

Rights of LGBTQ+ Older People in Scotland



Who we are

Age Scotland is the national charity for older people. We work to improve the lives of everyone over the age of 50 so that they can love later life.

Our vision is for Scotland to be the best place in the world to grow older.

Our mission is to inspire, involve and empower older people in Scotland, and influence others, so that people can make the most of later life.

Our three strategic aims are to:



Help older people to be as well as they can be



Promote a positive view of ageing and later life



Tackle loneliness and isolation

How we can help

We know that growing older doesn't come with a manual. Later life can bring changes and opportunities to your life and you may need to know about rights, organisations and services which are unfamiliar to you.

That's why we provide free information and advice to help you on a range of topics including benefits and entitlements, social care, legal issues such as Power of Attorney, housing and much more. All of our guides are available to download for free from our website, or you can contact our helpline team to have copies posted to you for free.

The Age Scotland **helpline** is a free, confidential phone service for older people, their carers and families in Scotland looking for information and advice.

Later life can bring times when you just need someone to talk to. Our **friendship line** is part of our wider helpline and older people can call us for a chat. We're here to listen, provide friendship and offer support.

For information, advice and friendship



Call us free on: 0800 12 44 222
(Monday – Friday, 9am - 5pm)



Visit [agescotland.org.uk](https://www.agescotland.org.uk)
to find out more.

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Please note that the inclusion of named agencies, websites, companies, products, services or publications in this information guide does not constitute a recommendation or endorsement by Age Scotland.

Introduction

Most of the issues, advice and policies relating to later life apply to everyone equally, but there are some things that affect lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBTQ+) people differently.

The language used by LGBTQ+ people to describe their experiences and identities is varied and changes over time. We're committed to reflecting this diversity but recognise that terms used in this guide may vary in their usage or become outdated.





Keeping you safe

Attitudes towards LGBTQ+ people have changed in recent years, mainly in positive ways. The discriminatory treatment and abuse that many members of the LGBTQ+ community have experienced in the past are viewed as increasingly unacceptable, and should no longer happen. You should be able to live safely in a society that accepts and values you. Unfortunately, prejudices do remain, so it is important to know that your rights are legally protected, and know what to do if you feel you are being treated unfairly.

The law

The Equality Act 2010 protects you from being treated unfairly because of:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

The unfairness, or discrimination may be:

- **direct** - where you are treated less favourably because of who you are
- **indirect** – where you are treated the same, but you are more badly affected because of who you are

There is some debate about the meaning of gender reassignment and whether it applies to non-binary people. The Equality Act says that gender reassignment includes anyone who has taken steps towards transition, and there is no requirement to have had medical treatment or have obtained a Gender Recognition Certificate to be protected under this category.

If you believe your human rights have been breached, or you have been unlawfully discriminated against, the **Equality Advisory Support Service** can provide help and advice on **0808 800 0082**.

There is more information about discrimination on the **Equality and Human Rights Commission** website at **www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/commission-scotland**.

Hate Crime

Hate crime is a crime that is committed against someone because of their sexual orientation, gender identity, age, race, disability or religion. The crime may be physical or verbal, for example assault, harassment, verbal abuse and damage to property.

If you are the victim of a hate crime, you can report this to the police in person at a police station or by telephone on the non-emergency 101 number. If you are in immediate danger, dial 999.

You can also report hate crime at a **Third Party Reporting Centre**. You can find a list of these at **www.scotland.police.uk/contact-us/report-hate-crime-and-third-party-reporting/third-party-reporting-centres**.

To report the hate crime online, go to **www.scotland.police.uk/secureforms/c3**. You do not have to give your details if you would rather report it anonymously.

Stonewall Scotland have produced a guide to hate crime, including how to report it and why you should report it. To request a copy, contact them on **0800 0502020** or visit **www.stonewallscotland.org.uk/hate-crime**.

