



LGBTQ people's rights in Sweden



This leaflet is for young LGBTQ people who are newly arrived in Sweden. LGBTQ people are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and queer people. In this leaflet, information is provided about your rights as an LGBTQ individual in Sweden. At the back, there is a list of organisations, authorities and websites where you can get more information, help, and support.

The laws in Sweden are based on the UN Declaration of Human Rights, meaning that all people are equal and should have equal rights. No one is allowed to threaten you, hit you, or treat you badly because you are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, or queer.

Seeking asylum

If you are persecuted in your home country because you are an LGBTQ person, you have the right to seek asylum in Sweden on those grounds. It is important that you disclose the reasons why you are seeking asylum as early in the asylum process as possible, and explain what has happened or what you are afraid will happen in your home country. You can seek asylum at the country border or at the Migration Agency. If you seek asylum in Sweden because you are persecuted as an LGBTQ person, you can contact the RFSL Newcomers network to get help and support in the asylum process.

Love and relationships

You have the right to love who you want and live as who you are. If you are in a relationship with someone of the same gender, you have the right to publically express your love. If you are over 18, you have the right to marry who you want, regardless of gender. In Sweden, there are many LGBTQ people who are parents and you have, for example, the right to undergo fertility treatment or apply for adoption in a similar way as everybody else.

Having sex

As long as everybody involved consents and wants to, you can have sex with whoever you want regardless of whether you are the same sex or not. It is illegal for a person who is

over 15 to have sex with somebody who is under 15. It is legal, however, if people under the age of 15 want to have sex with each other.

Accessing education

You have the right to be yourself and feel secure at school and university. No one, including teachers or other students, is allowed to treat you badly, talk negatively about you because of your sexuality, gender identity and/or gender expression, or talk negatively about LGBTQ people.

In employment

Just as in education, you have the right to be yourself and feel safe at your workplace or internship, and when you seek employment. No colleague or manager can comment on your sexuality, gender identity and/or gender expression in a negative way, or speak badly about lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans or queer people.

Accessing healthcare

Your sexuality, gender identity and/or gender expression should not affect the care you receive or how the staff treat you. You are to be treated with respect and your health issues should be taken seriously.

All staff who work in healthcare services must ensure professional confidentiality, meaning that they cannot disclose anything about you to anyone else apart from other

medical staff who treat you. They cannot disclose anything that you do not want to be shared with your family, relatives or friends. However, they must report to social services if they suspect that a person under 18 is being subjected to violence or abuse in the home.

Testing for sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV/AIDS is always free of charge for everyone in Sweden. There are youth health clinics specifically for young people and you can visit them if you have questions about your body, sex and relationships, or if you feel bad and need someone to talk to. You can attend a youth clinic from the age of 13 to 20-25 years old. On the website, www.umo.se, you can find contact details of your nearest youth clinic, as well as a lot of information on the body, sex and relationships, and you can also ask questions anonymously.

Trans people wanting to access healthcare and legal gender recognition

If you want to change your body so that it better fits your gender identity, you can access trans-specific healthcare, including surgery and hormone treatment. You must first undergo a gender clinic assessment, which mostly involves talking about how you view your gender identity. You have the right to access this gender clinic assessment no matter where in Sweden you live, however, there are different rules depending on your local region. In many places, you need a referral from a general psychiatrist or child and adolescent



psychiatrist (BUP) but, in other locations, your youth health-care clinic or a general physician can refer you.

You need to be registered as a resident (or asylum seeker) in Sweden to start a gender clinic assessment but do not need to be a Swedish citizen. You can access the assessment if you are under 18, but for certain medical treatment and changing your legal gender you must be 18. You have the right to get treatment even if your legal guardians do not approve. If you have begun treatment in another country, then the Swedish healthcare system should help you.

If you wish to change your first name that better reflects your gender identity, you can do that without a medical diagnosis or engaging with the healthcare system. You must contact the Swedish Tax Agency or the Swedish Patent and Registration Office to get a new name registered in your identity documents.

Social services and living accommodation

There are social services in every municipality in Sweden. Social services can sometimes help with living accommodation, employment, and finances. Just as in all other contexts, you have the right to be treated with respect when engaging with social services. They cannot treat you badly or question your sexuality, gender identity and/or gender expression.

If you are living in accommodation arranged by social services or by the Migration Agency, these agencies, inclu-

ding staff at the accommodation, are responsible for your well-being and safety while you are living there. If you do not feel safe at the accommodation arranged by the Migration Agency, it is important that you notify the Health and Social Care Inspectorate (IVO) so that they can help you. Their job is to ensure that the social services follow the rules and regulations in place, and that they treat you as well as possible.

