# Trans Survival Toolkit (UK)

How to Stay Safe, Resilient, and Ready in a Hostile Climate





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How to Stay Safe, Resilient, and Ready in a Hostile Climate Version 1.0 – April 2025

The United Kingdom is not the safe haven it pretends to be for trans people. Despite the image it presents internationally as a progressive democracy, the UK is increasingly hostile to trans lives. In recent years, there has been an orchestrated backlash driven by media misinformation, trans-exclusionary lobby groups, and a bipartisan political retreat from basic civil rights. Anti-trans rhetoric has moved from the comment sections to the front pages, to policy white papers, to legislative proposals and courtroom battles. We are not safe by default. We are safe because we fight to be.

From Westminster to Westminster Abbey, and from Brighton to Belfast, no corner of this island has escaped the culture war waged on our backs. Hate crimes are rising (<u>UK Home Office 2023 report</u>), legal protections are eroding, and essential services are being systematically stripped of funding or warped by anti-trans bias. Whether you're facing medical gatekeeping in the NHS, housing discrimination in council offices, or harassment in your school or workplace, survival as a trans person in Britain today requires more than resilience. It demands preparation, mutual support, and constant vigilance.

## **©** Purpose of This Guide

This guide was written **by and for trans people**, especially those who are most often erased: Black and brown trans people, disabled trans people, trans migrants, sex workers, working-class and neurodivergent trans folks. This guide is not about assimilation, respectability politics, or appealing to institutions that will never protect us.

It is about:

- Survival: Practical tips to navigate daily life under siege.
- **Resistance**: Building networks of care, sabotage, and joy.
- **Liberation**: Creating the world we need before they finish burning the one we had.

This is your map to fighting through hostile terrain.

 $\bigotimes$  You can also access supplementary resources via:

- Trans Safety Network
- TransActual UK
- Gendered Intelligence
- Mermaids UK



#### **K** What This Guide Covers:

- Know Your Rights: Legal protections, name change, GRCs, and gendered spaces
- Healthcare Access: Navigating the NHS, private providers, HRT access, and mental health support
- Safe Housing: Social housing, squatting law, shelters, and anti-eviction strategies
- **Employment & Workplace Protections**: Avoiding disclosure traps, discrimination defense, and worker co-ops
- Digital & Physical Security: Anti-doxxing, police response plans, and counter-surveillance tools
- Mutual Aid: Building local pods, care webs, and fundraising collectives
- Exit Planning: Cross-border safety, asylum options, and mobile escape strategies

## **I** A Note on Strategy & Caution

Trans survival isn't about being out at all costs. Visibility is not always safe. Coming out is not mandatory. Transition is not a linear journey. Strategic invisibility, privacy, and digital compartmentalisation are valid tools of resistance. Safety does not mean silence, but it does mean choosing how and when you reveal yourself.

This guide will provide tactics for:

- Living stealth or semi-stealth
- Evading media and doxxing threats
- Protecting your identity while organising
- Building redundancy plans if forced to relocate, re-name, or go dark

## A Call to Each Other

There is no cavalry. No one is coming to save us. We are the answer to each other's calls.

If you've ever felt alone, outnumbered, erased, or exhausted by this country: this guide is for you.

We do not need permission to exist. We do not owe apologies to anyone for surviving.

This is not just a toolkit. It's a love letter. It's a signal flare. It's a roadmap through the storm.

Keep it close. Share it widely. Print it. Encrypt it. Translate it. Tattoo it in code. Archive it in libraries and server farms. Because when the grid falls or the laws tighten, it will still be here.

#### We keep us safe.



## **1. KNOW YOUR RIGHTS**

Trans rights are human rights, but they are only as powerful as our ability to wield and defend them. In the UK, legal protections for trans people exist on paper, but enforcement is inconsistent and awareness remains dangerously low. This expanded guide breaks down your legal rights across key sectors, employment, healthcare, education, housing, and public safety, and offers practical tools to resist discrimination, document violations, and protect your dignity. Share it. Teach it. Use it.

## 🙅 The Equality Act 2010: Your Legal Backbone

The <u>Equality Act 2010</u> is the primary anti-discrimination law in the UK. It protects individuals against unfair treatment on the basis of nine protected characteristics, including "gender reassignment."

## Gender Reassignment Is a Protected Characteristic

- You **do not** need a Gender Recognition Certificate (GRC) or any medical intervention to be protected under this law.
- Protection begins as soon as you begin transitioning in **any form**, socially, legally, medically, or symbolically.
- The law applies to all stages of transition and includes people perceived to be transitioning, even if they aren't.

#### **Where This Protection Applies:**

- **Employment:** Employers must not misgender you, deny promotions, or fire you due to your gender identity.
- **Education:** Schools, colleges, and universities must accommodate your gender identity and protect you from harassment.
- **Public services:** This includes healthcare, government departments, and local councils.
- Goods and services: From gyms and banks to restaurants and public toilets, you are protected.

Further reading: Citizens Advice Guide



# Your Rights in Public Services: NHS, Housing, Education

## • The NHS Must Respect Your Identity

- You have the right to:
  - o Be addressed by your correct name and pronouns
  - Access single-sex wards in line with your gender identity
  - o Request privacy or separate accommodations where appropriate
- It is unlawful for NHS staff to deny care, delay referrals, or discriminate against you based on gender identity.

## See: Stonewall UK – Trans Health Rights

## Housing Protections

- Housing providers, including councils, hostels, and shelters must not:
  - Deny you accommodation
  - Assign you to unsafe or misgendered housing
  - Harass or exclude you based on your transition status

# See: Shelter UK – Housing Discrimination

## Education Rights

- Schools must:
  - Protect trans students from bullying and harassment
  - Use the correct name and pronouns
  - Allow access to gendered facilities (toilets, changing rooms) in line with your identity

See: EHRC – Guidance for Schools



# 🞽 Hate Crimes and Transphobia: Report and Resist

Hate crimes against trans people are **recognized under UK law**, but conviction rates remain low. Reporting can be traumatic, and many trans people avoid it due to negative experiences with police, but documenting incidents builds power, both legally and politically.

