



SafeLives Trans Inclusion Summary Statement

Trans-inclusion

We want all victims and survivors of domestic abuse to get the right support, when they need it, whatever their characteristics and identities. We believe this is possible without people's rights being in conflict. Our priority is the safety and wellbeing of everyone at risk of domestic abuse.

Trans victim survivors

Estimates suggest that around 0.5% of the UK population identifies as Trans or gender diverse¹, and research² indicates that transgender and gender diverse people may be experiencing domestic abuse at a higher rate than any other group yet are more likely to be hidden from services. Trans and gender diverse victims' gender identity can sometimes be targeted as part of the abuse. Evidence suggests that LGBT+ victims and survivors are not accessing domestic abuse services at the same rate as the general population. It is essential that transgender and gender diverse victims of domestic abuse can access appropriate support.

Single sex spaces

Domestic abuse disproportionately affects women. 95%³ of victims assessed as at high risk of harm are women, and the vast majority of perpetrators of domestic abuse are men.

Women have a right to be protected from further abuse and exacerbating trauma, and in that context there is concern about upholding the safety and protection offered by single-sex spaces. The right to access single-sex spaces after domestic and/or sexual violence is currently being tested through legal cases. This underlines the importance of a full spectrum of provision which services the needs of different individuals and groups within society.

The Equality Act 2010 provides an exemption for single-sex spaces to provide a different service, or refuse a service, to a Trans person in cases where they can demonstrate that

¹ ONS Census 2021

² Stonewall (2018) LGBT in Britain: Home and Communities

³ Marac National Dataset. www.safelives.org.uk/practice-support/resources-marac-meetings/latest-marac-data

doing so is a 'proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim'. This does not permit single-sex services to have a blanket ban on Trans service users. Entry to any domestic abuse service should not be limited to meeting the right gender criteria.

Support for Trans survivors

It is essential that transgender and gender diverse victims of domestic abuse can access appropriate support. We believe commissioners should ensure provision is made available for all victims and survivors, however they identify.

Frontline services already continuously assess risks presented by victim survivors who need to access support. We expect services to apply the same thorough, comprehensive risk assessment to all people coming into services to determine their access to that service.

We believe no new safety risks are created by self-identified Trans people accessing domestic abuse support, because all services should be carrying out the same risk assessment as standard when anyone seeks support, to ensure they are not perpetrators of abuse and do not have behaviours that would put other service users or staff at risk. Services unable to provide support for reasons within the exemptions of the Equality Act should ensure onward referral.

Our practice guidance, developed with input from a wide range of individuals and services, provides a risk-based decision-making framework to support commissioners and frontline services to provide support for Trans and gender diverse victims and survivors of domestic abuse, either via single-sex services or specialist services.

Legislation and policymaking should be evidence led and we believe UK Governments should be closely monitoring data on the gender identity of victims and survivors presenting at services as well as the percentage of Trans women who are able/not able to access female-only services. Experiences of all service users should be captured and evidence about safety within single-sex spaces routinely collected and reviewed.

We believe UK Governments should be funding training for all domestic abuse services to increase their competence and confidence in supporting Trans and gender diverse victims.

We also believe UK Governments should also be funding specialist provision for LGBT+ victims of domestic abuse.

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