

Britain country report

The main change to the situation facing LGBTQIA+ people in Britain over the last five years or more have been the deepening attacks on trans people. These attacks which come from the state, from the far right and from some people who call themselves feminists take the shape of denial of live saving services but also of physical and online hate crimes. They often follow the same patterns as attacks on the LGBT community as a whole from 20 or more years back.

The height of the Covid 19 pandemic had a particularly negative impact on younger queer people many of whom were forced back into unsympathetic birth families.

There is no unified or structured queer movement and never really has been.

Some groups such as TransActual, Queers for Palestine, Lesbians and Gay Men Support the Migrants and LGBT caucuses in most major trade unions have a Britain wide focus, but more activist organisations are concentrated in London than elsewhere, including Trans Action Block, Trans Strike Back, Trans Strike Delegations, and Trans Kids Deserve Better. Other local trans groups exist, including various under the banner of Trans Liberation Front, as well as groups such as TransOxford, Bristol Leading Against Transphobia, Trans Leeds, Resisting Transphobia in Edinburgh, and Trans.Liberation Cambridge. There are also various local dyke solidarity groups who organise to march against imperialism and transphobia as well as for broader queer liberation.

Support for Trans liberation has been rather polarizing with the creation of one organisation which specifically excludes trans people and hate speech from some well known cis women and gay men.

Pride events in June and July are organised in almost every city and many smaller places. Frequently, the organisers are corporate-dominated and represent a pinkwashing and rainbow capitalist politics centred on accommodating (some) queer people into existing class society rather than on liberation. Those events, especially trans prides, with more radical politics will frequently be organised by people involved in the organisations mentioned above.

Pro-queer charities have a greater reach than any activist or media group but are significantly less radical. Of these, Mermaids (focused on trans youth healthcare) and Stonewall (which does general advocacy and research for queer people) are two giants. Other noteworthy groups include Gendered Intelligence, The Clare Project, and Switchboard. The limitations of this are seen in the inability of Mermaids or Stonewall to robustly oppose the Cass Review, which represented a wholesale attack on trans youth healthcare specifically and trans existence *per se*. Interestingly, The Good Law Project is a rare exception; although it is not exclusively queer focussed, it has been far more militant in legally challenging anti-trans legislation and adopted a more forthright and consistent messaging.

Most trade unions have specific LGBT structures and the trade unions centrally organise an LGBT conference before Pride in London. The policy positions they take are way to the left of other LGBTIQ groups and as far as we know are all pro-trans. The extent to which members joining a union know about these structures or have a route to getting involved is however limited.

There has been a major queer strand in the Palestine solidarity movement. This existed long before October 7 but before then was much more on the fringes of the movement but since then has been much more visible both on pro-Palestine marches – where we have not heard any reports of lack of such contingents being welcomed – and in tackling LGBT or pro-LGBT events such as Eurovision which pinkwash Israel. New organisations have been formed but it remains to be seen how long they last.

Many young queer people are active in other social movements such as in defence of the climate, against repression and the far right but not necessarily visibly so. This includes Black people and those from migrant communities. There are some specific Black and migrant groups but they tend to be more to provide basic and essential support services rather than more activist based. There is no general tradition of queer visibility in international solidarity campaigns.

Anticapitalist Resistance has been particularly involved in pro-trans activity as the cutting edge against the attacks on the LGBTQIA community as a whole. We have carried extensive material on our website and produced some printed material. This work includes some cis het comrades too. We are also trying to strengthen co-operation with comrades in Ecosocialist.scot our sister organisation in Scotland who face many of the same problems but a different legal and political system.