Trans Focus

The World from a Transgender Perspective

June 2026



Welcome to June

There doesn't seem to be a month that passes without another attack on trans people. Last month was no different. The apparently trans-hostile UK government has once again decided that trans people are somehow responsible for the country's problems, and that pushing us out of public life is the answer. And so, as we enter Pride Month, the message being sent to our community could not be clearer.

The hatred and hypocrisy ring out in every statement from those supposedly tasked with protecting all citizens equally. Yet despite the endless rhetoric, I have still not seen anyone explain how these unworkable rules are actually meant to function in real life. The closest thing to a "solution" offered has been the suggestion of creating separate gender-neutral toilets alongside existing male and female facilities. Aside from the enormous cost, this feels wildly unrealistic. Given the painfully slow progress made over decades in improving disabled access, it is difficult to imagine governments or businesses suddenly rushing to rebuild public facilities now.

Which brings us to another suggestion often thrown around — that trans people should simply use disabled toilets instead. Apart from the fact that this immediately outs many of us in public, accessible facilities are already limited and inadequate in many places. Often there is only one available toilet. Sometimes they require staff permission or a special key. In smaller venues, those facilities frequently double as standard male and female toilets anyway.

And then we come to the contradiction at the heart of all this. We are told we are supposedly a "danger" in public spaces. Yet if that were genuinely true, why are we suddenly considered no threat at all when it comes to disabled people? The logic collapses under the weight of its own prejudice.

Like I said — hypocrisy.

Many people have rightly pointed out that this feels disturbingly similar to the resurrection of Section 28, the 1988 legislation that sought to erase LGBT people from public life and silence discussion of who we were. History has seen this before. The language changes. The targets change. But the tactics remain painfully familiar.

I'll leave you with a reminder of another time when segregation and exclusion were defended as "common sense" and "for public safety." As people often say today: *it was never really about the toilets then, and it isn't about the toilets now.*



We've tried something different this month. As well as a tongue in cheek account of the toilet fiasco, we've rewritten Snow White as a politically correct satire. We need a bit of fun in our lives, so we hope you enjoy.

A heads up about a new drama in the UK. It's called *"TipToe"* Written by Russel T Davies of *"It's A Sin"* and *"Queer as Folk"* fame, it promises to be a hit.

Neighbours Leo (Alan Cumming), a Canal Street bar owner and Clive (David Morrissey) an electrician with teen sons, find their lives unravelling as social tensions rise. Simple disagreements escalate into dangerous hostility in their Manchester suburb. If you have access to UK TV it's on Channel 4, Sundays (from 31st May), 21.00 bst. Otherwise, get it as part of your box sets from your supplier.

I'm told its very dark, so be prepared. But, if it's anywhere near as good as *It's a Sin*, we're in for a treat.

