity the same as their sex assigned at birth.
Deadnaming	Calling a (trans+) person by their birth name after they have started using a different name.
Dispersed accommodation	A form of self-contained accommodation (see below), usually run by a refuge, where units are located in the community rather than within a single refuge building.
General needs accommodation	In this report, we use this term to describe accommodation that is not specifically designed to support LGBTQ+ people. This includes council housing, accommodation provided by charities, housing association accommodation and general needs refuges.
General needs refuge	In this report, we use this term to refer to a refuge (see definition below) which is not specifically designed for LGBTQ+ victims and survivors.
LGBTQ+ by-and-for accommodation	Accommodation that is led and run by LGBTQ+ people and is specifically designed to support LGBTQ+ people.
LGBTQ+ specialist accommodation	Accommodation that is specifically designed to support LGBTQ+ people but is not led or run by LGBTQ+ people.
Misgendering	Referring to someone by words, names or pronouns that do not reflect their gender identity. For example, referring to a woman by the pronoun “he”.
Multiple compound needs	Needs arising from experiences of one or more severe disadvantages that may be interconnected and reinforce one another. These include (but are not limited to) needs relating to mental health, substance use, physical health, trauma, and experience of the criminal justice system.
Refuge	Safe accommodation dedicated to victims and survivors of domestic abuse, usually featuring dedicated support services and resources.
Self-contained accommodation	Accommodation where sleeping, washing and cooking facilities are all located in a private space and are not shared by more than one household.
Trans+ people	People with a gender identity different from their sex registered at birth.

Principles for service delivery

These principles translate findings from research interviews and a co-creation session with Galop's Lived Experience Research Group. They are not intended to provide an exhaustive set of standards.

Service providers can apply these principles, alongside inclusion frameworks across different accommodation models to strengthen LGBTQ+ inclusion throughout the design, delivery and evaluation of their services.

1

Develop and regularly review safety plans with each LGBTQ+ victim and survivor, considering the accommodation, other residents, neighbourhood, transport and local services.

Examples of how to implement this in practice:

Providers ask victims and survivors what safety means to them, including how their LGBTQ+ identity may shape the accommodation, location, facilities or support they need, and review this regularly as their needs and comfort with sharing information may change.

Providers ask whether proximity to LGBTQ+ venues or communities would increase safety and connection or create risks of recognition, 'outing' or contact with the alleged perpetrator.

2

Affirm each victim and survivor's LGBTQ+ identity on their terms and safeguard them from unwanted disclosure and discrimination.

Examples of how to implement this in practice:

Providers offer private and voluntary opportunities for victims and survivors to tell them their name, pronouns, and identity terms.

Provider policies, forms, records, case management systems, and communications recognise a wide range of LGBTQ+ identities, relationships and families.

Providers offer optional LGBTQ+-specific information, peer support and community connection while respecting victims and survivors who do not want to participate or could risk being identified through them.

11 Principles for service delivery

3	**Provide accessible, accurate informationand verified, LGBTQ+-appropriate routes to support.**
Examples of how to implement this in practice:	Providers explain rights, eligibility, accommodation options and complaints processes without making assumptions based on sex, gender, sexual orientation or relationship type.
	Before providers refer someone to another service, they check that it is available, accepting referrals and able to meet their identity, support and access needs.
4	**Protect victims and survivors from alleged perpetrators who exploit identity, relationships, community networks, services or personal information.**
Examples of how to implement this in practice:	Providers assess a range of risks such as someone being outed, having their gender history shared without consent, experiencing digital abuse or being harmed through the perpetrator's connections to family, faith groups, LGBTQ+ communities, venues or services.
	Providers limit access to sensitive information about a victim's or survivor's identity, relationships, location and use of LGBTQ+ or generic abuse support services.
	Providers agree safe ways to contact victims and survivors, confirm their identity, and manage any known links between the alleged perpetrator and relevant services or communities.
5	**Enable victims and survivors to exercise choice, dignity and self-determination in their personal space, relationships and everyday lives.**
Examples of how to implement this in practice:	Providers ensure that rules and restrictions are fair and do not discriminate against LGBTQ+ relationships, chosen family or community connections.
	Providers provide safe ways for victims and survivors to challenge decisions, including access to someone independent of those managing the accommodation.
6	**Support victims and survivors into affordable and secure long-term housing that remains safe and sustains the identities, relationships and support that matter to them.**
Examples of how to implement this in practice:	Providers assess housing options for affordability, accessibility, risks linked to the perpetrator, and whether they provide a safe environment for a person's LGBTQ+ identity and expression.
	Providers consider the continued access of chosen family, LGBTQ+-affirming healthcare, specialist support and community without assuming which connections the victim or survivor wants.

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Get help

If you are LGBT+ and experiencing violence or abuse, such as conversion practices, hate crime, domestic abuse or sexual violence, you can contact Galop directly.

galop.org.uk

National Helpline for LGBT+ Victims and Survivors of Abuse and Violence

0800 999 5428
help@galop.org.uk

National Conversion Therapy Helpline

0800 130 3335

Galop

info@galop.org.uk
galop.org.uk

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