# • What Is a Hate Crime?

- Any crime (assault, harassment, threats, vandalism) motivated by hostility toward your gender identity.
- Even if the case isn't prosecuted, it should be logged as a hate incident.

# **K** How to Report (With or Without Police)

- Anonymously and securely:
  - <u>Galop</u> LGBTQ+ anti-abuse and legal support
  - <u>True Vision</u> Official UK police reporting portal
  - <u>Stop Hate UK</u> Offers anonymous phone, online, and text reporting
- What to include:
  - Date, time, location
  - Description of the incident and attacker(s)
  - Photos, screenshots, messages
  - Witness accounts (if available)

## Why Reporting Still Matters

- Establishes patterns of violence in your community
- Builds a case if repeated offenses occur
- Connects you with local victim support organisations



# Spread the Word: Legal Empowerment Is Collective Protection

Knowing your rights is step one. Teaching and defending them is step two.

#### Share This Guide:

- Include it in mutual aid kits
- Post it in community centers, GP clinics, and universities
- Translate into community languages
- Offer Know Your Rights teach-ins at activist meetups or support groups

#### Build Legal Networks:

- Start a community legal support pod
- Connect with trans-friendly lawyers through LGBTQ+ Lawyers Division (Law Society)
- Partner with orgs like <u>Trans Safety Network</u> and <u>Black LGBTQIA+ Migrant Project (BLMP)</u> for legal accompaniment and community defense

Legal literacy is not liberation, but it is armor. The UK system will not save us, but it can sometimes be forced to yield. Use the law when you must, resist its limits when you can, and always center your safety, your community, and your dignity.



# 2. LEGAL CHANGES & DOCUMENTATION

Your identity is valid, whether or not it is legally recognized by the state. But navigating official systems with accurate documentation can significantly reduce the risk of misgendering, harassment, and denial of services. In a climate of rising transphobia, bureaucratic resilience is not just paperwork, it's protection. This guide breaks down the process of updating your name and gender marker in the UK, with emphasis on what matters most for everyday safety and autonomy.

# Name Changes: Simple, Free, and Empowering

## 🔽 Change Your Name via Deed Poll

- A Deed Poll is a straightforward legal document that proves you've changed your name. It's the key to updating most UK records.
- No solicitor, judge, or official registration is required. You can create one yourself. •

#### How To Complete a Free Deed Poll:

- 1. Visit FreeDeedPoll.org.uk and fill out the online form.
- 2. Print the document and sign it in front of two witnesses.
- 3. Send copies to institutions where you want to update your name, such as:
  - **HM** Passport Office 0
  - o DVLA
  - NHS
  - Banks and building societies 0
  - Universities and schools 0

#### **Important Notes:**

- Witnesses must be over 18 and not related to you.
- Keep multiple copies, some institutions will want originals. ٠
- Consider laminating a copy or uploading it to encrypted storage. •

#### **Additional Resources:**

- Gov.uk Changing your name
- LGBT Foundation Name Change Guidance
- Gender Construction Kit Name Change Guide •



# 1 Gender Recognition Certificates (GRCs): Optional, Burdensome, Often Irrelevant

## What Is a GRC?

- A GRC updates the sex marker on your UK birth certificate.
- It is **not required** to update your passport, NHS records, driving licence, or most legal documents.

## Why Many Trans People Skip It:

- Requires a **formal diagnosis of gender dysphoria**, which pathologizes your identity.
- Demands proof of "living in your acquired gender" for two years.
- Comes with a £5 statutory declaration fee, plus a £5-£100 GRC application fee.
- Involves submitting intrusive personal documents to a cisgender review panel.
- High emotional and financial cost for limited utility.

## Use Cases:

- May help with inheritance, pension, and marriage rights.
- Rarely required by most daily services or institutions.

More Info: Gov.uk – GRC Application Process



# S Which Records to Update (And Why They Matter)

# Passport & Driver's Licence

- These are your most commonly requested identity documents.
- Can be updated **without a GRC**, using a Deed Poll and a doctor's letter.
- Gender markers include "M," "F," or "X" (non-binary X passports are under limited rollout, check current guidance).

## How To Apply:

- Change name on passport
- Change details with DVLA

## **NHS** / GP Records

- Request updates to your name, title, and gender marker directly with your GP.
- If you change your gender marker, you will receive a **new NHS number**.
- A GRC is **not required**. A Deed Poll and request letter are sufficient.

## **Resources:**

• TransActual – NHS Transition Updates

# **Education, Workplaces, Banks, and Utility Providers**

- All these institutions must recognize your name change with a Deed Poll.
- If you face resistance:
  - Escalate through complaints procedures
  - Cite the Equality Act 2010
  - Contact <u>ACAS</u> or a union rep

**Pro Tip:** Keep a checklist of which documents and organisations you've updated and when.



# K Free Tools, Templates & Legal Support

- FreeDeedPoll.org.uk: No-cost templates for name changes
- Gender Construction Kit: Step-by-step documentation guidance
- TransActual UK: Resource hub on transition logistics
- <u>Galop</u>: Support for trans people facing harassment or discrimination
- <u>Stonewall Trans Rights</u>: Policy and advocacy information

## **Tips: Resilience Through Paperwork**

- Scan and store all documents securely, use encrypted tools like Proton Drive or Signal
- Build a support network: coordinate legal clinic days or name-change buddy systems
- Create a timeline for updates and set achievable goals, don't burn out on bureaucracy
- If possible, request letters from GPs or therapists early, they can be reused across services
- Carry digital copies of your deed poll on your phone for emergencies

Your paperwork does not define your worth, but in this system, it can help shield your truth. Let your name reflect your power. Let your records reflect your reality.