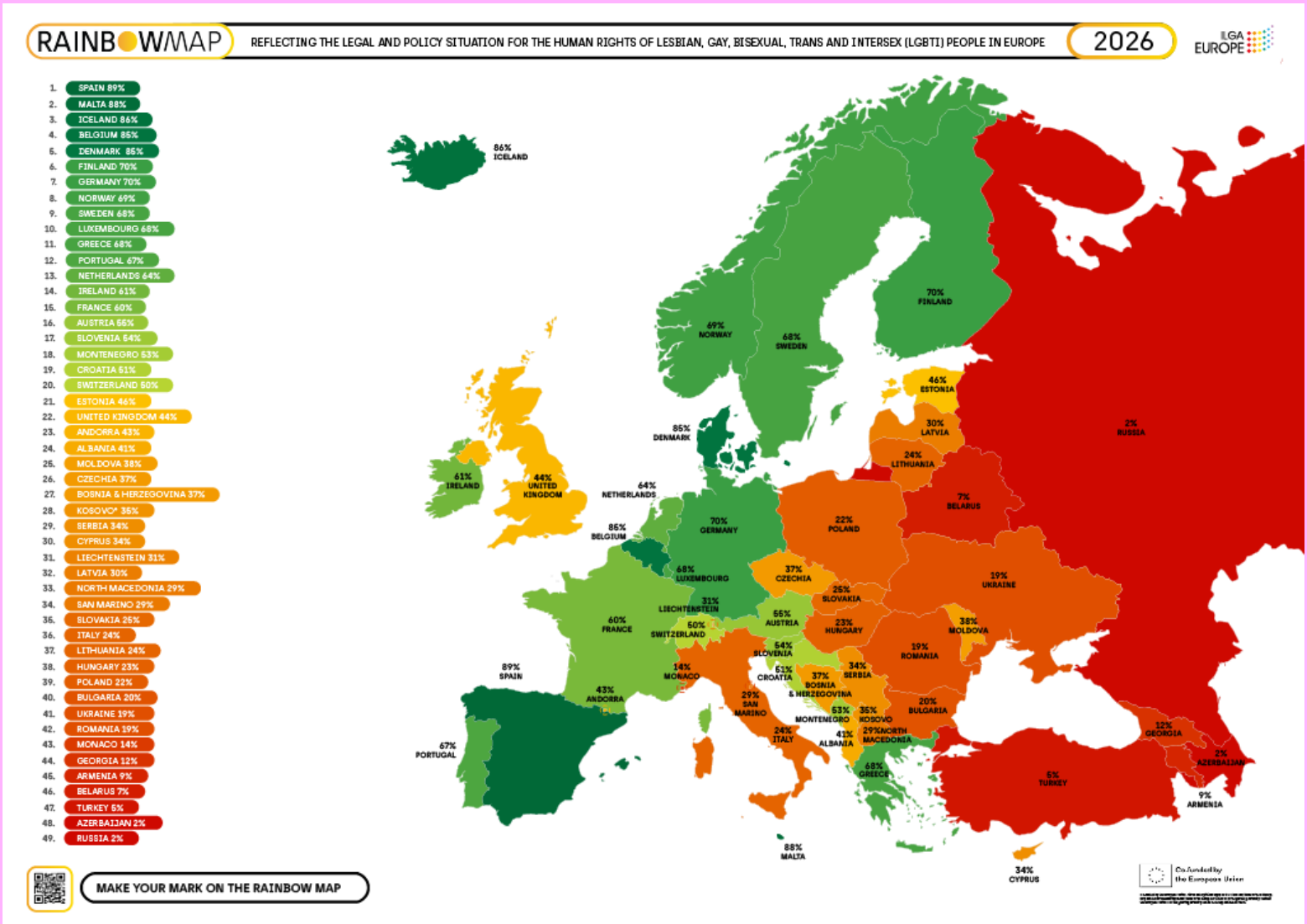
Other than that, there's plenty for you to read this month. As ever, if you want a subject covering or want to contribute, please contact us via the magazine website.

Pride month is upon us and whether you attend, participate or just live your life, I hope you enjoy.

Have an amazing month,

Love Carla & Penny xx

ILGA-Europe Rainbow Map Rankings 2026



In May, ILGA-Europe released its latest Rainbow Map rankings — the annual assessment measuring how well 49 European countries protect the rights of LGBT+ people. This year, Spain claimed the number one position, while the United Kingdom fell to 22nd place,

continuing a steady decline that has surprised many who remember Britain once leading Europe on equality.

For me, the contrast between the two countries is more than political statistics. It is something I experience in everyday life.

I have lived in Spain for more than 11 years, including the last six as a trans woman. Over that time, I have watched Spain become increasingly confident in its support for LGBT+ inclusion, while the tone surrounding trans people in the UK has grown noticeably more hostile and divisive.

The Rainbow Map itself is far more than a symbolic league table. Compiled by ILGA-Europe — the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association — it evaluates countries on a wide range of legal and policy measures, including protections against discrimination, gender recognition laws, healthcare access, family rights, and political freedoms. The data is supported by hundreds of activists, legal experts, and human rights specialists across Europe and Central Asia.

But behind every ranking lies a human reality.

For LGBT+ people, particularly trans people, these numbers often reflect something deeply personal: whether we feel safe walking through our communities, whether we are treated with dignity, and whether political leaders choose to include us or use us as targets in wider cultural debates.

Spain, despite its imperfections, has largely chosen inclusion.

The country’s LGBT+ policies send a clear message that trans people are part of society rather than outsiders to it. Legal recognition has improved, healthcare protections have expanded, and equality measures continue to move forward rather than backwards. Importantly, much of Spain’s political establishment has resisted turning trans lives into a permanent culture-war battleground.

