

A Practical Guide to **Queer** Edinburgh

Healthcare, wellbeing, legal support, and community. A directory of LGBTQ+ services across Edinburgh and the Lothians.

MAY 2026

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LAVENDER MENACE QUEER BOOKS ARCHIVE

This guide is for everyone in Edinburgh's LGBTIQ+ communities. It lists services built by and for queer, trans, intersex, and non-binary people, alongside NHS and mainstream services we've found to be safe and competent.

Edinburgh has a long queer history. Lavender Menace itself goes back to 1976. The services and groups here are part of that lineage. Some are NHS clinics. Many are run by community for community.

You don't need to read this in order. The helplines on the next page are for moments when you need someone now. The sections that follow group services by what you might be looking for. The pathways at the back start with what you're going through. Sections touch on sexual violence, abuse, suicide risk, and conversion practices, so take it at your own pace.

Services change. Phone numbers shift, waiting lists grow, groups pause and restart. Check details before you rely on them. If anything is wrong, missing, or should be reframed, write to themenaces@lavendermenace.org.uk.

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If you need help right now

LGBT Helpline Scotland	0800 464 7000	Samaritans · 24 hours	116 123
Switchboard · LGBTQIA+ support, daily	0800 0119 100	LGBT Youth Scotland	online Mon & Thu 6–8pm
Galop · LGBT+ abuse & hate crime	0800 999 5428	LiveChat (13–25)	
Rape Crisis Scotland · 5pm–midnight	0808 801 03 02	NHS 24 · urgent health	111
Breathing Space · mental health	0800 83 85 87	Edinburgh Council · homeless out-of-hours	0800 032 5968

In immediate danger? Call 999.

Hub organisations

Good places to start. These organisations offer direct support, run many of the services listed here, and can refer you on.

LGBT Health and Wellbeing

Scotland's main LGBTQ+ health and community charity.

Edinburgh base Duncan Place Community Hub, 4 Duncan Place, Leith, EH6 8HW · **Office** 0131 564 3970 · **Helpline** 0800 464 7000 (Tue/Wed/Thu 12–9pm, Sun 1–6pm) · **Email** helpline@lgbthealth.org.uk · **Web** lgbthealth.org.uk · **Eligibility** 16+, all LGBTQIA+ identities

Helpline, 1:1 support, counselling, peer groups, social events. BSL helpline support Thursdays 6–9pm. Specific programmes for trans and non-binary people, older LGBTQ+ people, carers, and the New Scots project for LGBTQ+ people seeking asylum and refugees. Duncan Place hosts dozens of community groups each week.

Equality Network & Scottish Trans

Scotland's LGBTI equality and human rights charity.

Web equality-network.org · scottishtrans.org · **Email** sta@equality-network.org

Policy, rights, and advocacy work alongside our communities. Resources on gender recognition, employment discrimination, hate crime, and challenging service providers. Scottish Trans publishes some of the strongest community-led analysis of how shifting UK and Scottish law affects trans people.

LGBT Youth Scotland

National charity for LGBTQ+ young people, 13–25.

Web lgbtyouth.org.uk · **Email** info@lgbtyouth.org.uk · **LiveChat** online Mon & Thu, 6–8pm

Youth groups across Scotland, 1:1 support, online chat, rights advice, and support for parents and carers. Also runs the LGBT Charter programme for schools and organisations.

Healthcare

Sexual health, gender-affirming care, mental health, harm reduction. Some NHS, some run by community.

§ Sexual health

Chalmers Sexual Health Centre

NHS Lothian's specialist sexual and reproductive health service.

Address 2A Chalmers Street, Edinburgh, EH3 9ES · **Phone** 0131 536 1070 · **Walk-in** Mon–Thu 8:30am–7:30pm, Fri pre-booked only · **Web** lothiansexualhealth.scot

STI testing and treatment, contraception, PrEP, DoxyPEP, abortion services. Staff trained to work with LGBTQ+ people. Dedicated Wednesday evening clinic for gay, bi, and other men who have sex with men.

ROAM Outreach

Community sexual health for gay, bi, trans men, and other men who have sex with men.

Phone 0131 536 1773 · 07774 628 227 · **Web** roam-outreach.com

Free, confidential, by people from our communities. Outreach clinics in community venues, saunas, and online. PrEP assessments, rapid HIV and syphilis testing, vaccinations, 1:1 advice.