# 💾 3. NHS & PRIVATE HEALTHCARE

**Trans healthcare is real healthcare.** Despite political hostility, institutional delays, and misinformation, your right to transition-related care is recognized across multiple UK medical frameworks. Whether you're navigating the NHS or accessing private care, your autonomy matters. This guide expands on current realities, informed consent models, and how to safely and effectively pursue the care you need.

# **NHS Gender Identity Clinics (GICs): Know the System, Beat the Delay**

## Wait Times Are Long, Act Now

- In 2025, NHS Gender Identity Clinic (GIC) wait times range from **4 to 6 years**, with some individuals waiting even longer.
- Demand has increased sharply, but funding and staffing have not kept pace, causing a national crisis in access.
- You do not need a psychiatric evaluation to request a referral. GPs are expected to refer upon request.

## **Immediate Steps:**

- 1. Book an appointment with your GP.
- 2. Clearly state you want a referral to a Gender Identity Clinic.
- 3. Ask your GP for written confirmation of the referral.
- 4. Track all interactions. Keep emails, appointment dates, and a record of what was said.

**GPs must not delay or gatekeep access.** They are bound by the NHS clinical mandate to respect trans patients' rights to timely care.

NHS Gender Dysphoria Protocol

# Frans Healthcare Is Not Cosmetic

## Talking to GPs Who Push Back

- Transition care is medically necessary, not elective.
- The NHS acknowledges gender dysphoria treatment, including hormone therapy and surgeries as legitimate, essential interventions.
- You can cite:
  - o WPATH Standards of Care 8
  - o NHS Trans Healthcare Commissioning Guidance

## If You Face Discrimination:

- Request a new GP within your practice.
- Submit a formal complaint: <u>NHS Complaints Process</u>
- Report the incident through:
  - o TransActual Feedback Tool
  - LGBT Foundation Health Services



Many trans people turn to **private care** due to NHS delays. Private services using the informed consent model typically allow you to begin HRT without psychiatric diagnosis, offering faster and more affirming pathways.

## **Trusted Providers:**

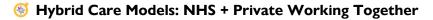
- GenderGP
  - Hormone therapy, bridging prescriptions, letters for legal name changes, voice therapy, and more
  - o Informed consent approach, no gatekeeping. Accessible across the UK and internationally.
- <u>MyWebDoctor</u>
  - EU-based provider that offers hormone prescriptions for UK clients.
- Gender Plus
  - UK-based clinic offering bridging HRT, psychological support, surgical referrals, and voice coaching.
- **<u>Plume</u>** (international)
  - May expand UK services, check for updates on global rollout.

## **Additional Services:**

- Blood test kits: <u>Medichecks</u>, <u>Blue Horizon</u>
- Hormone injection training: Ask GenderGP or Gender Plus for video support or letters to your GP

## **Key Considerations:**

- Monthly costs can range £30-£100 depending on provider and medications.
- GPs are not legally obligated to cooperate with private providers, but many do.



Most trans people in the UK are forced to balance private and public healthcare. This hybrid model is **legal, flexible, and increasingly common**.

## How to Navigate It:

- Use private services to begin HRT, then transition into NHS GIC care once available
- Ask your GP to support with:
  - Bloodwork and monitoring
  - Prescription fulfillment (if they agree to shared care)
  - Letters of support or administrative aid

## Tips for Smooth Integration:

- Keep organized records of hormone doses, blood tests, provider communications
- Ask for GP cooperation in writing, citing continuity of care and patient safety
- Be firm but respectful: most resistance is based on confusion, not malice

Guide: <u>TransActual – How to Access HRT</u>

# **Non-HRT Trans Healthcare**

Trans health includes more than hormones:

- Voice training: GenderGP, NHS Voice Services
- Fertility preservation: Must be requested before starting HRT (ask GP or fertility clinic)
- Mental health support: MindOut, Pink Therapy, Switchboard
- Sexual health: Free testing and care via Brook, Terrence Higgins Trust, or local NHS clinics

## Reminders

- **Document everything**: keep digital and printed copies of referrals, prescriptions, blood results, and care letters
- You are not broken for needing care, you're building a future for yourself
- Consider organizing a local or digital **trans health pod** where people support each other with provider reviews, resources, and appointment prep
- Advocate for others, and ask for help, collective navigation is how we survive

Transition is a journey, not a queue. Your body deserves care now, not later. And you don't need to earn your humanity, it's already yours.



# 1. HOUSING SAFETY

**Safe housing is a right, not a privilege.** For trans people, especially youth, disabled individuals, neurodivergent folks, migrants, asylum seekers, sex workers, and people of colour, housing insecurity isn't just a systemic oversight. It's a form of slow violence. Navigating the housing system in the UK while trans means preparing for discrimination, transphobia in shelters, bureaucratic cruelty, and often outright exclusion. This deeply expanded guide offers strategies for crisis response, eviction prevention, squat defence, council navigation, and building housing resilience through mutual aid.

## 1 If You're Facing Eviction or Unsafe Home Conditions

## Step 1: Contact LGBTQ+ Housing Advocacy Orgs Immediately

- Stonewall Housing
  - Emergency and long-term housing support, including access to LGBTQ+-friendly shelters, case management, and domestic abuse referrals.
  - Provides advocacy for trans people navigating unsafe hostels or eviction threats.