That difference is felt beyond legislation.

In cities such as Madrid and Valencia, as well as coastal communities including Alicante, Torrevieja and Orihuela Costa, LGBT+ visibility has become part of ordinary public life. Pride flags are rarely treated as controversial, and trans people are increasingly viewed simply as neighbours, work colleagues, friends, and family members.

That does not mean discrimination never exists. No country is free from prejudice. However, the overall atmosphere feels markedly calmer and less confrontational than in Britain today.

The UK's decline in the rankings reflects a broader shift in public discourse over recent years. Debates around gender identity have become increasingly polarised, with trans people frequently positioned at the centre of political arguments, media controversies, and online hostility.

ILGA-Europe specifically pointed to concerns around the erosion of gender recognition protections in explaining Britain's falling position. Combined with increasingly heated rhetoric in parts of the press and political sphere, the result has been a growing sense among many trans people that their existence is being debated rather than understood.

What makes this particularly striking is that the UK was once regarded as one of Europe's most progressive countries on LGBT+ equality. It helped shape major advances in rights and public acceptance over several decades. For many people, the current climate feels like a significant cultural step backwards.

At the same time, real life is often more nuanced than online debate suggests.

Many trans people in Britain continue to live ordinary lives surrounded by supportive families, friends, and communities. Others describe experiencing regular hostility or anxiety, particularly online, where conversations around trans issues can quickly become aggressive and dehumanising.

Responses to this year's Rainbow Map rankings highlighted that divide clearly. Social media discussions were often dominated by dismissive or hostile reactions questioning why trans people needed protections at all. Familiar accusations quickly resurfaced, with trans individuals portrayed as threats, burdens, or symbols within a broader ideological conflict.

Those reactions themselves perhaps illustrate why the UK continues to struggle in international equality rankings. Legal protections matter, but so does the wider social climate that surrounds them.

Spain offers a reminder that a different approach is possible.

Acceptance has not damaged Spanish society. Greater inclusion has not undermined women's rights or social stability. If anything, the visibility and normalisation of LGBT+ people has helped create a more open and relaxed public culture.

From personal experience, everyday interactions in Spain often feel refreshingly uneventful — and that in itself can be powerful. Most people simply get on with life. On the rare occasion misunderstandings happen, they are usually met with politeness rather than confrontation.

One trans friend living in Spain recently summed it up perfectly when she told me:

“I’m treated with more kindness as a trans woman than I ever was before.”

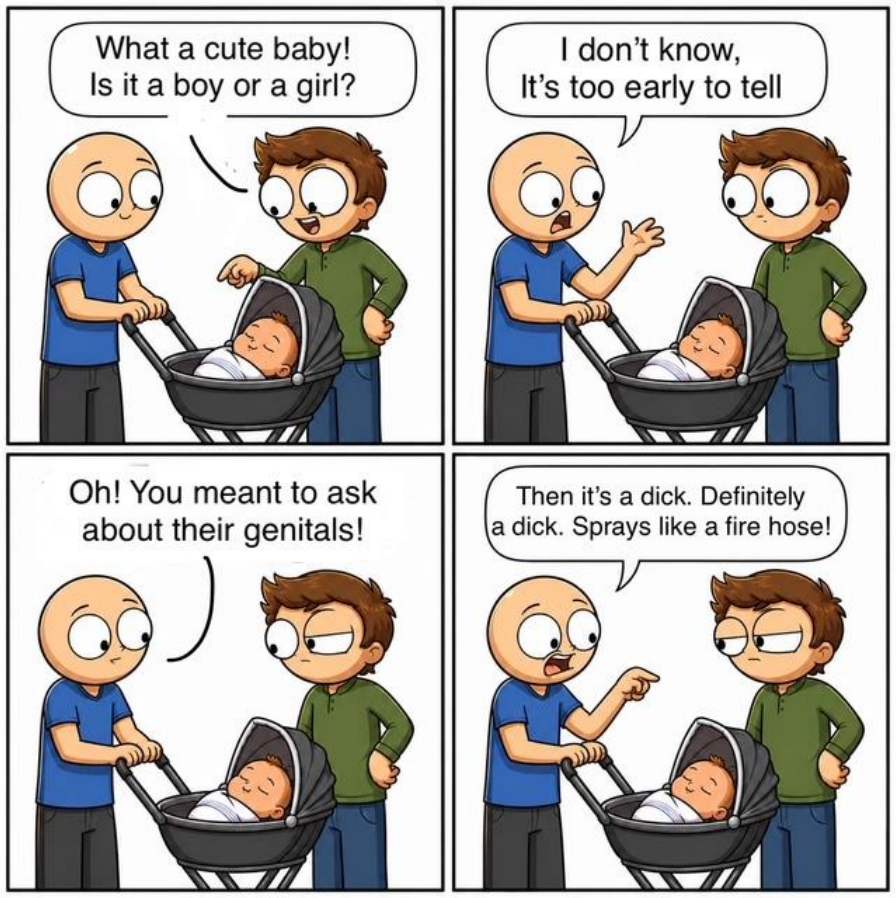
That may not reflect every experience, but it speaks to something larger about social attitudes and the importance of empathy in public life.