Waverley Care

Scotland's HIV and Hepatitis C charity.

Web waverleycare.org

Support groups for people living with HIV, with separate spaces for women and for gay and bi men. Monthly meet-ups, an infant formula milk programme for parents living with HIV in NHS Lothian, and rapid testing at central Edinburgh clinics. Also runs SX project for gay, bi, and other men who have sex with men.

Trans & Non-Binary Sexual Health Clinic

Drop-in clinic in an LGBTQ+ space.

Where LGBT Health and Wellbeing, 4 Duncan Place, EH6 8HW · **When** Fortnightly Thursdays, 1pm–4pm · **Partners** Waverley Care, LGBT Health and Wellbeing, LGBT Youth Scotland, NHS Lothian

STI testing (when you have no symptoms), PrEP, vaccinations, and advice. Designed for trans and non-binary people, by people from our communities. Wheelchair access and gender-neutral toilets at the venue.

§ Gender-affirming healthcare

Chalmers Gender Identity Clinic (GIC)

The NHS adult gender clinic for Lothian, Fife, and Borders.

Address 2A Chalmers Street, EH3 9ES · **Phone** 0131 536 1570 (Mon–Fri 1pm–4pm) · **Web** lothiansexualhealth.scot/gender-identity-clinic · **Access** GP referral only · 17+

Assessment, hormone therapy, voice work, and referrals for surgical care. Current waits for a first appointment are around two years, which can be hard. The Trans Support Programme at LGBT Health and Wellbeing offers community-based support throughout the wait. GP referrals only.

A NOTE ON SHIFTING POLICY

In late 2024, NHS Lothian paused surgery referrals for 18–24 year olds at Chalmers GIC. Referrals and assessments have since resumed, though the situation has changed multiple times. Trans healthcare in Scotland is actively contested. Check Chalmers GIC's FAQ for current practice, and read Scottish Trans for community-led analysis.

Sandyford Gender Service (Glasgow)

Scotland's largest GIC. The only adult service that takes self-referrals.

Address 6 Sandyford Place, Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow, G3 7NB · **Web** sandyford.scot · **Also** the route for young people under 17 in Scotland

Your-GP Edinburgh

Private adult gender clinic in Edinburgh.

An option for those with the financial means to access private healthcare. Worth weighing cost, ongoing prescribing, and whether your NHS GP will operate shared care.

§ Mental health & counselling

LGBT Health and Wellbeing Counselling

LGBTQ+ specialist counselling, sliding-scale fees.

Access Referral via Edinburgh office (0131 564 3970) · **Format** In person at Duncan Place, or online

Individual Support at LGBT Health and Wellbeing

Shorter-term sessions with a Development Worker.

Contact diane@lgbthealth.org.uk · 0131 564 3970

A useful first step for anything around sexuality, gender, or wellbeing. Not a substitute for counselling. You don't need to be in crisis to access it.

Pink Therapy Directory

UK-wide directory of gender, sex, and relationship diverse therapists.

Web pinktherapy.com

A good starting point for finding an affirming private therapist in Edinburgh. Some offer sliding-scale fees, so it's worth asking.

§ Substance use & harm reduction

CREW 2000

Edinburgh-based harm reduction charity.

Web crew.scot

Non-judgemental information and support around drug use. Blood-borne virus testing (HIV, Hep B, Hep C) at drop-ins or by appointment. You don't have to stop using to get support.

LGBTQ+ AA & NA

Twelve-step fellowships, queer-specific.

Where LGBT Health and Wellbeing, Duncan Place · **AA** weekly · · **NA** Monday evenings, 6:30–7:45pm

Wellbeing & peer support

Helplines, peer groups, and counselling. Most groups are free and you don't need a referral.

§ Helplines

LGBT Helpline Scotland

0800 464 7000

Tue/Wed/Thu 12–9pm · Sun 1–6pm · BSL Thu 6–9pm

Switchboard (UK)

0800 0119 100

Every day · 10am–10pm

Mermaids

0808 801 0400

Trans youth to 20 + families · Mon–Fri 9am–9pm

Mindline Trans+

0300 330 5468

Mon & Fri, 8pm–midnight · Trans, non-binary, intersex + their people

Breathing Space Scotland

0800 83 85 87

Mental health distress

Samaritans

116 123

Free · 24 hours

§ Peer support groups in Edinburgh

Most groups run out of LGBT Health and Wellbeing at Duncan Place. Full programme at lgbthealth.org.uk/events. Groups come and go; new ones are added regularly. Some current and recent examples:

LGBTQ+ Living with Anxiety · five-week peer support course

LGBT Non-Birth Parents · monthly social and support

Caring for Carers · for LGBT carers

Older LGBTQ+ social group · 50 and over, monthly

Trans Support Programme · groups, workshops, 1:1

Scottish Network of Parents and Carers of Trans Kids · monthly

Bi+ socials · regular meetups

New Scots · for LGBTQ+ asylum seekers and refugees

Legal services & rights

Discrimination, gender recognition, hate crime, immigration. Your rights, and organisations that can support you.

§ Discrimination, employment, housing rights

Citizens Advice Edinburgh

Free advice on discrimination, employment, housing, benefits, immigration.

Web citizensadviceedinburgh.org.uk

ACAS Helpline

Free employment law and workplace advice.

Phone 0300 123 1100

Law Society of Scotland · Find a Solicitor

For legal representation in discrimination, family, and other matters.

Web lawscot.org.uk

§ Gender recognition

Scottish Trans

Guidance on Gender Recognition Certificates and updating documents.

Web scottishtrans.org

Plain-language guidance on Gender Recognition Certificates, name and document changes, and dealing with workplaces and services. Resources written by and for trans people.

A NOTE ON CURRENT LAW

The 2024 UK Supreme Court ruling on the meaning of "sex" in the Equality Act 2010, and the EHRC's revised Code of Practice on services, have changed how some organisations interpret their duties. The legal picture is contested, and trans people remain protected from discrimination. If a service is treating you unfairly, you may have grounds to challenge it. Scottish Trans publishes the clearest community-led analysis.

§ Domestic abuse, hate crime, sexual violence

Galop

The UK's LGBT+ anti-abuse charity.

Helpline 0800 999 5428 · Hours Mon–Tue 9:15am–8pm, Wed–Fri 9:15am–4:30pm (closed 1–2pm daily) · Email help@galop.org.uk · Web galop.org.uk

Specialist support for LGBT+ people facing domestic abuse, sexual violence, hate crime, honour-based abuse, forced marriage, and conversion practices. Run by and for our communities. Specific support for trans survivors.

Edinburgh Rape Crisis Centre

Trauma-informed, survivor-led support after sexual violence. Trans-inclusive since 2008.

Address 17 Claremont Crescent, Edinburgh, EH7 4HX · Callback phone 0131 556 9437 · Email advocacy@ercc.scot · Office 0131 557 6737 · Web ercc.scot · Eligibility Women, trans women, trans men, non-binary people, and young people of all genders aged 12–21

Covers Edinburgh, East and Midlothian. Runs the Student Survivors Project (studentsurvivors@ercc.scot) and the SIA project for Black and minoritised ethnic survivors (sia@ercc.scot). Out-of-hours support: Rape Crisis Scotland on 0808 801 03 02 (every day, 5pm–midnight).

Police Scotland · Third Party Reporting

Report hate crime through an organisation, not directly to the police.

Web scotland.police.uk · Non-emergency 101 · Emergency 999

Reporting to the police is one option, and not always the right one. For many people, particularly Black, racialised, migrant, and trans people, direct contact with police carries its own risks. Third Party Reporting Centres, including LGBT Youth Scotland and LGBT Health and Wellbeing, can take a report on your behalf. Galop can support you whatever route you choose.

§ Asylum & immigration

Rainbow Migration

Free, confidential legal advice for LGBTQI+ people seeking asylum.

Web rainbowmigration.org.uk

Also supports LGBTQI+ partners applying for UK leave to remain. Most direct services are England-based; resources and remote support are useful UK-wide.

New Scots at LGBT Health and Wellbeing

For LGBTQ+ people seeking asylum and refugees in Edinburgh.

Information, peer support, and social activities. Open to people 16+, at any stage of asylum or refugee status. Volunteers speak a range of languages.

Scottish Refugee Council

General immigration and asylum support in Scotland.

Phone 0808 196 7274 • **Web** scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk

Micro Rainbow

Safe housing and social inclusion for LGBTQI+ refugees and people seeking asylum.

Web microrainbow.org

Safe houses are England-based; the organisation offers UK-wide support, online events, and meetups.

Housing & homelessness

Everyone has the right to a safe home. If yours isn't safe, or you don't have one, start here.

