Making Scotland the best place for LGBTQ+ young people to flourish and thrive.

Life in Scotland 2026 FAQs

About Life in Scotland

Life in Scotland is research undertaken by LGBT Youth Scotland every 5 years on the lives and experiences of LGBTQ+ young people aged 13-25 who are living in Scotland.

The *Life in Scotland for LGBT Young People* 2022 report gives an overview of the findings from the previous survey. Key stats are on pages 6 & 7 – for example, only 10% of participants rated their experience of school as good, and there had been a reduction overall in the percentage of participants rating Scotland a good place to be LGBTI over the preceding 5 years – falling from 81% to 65%.

The findings from our 2022 Life in Scotland survey are used by politicians, policy makers, healthcare improvement teams, youth workers, funders and public services to better understand what life is like for LGBTQ+ young people — and take action where it is needed.

The 2026/2027 research will give us an up-to-date picture of the issues young people are facing today and how they feel about their lives in Scotland, while also allowing us to compare experiences across the last 15 years.

What impact will life in Scotland have for young people?

Data from Life in Scotland will help us:

- Understand the needs of LGBTQ+ people living in Scotland today
- Identify where LGBTQ+ people need support and where work needs to be done to improve LGBTQ+ people's rights
- Demonstrate to key decision makers why they should take action on LGBTQ+ rights
- Inform training, resources, work with national partners, submission to Scottish Government consultations and speeches in the Scottish Parliament
- Adapt LGBT Youth Scotland's services so they respond to the needs of young people
- Strengthen funding applications for services that support LGBTQ+ young people

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What areas are covered?

The questions are a combination of tick boxes and open text boxes. For some questions young people will be invited to share details of their experiences- including experiences of bullying, discrimination, and coming out. The following topics are covered:

About You – demographic questions about you
Community – covering how you feel about your local area, your community and what it means to you, perception of discrimination and prejudice, and inclusive spaces/services
Coming out – experiences of coming out
Healthcare and sport - experiences and perception of healthcare provision and access to sport
Education and work – experiences of education (school, further education and higher education), work, experiences of LGBTQ+ -phobic bullying and discrimination, experiences of inclusive education/workplaces
Safety - experiences of public spaces and safety to be yourself, understanding & experience of hate crime, relationship with police
Living situation – what your home life looks like, financial situation-including ability to meet basic needs
Representation and media - views on LGBTQ+ representation in the media/ news outlets, views on LGBTQ+ representation in politics, views on the impact of representation and media, social media use.

How was Life in Scotland Developed?

This is the fourth version of Life in Scotland. A pilot was run in 2007, with the first full Life in Scotland being run in 2011. Where possible, questions have been updated over the years to reflect the change in language and needs of the LGBTQ+ community. Changes to the survey are sometimes limited to ensure that data can be compared with previous versions.

This latest version of Life in Scotland has been co-developed with a Young Person Steering Group (YPSG) of peer researchers to ensure that young people's lived experience shapes the research throughout and that it speaks directly to LGBTQ+ young people. YPSG members are involved in a year-long training and research project to oversee and deliver the research, including: co-creating the survey, developing comms and promotional material, analysing survey results, and developing and sharing recommendations from the findings to influence change.

An equality and child rights impact assessment of the project has been completed to understand its impact and mitigate any potential harm. This concluded that there are significant benefits for LGBTQ+ communities in Scotland through raising awareness of what is working well, where there are increasing challenges for the community, and through the potential for tangible action to improve access to rights over the forthcoming period. In addition, with the intersectional nature of this project and the lives of LGBTQ+ young people, there are positive impacts across the majority of protected characteristics with this research being unique in Scotland. There are also significant benefits in terms of children and young people realising their rights.

The main potential risk is to research participants' health and wellbeing if they choose to share potentially distressing stories and experiences. This has been mitigated using content warnings, opportunities to skip questions and regular links to external support. A further identified risk was to the wellbeing of YPSG members during data analysis where they may be working with distressing data. This has been mitigated through a rigorous analysis plan with staff members completing an initial data screening process, and using a trauma informed coaching approach to research skills training.

Support

Some of the questions in this survey refer to mental health problems and bullying. There is therefore signposting throughout the survey (including on the info sheet for young people) to LGBT YS services and youth workers, Childline, the Samaritans, Breathing Space and the Mix.