Ultimately, the growing contrast between Spain and the UK is not simply about laws or rankings. It is about the type of society a country chooses to become.

One path embraces inclusion as part of modern democracy.

The other risks allowing fear, outrage, and division to shape public conversation.

And for trans people across Europe, those choices increasingly shape daily life in very real ways.




We're No1
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SOMOS Nº1

Seeking Sanctuary: Why and How a Trans Woman from the USA Might Pursue Political Asylum in Spain



In an era of deepening political and cultural divides, a growing number of transgender Americans are exploring radical options for safety and self-expression, including seeking international protection abroad. Spain, with its progressive LGBTQ+ laws and explicit recognition of gender identity in asylum procedures, has emerged as a potential destination for some. While asylum claims from U.S. citizens remain rare and face significant hurdles, the legal pathway exists—and understanding it is crucial for those feeling increasingly vulnerable.

The "Why": A Well-Founded Fear of Persecution

Under the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol—cornerstones of international refugee law—asylum is granted to individuals with a well-founded fear of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. Gender identity is widely recognized as falling under "particular social group," and Spain has strengthened this through national legislation.

In February 2023, Spain amended its asylum law to explicitly include "gender" identity as a ground for persecution, alongside sexual orientation. This makes it one of the more accommodating European countries for transgender applicants. Spain's 2023 transgender equality law further bolsters protections, integrating these considerations into the asylum framework.

For a trans woman from the United States, the case would hinge on demonstrating personalised risk rather than general societal discomfort. Factors that could support a claim include:

State-level restrictions and violence: Many U.S. states have passed numerous laws restricting gender-affirming care (especially for youth, but with ripple effects), sports participation, bathroom access, and legal recognition. Reports of death threats, family rejection, workplace discrimination, or inability to access healthcare can form part of the evidence.

Federal policy shifts: Executive actions redefining sex as immutable and limiting federal recognition of gender identity have raised alarms in the LGBTQ+ community.

Documented harm: Evidence of specific threats, harassment, medical denials leading to health crises, or inability to live authentically without fear of violence. Credible country-of-origin reports, personal affidavits, medical records, and witness statements are key.

Success is not guaranteed. European countries, including Spain, often view the U.S. as a "safe country of origin" overall, meaning applicants must prove their specific circumstances override this presumption. Similar claims in places like the Netherlands have faced initial rejections, leading to legal challenges.



Spain stands out for being relatively open to claims based on broader discrimination patterns, not solely immediate life-threatening danger, and it provides reception support including housing and basic aid during processing.

The "How": Navigating the Spanish Asylum Process

Asylum must generally be claimed from within Spain—you cannot typically apply from a U.S. embassy or remotely.

1. Entry into Spain: Most Americans enter visa-free for up to 90 days under the Schengen Area rules. Overstaying or entering irregularly complicates matters, so timely application is advised.

2. Submitting the Application: At authorized Immigration Offices ("Oficina de Extranjería"), police stations, or the Office of Asylum and Refuge (OAR).
- Ideally within one month of arrival.
- The process starts with an appointment (bookable online in some locations) and a formal interview. Applicants should request an interpreter if needed.