## • The Outside Project

- Trauma-informed LGBTQIA+ shelter and crisis centre. Offers emergency beds, community kitchen, and mutual aid.
- Their model is trans-led, peer-operated, and non-judgmental.

# • AKT (Albert Kennedy Trust)

- For queer people aged 16–25. Offers host homes, crisis navigation, digital mentoring, and survival planning tools.
- Shelter UK
  - Legal support for housing discrimination and unlawful evictions.
  - Housing advisors available by phone, webchat, and at community centres.
- <u>Galop</u>
  - Essential for trans survivors of domestic abuse or hate crimes. They can advocate directly to councils and help find gender-appropriate emergency placements.



## Know Your Legal Housing Rights

#### **Tenant Protections**

- Eviction requires a court order. Your landlord cannot simply change the locks or throw you out.
- Section 8 and Section 21 notices must follow correct timelines and include legal documentation.
- If you're harassed or discriminated against for being trans (e.g., misgendered, denied entry to shared spaces), you can file under the Equality Act 2010.

## Navigating Council Housing Systems

- Councils must respond to people at risk of homelessness within **56 days** of a threat being reported.
- If you are fleeing domestic abuse, experiencing hate crime, or transphobia at home, you are eligible for priority need.
- Councils have a duty to accommodate based on your lived gender, not assigned sex.
- Always ask for housing decision letters in writing and know you can request a review within 21 days.

# Resource: Shelter – Trans People and Housing Rights

# Squatting: Rights, Risks, and Safety Strategies

## What's Legal (and What's Not)

- Squatting in residential properties is criminalised under Section 144 of the Legal Aid Act.
- **Squatting in commercial buildings is still legal**, though civil eviction can be initiated by the owner.
- Being in a building is not criminal unless you break in or damage the property.

## Safer Squatting Tips

- Target empty, unsecured commercial buildings like unused shops, offices, or warehouses.
- Use a Section 6 Legal Warning to assert non-residential occupancy rights.
- Document that the building was abandoned (photos, utility bills, public records).
- Avoid publicising locations online, use secure networks to coordinate entries and exits.

## Ҟ Resources:

- Advisory Service for Squatters
- Squatter's Handbook (PDF)
- <u>Netpol</u> Police monitoring and legal support



## 🔝 Mutual Aid & Emergency Shelter Networks

#### Localised Mutual Aid Infrastructure

- <u>Queercare</u>: Offers gendered safety planning, emergency hosting, and rapid response networks across the UK.
- **<u>Radical Housing Network</u>**: Organises direct action and tenant support, especially in gentrifying zones.
- **ACORN UK**: Renters union that helps protect tenants from illegal evictions and landlord abuse.

## Secure Emergency Contact Webs

- Use Telegram, Signal, or Matrix to join hyperlocal housing pods.
- Build an encrypted housing safety tree: who can host, who has spare keys, who has a car, who has a burner phone.

## **DIY Shelter Tactics**

- Build or join a buddy network: 2–3 people you check in with daily.
- Build an escape kit: ID, meds, cash, contact sheet, extra SIM, hoodie.
- Distribute printed local safe-shelter resources in libraries, food banks, pharmacies, and queer cafes.

## Notes

- **Domestic violence, institutional neglect, and state discrimination** are not your fault. You are not hard to house. The system is built to exclude you.
- You have the right to access safe, stable, and affirming housing that does not endanger your life.
- Begin documenting your story early: keep dates, screenshots, and letters in a secure folder.
- Housing pods, queer squats, and trans-led co-ops are forming across the UK, tap into them or start your own.

# Housing is survival. Housing is emotional safety. Housing is how we rebuild our futures. You are not a burden, you are a builder.



# 5. EMPLOYMENT AND WORKPLACE TIPS

**Employment should never require erasing your identity.** Yet for many trans people across the UK, the workplace is still a place where misgendering, discrimination, invisibilisation, and exploitation are common. From job applications to contract negotiations, from navigating HR systems to resisting microaggressions on the shop floor, trans workers deserve to know their rights, and have real strategies to protect themselves.

This expanded guide offers legal resources, reporting tools, and creative labour models that help trans workers survive, and thrive, in a hostile job market.

#### **1** During Interviews: Disclosure Is Optional

- You are **not legally obligated** to disclose your trans status, medical history, gender identity, or pronouns during any stage of the hiring process.
- Employers **cannot ask** about your transition, hormone status, surgeries, or name change history unless it's for a specific and lawful job-related reason (e.g., roles requiring a DBS check).
- Many trans people choose not to disclose at interview stage, this is your right.
- If you **choose** to disclose:
  - Practice saying it in a way that centres confidence and clarity.
  - You do not have to justify your identity.
  - You can ask about their policies on gender inclusion, dress code flexibility, or pronoun use.

Legal Source: Equality Act 2010 – Overview



# **(** Know Your Rights: Legal Protections at Work

#### The Equality Act 2010

- Gender reassignment is a protected characteristic.
- This protection applies whether you're socially transitioning, medically transitioning, or simply living in your authentic gender.
- You are protected from discrimination whether you identify as binary, nonbinary, genderqueer, or agender.

#### **Common Types of Workplace Discrimination:**

- **Direct discrimination**: Refusing to hire you, paying you less, or dismissing you due to your gender identity.
- **Indirect discrimination**: Dress codes, policies, or expectations that disproportionately harm trans employees.
- **Harassment**: Intentional misgendering, invasive questions about your body, or refusal to use your name or pronouns.
- **Victimisation**: Punishing you for complaining or asserting your rights.

