Trans Focus

The World from a Transgender Perspective

July 2026



The Costa Rainbow

Walk like an Egyptian

Long Satin Skirts

Welcome to July

Pride month is over for another year. A month for most of us to come together in defiance and celebration. I felt this year we needed it more than ever. Despite many countries becoming more progressive towards us, the UK and USA seem to be ignoring the trend. This despite more large organisations outwardly supporting trans rights with their policies. Spain still ahead of the curve and happily accepting.

Bucking the trend, amongst others Aviva, Co-op, Thames Water, Unilever, BP, Microsoft UK, Metro Bank, Ann Summers have all either challenged their government or instigated policies supporting transgender rights. Marks & Spencer in particular spring to mind having been put under pressure by transphobic activist group ‘Sex Matters’ have reiterated their inclusive changing room and bra fitting policy.

I feel hopeful that in the future, that governments will bow to pressure and eventually follow, and eventually ditch their current transphobic stance.

As ever we have filled the magazine with content that we hope you will enjoy and find entertaining and informative. We always try to bring you something that is different. Try the time The Bangles were late for their gig in Alicante and Costa Blanca T-Girls saved the day. Or when the world turned, and it was ‘normal’ for trans people with cis people having their identity under threat. Both are revealed inside.

Of course, we also have our personal stories as well as our political and current affairs viewpoints to keep you informed. Whether we like it or not, we are currently facing a challenge to our existence. Carla and Penny will always do our best to keep you informed and up to date.

I’ll finish by encouraging any of you to contribute if you want to. Either trans related or wider LGBTQ issues are welcome. Also, if you have any ideas for subjects we can cover in future editions, don’t hesitate to get in touch.

Thank you all for reading and hope you enjoy.

Love

Carla & Penny xx


I'M SICK AND TIRED OF THIS MONTH-LONG FESTIVAL SHOVING ITS IMAGERY DOWN EVERYONE'S THROAT.
I'M SICK AND TIRED OF CORPORATIONS PAINTING THEIR LOGOS LIKE CORPORATE VIRTUE WHORES.
I'M SICK AND TIRED OF THIS FESTIVAL TURNING CITIES INTO DEGENERATE STREET PARTIES.
I'M SICK AND TIRED OF THE CONSTANT GUILT TRIP IF YOU DON'T PARTICIPATE.
I'M DONE WITH THIS SPECTACLE. ENOUGH IS ENOUGH.
ANYWAY THAT'S ENOUGH ABOUT THE FOOTBALL WORLD CUP, HAPPY PRIDE MONTH.

The Rainbow Destination

By Penny



I've just returned from a week at one of my favourite places on earth, a place where the weather behaves itself and doesn't try to roast you alive the moment you step outside. Back here on the Costa Blanca, summer arrives like an angry dragon, breathing fire over everything. Gran Canaria, bless it, offers a far more trans-friendly climate: one where you're not locked in a daily battle to stop your foundation melting faster than an ice lolly on Blackpool beach, and your carefully styled hair doesn't explode into a fuzzy halo the second you leave the sanctuary of air-conditioning.

Maspalomas, perched on the southern tip of Gran Canaria, has earned its reputation as one of the world's most LGBT-friendly destinations — and not because someone slapped a rainbow sticker on a lamppost and called it a day. No, this reputation has been built over decades of genuine welcome, a thriving LGBT scene, and a local culture so relaxed and open you half expect it to offer you a cocktail and ask how your day's been.

Geography and climate

Maspalomas enjoys a mild, sub-tropical climate all year round — warm winters, long summers, and none of the "surprise! you're melting!" nonsense we get on the mainland. This blissful weather encourages an outdoor social life, perfect for anyone who prefers their community with a side of sunshine. The famous dunes and beaches offer vast, natural spaces where LGBT visitors can unwind without feeling judged, stared at, or forced to explain their existence to someone who still thinks "trans" is short for "transmission".

Concentrated LGBT infrastructure

One of Maspalomas' greatest strengths is how compact and convenient its LGBT scene is. Playa del Inglés and Maspalomas are packed with gay bars, clubs, saunas, beach bars, and travel services — all within easy tottering distance in heels. The Yumbo Centre is the beating heart of it all: a multi-level wonderland where drag queens reign, themed parties flourish, and you can find everything from a cocktail to a feather boa in under five minutes. The density of LGBT venues creates a visible, vibrant community, newcomers don't wander around lost; they're swept up into the fun before they've even finished unpacking.



Events and cultural life

Maspalomas hosts some of Europe's most exuberant LGBT events, with Maspalomas Pride

being the crown jewel. Pride here isn't just a parade, it's a full-blown festival of concerts, pool parties, performances, and more glitter than you'd find backstage at Eurovision. Throughout the year, circuit parties, cultural programmes, and themed weeks keep the energy high and the community connected. These events aren't just entertainment; they're declarations of visibility, joy, and "we're here, we're fabulous, and we're not going anywhere".