LGBT Health and Wellbeing provide a helpline that can give emotional support and practical information to victims of LGBT hate crime. You can also report hate crime to them if you do not want to contact the police directly. Call them on **0300 123 2523**, Tuesdays and Wednesdays between 12pm and 9pm.

Galop's National LGBT+ Hate Crime Helpline is available Monday to Friday between 10am and 4pm. Contact them on **0207 7042040** or email them at **HateCrime@galop.org.uk**.

Domestic abuse

Domestic abuse can take many forms including physical, emotional, sexual and financial. It can be difficult to ask for help, especially if you are being abused by someone you are close to. You may be concerned that the abuser will get into trouble or have been convinced that the abuse is your fault. However it is important to remember that being abused is never your fault, and you have a right to live safely, without fear.

If you, or someone you know, is experiencing serious harm or abuse, or is in immediate physical danger, call the police using the emergency 999 number. If you want to report a non-urgent incident to the police, call the non-emergency 101 number or go to your local police station.

Galop's LGBTQ+ Domestic Abuse Helpline provides practical and emotional support for LGBTQ+ people experiencing domestic abuse. Contact them on **0800 999 5428** or email them at **help@galop.org.uk**. The helpline operates from 10am to 5pm on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays, and 10am to 8pm on Thursdays. Tuesday from 1pm to 5pm is a trans-specific service. For more information, see their website **www.galop.org.uk**.

Elder abuse

The **Hourglass** helpline can provide advice and emotional support to any older person, or anyone concerned about the harm or abuse of an older person. Calls are confidential and their number will not appear on your telephone bill. Contact them on **0808 808 8141** or visit **<https://wearehourglass.scot/scotland>**.

For a copy of Age Scotland's **Elder abuse: keeping safe** guide, call our helpline on **0800 12 44 222**.

Conversion Therapy

Although there is no standard legal definition of conversion therapy, it refers to anything that claims to treat or cure someone's sexual orientation or gender identity. This includes medical treatment, psychiatric and psychological therapies, faith- or culture-based practices, verbal and sexual abuse. Many LGBTQ+ people have experienced trauma as a result of these practices.

The UK Government's **National LGBT Survey 2018** showed that although LGBTQ+ people of all ages are affected, older people are more likely to have been offered or undergone conversion therapy.

In Scotland, conversion therapy is not currently illegal. However, the Scottish Government plan to introduce new laws to change this by the end of 2023, calling it 'an abhorrent practice that has no place in Scotland'.

In 2017, a large number of health, counselling and psychotherapy organisations, including NHS Scotland, England and Wales, signed a joint document (a **Memorandum of Understanding**) stating that conversion therapy in relation to gender identity and sexual orientation is 'unethical, potentially harmful and is not supported by evidence', and aims to end the practice in the UK.

Conversion therapy can have a major, long-lasting effect on mental health. If you have been affected by conversion therapy, there is support available to help you to deal with its impact.

Your GP can provide help with mental health issues, and make referrals to suitable counselling and psychotherapy services. However, the waiting list for these services is often long, and you may want to consider other support options while you wait.

The **National Conversion Therapy Helpline**, provided by **Galop**, provides confidential, specialist support. Contact them on **0800 999 5428**, or email them at **help@galop.org.uk**.

If you want to consider private counselling, you can search for registered, trained and suitably experienced counsellors on the **British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP)** website, at www.bacp.co.uk/search/therapists. Fees for private counselling vary, but many counsellors offer reduced rates for people on low incomes.

Visit the **NHS Inform** website at www.nhsinform.scot/tests-and-treatments/counselling-and-therapies/counselling-and-psychotherapy for more information about counselling and psychotherapy services, or call their helpline on **0800 22 44 88**.

Money

Benefits

If you have a low income, you may be entitled to means-tested benefits to help with your day-to-day living costs. If you live with a partner, are married or are in a civil partnership, your combined income and savings will be taken into account when assessing means-tested benefits.

