
TOGETHER FOR YOU—LGBT+ SUPPORT

During the Coronavirus Pandemic

You have the right to feel safe at home

The lockdown has forced many LGBT+ people back into homes where they may not feel welcomed, accepted or safe. Some people may feel that they have no other option than to live in a place where they would otherwise prefer not to. However, just because you feel forced to live somewhere does not mean that you have to accept feeling unsafe.

We all have the right to a safe place to live. If you do not feel safe where you are living you may have options of finding more suitable accommodation.

Abuse from parents, siblings, partners, housemates or neighbours is unacceptable

Domestic abuse is not only abuse from an intimate partner. You can also experience domestic abuse from parents, siblings or other relatives. Domestic abuse can include; violence, intimidation, cruelty, coercion or any other behaviour which makes you feel unsafe where you are living. All domestic abuse is wrong and there is no acceptable level of abusive behaviour that you should expect to put up with.

Many LGBT+ people can also experience abusive behaviour including intimidation and harassment from neighbours. These experiences might start off at a low level but can escalate to the point where someone no longer feels safe in their home. It is important to know that if you don't feel safe in your home that there is support available to you from the PSNI and The Rainbow Project.

Report crimes or incidents to PSNI or LGBT Advocate

In an emergency you should contact the PSNI on 999. If you do not require an immediate response from the PSNI you can contact the 101 non-emergency number.

If you do not feel comfortable reporting a crime to the PSNI you make the report to the LGBT Hate Crime Advocate Aisling Twomey by emailing advocacy@rainbow-project.org or by contacting The Rainbow Project on 028 90 31 90 30.

You can also report hate crimes online at <https://www.psni.police.uk/crime/hate-crime/reporting-a-hate-crime/>

If you're struggling, we're here to help you

There are many members of our community who are struggling right now but it's important to know that there is a lot of support available to you.

You can access counselling at The Rainbow Project free of charge from accredited non-judgmental counsellors. Counselling is currently available over the phone or via video chat.

If you have concerns about your sexual health we can provide you with a sexual health consultation and provide rapid testing for HIV and Syphilis if you are at risk of contracting either infection.

Young people can also access a range of educational and social forms of support including the Let's Talk Gender Identity education programme, relationships and sexuality education workshops and the Out North West youth programme for young people living in the west of Northern Ireland.

If you're feeling isolated we can connect you with community

LGBT+ people can often feel isolated and the lockdown can make these feelings even worse. To make sure that people still have access to community we have a range of social supports available.

We have regional LGBT+ Peer Social and Support groups in Foyle and in some areas across Northern Ireland; these groups are currently meeting for online sessions and private chat groups hosted and facilitated by our staff.

Our Culture Club social group has regular video chats where people can just talk with other people, take part in workshops or participate in weekly quizzes.

We have also started a Queer Book Club so that LGBT+ people can learn more about themselves and our community through the stories of others.

Our job is to make you feel connected to your community and during lockdown we are being creative about how we bring people together while keeping them apart.

For more information about services available at The Rainbow Project you can check our website www.rainbow-project.org or email info@rainbow-project.org. You can also contact us on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram.

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