Safety and openness

Spain is one of Europe's most progressive countries for LGBT rights, and the Canary Islands proudly uphold that standard. In Maspalomas, local businesses and authorities openly support LGBT tourism, creating an atmosphere where holding hands, kissing, or strutting in full drag is met with smiles rather than side-eye. No place is perfect, of course, but many LGBT travellers say Maspalomas feels safer and more welcoming than most resort destinations

Tourism infrastructure and accessibility

Accommodation options range from boutique hotels to gay guesthouses and large resorts, many of which explicitly cater to LGBT guests. The island's tourism infrastructure is well-developed, with reliable transport, experienced hospitality staff, and an airport close enough that you can go from runway to rum punch in under an hour.

Community and local engagement



Maspalomas isn't just a tourist bubble, it has a genuine local LGBT community and organisations that support inclusion year-round. This gives the area authenticity: it's not simply a place that tolerates LGBT visitors; it's a place that celebrates them. Local businesses often sponsor events and awareness campaigns, reinforcing the sense of solidarity.







A reputation for fun and freedom

Maspalomas has perfected the art of balancing relaxation with exuberance. Whether you want a quiet day on Playa del Inglés, a wild night at the Yumbo, or a themed party involving costumes you'd never dare wear back home, the resort delivers. The openness and visibility of LGBT life here create a rare sense of belonging, the kind that makes you think, "Yes, this is what freedom feels like."

Maspalomas stands out as one of the most LGBT-friendly places on the planet thanks to its glorious climate, concentrated LGBT infrastructure, iconic events, progressive culture, and welcoming tourism sector. Spain's legal protections and the island's practical safety make it a haven where visitors can relax, celebrate, and express themselves without hesitation. For many LGBT travellers, Maspalomas isn't just a holiday spot, it's a place where identity and joy can be lived openly, loudly, and with a cocktail in hand.

Costa Blanca T-Girls Come to the Rescue



Alicante. Tonight The Bangles are playing. The crowd is anticipating their arrival.



In the audience are Costa Blanca t-girls Carla, Emma, Summer and Penny.



The announcer comes on. 'There has been a problem...'



'The Bangles coach is caught up and delayed following an accident on one of the roads in Murcia.'



‘It looks like they aren’t going to be able to play tonight.’



The crowd are understandably disappointed.



Carla has an idea.
‘I’ll go backstage.’



She tells them that Costa Blanca t-girls will save the day and play until The Bangles arrive.



‘So long as we can borrow your equipment until they arrive.’



‘Yes, of course!’
The t-girls prepare.



To the delight of the audience, Costa Blanca t-girls enter the stage and play 'Walk Like An Egyptian'.



At the end, the real Bangles enter the stage to say thank you for saving the day and everyone cheers.



An Ordinary Day

In an Alternative World



Sarah woke to the sound of the breakfast television already playing downstairs. Wrapping a dressing gown around herself, she made coffee and sat with a piece of toast while the presenters discussed what they called "the cis issue."

“Here we go again”

A politician spoke about public safety. A newspaper columnist warned about the growing influence of "cis ideology." Another guest questioned whether cis people should have

unrestricted access to public changing rooms. Sarah watched for a few minutes before switching the television off. As usual, nobody on the panel was cis.

The bus to work was crowded. Around her, passengers scrolled through news stories and social media posts. The topic seemed to be everywhere. Headlines questioned whether cis identities should be affirmed. Commentators debated whether young people were being encouraged to become cis. Experts discussed cis lives, cis rights and cis behaviour. Nobody seemed interested in what cis people themselves had to say. Sarah stared out of the window and watched the city pass by.

At work, the conversation in the office kitchen wasn't much different. Colleagues discussed a television documentary that claimed increasing numbers of young people were identifying as cis because of social pressure and online influence. Someone joked that being cis had become fashionable.

When Sarah entered the room, the conversation faltered for a moment before continuing in a more careful tone. She had become used to that.

People rarely saw her as simply Sarah. She was often treated as a representative of a group, expected either to defend herself or remain silent while others debated people like her.

Later, during a meeting, a client repeatedly referred to her incorrectly despite being corrected more than once. The mistake was brushed aside as unimportant. Sarah was expected to ignore it and move on. She always moved on. You must choose your battles.

At lunchtime she walked to the supermarket. Outside, campaigners stood behind a table covered with leaflets warning about the dangers of "cis ideology." A large banner declared that children needed protection. The volunteers smiled politely and insisted they had nothing against cis people. Sarah kept walking.

Inside the shop she noticed the familiar glances. Conversations lowered as she approached. Strangers examined her appearance, searching for clues, deciding whether she belonged. Years of experience had taught her to recognise the look.

The judgement.

The curiosity.

The suspicion.

At the checkout, a security guard stopped her and asked to see identification after a complaint from another customer. The request was framed as routine and reasonable.

People in the queue watched as she handed over her documents. Nobody seemed embarrassed. Only Sarah. She debated whether to use the toilet, but a little shaken, decided she would hold on until she returned to work.

By the end of the day, she was exhausted.

