

UK Lesbian Coalition



Input into the thematic report HRC62: Violence and discrimination experienced by lesbian, bisexual, and queer (LBQ) women, by the Independent Expert on sexual orientation and gender identity

January 2026

A coalition of UK lesbian campaigning and advocacy organisations

Submission on Call for input on violence and discrimination experienced by LBQ women

This response to the call for evidence by the Independent Expert on SOGI for the thematic report HRC62 is submitted by a coalition of UK-based lesbian campaign and advocacy groups from England, Scotland and Wales:-

Lesbian Persistence, Lesbian Labour, Lancaster Lesbians, WomenZone, Lesbian Fightback, Yorkshire Lesbians, Lesbian Greens, and Lesbian Strength.

The submission is supported by LGB Alliance, LGB Alliance Cymru and LabourLGB

Call for input for HRC62

We consider the basis of the call for input on Violence and Discrimination Experienced by LBQ Women to be fundamentally flawed. It is based on a transgenderist approach which demands that heterosexual males are to be treated as 'lesbians' if they so self-define. This in itself is deeply offensive and erases the very definition of Lesbian.

We consider that transgenderism presents significant risks of harm to lesbians (especially young lesbians), and therefore any recommendations in the proposed HRC62 report will in practice - contrary to its stated intention - exacerbate and promote harm to lesbians.

In the UK, it is clear that there is no legal justification for such an approach, following the Supreme Court judgment in *For Women Scotland vs The Scottish Ministers*. HRC62 as proposed will include proposals and recommendations that would not conform to UK law.

We agree with the statement in the call for input that lesbians "experience unique vulnerabilities that may not be adequately addressed within traditional women's rights and LGBT rights framework". However, the call's statement refers not only to lesbians but also to 'queer' women who are, in fact, males. The harms to lesbians cannot be properly addressed within such a teaming. On the contrary, doing so takes the full focus away from lesbians and the conflation will lead to confused messaging, some of which will benefit men at the expense of lesbians.

The need to accurately identify lesbians

Whatever violence or discrimination males who say they are 'lesbians' may face is wholly unrelated to the violence and discrimination experienced by lesbian women. It is not possible to develop a meaningful strategy for dealing with violence and discrimination against a group of people when that group is not properly defined.

This point was clearly made in *For Women Scotland*¹. Para 206 of the Supreme Court judgment states that

a person with same sex orientation as a lesbian must be a female who is sexually oriented towards (or attracted to) females, and lesbians as a group are females who share the characteristic of being sexually oriented to females. This is coherent and understandable on a biological understanding of sex.

It continues that, if ‘transwomen’ are considered female,

The concept of sexual orientation towards members of a particular sex... is rendered meaningless. It would also affect the composition of the groups who share the same sexual orientation (because a trans woman with... a sexual orientation towards women would fall to be treated as a lesbian) ...

[para] 207. Thus, as well as the inevitable loss of autonomy and dignity for lesbians such an approach would carry with it, it would also have practical implications for lesbians across several areas of their lives.

Lesbians are same-sex attracted

We reject the suggestion, made by some commentators in recent years, that lesbians are attracted to people on the basis of the invented concept of ‘*gender identity*’ rather than *sex*. Our rejection comes from our personal experiences of being lesbian as well as from discussions with wider groups of lesbians.

As we show below, transgenderism can cause significant harm to lesbian women by pressurising them into unwanted sexual relations with men who self-define as ‘lesbian’.

Forced teaming of lesbians with ‘transwomen’

We consider the forced teaming of lesbians with heterosexual ‘transwomen’ (ie males) to be a significant form of discrimination against lesbians. It also contributes to lesbian invisibility and the ongoing neglect of lesbians in national and international policy-making, even when that is primarily concerned with women. This long-term neglect is evident in the UN’s international treaties concerning women. Neither CEDAW nor the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women mention lesbians. Nor do the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking, or the Convention on Consent to Marriage. Nor does the Council of Europe’s Istanbul Convention. All are blind to the ways the issues they address specifically impact lesbians.

¹ <https://supremecourt.uk/cases/judgments/uksc-2024-0042>

Claiming that heterosexual males can be ‘lesbians’ obfuscates lesbian issues and makes it impossible to argue for specific measures intended to overcome discrimination or violence against lesbians.

European Convention on Human Rights

We consider that including men - however they may identify - in the category of lesbians breaches our human rights as provided by articles 8, 11 and 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights².