Internet and social media

The same rules apply on the Internet as in the rest of Swedish society, meaning that no one can violate, harass, threaten, or sexually harass you online. No one can write derogatory or negative things about you, your sexuality, or your gender identity and expression. No one can threaten you, make you engage in sexual acts, or send images of you against your will. They also cannot send images to you that you do not want. If this happens, you can report it to the police.

Where you can get help

RFSL Newcomers

RFSL Newcomers is a network that provides support and information to newly arrived LGBTQ people in Sweden. Newcomers can assist you with information about your rights, offer Swedish lessons, and help you find a place to live. Newcomers is also a social meeting space where you can meet other LGBTQ people who are new in Sweden.

<http://www.rfsl.se/en/organisation/asylum/newcomers/>

RFSL Crime Victim Support

RFSL (Swedish Federation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Rights) has a crime victim support unit. You can talk to someone and receive support and help if you have experienced threats, violence, or sexual coercion.

<http://www.rfsl.se/en/organisation/crime-victim-support/>

Migration Agency

Information for LGBTQ people seeking asylum.

<http://www.migrationsverket.se/English/Private-individuals/Protection-and-asylum-in-Sweden/For-lgbtq-persons.html>

Transformering.se – for trans issues

RFSL Ungdom's website, transformering.se, provides lots of information about healthcare for trans people and the specific

rules that apply, as well as tips and advice regarding many questions that concern trans people.

www.transformering.se (in Swedish)

Sveriges Antidiskrimineringsbyråer

This is a collective organisation that includes Sweden's 16 anti-discrimination bureaus. You can contact them if you feel that you have been discriminated against.

www.adbsverige.se

Pegasus – for young people with experience of having sex for compensation

If you have experience of having sex for compensation or have questions, you can contact Pegasus for information and support. Sex for compensation means receiving something in return for having sex, such as money, drugs, alcohol and other forms of exchange. Pegasus is a website and a chat run by RFSL Ungdom, which is an LGBTQ youth organisation. Pegasus supports LGBTQ people between 15–25 years old.

www.pegasus.se

UMO.se

UMO is a website for everyone between 13-25 years old looking for answers to questions concerning sex, health, and relationships.

www.umo.se



Police

Harassment, sexual violations, threats, and violence are crimes and should be reported to the police. If you have been subjected to a crime because of your sexuality or because you are a trans person, it is a hate crime and the punishment should be more severe.

www.polisen.se

Girl or youth support organisations

If your family or partner treats you badly because of your sexuality, gender identity and/or gender expression, you can get help from the social services and youth support organisations. There are youth support organisations in many places in the country that can help you contact the police, social services, or healthcare, for example. Some organisations only work with girls and others have special knowledge about lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer and trans people. Unizon includes all of the support organisations and can help you get in touch with the right one.

www.unizon.se

Flyktinggruppernas Riksråd (FARR)

Farr is an organisation for people and groups working to strengthen asylum rights in Sweden.

www.farr.se

HIV-Sverige

Hiv-Sverige is a non-profit organisation working to improve the living conditions of people who live with HIV.

www.hiv-sverige.se

Vårdguiden – for questions about healthcare

Information about healthcare in Sweden is available at the website, 1177.se. At Vårdguiden, you can read about how the healthcare system works, what rights you have and where to contact specific services. There is also information about what you can do if you feel that you have not received proper care or have been poorly treated in the healthcare system.

www.1177.se/Other-languages/New-in-Sweden---healthcare/

Equality Ombudsman (DO)

According to the Discrimination Act, it is forbidden to subject you to harassment, violations, sexual violations, threats, and violence because of your sexuality, gender identity and/or gender expression in school, employment, healthcare, and other public spheres. DO is the authority ensuring that the Discrimination Act is followed. If you want to report an agency because you think they have violated the Discrimination Act or if you have questions about discrimination, contact the Equality Ombudsman.

www.do.se

Health and Social Care Inspectorate (IVO)

IVO is the public authority that you should contact if you have been badly treated in the healthcare system or by social services.

www.ivo.se

Social services

If you have to leave your family or partner because they threaten you, are violent, or in other ways treat you badly, you can get help with sheltered living from the social services. Contact details of the social services are available at your municipality's website, but you can also find contact information here: www.kollpasoc.se

Labour unions – for support in employment

If you have been treated badly at your workplace or when seeking employment, you can often get support from a union. The unions help their members to ensure that they are treated well in their employment. They can also assist you in reporting something to the Equality Ombudsman or the police.

Employers cannot stop anyone from being a member of a union; everyone has the right to join. You must be a member to get the best help from them and there are different unions depending on the type of work you do.

When you apply for a new job, the employer should give you information about the unions that employees are members of so that you can talk to them.

ENGELSKA

Order or download the material at:

www.mucf.se/publikationer

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