At home she changed into comfortable clothes and turned on the evening news. The lead story concerned proposals to restrict cis participation in sport. Politicians argued. Commentators argued. Campaigners argued. Not a single cis person appeared on screen.

The discussion wasn't really about people. It was about an idea, a problem, a controversy. People like Sarah had become a subject rather than participants.

After muting the television, she met her friend Emma at a nearby pub. For a while they talked about ordinary things, such as family, work, holidays and the rising cost of living. The conversation felt like a relief. Sarah could simply exist without explanation. Yet even there the topic found her.

At a neighbouring table, people discussed cis people in the detached way people discuss distant political issues. They spoke about protecting children, preserving traditions and maintaining public confidence. They insisted they held no hatred toward cis people.

Sarah listened quietly. The words were familiar. She had heard them all before.

Emma eventually asked whether it ever made her angry. Sarah thought about the television panels, the newspaper headlines, the suspicious glances, the endless public debates. Anger wasn't the right word. What she felt most often was exhaustion.

Every day, people argued about what she was, what she should be allowed to do, where she should go and whether she posed a threat. Complete strangers felt entitled to discuss her life in ways they would never tolerate for themselves. Yet nobody seemed interested in the reality - Facts.

Nobody asked about her work, her friendships, her hopes or her worries. Nobody asked what it felt like to live under constant scrutiny.

Late that evening Sarah returned home, got ready for bed and scrolled through the news on her phone. The same phrases appeared repeatedly.

Public safety.

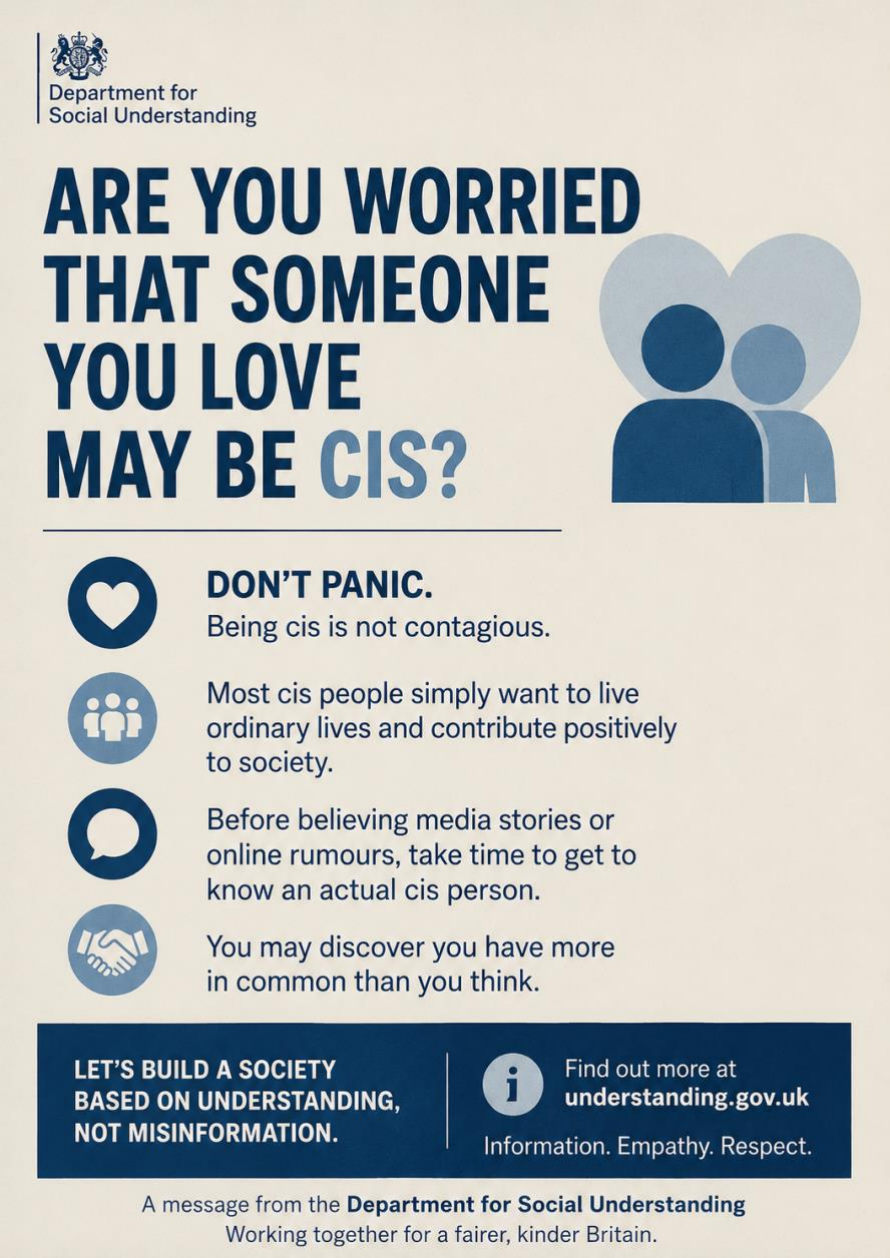
Biological reality.