Support Guide: <u>ACAS – Gender Reassignment Discrimination</u>

## Documentation Is Power

- Start documenting every incident of discrimination or hostility:
  - What happened, when, and who was involved
  - Save emails, messages, or audio (check legality of recording in your area)
  - Keep a private log with dates, quotes, and emotional impact

#### **Reporting Pathways:**

- Internally: Submit a complaint to HR (if you feel safe to do so).
- Externally:
  - ACAS Free legal advice, early conciliation, and tribunal prep
  - EASS Equality Advisory Support Service for discrimination complaints
  - Galop Supports LGBTQ+ people experiencing workplace abuse

P Tip: Even if no action is taken immediately, keeping a detailed log helps in future legal cases or complaints.



# Alternative Work Models for Trans Safety and Autonomy

#### • Freelance & Remote Work

- Enables trans people to control their working conditions, choose affirming clients, and reduce inperson exposure to harassment.
- Trans freelancers dominate industries like writing, illustration, marketing, development, and consulting.
- Use platforms like:
  - Contra: No-fee freelancer marketplace
  - Fiverr and Upwork: Global job boards
  - TransTech: Trans-owned tech training & job portal

## Worker Cooperatives & Collectives

- Co-ops are democratically run workplaces where workers own and manage operations.
- Perfect for trans people seeking safer, non-hierarchical employment.
- UK examples:
  - <u>Co-operatives UK</u>: Registry of UK worker co-ops
  - Equal Care Co-op: Care sector co-op prioritising disabled and marginalised workers
  - o Outlandish: Digital and data-focused cooperative

## Trans-Owned, Queer-Led Employers

- Search for queer and trans-owned businesses through mutual aid networks, Instagram, or TikTok.
- Safer employment options include:
  - Community centres
  - Trans-focused arts orgs
  - Bookshops, tattoo studios, healing collectives, sex worker co-ops



## Digital and Peer Support Networks

- LGBT Foundation: Employment and wellbeing support
- <u>Stonewall Workplace Index</u>: UK employers rated by LGBTQ+ inclusion
- <u>TransActual UK</u>: Trans-led guides on employment law, healthcare, ID changes
- Out & Equal: International workplace equity resource hub

## **Peer Work Pods:**

- Start a pod with 3–5 other trans or queer workers to share job listings, interview strategies, name change documents, or venting space.
- Schedule regular check-ins and build a shared database of safe employers.

Workplace inclusion shouldn't be a bonus, it should be the baseline. If you're navigating unsafe work, know that your safety matters more than a job. You deserve employment where your gender is respected, your name is honoured, and your labour is valued. Whether you're a barista, a coder, a sex worker, or a youth mentor, your contribution matters.

Your labour is resistance. Your income is survival. Your workplace can be a site of power, not just exploitation.



# **i** 6. DIGITAL SECURITY

**If your phone knows everything about you, so does the state.** In an age of predictive policing, biometric surveillance, artificial intelligence-driven data profiling, and unregulated private intelligence networks, digital security is no longer optional. For trans people, especially those who are visibly out, politically active, organizing mutual aid, or navigating criminalized identities, the stakes are higher than ever. Digital security isn't about paranoia, it's about preserving the ability to act, speak, build, and survive.

This guide expands on foundational tactics for device protection, anonymity, metadata reduction, antisurveillance infrastructure, and building collective digital resilience for trans liberation.

## O Use Pseudonyms and Compartmentalised Identities

- Using a pseudonym isn't lying, it's self-preservation in a digital landscape where one post can endanger your housing, employment, safety, or immigration status.
- Build layers:
  - A legal-name identity for government services, taxes, and formal employment
  - A pseudonymous identity for activism, protest planning, and network organizing
  - A nickname or alternative handle for queer community spaces, gaming, dating, or support forums

#### **Tips for Strong Compartmentalisation:**

- Use separate email accounts, SIM cards, and device profiles for each identity
- Avoid cross-posting or linking pseudonyms with public photos, payment apps, or logins
- Don't use the same username across platforms unless visibility is intentional

#### **Pseudonym-Friendly Platforms:**

- <u>Mastodon</u>: Decentralized and non-algorithmic
- Matrix: Encrypted and federated chat, good for protest comms
- <u>Cohost</u>: No real name policy, minimal tracking
- Signal: Use with a burner number and strong privacy settings



## Lock Down Your Devices

#### Enable 2FA (Two-Factor Authentication)

- Use <u>Aegis</u> or <u>Authy</u> for app-based codes
- Never rely on SMS for sensitive 2FA, it's vulnerable to SIM swap attacks

#### Secure Messaging

- <u>Signal</u>: Ideal for encrypted conversations, offers PINs, disappearing messages, and no cloud backups
- <u>Session</u>: Fully anonymous, uses no phone number
- Briar: Bluetooth/WiFi direct messaging for when the internet is down

#### **General Phone Hygiene**

- Install apps from <u>F-Droid</u> or trusted sources only
- Turn off location services unless actively needed
- Disable biometrics if you're vulnerable to arrest or stop-and-search
- Clear browser history and app caches regularly

#### Password Safety

- Use long passphrases (4+ words) instead of single-word passwords
- Store credentials in Bitwarden or KeePassXC, not in your browser
- Set devices to auto-lock within 30 seconds of inactivity



# Assume Devices Will Be Seized

#### **Contexts of Seizure:**

- UK law allows police to seize electronics without prior notice during raids, protests, or investigations
- Border agents can legally demand passwords, social media handles, and device access

#### **Preparedness:**

- Keep sensitive organizing information in secure cloud tools:
  - <u>CryptPad</u> Fully encrypted collaborative docs
  - Proton Drive Encrypted cloud storage
  - Tutanota Encrypted calendar, email, and notes
- Maintain minimal data on your devices, don't store protest routes, jail support contacts, or full group chat archives
- Practice emergency wipe drills: learn how to factory reset your phone in seconds
- Create a backup and encrypt it, store offline or on a trusted device, not in plain Google Drive or Dropbox