Pension Credit

Pension Credit is a means-tested benefit for those who have reached State Pension age and are on a low income. There is no capital limit and the amount you could get may be higher if you have a disability, caring responsibilities or are responsible for certain housing costs such as eligible service charges and payments under a co-ownership scheme.

To apply by telephone contact the **Pension Credit claim line** on **0800 99 1234**.

Housing Benefit

Housing Benefit provides means-tested help with your rent and eligible service charges if you are over State Pension age and have a low income. To apply for Housing Benefit, contact your local council or visit their website.

Council Tax Support

There are many situations in which you may be able to claim a Council Tax Reduction, exemption or discount, for example:

- you are on a low income, or live with someone on a low income
- you receive certain income-related benefits
- you have a disability
- you are over State Pension age
- you live alone, regardless of your income

To apply for Council Tax support, contact your local council or visit their website.

Universal Credit

Universal Credit is a means-tested benefit for those who are under State Pension age and on a low income. You may get extra Universal Credit if you are responsible for a child, have a disability, are a carer or have certain housing costs including rent and eligible service charges.

For more information and to make a claim visit

www.gov.uk/universal-credit/how-to-claim.

You can contact the **Citizens Advice Bureau Help to Claim** service on **0800 0232581**.

For more information about benefits, a copy of any of our benefits guides or a benefit check to see if you may be entitled to some extra money, call the **Age Scotland** helpline on **0800 12 44 222**.

State Pension

State Pension is based on your National Insurance contributions and can be claimed at State Pension age, which is currently changing. For all genders, it is currently age 66, rising to 67 by 2028. To check your State Pension age, visit www.gov.uk/state-pension-age.

The Gender Recognition Act came into force in April 2005, and gave transgender people the legal right to be treated as their preferred gender.

If you were born between 24 Dec 1919 and 3 April 1945, and had gender reassignment surgery before 4 April 2005, you may have lost out as a result of some of your pension calculations being made under the old rules. A Court of Appeal ruling means that if this applies to you, you can claim equal treatment rights for social security purposes.

To apply, you must first submit an expression of interest. You can request a form to do this by contacting the **Department for Work and Pensions Gender Recognition Team** on **0191 218 7622**. A new State Pension calculation will be made and you will receive a letter explaining your options, so you can decide whether or not to proceed with your application.

The government-approved **MoneyHelper** service can provide free advice and information about State Pensions, as well as occupational and private pensions. If you would like to speak to someone about your pension options, call them on **0800 011 3797** or visit their website www.moneyhelper.org.uk/en/pensions-and-retirement.

Legal

Making a Will

It can be hard to think about death and sometimes this means we put off making a Will. However, having a Will in place can save you a lot of worry.

A Will lets you say how you'd like your estate (your property, savings and possessions) to be distributed. It's especially important to have one if you think family members might contest your wishes. It's also a good idea to make a Will if you're in a committed relationship but you aren't married or civil partners, or if you own a property with someone who is not your spouse or civil partner.

It is important that your Will clearly identifies who the beneficiaries are, particularly if a beneficiary has changed their name and/or gender.

Make sure you review and update your Will regularly so it reflects your situation, and what you want to happen with your estate, accurately. You may need to change your Will if, for example, you get married or divorced, or your financial position changes significantly.

If you marry or enter a civil partnership, your existing Will remains valid, but if you end your civil partnership or get divorced your ex-partner is excluded from the Will.

Inheritance Tax

Civil partners and spouses can inherit money and property from their partner without paying Inheritance Tax, regardless of the size of the estate.

This rule doesn't apply to couples who live together but haven't married or registered their partnership. In that case, if the value of assets, such as a house, exceeds the threshold (currently £325,000), the surviving partner might have to sell the home to pay the tax debt after their partner's death. See www.gov.uk/inheritance-tax for more information.

Joint homeowner partners who aren't civil partners or spouses should seek independent financial advice about their Inheritance Tax position.

Power of Attorney

A Power of Attorney is a legal document you can use to allow someone to make decisions on your behalf, or to support you to deal with your finances.