Protecting children.

Cis ideology.

She put the phone down and switched off the light. As she tried to drift off to sleep, she wondered. The strangest thing, she thought, was not the hostility It was being talked about everywhere while remaining unheard. She was not an issue to be debated. She was simply a person trying to live an ordinary life.

Tomorrow, she knew, would be much the same.



The passage of the Crime and Policing Act 2026

And what it means for trans people in the UK.

The passage of the Crime and Policing Act 2026 marks a significant shift in the legal landscape for LGBTQ+ people in England and Wales, and particularly for transgender individuals who have long faced gaps in protection. For years, hate crime legislation operated within what many campaigners described as a “hierarchy of hate,” where offences motivated by race or religion were treated as aggravated, with stronger sentencing powers, while those targeting LGBTQ+ people were not. This new law finally removes that imbalance.

By recognising anti-LGBTQ+ hate crimes as aggravated offences, the Act sends a clear and overdue message: hostility based on sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability is no less serious than any other form of prejudice. In practical terms, this means that when a crime is proven to be motivated by hatred towards a transgender person, courts now have explicit powers to impose harsher sentences. That change is not just symbolic, it has real consequences for deterrence, accountability, and the way cases are handled within the justice system.





For transgender people, who often experience disproportionately high levels of harassment, abuse, and violence, this development could mark the beginning of a more responsive and protective legal environment. One of the long-standing issues has been underreporting, driven by a lack of confidence that the system takes such crimes seriously. When the law itself appears to rank some forms of hate as less severe, it inevitably shapes how victims perceive their own worth and whether justice is attainable. Equalising the legal framework helps to rebuild that trust.



The Act may also influence policing practices. With clearer legal recognition of aggravated offences, police forces are more likely to prioritise the identification and recording of transphobic hate crime. This could lead to better data collection, improved training, and more consistent responses across different regions. Over time, that consistency matters—it can reduce the postcode lottery that often defines the experience of LGBTQ+ people engaging with law enforcement.

There is also a broader cultural impact. Legislation does not operate in a vacuum; it reflects and shapes societal values. By formally acknowledging that anti-LGBTQ+ hatred warrants the same level of seriousness as other forms of discrimination, Parliament has drawn a line that may influence public attitudes, institutional policies, and future legal reforms. For transgender individuals, whose rights and recognition are frequently debated and contested, this kind of legal affirmation carries weight beyond the courtroom.



However, it is important to remain realistic about what this change can and cannot achieve. Stronger sentencing powers do not automatically eliminate prejudice or violence. The effectiveness of the law will depend on its implementation—on whether police, prosecutors, and courts apply it consistently and sensitively. It will also require ongoing advocacy to ensure that trans-specific experiences are properly understood within the broader LGBTQ+ category.

Even so, the Crime and Policing Act 2026 represents a meaningful step forward. It closes a long-criticised gap in the law and offers a more equal foundation for justice. For transgender people, it signals not only greater protection today but the possibility of a future where their safety and dignity are taken seriously at every level of society.

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ASK CARLA

Hi Carla,

I'm newly out as transgender. Not many people know about me. Can you give me some suggestions about where I can go?

First of all, congratulations on taking that step. Coming out to yourself is huge, and it's okay not to have everything figured out straight away.

My biggest tip is: don't feel you have to rush. Start with what makes you feel safe, comfortable, and happy. For some people that's finding a supportive online community, for others it's experimenting with clothes, makeup, names, or pronouns in private first.

A few good first steps can be:
• Find supportive trans or LGBTQ+ groups, either locally or online. Talking to people who understand really helps.
• If possible, speak to a gender therapist or counsellor who is trans-friendly.
• Keep a journal about how you feel. It can really help you understand what you want.
• Try small changes first and see what feels right for you.
• Most importantly, be kind to yourself. There's no "correct" way to be transgender.

My first time outside was taking the rubbish out to the bin at the bottom of the road. Not a big thing in the grand scheme of things, but big for me. Start small and grow from there.

You don't need to have all the answers today. This is your journey, and you're allowed to take it one step at a time.

Best wishes

Carla X


WE ARE NOT HERE TO BE TOLERATED.
TRANS WOMEN
ARE NOT A THREAT.
WE ARE NOT A DEBATE.
WE ARE NOT AN IDEOLOGY.
WE ARE PEOPLE.
WE EXIST.
THAT IS NOT NEGOTIABLE.
WE ARE DONE SHRINKING OURSELVES
TO MAKE PREJUDICE MORE COMFORTABLE.
WE ARE DONE KEEPING THE PEACE
WHEN THAT PEACE IS BUILT ON OUR SILENCE.
NO MORE.
CALL US DISRUPTIVE IF YOU MUST.
WE CALL IT SURVIVAL.
WE CALL IT TRUTH.
AND WE ARE NOT LOWERING
OUR VOICES ANYMORE.