#### Obscure Metadata and Location

#### Turn Off Broadcasting Services:

- Disable Bluetooth auto-pairing and WiFi auto-connect
- Deactivate GPS unless you need real-time navigation

#### **Use Anonymity Tools:**

- Tor Browser: For researching or communicating anonymously
- Mullvad VPN: Offers anonymous payments and no-log policy
- GrapheneOS: Consider this hardened Android OS for high-risk users

## Harden Your Browser:

- Use <u>Firefox</u> with:
  - o <u>uBlock Origin</u>
  - o Privacy Badger
  - NoScript for granular control over scripts
- Use Brave for quick hardening and tracker blocking



# Responding to Doxxing and Digital Harassment

#### When Doxxed:

- Screenshot every instance immediately, doxxers often delete or edit posts
- Report accounts on all platforms, even if you think it won't help
- Use <u>DeleteMe</u> or <u>Incogni</u> to scrub your info from public broker databases

#### **Build a Digital Threat Response Plan:**

- Assign a digital support buddy (can post, report, help document while you disconnect)
- Have safe social logins, device backups, and escape comms ready
- Use Digital First Aid Kit to assess exposure

## Tools & Guides:

- EFF Surveillance Self-Defense
- Tactical Tech
- Privacy Guides
- CyberFeminism Index: Radical, global tools for digital justice

Digital security is collective. It grows when we teach each other, cover each other, and debrief together after threats. Audit your systems quarterly. Pair up and walk through threat models. And when harm happens, respond with care, not shame.

Being vigilant isn't paranoia, it's preparation. You are already doing the work to protect your future, and every encrypted message you send is a refusal to be surveilled.



# a 7. POLICING & SURVEILLANCE

The police are not here to protect you, they are here to enforce the state. For trans people, especially those who are Black, brown, migrant, disabled, neurodivergent, sex-working, or visibly queer, policing is a structural threat. From stop-and-search to digital surveillance to expanded protest criminalisation, the UK's policing regime continues to evolve toward repression. This section is a survival manual for navigating police interaction, resisting surveillance, and holding the line during moments of direct confrontation with state power.

## E Know the Law: The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022

#### What This Law Does:

- Gives police broad authority to stop and search without suspicion in protest-related areas
- Criminalises disruption, even when nonviolent, targeting climate protesters, trans rights marches, and public disruption campaigns
- Allows conditions to be imposed on protests for being "too noisy," "too annoying," or "likely to cause unease"
- Raises penalties for obstruction of highways, statue toppling, or chaining oneself to property
- Empowers police to pre-emptively restrict travel or contact between protest organisers

#### Key Takeaway:

You do not need to justify yourself to police. You are not required to disclose your gender. You do not have to answer questions beyond name and address when legally compelled. Silence is your right.

#### **Core Phrases to Memorise:**

- 1. **"No Comment"** Use consistently. Don't fill silence.
- 2. "Am I Free to Go?" Say it clearly. If yes, walk away.
- 3. "I Want a Solicitor" Repeat this phrase even if you already asked once.

#### S Learn More:

- Green and Black Cross Stop and Search
- Netpol PCSC Act Analysis
- Liberty Protest Rights



## Gender and Police Interaction

#### **Know Your Rights:**

- You are not legally required to out yourself.
- You have the right to refuse a search by an officer who does not match your gender identity.
- You can ask for a supervisor or an officer of your lived gender.

#### In Case of Misgendering or Harassment:

- Write down or photograph badge numbers and shoulder codes
- Record interactions discreetly (legal in public unless obstructing)
- File reports with:
  - Galop LGBTQ+ Hate Crime Advocacy
  - o Black Protest Legal Support
  - o <u>Liberty Legal Support</u>

Read: TransActual – Police and Gendered Searches

## Staying Safe During Protests

#### **Before You Go:**

- Wear layers and bring snacks, water, ID (if you choose), and any medical gear
- Write emergency contacts and a legal support number (like GBC) on your arm with permanent marker
- Use the buddy system: 2–5 people who commit to staying together throughout the action

#### At the Protest:

- Avoid sharing identifying info over unencrypted channels
- Use burner phones or lock down your phone (disable biometric unlock, set strong password)
- Do not bring notes, contact sheets, or organisational documents unless encrypted
- Avoid standing near surveillance vans, high-mounted cameras, or police kettles

#### **On Livestreaming:**

- Always ask for verbal consent before filming anyone
- Turn off geolocation, avoid tagging locations in real time
- Use apps like ObscuraCam or video editing software to blur faces

#### 惧 Tools:

- Green and Black Cross Know Your Rights
- Activist Legal Project Legal aid and arrest prep
- EFF Protest Security



## Surveillance Infrastructure to Be Aware Of

## **Tools Police Use:**

- Facial recognition software: used at events in London, Birmingham, and Manchester
- IMSI Catchers: intercept mobile traffic and metadata
- **Predictive policing databases:** automate surveillance of "suspicious" individuals based on race, movement, or associations
- Social media monitoring: police follow hashtags and events
- Drones and aerial imaging: track crowds and individuals from above

## How to Resist:

- Cover distinguishing features (tattoos, clothing logos)
- Use Faraday bags or airplane mode
- Switch SIMs between actions or use a clean device
- Stay off surveillance chokepoints: CCTV-heavy intersections, public transport hubs

# **i** After Arrest or Police Harassment

## If Arrested:

- Stay calm, repeat "No comment" to every question
- Do not sign caution forms without legal advice
- Request a solicitor from Police Action Lawyers Group
- Refuse voluntary interviews, make no statements outside your solicitor's presence

## Support Yourself and Others:

- Alert your protest pod or jail support network
- Log the time and location of arrest for follow-up
- Prioritise rest, hydration, and mental health recovery after release

## Post-Arrest Resources:

- <u>Netpol Arrest Advice</u>
- Green and Black Cross What Happens Next

Policing is not a neutral act, it is an active form of oppression. Whether you are marching for trans liberation, resisting state violence, or building mutual aid, you are under scrutiny. But knowledge is armour. Community is your strongest shield. Train together. Debrief together. Document abuse. Protect each other.