The person who gives the powers is the granter, and the person who agrees to act on that person's behalf is the attorney.

You can only grant Power of Attorney if you have the mental capacity to do so. There are two types of powers that you can grant. Welfare powers allow someone to make decisions about your health and care. These powers will only begin if you lose the ability to make the decisions for yourself. Continuing (financial) powers allow someone to make decisions about money, property and other assets. You can decide if you want these powers to only begin if you lose the capacity to make your own financial decisions, or at another point in time so that someone can support you to deal with your finances even though you can still do so yourself.

Having a Power of Attorney can give you peace of mind that someone you have chosen, and who knows what is important to you, will make decisions for you if you cannot. If they need to act on your behalf, they will have all the information they need to take appropriate action with confidence.

Care

Care at home

If you have mobility problems, care needs, are living with a condition like dementia or need help with everyday tasks, support may be available to help you at home.

In Scotland, Personal Care and Nursing Care are free for those who are assessed as needing them.

Personal Care includes help with things like bathing, shaving, going to the toilet, getting up and going to bed, medications and dressings, cooking / reheating food and the use of surgical equipment.

Nursing Care covers medical assistance involving a qualified nurse, such as giving injections or managing pressure sores.

If you are assessed as needing help with housework or shopping, sometimes known as domestic assistance, there is likely to be a charge for these services.

To request an assessment of your care needs, you should contact the social work department of your local council. The assessment will usually happen in your home. The assessor will talk to you about how you carry out everyday tasks and ask about the help you currently have from friends, family or a carer.

The social worker who is making the assessment will ask you for information about your income, savings and essential expenditure, and will work out how much you can afford to pay for any services that are not free of charge.

You should not be treated less well because of your sexuality or gender expression. Care workers should recognise and embrace the diversity of those they care for. They should ensure that the language they use is inclusive, that they understand any specific healthcare needs you may have and that they treat you, and your partner if you have one, with dignity and respect.

Carers

If you care for someone else, you can ask the council for a Carer's Assessment. This looks at the help you need so that you can provide the care. This could be, for example, equipment, emotional and practical support or respite services. The person carrying out the assessment should not make assumptions or judgements about the nature of your relationship with the person you care for. Services provided to meet needs identified by a carer assessment should be free of charge.

Care homes

The right care home for you will depend on your preferences and needs. There are currently no specialist housing options for older LGBTQ+ people in the UK, however, you should feel able to ask questions of the managers and staff working in residential care, to find out more about their attitudes. You may want to ask:

- Do they actively welcome LGBTQ+ people and is this reflected in their promotional literature?
- Do they have other LGBTQ+ people living in the home?
- Are all staff properly trained and aware of the issues affecting LGBTQ+ people?
- Do they have procedures for tackling discrimination from other residents?
- Are their computer systems flexible enough to be inclusive of people who are transgender and non-binary gender?
- How does the home accommodate personal relationships and do they have a code of practice about privacy?
- Do they provide gender-neutral toilet facilities in the shared areas of the home?
- Are staff aware of the specific care issues relating to people at different stages of transition?

Paying for residential care is a complex subject. A financial means test will look at your income and capital, such as your savings and property, to determine whether you have to pay, and if so how much.

If you own your home it won't be included in the means test if your civil partner or spouse still lives there. In some circumstances, it isn't included if another relative still lives there. Call the **Age Scotland** helpline on **0800 12 44 222** for more information about paying for residential care and a copy of our **Care homes: funding guide**.

Discrimination and complaints

You should not experience discrimination from a care home or care worker as a result of your sexuality or gender expression. If you do, you can use the care home's own internal complaints procedure, the Care Inspectorate complaints procedure or the social work complaints procedure.

Care home complaints

There are a number of ways you can make a complaint about a problem in a care home.

You can speak to the care home manager or other staff member informally. If the care home is made aware of something you are not happy with, they may be able to correct it straight away.

You can make a formal complaint using the care home's complaint procedure, which should be available to all residents. You should not be treated differently because you have made a complaint.