Long Satin Skirts: Effortless Elegance for Trans Women

It was a Saturday night event with friends. I was planning what to wear…

One of the things I love over recent years is the varied clothing choices we have as women. A long sating skirt has become a big part of my wardrobe. Especially duiring the summer months.



Few garments combine comfort, movement, and femininity as beautifully as a long satin skirt. Whether styled for a summer afternoon in the city, an evening meal by the sea, or a special occasion, a satin skirt offers an elegant foundation for countless outfits. For many trans women, it can also be a surprisingly powerful wardrobe piece, helping create balance, confidence, and a silhouette that feels authentically your own.

One of the reasons satin skirts work so well is their fluidity. Unlike stiff fabrics that add structure, satin drapes softly over the body, creating graceful movement with every step. The subtle sheen naturally draws the eye downward, which can help create visual balance for women who feel their shoulders are broader than they would like.

A common misconception is that broad shoulders must be hidden. In reality, successful styling is usually about balance rather than concealment. Long satin skirts excel at this because they add softness and visual interest to the lower half of the body. Combined with a defined waist and carefully chosen top, they can create an elegant and harmonious silhouette.

When choosing a top, look for styles that create vertical lines. Soft V-necks, open collars, and wrap-style tops help guide the eye inward and downward rather than emphasizing width across the shoulders. Sleeveless collared blouses can be particularly effective, especially in warmer climates. While many women instinctively reach for sleeves to disguise their shoulders, short sleeves often end at the widest part of the shoulder and can unintentionally draw attention to it. A sleeveless blouse with a soft collar and open neckline often creates a cleaner, more flattering line.



Fabric choice matters too. Lightweight satin, silk, viscose, and other drapey materials complement the movement of a satin skirt without adding unnecessary volume. Avoid tops with large ruffles, puff sleeves, shoulder embellishments, or strong shoulder padding, as these details can exaggerate width in the upper body.

Colour can also be used strategically. A darker, matte top paired with a lighter or more lustrous satin skirt naturally shifts visual emphasis downward. If you love matching satin separates, choose streamlined silhouettes that skim rather than billow.

Accessories offer another opportunity to create balance. Earrings, bracelets, statement rings, and elegant handbags draw attention throughout the outfit rather than concentrating it at shoulder level. Comfortable sandals, espadrilles, or a modest heel can further enhance the long, flowing lines of the skirt.

Above all, remember that style is not about meeting someone else's idea of femininity. Fashion works best when it reflects your personality, your lifestyle, and your confidence. Broad shoulders do not make a woman less feminine. They are simply one aspect of a unique body shape that can be styled beautifully.



The long satin skirt remains one of fashion's most versatile pieces because it combines softness, sophistication, and ease. Whether paired with a sleeveless collared blouse, a wrap top, or a simple open-neck shell, it offers endless possibilities for creating outfits that feel elegant, comfortable, and unmistakably you.

Because true style is never about hiding who you are. It is about expressing it with confidence.

As it turned out, it was a wonderful night with amazing food, drinks and most importantly the company.

A summer night Barbeque, somewhere in Spain…







STYLE CONFIDENCE

Long Satin Skirts: Feminine, Flattering & Unapologetically You

A STYLE GUIDE FOR TRANS WOMEN

Long satin skirts are one of the most versatile, elegant pieces you can own. They move beautifully, feel amazing in warm weather, and create a silhouette that celebrates your shape. Here's how to wear them with confidence.

WHY SATIN WORKS SO WELL

Creates balance: The fluid drape skims your body without clinging.

Draws the eye down: Movement and shine bring attention to the lower half.

Perfect for warm climates: Satin breathes and feels cool against the skin.

BEST TOPS TO PAIR

- ✓ Sleeveless collared blouses
- ✓ Soft V-neck or open necklines
- ✓ Wrap-style or draped tops
- ✓ Lightweight woven shells
- ✓ Short-sleeve shirts with rolled or capped sleeves

These styles elongate your neck, soften the shoulders and highlight your waist.

FLATTERING SILHOUETTE TIPS

Define your waist
Tuck in or choose wrap styles to create a clear waistline.

Soften the shoulders
Avoid puff sleeves, structured shoulders and cap sleeves that end at the widest point.

Draw attention downward
Let the skirt do the shining! Add bracelets, rings or a delicate bag to keep the focus lower.

Add height
Sandals with a small heel or platform elevate your look (and your posture!).

NECKLINES THAT FLATTER

Create vertical lines and soften your frame.



Soft V-Neck
Elongates the neck and draws the eye inward.

Open Collar
Breaks up width across the chest and looks chic.

Sleeveless Collared
Clean, elegant and perfect for warm days.

Wrap Style
Defines the waist and creates lovely shape.

STYLING EXAMPLES

Easy outfits for a sophisticated summer look.



Classic & Clean
Sleeveless shirt blouse + navy satin skirt + minimal accessories.

Soft & Romantic
Wrap top + olive satin skirt + gold jewelry + strappy sandals.

Evening Elegance
Satin cami + long satin skirt + blazer + heels. Effortless and refined.

THINGS TO AVOID

These can add width to your upper body.