You do not owe them your silence. You do not owe them your compliance. You owe yourself your freedom.



# 🔝 8. COMMUNITY & MUTUAL AID

We survive because we keep each other alive. In a time of hostile government policy, healthcare collapse, mass evictions, and growing fascist violence, trans people cannot afford to rely on systems that were never designed for us. Mutual aid is not charity. It is not optional. It is the most radical act of resistance in a society built on abandonment. Mutual aid and community defense are our frontline infrastructure, the foundation of a liberated future. When the institutions collapse or actively harm us, it is these grassroots networks that keep us breathing, clothed, housed, affirmed, and protected.

Mutual aid is not just about giving, it's about **long-haul relational care, strategic resistance, and survival rooted in shared responsibility.** This updated guide outlines practical steps to build durable trans-centered pods, prevent burnout, integrate safety planning, skillshare radical tools, and harden our social infrastructure against repression.

## Build Tight-Knit Local Support Networks

#### Why Local Networks Matter:

- Emergency services often misgender, delay, or harm trans people.
- Being doxxed, unhoused, deported, or targeted is not a rarity, it's a weekly occurrence for our community.
- Large orgs are often bureaucratic, cis-led, and inaccessible. Local pods respond faster, are more accountable, and can disappear or reorganise as needed.

#### How to Start:

- Form a pod of 3–10 trusted individuals. Think beyond friendships, include neighbours, local delivery workers, caretakers, harm reduction allies.
- Choose secure tools like <u>Signal</u>, <u>Session</u>, or <u>Matrix</u> to coordinate.
- Create a shared emergency contact sheet (encrypted), and track available resources, shelter beds, cars, money, SIM cards.

#### Suggested Structures:

- Assign rotating or overlapping roles: wellness check-ins, legal contact keeper, funds handler, crisis response, transport lead.
- Develop shared care agreements: boundaries, access needs, no-contact policies, safety plans.
- Map skills and assets: legal literacy, first aid, food prep, anti-doxxing, prison support, digital security.

#### Learn More:

- Mutual Aid Dean Spade (free book)
- QueerCare Mutual Aid Guide
- Disabled And Here Toolkit
- Solidarity Not Charity Toolkit



#### Join or Create Trans Mutual Aid Groups

#### National + Regional Networks:

- <u>Trans Mutual Aid UK</u>: National directory of trans aid groups, emergency contacts, housing and legal referrals
- <u>Sisters Uncut</u>: Abolitionist feminist group creating anti-carceral care systems
- <u>Acorn the Union</u>: Organises tenants, workers, and low-income people into direct-action community unions
- <u>London Trans+ Mutual Aid</u>: Offers safe housing, affirming clothing swaps, and rapid-response crisis support

#### Build Your Own:

- Create a low-barrier intake: allow anonymous requests, use encryption, don't require ID
- Use sliding-scale or needs-based models for sharing money, food, shelter, or hormones
- Anonymise resource logs, use burner accounts or Open Collective for transparency
- Ground everything in abolitionist values: anti-policing, anti-ableism, anti-racism, anti-assimilation

#### **K** Tools to Build:

- <u>Riseup Pads</u>: Secure, collaborative notetaking
- <u>CryptPad</u>: Encrypted file sharing and form creation
- <u>ProtonMail</u>: Encrypted email communications
- Loomio: Decision-making in distributed groups



# Learn Community Safety and Crisis Skills

#### First Aid:

- Train in Naloxone reversal, CPR, wound care, seizure and diabetes support
- Keep a rotating trauma kit with gloves, sterile pads, glucose, spare meds, menstrual supplies
- Host teach-ins every 2–4 months: invite nurses, street medics, or experienced organisers

#### **Conflict De-Escalation:**

- Use roleplay drills to practice responding to fascist threats, street harassment, and police aggression
- Incorporate somatics and nervous system literacy into de-escalation protocols
- Have your pod develop verbal scripts and safety codes for retreat or regrouping

#### **Trauma-Informed Peer Support:**

- Establish peer-led processing circles with rotating facilitators
- Distribute grounding kits and check-ins after actions, evictions, or harassment
- Respect consent and bandwidth, emotional labour is labour
- Create referral trees for mental health professionals and crisis listeners familiar with trans-specific trauma

**Explore** Further:

- Fireweed Collective: Trans-led mental health justice
- Trans Lifeline: Peer support and crisis navigation
- Queercare Safety
- Active Listening for Organizers zine



#### K Infrastructure Ideas to Expand Mutual Aid

- **Tool libraries:** Offer low-income access to electronics, carpentry tools, sewing machines, bike repair kits
- **Food co-ops:** Coordinate bulk orders with farmers and warehouse distributors
- **Care webs:** Shared spreadsheets for who can offer childcare, cooking, meds runs, emotional support
- **Drop-in spaces:** Rent or rotate space for therapy collectives, laundry access, computer access, and meals
- Hormone exchanges: Secure boxes or mailing programs to redistribute unused/unopened HRT kits
- **Disaster response:** Create protocols for floods, power cuts, ICE raids, police raids, or sudden evictions

**Mutual aid is the practice of dreaming each other alive.** It is listening to what someone needs and offering what we have. It is refusing to let survival be conditional on productivity or perfection. It is sitting with people through crisis and making sure they wake up tomorrow.