If you prefer not to complain to the care home directly, you can contact the Care Inspectorate and make your complaint to them by:

- calling the national enquiries line on **0845 600 9527**
- filling in a complaints form online at **www.careinspectorate.com**
- visiting any Care Inspectorate office
- writing to any Care Inspectorate office or to their headquarters:

Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee DD1 4NY

Social work complaints

Social work complaints follow a three-stage process:

Stage one – frontline resolution:

You should make your complaint to the social work department, by telephone, email or letter, within six months of the time you become aware of the problem. They should respond within five working days. If you are not happy with their response you can ask them to move your complaint to stage two.

Stage two – investigation:

Your complaint should be acknowledged within three working days. The council should investigate your complaint and give you a full response within twenty working days, unless they let you know that they need more time to look into it. If you are still not happy with the council's response, you can ask the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman to look at the decision.

Stage three – the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman:

The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) can review decisions independently and make recommendations for actions that organisations are expected to carry out, such as recommending the council improve their services in a particular way or recommending that the council apologise to you.

You have 12 months to complain to the SPSO from the time you become aware of the problem. You can contact the **SPSO** on **0800 377 7330** or see their website **www.spsso.org.uk**.

You may also wish to discuss your complaint with your local councillor or MSP. If you do not know their contact details, call the **Age Scotland** helpline on **0800 12 44 222** and we will find this information for you.

Health

Healthcare

Healthcare services have a duty to provide care that is fair and equal. LGBTQ+ people face the same general health concerns as everyone else.

If you may have faced discrimination or poor treatment in the past, it's understandable to worry it could happen again. A bad experience may put you off going back to your doctor even if you're concerned something might be wrong, and this could put your health at risk.

It's important to see a doctor if you're concerned about your health. Every doctor's surgery should have a policy on equality and diversity, which you can ask to see at any time. Any information you share with NHS staff is confidential and there are strict laws to ensure health records are kept secure.

If you've been treated unfairly by a health service because of your sexual orientation or gender identity, you can make a complaint.

The **Patient Advice and Support Service** is provided by Citizens Advice Scotland. They can provide you with information and advice about your rights as a patient, and practical support with making a complaint. You can contact their helpline on **0800 917 2127** or visit their website at **www.cas.org.uk/pass**.

Sexual health

Sexually Transmitted Infections among older people have risen in the past 10 years. There has also been a rise in the transmission of HIV among older adults across the UK.

Unprotected sex with a new partner, or with multiple partners, could put you at increased risk of infection. Not all Sexually Transmitted Infections have symptoms so it's important to have regular sexual health checks. If you'd prefer not to see your usual doctor, you can make an appointment at a sexual health or genito-urinary medicine (GUM) clinic. Some of these are drop-in centres where you don't need an appointment.

The best way to prevent Sexually Transmitted Infection is to practise safer sex using condoms.

Condoms are available free of charge from sexual health clinics and genito-urinary medicine (GUM) clinics, many GP surgeries and other community health services.

In some NHS board areas there are schemes such as the C Card scheme, that allow you to collect condoms and other safer sex products from a variety of community settings such as colleges, health centres and other health services, and also by post.

For advice about getting and using condoms, visit the **NHS Inform** website at www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/contraception/getting-started/the-different-types-of-contraception#condoms.

LGBT Health and Wellbeing can provide sexual health information and contact details for sexual health services. Call their helpline on **0300 123 2523**, Tuesdays and Wednesdays 12pm - 9pm, Thursdays and Sundays 1pm - 6pm.

Mental health

Around one in three people are affected by mental ill health in Scotland each year. Although mental health problems are not an inevitable part of getting older, people who identify as LGBTQ+ are more likely to be affected in later life if they have experienced discrimination, isolation, rejection or abuse due to their gender identity or sexuality.

