LGBTQIA+ in the UK

The UK is, in general, an open, safe and welcoming place for the LGBTQ+ students, with a raft of laws during the current century heralding an era of equality after decades of discrimination. In 2013 marriage was extended to include same-sex couples, and in 2005 the Gender Recognition Act gave trans people legal recognition in their appropriate gender.

Big cities offer students a huge range of LGBTQ+-friendly venues, and Students' Unions and universities often have societies and affinity groups specifically for LGBTQ+ students. Below are just a few suggestions of places you might like to try, but it is by no means an exhaustive list!

Gay's the Word - 66 Marchmont St, London WC1N 1AB
This historic bookshop in Bloomsbury was the UK’s first gay bookshop and has been a sanctuary for LGBTQ+ people for decades. As well as stocking an impressive range of books, they host regular community and discussion groups, including a Trans London group and Black Lesbian discussion group - see their website for more details. You may also recognise Gay’s the Word from the film Pride!

Queer Lit - 39 Tib Street, Manchester, M4 1LX
This award-winning bookshop and Pride store in the centre of Manchester is both a treasure trove and a community space, also running book clubs and other events.

Soho (London) and the Gay Village (Manchester)
While you will now find gay bars and other venues all over the UK, Soho in London and the Gay Village in Manchester remain LGBTQ+ hubs, offering a host of bars, clubs, support services and other venues.

Queer Britain Museum - 2 Granary Square, London WC1N 4BH
The UK’s first museum dedicated to Queer History, this free, intimate attraction just off London’s trendy Granary Square is well worth a visit.

Students' Unions
University Students’ Unions usually have an LGBTQ+ society or Student Network offering activities, social events, support and activism. Center-based students have Associate Membership of UCL Union so can join their LGBTQ+ Student Network.

Sexual Health
Sexual healthcare is free in the UK, whereas some aspects (such as preventative care or routine testing) are excluded from your Cigna insurance. 56 Dean Street is a clinic in Soho promoting sexual wellbeing among the LGBTQ+ community that is open to all genders. They also have clinics specifically for the trans and non-binary community.

Key Dates
February: LGBT+ History Month - events including talks, film screenings and exhibitions take place across the UK to mark and celebrate LGBT+ history

June: Pride Month - Pride parades and other events take place across the UK throughout June

Useful resources
The BeYou Project - resources aimed at young LGBTQ+ people on a range of topics including online safety, sexual health and more

Gendered Intelligence - trans-led charity providing advice and resources for young trans people

MindOut - Mental Health resources aimed at LGBTQ+ people

Switchboard - a help and information line staffed by LGBTQ+ volunteers

Arcadia recommends...
For a taster of UK LGBTQ+ life past and present, we suggest...

TV - It’s a Sin, Feel Good, Heartstopper
Film - Pride, Blue Jean
Book - Trans: A Memoir (Juliet Jacques), Rainbow Milk (Paul Mendez), Girl, Woman, Other (Bernardine Evaristo)