- ✕ Puffed or flutter sleeves
- ✕ Boat or high necklines
- ✕ Strong shoulder pads
- ✕ Halter tops
- ✕ Horizontal stripes or bold prints on top



Your style is your story. Make it beautiful. ♡



CONFIDENCE IS THE BEST OUTFIT

Fashion isn't about hiding – it's about highlighting what makes you feel like you. Experiment, play, and wear what makes you walk a little taller.

You deserve to feel amazing. ♡



Standing Tall: The Quiet Comedy of Dressing a 6'2" Trans Woman

By Penny

There is a particular kind of irony in being a tall trans woman. People often assume height grants confidence, presence, even glamour. In reality, it mostly grants me sleeves that end somewhere near my elbows and trousers that appear to have given up halfway down my legs. What many people treat as a simple pleasure of buying clothes becomes, for me, a long-running comedy of errors performed in changing rooms, online shopping baskets, and the occasional despairing sigh at the postman.



The fashion industry, bless it, still behaves as though women come in one standard height: 5'3", maybe 5'4" if they're feeling adventurous. Anything beyond that and the system seems to short-circuit. I walk into a high-street shop and immediately know that every "maxi" dress will be a midi, every "long coat" will be a jacket, and every pair of jeans will be an enthusiastic attempt at capri trousers. Even tall ranges, those rare hopeful corners of the internet, often misunderstand the assignment. Yes, the hem reaches my hips, but the shoulders cling to me like they're trying to stop me leaving the shop.

Of course, height is only one part of the equation. Many of us who transitioned after male puberty carry broader shoulders, longer torsos, and ribcages that seem to have been designed with buoyancy in mind. This creates a unique geometry puzzle: trousers that are long enough but sit on the wrong waist; skirts that assume my hips are located somewhere else entirely; blazers that fit my torso but behave as though my shoulders are optional extras. And then there are shoes, the eternal quest for a feminine UK size 10 or 11 that doesn't resemble a canoe or a medieval torture device.

Shopping, therefore, becomes an emotional experience as much as a practical one. Walking into the women's section still carries a flicker of anxiety, not because I don't belong there, but because I know the clothes won't behave. Changing rooms are where dysphoria goes to stretch its legs. Mirrors highlight every proportion mismatch; lighting reveals sins I didn't know I had; and occasionally a shop assistant offers that polite-but-confused look that says, "We don't have anything for you, but good luck, tall one."

Online shopping should, in theory, solve all this. Instead, it introduces new forms of chaos. Models are always 5'8" and wearing a size 6, which tells me precisely nothing about how the garment will behave on a 6'2" trans woman with shoulders. Sizing varies wildly between brands. And returning tall items means paying postage twice and explaining to the courier why the "floor-length" dress you ordered turned out to be a tunic.



And then there are the modern wildcards: **Temu** and **Shein**. These platforms are the fashion equivalent of a lucky dip at a school fair. You might receive a dress for £7 that fits like it was tailored for you, or you might receive something that looks like it was designed by someone who has never met a human body. Yet, occasionally,

they deliver miracles — a pair of boots that actually fit my size 10 feet, a dress that reaches my ankles, a top that doesn't transform into a crop-top the moment I lift my arms. The quality is sometimes "mystery fabric", but when you're tall and desperate, you learn to celebrate the wins.

What strikes me most is how little the fashion industry acknowledges height diversity, especially for tall trans women. Plus-size inclusion has made welcome progress, but tall ranges remain an afterthought. We need extended shoe sizes, tall clothing that understands proportions rather than simply adding length, and models who reflect the reality of women who stand above six feet.





Despite all this, I've learned to find joy in the pieces that work. I've discovered silhouettes that flatter my frame, fabrics that behave, and outfits that make me feel like myself. Every garment that fits properly feels like a small victory — a reminder that I deserve to take up space, both physically and emotionally.

Being a 6'2" trans woman means I stand out. Dressing this body shouldn't feel like a battle, but until the fashion world catches up, I'll keep standing tall and keep searching for clothes that let me do the same.

Dear Penny,

I am a transgender woman living in the UK. All I want to do is get on and live my life as my genuine self but the UK media has created a hostile environment for trans women and the government and the EHRC has not helped. I am now scared to leave my house.

Tina
Shepherds Bush

You've written this letter with hands that are clearly trembling, and yet every word carries the unmistakable strength of a woman who has endured far more than she should ever have had to. Fear may be loud right now, but I promise you — it is not the truest thing about you.

Let's name what you're living through, because pretending it's "just in your head" would be a cruelty. The UK has become a difficult place for trans women. The media has been relentless, the political climate chilly, and the EHRC's recent shifts have left many women feeling pushed to the margins of their own lives. You are not imagining this. You are responding to a real pressure, a real hostility, a real erosion of safety.

But here is the part you may have forgotten:
You are still allowed to take up space in this world. You are still allowed to live. You are still allowed to be seen.