3. Initial Steps and Interview: Authorities conduct a screening to determine if the claim is admissible. You'll explain your fear of persecution in detail. Supporting evidence is critical here—medical transition records, police reports of incidents, news articles about conditions in your home state, and expert affidavits from LGBTQ+ organizations.



4. The Decision Process:
- If accepted for processing, you receive documentation allowing you to stay while your case is evaluated (which can take months or longer).
- Spain's system includes access to the International Protection Reception System, offering accommodation, financial support, legal aid, and specialized services for vulnerable groups like LGBTQ+ applicants.

5. Appeals and Outcomes: Rejection can be appealed. Successful applicants receive refugee status or subsidiary protection, leading to residency rights, work authorization, and eventually pathways to citizenship.

Challenges abound: proving "persecution" from a developed democracy like the U.S. is an uphill battle. Language barriers, bureaucratic delays, and the emotional toll of recounting trauma add layers of difficulty. Trans-specific issues, such as matching documents to presented gender, may arise but are navigable with preparation.

Life in Spain as a Trans Woman

Beyond asylum, Spain offers a relatively welcoming environment. Madrid and Barcelona boast vibrant LGBTQ+ scenes, legal gender recognition is straightforward for residents, and healthcare (including transition-related care) is accessible through the public system. The country ranks highly on European LGBTQ+ rights indices, though rural areas can be more conservative.

A Note of Caution and Alternatives

Experts and advocates emphasize that asylum from the U.S. is exceptional and resource-intensive. Many trans Americans first explore internal relocation to progressive states, student visas, digital nomad visas (Spain offers one), or other EU countries with strong protections. Organisations like TransLash, Rainbow Railroad, or local Spanish LGBTQ+ refugee support networks can provide guidance.

For those whose fear is genuine and evidence-based, Spain's framework offers a beacon of hope rooted in human rights commitments. The journey demands courage, thorough documentation, and often professional legal help, but for some, it represents the chance to live authentically without fear.

This article is for informational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice. Consult qualified immigration attorneys and organizations specialising in LGBTQ+ asylum for personalized guidance.



THE DISTRACTION



Pride Month:

A History Written in Protest, Courage and Joy

Every June, rainbow flags appear on balconies, in city squares, across social media feeds and at marches around the world. For some, Pride Month is a celebration. For others, it is a protest. In truth, it has always been both.

Pride was never simply about parties or parades. It was born from resistance — resistance to police harassment, discrimination, violence, criminalisation and silence. It grew because LGBTQ+ people refused to disappear.

As we enter another Pride Month, it is worth remembering how we arrived here, why Pride still matters, and why the backlash we now see online proves that the fight is far from over.

Before Pride: Criminalisation and Silence

For much of modern history, LGBTQ+ people were forced to live in secrecy. Homosexuality was criminalised across much of the world, transgender people were ridiculed or erased, and many lost jobs, families and freedoms simply for existing.

In Britain, men could still be imprisoned for same-sex relationships until partial decriminalisation in 1967. In Spain, under the dictatorship of Francisco Franco, LGBTQ+ people faced surveillance, imprisonment and institutional persecution. The *Ley de Peligrosidad y Rehabilitación Social* targeted homosexuals and gender non-conforming people, treating them as social threats.

Across Europe and America, police raids on gay bars were common. LGBTQ+ venues existed in shadows because society gave queer people few safe public spaces.

Yet even in those years of fear, communities formed. Underground bars, drag shows, activist groups and friendship networks became lifelines.

The Stonewall Uprising: The Spark of Pride

The defining moment came in the early hours of June 28, 1969, at the Stonewall Inn in New York City.

Police raids on gay bars were routine, but this time the people inside fought back.

Drag queens, transgender people, lesbians, gay men and homeless queer youth resisted arrest and harassment. Among the names remembered most prominently are Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera, both transgender activists who became enduring symbols of queer resistance.

What followed were several nights of protest and clashes with police. The Stonewall uprising became the catalyst for the modern LGBTQ+ rights movement.

One year later, in June 1970, the first Pride marches took place in New York, Los Angeles and Chicago to commemorate Stonewall. The idea spread rapidly across the world.

Pride was born not from acceptance, but from rebellion.