City of Edinburgh Council • Housing Options

The council has a legal duty to help if you are homeless or at risk.

Phone 0131 529 7125 (Mon–Thu 8:30am–5pm, Fri 8:30am–3:40pm) • **Out-of-hours emergency** 0800 032 5968 (freephone) or 0131 200 2000 • **Drop-in** The Access Place, 6 South Grays Close, Edinburgh EH1 1TQ • **Email** assessmenthomelessnessandsupport@edinburgh.gov.uk • **Web** edinburgh.gov.uk/homeless-risk

The council has a legal duty to support you. If family rejection, abuse, or any other situation means you need to leave home, including quickly, they must help. Go in person if you can't get through by phone.

Streetwork

Rough sleeping outreach in Edinburgh.

Phone 0808 178 2323 • **Web** streetwork.org.uk

If you are sleeping rough or worried about someone who is, Streetwork connects people with local services and ongoing support.

Shelter Scotland

Free housing rights advice, with LGBTQ+ specific guidance.

Helpline 0808 800 4444 • **Web** scotland.shelter.org.uk

Crisis Skylight Edinburgh

Longer-term support to leave homelessness behind.

Phone 0131 209 7700 • **Email** edinburgh@crisis.org.uk • **Address** Cranston House, 271 Canongate, Edinburgh EH8 8BQ

Coaching, housing law, and clinical psychology support for people leaving homelessness behind. You can self-refer.

Stonewall Housing

UK-wide specialist housing charity for LGBTQ+ people.

Advice line 0800 6 404 404 (Mon–Fri 10am–1pm) • **Live chat** Mon–Fri, afternoons via stonewallhousing.org • **Email** advice@stonewallhousing.org

Free housing advice across the UK, by people who get LGBTQ+ lives. Not an emergency accommodation provider, but they can advocate, signpost, and walk through your options. Specialisms include domestic abuse, mental health, substance use, and people over 50.

akt

The Albert Kennedy Trust · LGBTQ+ youth homelessness, 16–25.

Web akt.org.uk

Community & social life

Where we read, dance, climb hills, kick balls, pray, organise, and meet. Edinburgh has a packed queer calendar.

STAY CURRENT

My Queer Diary (myqueerdiary.substack.com · Instagram @myqueerdiary) publishes a weekly digest of everything LGBTQ+ happening in Edinburgh. *LEAP Sports Scotland* (leapsports.org/clubs) keeps the full directory of inclusive sports clubs.

§ Books, archives & community spaces

Lavender Menace Queer Books Archive

A friendly community archive of queer LGBTQ+ books, in the lineage of Edinburgh's first queer bookshops.

Where Edinburgh Palette, St Margaret's House, Room G25c, 151 London Road, EH7 6AE · **Open** Tue & Thu, 11am–4pm · Social Sunday, 2nd & 4th Sundays, 2–4pm · **Email** themenaces@lavendermenace.org.uk · **Web** lavendermenace.org.uk

Hosts the Future Drop Outs co-working group, book clubs, author events, and workshops. The *Past Shelves: Histories of Queer Reading* exhibition runs at the Museum of Edinburgh through 20 September 2026. Accessible entrance via the car park off Restalrig Road South. Lavender Menace is currently crowdfunding to keep the archive open. Please donate or share if you can.

Lighthouse Books

Queer-owned, woman-led independent radical bookshop.

Address 43–45 West Nicolson Street, Edinburgh EH8 9DB · **Phone** 0131 662 9112 · **Open** Daily 10am–8pm (Sundays 11:30am–5pm) · **Web** lighthousebookshop.com

Wuthering Dykes Book Club

Sapphic-themed literary nights.

Held at various venues, often Lighthouse Books.