The fear you feel is understandable — but it is not a prophecy

Fear is a clever liar. It tells you that stepping outside your door will lead to catastrophe. It whispers that everyone is watching, judging, waiting. But fear never tells the whole story. It never mentions the people who will smile at you, the quiet kindnesses, the strangers who won't give you a second glance because they're too busy living their own messy lives.

It never mentions the possibility of joy.

You deserve a life that is bigger than your front door

You are not meant to be a ghost in your own home. You are meant to breathe fresh air, feel sunlight on your skin, choose your clothes with delight, and walk through the world as the woman you are — not as a secret, not as a compromise, not as a target.

And you don't have to do it all at once.

Start with gentleness

Think of your courage as a muscle. It doesn't grow by leaping — it grows by small, steady movements.

- A short walk at a quiet time of day
- A drive while presenting as yourself
- A visit to a supportive space, even online at first
- Meeting one trusted person who sees you, truly sees you

Every small step is a stitch in the fabric of your freedom.

You are not alone, even if it feels like it

There are trans women across the UK who feel exactly what you're feeling — not because they are weak, but because the climate has been harsh. And yet they continue. They build community. They find pockets of safety. They carve out joy. You are part of that sisterhood, even if you haven't met them yet.

And here is the truth I want you to hold close

The hostility you're describing is real, but it is not the whole country. It is not every person. It is not every street. It is not every day. And it is certainly not your future.

Your life is not over. It is waiting.

You are a woman with a right to exist, to walk, to smile, to be seen, to be loved, to be ordinary, to be extraordinary — whatever you choose. The world may feel cold, but you are not made of fragile things. You are made of truth, and truth has a way of surviving storms.

When you are ready — even if it's just for five minutes — open your door.
Not because the world deserves you.
But because **you** deserve the world.

With all my warmth,
Penny

When “Protection” Feels Like Pressure:

The UK’s Contradiction on Trans Healthcare



Britain’s politicians increasingly present themselves as defenders of LGBT rights. In this year’s King’s Speech, the government once again promised a law banning conversion therapy, framing it as proof of a modern and compassionate country.

On the surface, that sounds like progress. But for many trans people, especially trans young people, the promise does not feel convincing. This is because while ministers speak against conversion therapy, some current policies are seen by critics as producing similar outcomes in different ways.

The contradiction is hard to ignore. A state cannot say it opposes conversion practices while also making it much harder for trans people to access transition-related care.



One of the clearest examples is the restriction on puberty blockers for trans children. Supporters of the policy say it is about caution, evidence, and patient safety rather than ideology. But critics argue this misses a key point: forcing a trans teenager to go through puberty they do not want is not a neutral decision. It has deep and lasting medical and psychological effects.

Puberty blockers were originally used to pause physical development, giving young people, their families, and doctors time to decide the best path forward. By limiting access to them, the state has not stopped intervening. It has simply chosen one outcome over another. Puberty then proceeds naturally, changing the body in ways that may later require surgery, lifelong treatment, or may be impossible to reverse.

For a trans girl, this can include a deepening voice, facial hair, and more typically male bone structure. For a trans boy, it can mean breast development and other changes associated with female puberty. These are not abstract ideas, they are permanent physical changes that affect a person's life.

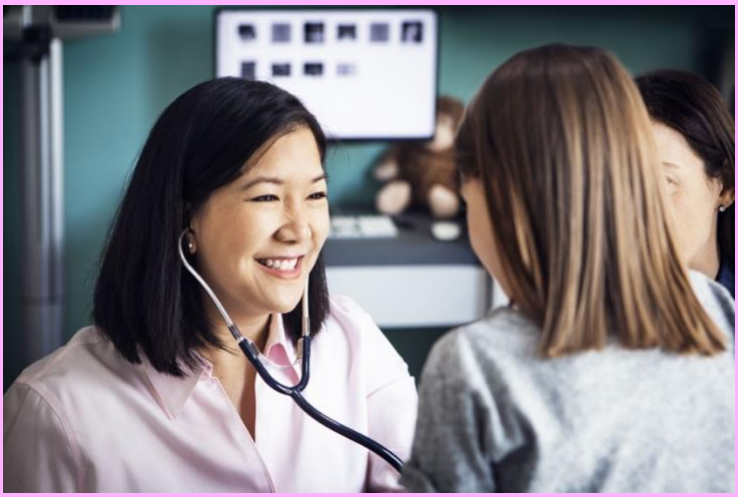
This is where the government's position on conversion therapy becomes difficult to reconcile. If conversion therapy means trying to suppress or change someone's gender identity, then what do we call a system that prevents young people from accessing treatment that would stop unwanted physical changes? The government says no one is trying to change anyone's identity. But intention is not the only issue. The effect matters too.



A teenager denied timely care may not experience this as neutrality. Instead, it can feel like enforced conformity: one path of physical development is allowed to continue, while another is effectively blocked.

This pattern extends beyond puberty blockers. More broadly, trans healthcare in

Britain is often described in terms of caution, delay, and “exploration.” In principle, careful assessment is reasonable. No one argues that major medical decisions should be rushed. But many trans people are concerned about how this approach works in practice.