The Growth of the Global LGBTQ+ Movement

The 1970s and 1980s saw the emergence of organised LGBTQ+ activism internationally.

Key milestones included:

- 1972 — Sweden became the first country to allow transgender people to legally change their gender.
- 1973 — The American Psychiatric Association removed homosexuality from its list of mental disorders.
- 1978 — Gilbert Baker designed the original rainbow Pride flag.
- 1981 onwards — The AIDS crisis devastated LGBTQ+ communities, particularly gay and bisexual men, while governments often responded with indifference or hostility.
- Activist organisations like ACT UP forced public attention onto the epidemic through protest and direct action.

The AIDS epidemic changed Pride forever. Marches became spaces not only of celebration, but grief, anger and survival. Entire generations were lost.

Yet LGBTQ+ activism continued to push forward.

Pride in Spain: From Dictatorship to Visibility

Spain’s Pride story is particularly powerful because of how rapidly the country transformed after dictatorship.

The first major Pride demonstration in Spain took place in Barcelona in 1977, only two years after Franco’s death. Protesters demanding LGBTQ+ rights were met with police violence.

From those beginnings emerged one of the strongest LGBTQ+ rights movements in Europe.

Major milestones in Spain include:

- 1979 — Homosexuality was officially decriminalised in Spain.
- 2005 — Spain became one of the first countries in the world to legalise same-sex marriage under Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero.
- 2007 — Spain introduced legal gender recognition legislation for transgender people.

Today, cities such as Madrid, Barcelona and Valencia host enormous Pride celebrations attended by millions.







Madrid Pride, in particular, has become one of the largest Pride events in Europe — a symbol of visibility, freedom and progress that would have been unimaginable during the Franco era.

But progress is never guaranteed.

Why Pride Is Still Needed

Every year, the same criticisms appear online whenever Pride Month begins.

“Why do they need a whole month?”
“Why is Pride everywhere?”
“Keep it private.”
“It’s gone too far.”

Alongside those comments come the homophobic slurs, anti-trans rhetoric, conspiracy theories and coordinated harassment campaigns that flood social media whenever Pride is mentioned.

For transgender people especially, social media has become a battleground. Politicians, commentators and influencers often frame trans existence as controversial simply for existing publicly.

That hostility matters because online rhetoric does not stay online.

It influences laws.
It influences media coverage.
It influences families.
It influences safety.

Across parts of Europe and the United States, anti-LGBTQ+ rhetoric has intensified in recent years. Trans healthcare is debated endlessly by people unaffected by it. Books are challenged. Drag performers are targeted. Pride events face protests and threats.

Even in relatively progressive countries like Spain, LGBTQ+ people still experience hate crimes, discrimination and abuse. Many young queer and trans people still grow up frightened of rejection.

Pride remains necessary because equality on paper is not the same as equality in everyday life.

It remains necessary because visibility saves lives.

It remains necessary because many people still cannot safely be themselves at home, at work or online.

And it remains necessary because history shows that rights can be reversed when societies become complacent.

Pride Is Protest — and Hope

Pride today contains contradictions, and that is part of its history.

It is joyful because LGBTQ+ people survived.
It is political because many still struggle.
It is commercialised in places because society changed enough for companies to want association with it.
It is criticised because visibility makes some people uncomfortable.

But beneath all the rainbow branding and festival stages, Pride still carries the spirit of Stonewall.

A refusal to disappear.
A refusal to be silent.
A refusal to accept shame.

For older LGBTQ+ people, Pride can be a reminder of battles fought and friends lost.
For younger generations, it can be the first moment they realise they are not alone.

And for transgender people especially — in a world increasingly eager to debate our existence — Pride remains an act of courage.

This June, as rainbow flags fly once again across Spain and beyond, Pride Month is not simply asking for celebration.

It is asking the world to remember.



Rainbow Vibes on the Costa Blanca: Orihuela Costa Pride Lights Up the Summer

By Penny

In the sun-drenched corner of Spain's Costa Blanca, where expat communities mingle with local charm and the Mediterranean sparkles just a short drive away, Orihuela Costa has quietly become a beacon of colour, joy, and inclusion. Each year, **Orihuela Costa Pride** transforms the vibrant neighbourhood of La Florida into a dazzling celebration of love, diversity, and unity.