Mixed anxiety and depression is the most common mental health problem in the UK. The symptoms are complex and vary widely. Many people describe feeling down, tearful, restless, irritable, despairing or empty. There may also be physical symptoms such as difficulty sleeping, sleeping too much, tiredness, a change in appetite and physical aches and pains that have no obvious cause.

Most people go through periods of feeling low, but if your mental health is affecting your day to day life it is important to speak to your doctor. Treatment options may include self-help, lifestyle changes, prescribed medication or talking treatments. You can discuss with your doctor what combination of these will be beneficial, and the doctor can also refer you to specialist services such as counselling if needed.

There may be a long waiting list for some mental health services but there are other sources of support available.

LGBT Health and Wellbeing can offer a variety of confidential mental health services such as emotional support, counselling, creative activity workshops, self-management courses and peer-support groups. You can self-refer to their services and you don't have to have a diagnosis of mental ill health. For more information contact the **LGBT Helpline** Scotland on **0300 123 2523**, Tuesday and Wednesday 12pm - 9pm, Thursday and Sunday 1pm - 6pm.

Breathing Space can give you support if you are feeling overwhelmed and need to speak to someone immediately. They can also provide advice about accessing mental health support services. Speak to them on **0800 83 85 87**, Monday to Thursday 6pm to 2am, Friday 6pm to Monday 6am.

Samaritans can give you a safe place to talk through your thoughts and feelings, and support to make decisions, by telephone, email, text and in person. Contact them on **116 123** or email **jo@samaritans.org**.

Dementia

Dementia is a set of symptoms caused by damage to the brain from certain diseases or conditions. These symptoms may include problems with memory, thinking, language and understanding.

Dementia may have particular implications for LGBTQ+ people. As dementia progresses, people generally find it easier to recall older memories, which may be of a time before you 'came out' or transitioned. This can be confusing or distressing, and you may need additional reassurance when talking about your life, or carrying out tasks where you see your body such as bathing or going to the toilet.

Your older memories may be of a time when you were more likely to experience discrimination and abuse as a result of being part of the LGBTQ+ community. It is important to know that you will have support and understanding to process any feelings you experience as a result

You may not remember if you have discussed your gender identity or sexual orientation with the people around you, and be worried that you will accidentally reveal information you wished to keep private.

Planning ahead and deciding what you are happy to share with family, friends and care providers can help you to feel more in control. If you reveal private information about yourself to a care worker, they should not discuss this with anyone else unless there is a specific risk to your safety or wellbeing.

Those who provide care for you should always act in your best interests, but if you want to nominate a specific person to deal with your affairs, and make decisions about your treatment and care on your behalf, you should consider setting up a Power of Attorney. See page 12 for more information about Powers of Attorney.

For help and advice with these or other aspects of dementia, contact the **Alzheimer Scotland** helpline on **0808 808 3000**, or visit their website **www.alzscot.org**.

Disclosure to healthcare services

Questions about your sexual orientation or gender identity can feel personal and even intrusive, but they help service providers know if what they offer is right for you. If you've had negative experiences after sharing personal information in the past, it's normal to worry it could happen again. It's up to you whether you want to disclose information about your sexual orientation or gender identity, but bear in mind that by letting service providers know could help them better meet your needs.

Health and public services are increasingly used to supporting LGBTQ+ people of all ages and backgrounds. There are also strict laws about confidentiality and privacy, as well as the Equality Act's protections against discrimination, so any personal information you share must be kept private, and health and care workers must treat you fairly.

Next of kin

When you register with a new health service, or are admitted to hospital, you will usually be asked to give details of your next of kin. This can be anyone you choose. It does not have to be a blood relative, spouse or civil partner.

The hospital should keep your next of kin informed about your condition and treatment. However, your next of kin has no legal power to act on your behalf. They cannot give or withhold consent to treatment, and cannot make decisions about your care.

If you are unable to nominate your next of kin when you are admitted to hospital, for example because you are unconscious or don't have the capacity the hospital will attempt to contact your closest relative.