When clinicians are encouraged to treat trans identity as something that might be explained away, through trauma, autism, social influence, anxiety, or confusion—then “exploration” can become less about understanding and more about discouragement.

Exploration is not automatically harmful. But when it takes place in a wider environment that is already sceptical of transition, it may not remain neutral.

The wider political climate also matters. In recent years, trans people in Britain have increasingly been discussed less as individuals needing healthcare and more as a social issue to manage. Public debate often focuses on toilets, sports, pronouns, and schools. Meanwhile, NHS waiting times for gender services are long, and legal gender recognition is often described as slow and difficult. Transition is frequently treated as something undesirable, rather than a legitimate medical pathway.

Against this background, the promise of a conversion therapy ban can appear inconsistent.

The government tends to imagine conversion therapy as something carried out by extreme religious groups or abusive counsellors. Those examples do exist and clearly should be banned. But modern forms of conversion pressure do not always look like obvious or dramatic abuse. They can also appear in more institutional ways.

They may look like repeated assessments, long waiting lists, limited treatment options, and systems where “doing nothing” becomes the default outcome.

This raises an uncomfortable question: if a young person consistently says they are trans, seeks care, and is then prevented from accessing treatment until puberty permanently changes their body, how different is that from a system that effectively pushes them to accept their birth sex?

The language may be softer. The setting may be medical rather than religious. But for many trans people, the result can feel similar.

Britain’s political leaders want to be seen as opposing conversion therapy, while also avoiding strong support for transition care itself. That is a difficult balance to maintain. But the contradiction is becoming increasingly visible.

A genuine commitment to ending conversion therapy would not only ban the most obvious forms of coercion. It would also ensure that trans people can access timely, appropriate healthcare that allows them to live as themselves.

Without that, there is a risk that conversion therapy is banned in name—but continues in quieter, more bureaucratic forms through the system itself.

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ASK CARLA

When im out, I usually have no problems but now and again I get things shouted at me. “It's a man”, or “use the right toilet.” What should I do?"

Firstly, remember that someone shouting abuse at you says far more about them than it does about you. Your safety comes first, so trust your instincts. If a situation feels threatening, walk away and seek support. Maybe make a note if it persists. You don't owe strangers an explanation or a debate. Many trans people find it helpful to have a few calm responses ready, but it's equally valid to ignore comments completely. Most people either support us or simply get on with their lives. Don't let the loud minority convince you that they represent everyone.

Someone said once, which resonated with me. “We cant control what others think or say. Their transphobia and hate is none of our business”.

Be safe.

Love Carla X


OH NO!
I REALLY NEED TO GO.
THE HANGAR
I HOPE NO ONE IS IN THERE.
TOILETS
WOW! I REALLY LIKE YOUR DRESS.
I WISH MY LEGS WERE THAT LONG.
WHEW...

Why do we still do these?

In the May edition, I looked at the everyday habits that no longer make sense. Here's part two…

1 Weird Human Habits Nobody Can Explain

These are great because **most people recognise them immediately**.

Opening the fridge repeatedly
You already looked. Nothing new appeared.

Pressing the pedestrian crossing button multiple times
As if the traffic lights are thinking *"Oh wow, they really mean it."*

Standing up the moment a plane lands
Everyone knows the doors won't open for 10 minutes.

Looking inside the kettle while it boils
Just checking if physics is still working.

Pushing a remote control harder when the batteries are dying

Checking your pockets for phone / wallet / keys
Even though you checked them 10 seconds earlier.

Turning the radio volume down while reversing or parking

Shaking a vending machine gently
Like it might suddenly become generous.

Opening and closing scissors a couple of times before using them

Pressing an elevator button repeatedly

2️⃣ Phrases People Use Even Though the Original Meaning Is Gone

These are fantastic because **the history behind them is usually surprising**.

Pull the chain
Old toilets literally flushed by pulling a hanging chain.

Hang up the phone
Landline receivers were hung on a cradle.

Roll down the window
Car windows used to be cranked with a handle.

Dial a number
Phones had a rotating dial.

CC someone
From carbon copy paper used in typewriters.

Cut and paste
Originally done with scissors and glue.

Film something
Even though nothing is actually filmed anymore.

Footage
Originally measured in literal feet of film.

Rewind
There’s nothing physically rewinding anymore.

Tape something
Even though tapes are long gone.

3️⃣ Things Everyone Does in Supermarkets

Pretending to study products when someone blocks the aisle

Letting someone go ahead of you because they only have one item
A strange but universal rule.

Walking faster when leaving without buying anything
As if security is watching.

Avoiding eye contact with the cashier while packing quickly

Trying to pick the fastest checkout line
Which inevitably becomes the slowest.

Putting one divider down… then the other person puts another divider down
Double divider diplomacy.

Buying things you didn't come for but forgetting the thing you did

Standing behind someone unloading a week's worth of groceries when you have one item

Checking eggs for cracks like a bomb disposal expert

Which ones do you still do?