§ Sport & movement

HotScots FC · Scotland's first LGBTQ+ football club, Edinburgh-based · hotscotsfc.co.uk

Caledonian Thebans RFC · LGBTQ+ inclusive rugby union

ShuttleScots · weekly inclusive badminton

Edinburgh Frontrunners · LGBTQ+ running club, all abilities

LGBTQ+ Basketball Edinburgh · weekly, beginners welcome

Queer Swim Edinburgh

Queer Runnings

Queer Yoga Edinburgh & Queer Joy! LGBTQIA+ Yoga

T-Climbing Edinburgh · trans and non-binary climbing meetups

Edinburgh Queer Hiking & Queer by Nature · outdoors and nature-based

Edinburgh Racqueteers · intermediate badminton

Gay Gordons · LGBTQI+ Scottish country dance and ceilidhs

§ Pink Triangle & nightlife

The Broughton Street area is Edinburgh's traditional gay village. **CC Blooms** (23 Greenside Place) has been open since 1991. **Planet Bar**, **Regent Bar**, and **Newtown Bar** round out the long-running scene. For drag, club, and DIY queer nights, look out for **Tracks at Subway** (Mondays), **Konversion**, and events at **People's Leisure Club**. Sober and dry queer events also exist; My Queer Diary is the easiest place to spot them.

§ QTIPOC+, faith, disabled queer spaces

Exhale.group · spaces for QTIPOC+ (Queer, Trans and Intersex People of Colour) in Scotland

Disabled Queer Edinburgh (DQE) · community group, contributes to Pride and runs its own events

Mustard Seed Edinburgh · inclusive faith community within the Scottish Episcopal Church

§ Annual highlights

Scottish Queer International Film Festival (SQIFF) · 19–24 October 2026. Community-led queer film festival.

LEAP Festival Fortnight · June. Inclusive sport, culture, and social events from LEAP Sports Scotland.

Pride Edinburgh · Saturday 20 June 2026. March from outside the Scottish Parliament, ending at a free festival.

Edinburgh Festival Fringe · 7–31 August 2026. A vast queer cultural scene runs through the Fringe each year.

Quick pathways

If you already know what you're looking for, start here. These point to one or two services each, not every option.

"I'm exploring my identity and don't know where to start."

LGBT Helpline Scotland on 0800 464 7000 offers anonymous, confidential conversations with trained volunteers from our communities. LGBT Youth Scotland's LiveChat is there if you are 25 or younger. You don't need to have it figured out before you call.

"I want to start gender-affirming healthcare."

Ask your GP for a referral to Chalmers Gender Identity Clinic for assessment, hormone therapy, voice work, and surgical referrals. Current waits for a first appointment are around two years, which can be hard. The Trans Support Programme at LGBT Health and Wellbeing offers community-based support throughout. Sandyford in Glasgow accepts self-referrals. Some people access private services like Your-GP, though this requires resources not everyone has.

"Something doesn't feel right at home, or with a partner."

Galop on 0800 999 5428 supports LGBT+ people experiencing or unsure about domestic abuse, sexual violence, hate crime, and conversion practices. Confidential, and you don't have to take action after you call. Stonewall Housing offers UK-wide housing advocacy if you need to leave somewhere unsafe.

"I've experienced a hate crime or harassment."

Reporting is your choice. Police Scotland take reports on 101 (non-emergency) and 999 (emergency). If police involvement isn't safe or right for you, Third Party Reporting Centres including LGBT Youth Scotland and LGBT Health and Wellbeing can take a report on your behalf. Galop offers support whichever route you choose, or none at all.

"I'm seeking asylum or settling in Scotland, and I'm LGBTQ+."

New Scots at LGBT Health and Wellbeing offers community and peer support at any stage of the asylum or refugee process. Rainbow Migration provides free, confidential legal advice. Scottish Refugee Council supports immigration matters more broadly across Scotland.

"I want to find community."

The community section has sport, books, faith, nature, dance, drag, and more. My Queer Diary on Substack publishes a weekly digest of what's on across Edinburgh's queer scene.

"I need somewhere safe to stay."

City of Edinburgh Council Housing Options on 0131 529 7125, or 0800 032 5968 out of hours. Shelter Scotland on 0808 800 4444 for housing rights advice. If you are sleeping rough, Streetwork on 0808 178 2323. If you're leaving abuse, Galop and Stonewall Housing can support you too.

"I'd like to talk to someone, ongoing."

LGBT Health and Wellbeing's counselling service runs on a sliding-scale fee, including free places. For private practitioners, Pink Therapy at pinktherapy.com lists therapists who work affirmatively with our communities; some offer sliding scales, so it's worth asking.



A Practical Guide to Queer Edinburgh · May 2026

This guide covers Edinburgh and the wider Lothian area (NHS Lothian: Edinburgh, Midlothian, East Lothian, West Lothian).

NHS gender services at Chalmers also cover NHS Fife and NHS Borders.

Send corrections, additions, and missing services to themenaces@lavendermenace.org.uk.

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