If you want someone specific, such as a partner or close friend, to be your next of kin, and to be able to make decisions on your behalf if you are unable to do so, you should consider drawing up a Power of Attorney. See page 12 for more information about Powers of Attorney.

Transitioning

Transitioning in later life

As attitudes change towards transgender people and the stigma reduces, a small but growing number of people are transitioning in later life.

Whatever your reason, whether you have only realised recently that you want to transition, have always known but feared the stigma or have felt there was little point after living so long in your assigned gender, it's really never too late. Transitioning can make you feel more 'yourself' and bring feelings of relief and self-acceptance at any age.

Older people can successfully transition and start living in their affirmed gender in just the same way that younger people can. If you're healthy and receive proper care, the treatments involved such as hormone therapy and surgery carry a low risk. However, if you are older you need to be aware of the limits and potential impact of treatment. For more information about this, you can speak to your doctor or a specialist Gender Identity Clinic.

Gender Identity Clinics

There are 2 main gender identity clinics in Scotland, in Glasgow and Edinburgh, and 2 smaller clinics in Inverness and Aberdeen. To become a patient of the clinics in Edinburgh and Aberdeen, you must first speak to your doctor, who will make a referral to the service. The clinics in Glasgow and Inverness accept self-referrals, meaning you can contact them directly even if you have not spoken to a doctor. There is likely to be a long waiting list, and it can take some time to get an appointment.

When you first attend a Gender Identity Clinic, they will make a detailed assessment of your needs, goals and general health. They may also discuss the types of treatment available, which include psychological support, hormone therapy, surgical procedures, hair removal and speech therapy.

Not everyone who attends a Gender Identity Clinic wants to transition surgically. Your medical professionals will work with you to agree an individual treatment plan, with the aim of helping you live comfortably in your preferred gender.

There are two ways to pursue gender transition in the UK – the NHS and privately. It is possible to use a combination of the two but you must discuss this with NHS staff. NHS clinics cannot work in parallel with private clinicians. Following your initial assessment, you must decide if you would like each part of your treatment to be handled by the NHS or privately.

Here are contact details for the NHS Gender Identity Clinics in Scotland:

Sandyford Gender Identity Service

GP referral or self-referral accepted from: NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde areas, NHS areas not covered by other gender identity services.

2/6 Sandyford Place, Glasgow, G3 7NB / **0141 211 8137**

www.sandyford.scot/sexual-health-services/gender-identity-service

Chalmers Sexual Health Centre

GP referrals accepted: NHS Lothian, NHS Borders and NHS Fife areas.

2A Chalmers St, Edinburgh, EH3 9ES / **0131 536 1570**

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

Highland Gender Identity Clinic

GP referrals and self-referrals accepted: NHS Highland area.

Raigmore Hospital, Old Perth Road, Inverness, IV2 3UJ

01463 704202

www.highlandsexualhealth.co.uk/gender-identity-1

Grampian Gender Identity Clinic

GP referrals accepted: Grampian NHS Board area.

Royal Cornhill Hospital, Cornhill Road, ABERDEEN, AB25 2ZH

01224 557651

Gender Recognition Certificates

The Gender Recognition Act 2004 allows transgender people to change their legal gender by obtaining a Gender Recognition Certificate. There are different routes to apply for a Gender Recognition Certificate depending on your circumstances.

To apply by the standard route you must:

- be at least 18 years old
- have lived in your acquired gender for 2 years, and intend to do so for the rest of your life
- have a diagnosis of gender dysphoria (confirmed by both your GP and a gender specialist)

You do not need to have had any surgery but one of the reports should say whether you are waiting for surgery, or give reason for you deciding not to have surgery.

If your application is successful, you will receive a Gender Recognition Certificate and information on how to get a new birth certificate. Once you have a Gender Recognition Certificate, you must be treated as your affirmed gender for legal purposes, including marriage, civil partnership, and registration of death.

You can get full information about the application routes, and the correct application form for your circumstances, from **www.gov.uk/apply-gender-recognition-certificate**.