A Warm Welcome for Everyone



What began as a bold first event a few years ago has blossomed into a much-anticipated fixture on the local calendar. Hosted primarily at the ever-popular The Emerald Isle Irish bar and events venue in La Florida, the day blends the best of British, Irish, and Spanish hospitality with unapologetic Pride energy.

The event typically kicks off in the early afternoon with an artisan market brimming with stalls selling everything from handmade crafts and rainbow merchandise. Families, friends, allies, and members of the LGBTQ+ community gather under the bright Spanish sun, setting the scene for an inclusive party that feels both welcoming and electric.

The Parade: A Burst of Colour and Pride



The highlight for many is the Pride Parade, which sets off from The Emerald Isle. Revellers in spectacular outfits, waving flags and dancing to the beat, wind their way through the local streets before returning to the main venue. It's a joyful, visible statement of equality that draws cheers from onlookers and participants alike.

Past parades have featured everything from fabulous drag performers to community groups, creating unforgettable memories along the route. The atmosphere is one of pure celebration, no barriers, just shared pride.



Non-Stop Entertainment and Tributes

Once the parade returns, the real party begins on the main stage. Expect a stellar line-up of live acts, including:

- Drag queens and kings delivering show-stopping performances
- Tribute artists channelling icons like Cher, Madonna, Robbie Williams, and more
- Local vocalists, dance groups (including Bollywood and fire performances)
- DJs spinning until late into the evening



Hosts such as Dame Marcy have become synonymous with the event's warm, larger-than-life spirit.

Food, drinks, and VIP seating options keep the energy high, while the venue's welcoming vibe makes it easy to chat, dance, or simply soak up the good times.

The event has grown rapidly thanks to passionate local organisers, volunteers, businesses, and support from the wider expat and Spanish communities. It's particularly popular with the large British and Irish populations on the Costa Blanca, offering a familiar yet gloriously rainbow twist on summer festivities.

Plan Your Visit to Orihuela Costa Pride 2026

For 2026, the celebrations are set for **Saturday 13 June** at The Emerald Isle, starting from 3pm with the parade following shortly after. Keep an eye on the official **Orihuela Costa Pride Facebook page** for the latest updates on performers, timings, and any ticketed elements.

Whether you're a seasoned Pride-goer or simply looking for a vibrant day out under the Spanish sun, Orihuela Costa Pride delivers heart, colour, and unforgettable memories. Pack your brightest outfit, bring your best dance moves, and get ready to celebrate love in all its fabulous forms on the beautiful Costa Blanca.

See you there!

Dear Penny

I am 60 years old and all my life I have wanted to be a woman. I look with envy at those young trans girls who are brave enough to go out and live their lives. I wish I was young again but at my age I am scared to leave the house as my true self because I am worried about what people might say. Is it too late for me?

Dear Brave Heart,

Oh, my love, you wrote this letter with far more courage than you realise. You may feel scared, but every word you shared tells me you're already standing on the threshold of something powerful: living as the woman you truly are.

Let me tell you something gently but firmly, fear is a loud companion, but it is not a wise one. It shouts about what *might* happen, while completely ignoring what *could* happen: freedom, relief, joy, and the quiet, steady pride of finally seeing yourself reflected back in the mirror of the world.

At 60, you are not late. You are right on time for your own life.

What you're feeling is normal

Many trans women, of every age, describe that first step out the door as the hardest. Not because the world is full of monsters, but because the mind is full of "what ifs". You've spent decades protecting yourself, and now you're asking your heart to take the lead. That's a big shift.

But here's the truth you need to hear

People are far more wrapped up in their own lives than we imagine. The world is changing, slowly but surely, and you may be surprised by how little fuss people make. And those who *do* fuss? Their opinions are not rent-free tenants in your life unless you let them be.

Start small, start softly

You don't need to burst out of the house in a ball gown. Think of it as dipping a toe into warm water.

- A quiet evening walk in a place you feel safe
- A drive while dressed as yourself
- A visit to a trans-friendly café or support group
- Meeting one trusted friend while presenting as you

Each small step builds a kind of inner muscle. Before long, what once felt impossible becomes simply… you.