You don't need to be trained, credentialed, or official. You just need to care, to show up, to keep trying. Our care is not a backup plan. It is the plan.

We are not weak for relying on each other, we are powerful because we refuse to leave anyone behind. Mutual aid makes us ungovernable, not just unafraid.



## **11** 9. CROSS-BORDER & EXIT PLANS

**The right to flee is a human right.** With authoritarianism on the rise, institutional protections collapsing, and transphobic policy becoming the norm in the UK, many trans people are preparing for the possibility of exile, relocation, or underground movement. Exiting a country under duress is not defeat, it's strategy. Whether you plan for emergency evacuation, permanent asylum, or building regional safety networks, this guide walks you through every step of trans-affirming mobility preparation.

A good exit plan is built *before* you need it. It's a mix of logistics, emotional readiness, encrypted storage, and community trust. This expanded edition includes document prep, jurisdiction research, go-bag builds, legal support systems, peer-based travel backup, and remote identity resilience.

# 🚺 Step 1: Secure & Duplicate Your Identity Documents

#### **Core Documents to Gather:**

- Passport (with updated name and gender marker where possible)
- Birth certificate and deed poll
- NHS number and medical treatment letters (especially related to HRT or surgeries)
- Immunisation records and COVID vaccine cards
- Proof of residency (utility bills, bank statements, lease agreements)
- Character references from employers, landlords, GPs, or faith/community leaders
- School/university documents (transcripts, letters of attendance)

#### **Storage & Duplication:**

- Keep physical originals in a waterproof folder hidden or with a trusted person
- Digitally scan and encrypt everything; upload to:
  - o Proton Drive
  - o CryptPad
  - An offline USB encrypted with Veracrypt
- Carry an emergency USB drive with <u>Tails OS</u> for untraceable access on borrowed devices

P Tip: If you're on bail, probation, or being monitored, seek legal advice before storing or encrypting materials offsite.



#### **Stronger Protection States:**

- **Ireland**: No surgical requirement for gender recognition, accessible healthcare, pro-trans legal environment
- Germany: Active LGBTQ+ refugee programs, hormone access, third-gender marker options
- **Canada**: Federal asylum protection for trans people, healthcare access by province, strong NGO support
- **Argentina**: One of the world's most progressive gender laws (Ley de Identidad de Género), free public HRT and surgeries
- **Iceland**: Legal recognition of nonbinary status, low state violence, small activist community but high safety

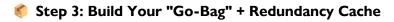
## Critical Tools:

- ILGA-Europe Rainbow Map
- Refugee.Info LGBTQ+ Support Directory

## Avoid for Safety:

- Russia, Belarus, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Iran, Poland, Hungary
- The US: Patchwork legal system; some states offer sanctuary, others criminalise genderaffirming care

🛪 Bonus: Research humanitarian visa options in countries like New Zealand, Sweden, and Uruguay.



A go-bag should sustain you for 7 days in transit and allow you to reach your destination safely.

## Core Contents:

- Passport + visa (hardcopy + digital)
- Emergency cash (£, €, USD in small bills)
- Burner smartphone w/ Airalo eSIM
- Power bank, USB cable, universal adapter
- 3 months of medication + digital copies of prescriptions
- Rain layer, thermal underlayer, gloves, change of underwear
- Food bars, electrolyte sachets, iodine tablets
- Analog notebook with:
  - o contact numbers (lawyers, NGOs, safe houses)
  - phrases in destination country language (for border interaction)

Carry in a discreet bag that doesn't draw attention. Avoid political patches, bright colours, or pride symbols if passing through dangerous zones.

# step 4: Build an Exit Pod & Remote Support Infrastructure

You won't always be able to leave with others, but you can build a support web.

# Form a "Departure Pod":

- Identify 2–4 people who:
  - Can house your pets or belongings short term
  - Are able to cover emergency transport costs if needed
  - Can wipe your social media, monitor email, or protect family left behind
- Keep roles documented but compartmentalised; use <u>Signal</u> or <u>Session</u> only

#### Legal Navigation:

- Register with <u>Rainbow Railroad</u>
- Contact Trans Asylum Seeker Support Network (TASSN) for peer-based escape planning
- Reach out to Asylum Aid UK or UKLGIG for status-based legal routes
- Use <u>ILGA World Asylum Help</u> for jurisdiction-specific support

< Hide a backup go-bag in a second location if possible.

# m Step 5: Maintain Digital & Physical Opsec (Operational Security)

#### **Digital Safety:**

- Use VPNs such as Mullvad or IVPN
- Turn off all location services before travel
- Change all passwords 48 hours before departure using a secure generator
- Avoid public WiFi unless using a VPN

#### **Physical Safety:**

- If crossing with medication, use labeled containers
- If transiting airports in hostile countries, travel in neutral clothing
- Consider removing piercings, visible tattoos, or hairstyles that may flag you
- Carry a decoy story (tourism, family visit) that is plausible

You deserve to feel safe. You deserve options. You deserve not to be trapped in a state that criminalises your identity. An exit plan is not fear-based, it's dignified preparation.

If you stay, support those who flee. If you flee, carry knowledge back. Movement is not surrender. It is strategy.

Plan like it's real, because it is. Move like you matter, because you do.

## CONCLUSION

You are not alone. You are not powerless. Your existence is a form of rebellion, and your joy is resistance. We are not here to ask for permission, we are here to live. To protect each other. To defy extinction. In a society that sees us as a problem to be solved or a debate to be had, we stand together as kin and comrades. Stay alert, stay alive, and stay trans.

#### Legal Disclaimer

This guide is provided for informational and educational purposes only. It does not constitute legal, medical, or psychological advice. Every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, but laws, policies, and public services may change. Always consult a qualified professional, solicitor, or service provider for advice specific to your situation.

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