You can get advice about the application process from the **Gender Recognition Panel** on **0300 1234 503**.

Changing your name

You might decide that you would like to change your name to better reflect your gender identity. In Scotland, you can change your name at any time, as long as you don't intend to deceive or commit fraud. If you are over 16, you can change your name with the National Records of Scotland for a fee of £40. There is currently a backlog of applications for changes of name. Visit www.nrscotland.gov.uk/registration for the most up-to-date information or www.nrscotland.gov.uk/files/registration/form-24.pdf to download the application form. You can also email namechange@nrscotland.gov.uk if you have any questions about the process. If you are not online, you can contact the **Change of Name** unit on **0131 314 4444**.

You don't need to have a Gender Recognition Certificate to change your name on your passport and other documents such as your bank cards. You may need to provide evidence of your name change, such as confirmation of the registration of your name with the National Records of Scotland.

To change your gender on your passport, you need a letter from your doctor or medical consultant confirming that your change of gender is likely to be permanent

To change your name and gender on your driving licence, you will need to complete form D1, available from the Post Office.

If you have a Will, make sure you're clearly identified if you have legally changed your name recently. If you're named in someone's Will by your former name, you will need to provide your Gender Recognition Certificate or other paperwork to prove your past identity.

Social activities

Social activities and community groups

Many LGBTQ+ groups and activities are based in Scotland's cities, which can sometimes make it difficult to find local opportunities to socialise with other LGBTQ+ people.

LGBT Health and Wellbeing have a directory of community groups, covering physical activity, social interaction, art, hobbies and more.

Helpline: **0300 123 2523**

www.lgbthealth.org.uk/lgbt-community-groups-scotland

Equality Network have a directory of LGBT+ organisations.

Tel: **0131 467 6039**

www.equality-network.org/resources/directory

The **Age Scotland** helpline offers friendship, information and advice, and can help you to find local activities or interest groups. We can help you to find social opportunities of all kinds, whether specifically for the LGBT+ community or more general. Call **0800 12 44 222** to speak to a friendly and inclusive advisor.

How you can help

Our vision is a Scotland where everyone can love later life.

All the information and advice we provide is free and completely impartial and in helping people access their rights and entitlements, it can be life changing.

We are an ageing population and more people than ever are coming to us for support. You can help us be there for those that need us most.



Make a donation

No matter how small or large, donations make a massive difference and help us continue our important work.

- ▶ Call **03330 15 14 60**
- ▶ Visit **age.scot/donate**
- ▶ Text **LATERLIFE** to **70085** to donate £5.*



Fundraise

Whether it is having a bake sale, running a marathon or knitting small hats for the Big Knit, there are so many ways to raise vital funds to support our work. To find out more, call **0333 323 2400** or visit **age.scot/fundraise**.



Leave us a gift in your Will

By choosing to leave us a gift in your Will, you can help Age Scotland to continue being there for vulnerable older people in the years to come. To find out more, call **0333 323 2400** or visit **age.scot/legacy**.

* Texts cost £5 plus one standard rate message

Let's keep in touch



Sign up to our newsletter

Our regular newsletters by email contain details of our campaigns, services and how you can support our work.

Sign up today by visiting [**age.scot/roundup**](https://age.scot/roundup)



Follow us on social media

Our social media channels are a great way to keep up to date with our work and issues that affect older people.



[**/agescotland**](https://www.facebook.com/agescotland)



[**@AgeScotland**](https://twitter.com/AgeScotland)



[**@age_scotland**](https://www.instagram.com/age_scotland)



[**/AgeScotland**](https://www.linkedin.com/company/AgeScotland)

Age Scotland is the national charity for older people. We work to improve the lives of everyone over the age of 50 so that they can love later life.

Our vision is a Scotland where everyone can love later life.

Contact us:

Head office

0333 323 2400

Age Scotland helpline

0800 12 44 222

Email

info@agescotland.org.uk

Visit our website

www.agescotland.org.uk

Follow us on social media:



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