Article 8 - Right to a private and family life

Sexual orientation concerns a most intimate part of an individual's private life and is an important element of the personal sphere protected by Article 8. It guarantees lesbians the right to respect for their identity and autonomy as lesbians. Treating males as if they were lesbians and allowing them to be admitted to lesbian spaces constitutes an unwarranted interference in this right.

Article 11 - Right to freedom of association

As for any minority group, the right to form associations where they can integrate with each other and express and promote their identity is an important part of lesbian life. Transgenderism would require lesbian associations to admit men who claim to be lesbians. This would undermine the freedom covered here, as the associations would have no control over their membership.

Article 14 - Right to Freedom from discrimination

Discrimination under this article occurs when a measure has a disproportionately prejudicial effect on a specific group. We submit that the inclusion of males in the category of lesbians is discriminatory because of its severe impact on lesbians, as discussed above.

Other harms of transgenderism to lesbians

There are also several other ways in which transgenderism leads to violence and discrimination against lesbians. Two key concerns specifically relate to the issues to be addressed by HRC62.

a. Coercion of lesbians into heterosex

The call for input to HRC62 refers to “transgender women [that is, men] who identify as lesbian”. It is not possible for a man to be a lesbian, as a matter of both fact and logic. Nevertheless, many LGBT organisations have taken this approach, and insist that lesbians accept such males

² For a detailed discussion of the legal issues, see the lesbian intervention in FWS vs Scottish Ministers <https://forwomen.scot/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Scottish-Lesbians-Lesbian-Project-and-LGB-Alliance-Written-Case-Interveners.pdf>

into their dating and social pools. Young women are particularly vulnerable to this pressure, especially if they are newly out as lesbians and looking to such organisations for support.

There is considerable evidence³ that lesbians have been coerced into having relationships with such males because of the threat of ostracisation and / or allegations of “transphobia” or “bigotry”.

Coercing lesbian women into heterosexual relationships against their will - regardless of how the male identifies himself – is a pernicious and lesbophobic form of emotional and sexual violence against lesbians.

b. Transing the gay and lesbian away

The concept of ‘transitioning’ is deeply homophobic and lesbophobic. It suggests that people who do not conform to rigid stereotypes - whether in dress, appearance, or interests - might actually be the opposite sex. It is, of course, impossible for someone to change sex, regardless of the degree of physical, hormonal, or surgical changes they undergo.

The vast majority of young people referred to gender clinics are gay or lesbian, and many also have significant underlying issues such as experience of physical or sexual abuse, autism, or care experience. The Cass Review⁴ reports that as many as 68% of the girls were exclusively same-sex attracted and a further 21% were bisexual, making a total of 89%. (The total figure for boys was 81%). This is powerful evidence that youngsters are mistaking their emerging sexual orientation for a ‘gender identity’ - a confused conflation that only started to occur with the spread of transgenderism.

In the UK more than 2,000 youngsters have already been subjected to treatment with puberty blockers. Almost all have progressed to taking cross-sex hormones. These children have been denied puberty and for the rest of their lives will require to take medications known to damage organs, stunt growth, reduce bone density and lead to a loss of sexual function and a shortened life-expectancy.

There are also a growing number of detransitioners who are starting to make their plight public⁵.

³ See for example:

Jackson, B., et al. (2025). Cotton ceiling 2.0: Bev Jackson. The Critic Magazine. Retrieved 7 January 2026, from <https://thecritic.co.uk/cotton-ceiling-2-0/>,

Lowbridge, Caroline (2021). “The lesbians who feel pressured to have sex and relationships with trans women”. Retrieved 7 January 2026, from <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-57853385> and

Wild Angela C.(2019) Lesbians at Ground Zero Retrieved 7 January 2026, from <https://www.gettheloutuk.com/blog/category/research/lesbians-at-ground-zero.html>

⁴ <https://cass.independent-review.uk/home/publications/final-report>

⁵ See for example <https://x.com/benryanwriter/status/2006816650541072612?s=20>

Conclusion and recommendations

We do not believe that HRC62, as presently proposed, can adequately address issues for lesbian women, as it also centres men.

We recommend that the proposal is withdrawn and rewritten to include only lesbians and bisexual women, defined on the basis of their (biological) sex. This would also be in line with UK equalities law.

We remain committed to reducing harms to lesbians and would be happy to contribute fully to a consultation which focuses on lesbians.

Contact details

Please contact us at lesbianpersistence@gmail.com