And please hear this

You deserve to exist in the world as your true self. Not hidden. Not apologising. Not waiting for permission that no one else has the right to grant.

Your life is not over. It is unfolding.

And when you finally take that first step outside as the woman you are, you may find the scariest part wasn't the world at all, it was believing you didn't deserve to be seen.

You do. You always have.

With all my warmth and admiration,
Your Penny



Do you have a problem you would like advice on?
Email transgenderfocus@gmail.com

Ten reasons why being transgender is the best thing in the world.

Living authentically as a transgender person allows you to claim your true self, fostering profound personal resilience, a unique perspective on the human condition, and a deep connection to a vibrant community. Many experience unparalleled joy in shaping their own identities and futures.

Forget for a while the difficulties we have. The negativity and hate from the media and politicians. Let’s celebrate being us…

The Joys and Strengths of the Transgender Experience

1. Radical Authenticity

Transitioning is one of the most powerful acts of self-love. Shedding societal expectations to live truthfully brings a sense of freedom that empowers you to create your own destiny and tell your own story.

2. Deep Empathy and Perspective

Going through the journey of discovering and embracing your identity builds massive emotional depth. Trans people often develop a unique understanding of gender, social conditioning, and the different ways people experience the world, leading to a profound capacity for empathy.

3. The Beautiful Trans Community
The trans community is incredibly diverse, creative, and supportive. Finding your "chosen family" and building connections with people who share similar experiences brings an unparalleled sense of belonging.

4. Gender Euphoria
There is unmatched joy in seeing your internal truth reflected in your external appearance. Whether it is wearing clothing that finally feels right, experimenting with presentation, or finding comfort in your own body, gender euphoria is a celebratory and beautiful experience.

5. Heightened Self-Awareness
Because cisgender people are generally not forced to evaluate their gender, trans people benefit from a deep, deliberate self-reflection. You intimately know *who* you are, which translates to a high level of self-assurance.

6. Freedom from Traditional Boxes
Being trans gives you a fresh, liberating perspective on societal norms. You realize that many arbitrary gender stereotypes are absurd, allowing you to interact with gender in a playful, unrestricted way.

7. Authentic Relationships
Living honestly means you attract people who accept you for exactly who you are. The right friends and partners will appreciate your courage to be yourself, which naturally filters out those who do not respect your boundaries.

8. True Appreciation for Life
Because living authentically can be difficult in a world that doesn't always understand, the moments of true joy, acceptance, and happiness are deeply cherished. You gain a profound appreciation for what genuine happiness feels like.

9. Incredible Resilience

Navigating a world that wasn't built for you builds ironclad resilience. This inner strength allows you to face future challenges with courage, proving that you have the power to overcome societal obstacles.

10. The Power of Existing and Inspiring

By simply living your truth, you become a beacon of hope and a leader for others. Being a visible, thriving trans person serves as a powerful reminder of the beauty of human diversity.



Papers, Please:

The Great British Toilet Inspection

A Satirical Commentary on “Biological Sex” Guidance

By a Very Confused Woman



Apparently, Britain has solved all its problems.

The rivers are clean. The NHS is thriving. Housing is affordable. Food banks are now artisan delis. Politicians are universally trusted. Nobody waits eight hours in A&E. And world peace is just around the corner.

Because at long last, the nation has turned its laser focus to the real crisis facing modern society: Who is peeing where.
Not crime. Not poverty. Not violence against women. Not the epidemic of sexual assault.
No.
The true danger, we are told, is Sandra from accounts quietly washing her hands in the ladies after twelve years of transition.
And so the great minds of government have gifted us guidance declaring that “biological sex” must take priority when deciding who may enter toilets and changing rooms.
A phrase so gloriously vague and scientifically misunderstood that it sounds less like legal guidance and more like a GCSE biology exam written by a columnist from 1987.

The New National Pastime: Gender Policing

Under this brave new system, ordinary women are apparently expected to become unpaid genital detectives.
Picture the scene.
Margaret, aged 63, enters the ladies in Marks & Spencer. Suddenly, a stranger leaps from behind the hand dryer.
“STOP!” he shouts. - “What are your chromosomes?”
Margaret freezes. “I… I beg your pardon?”
“XX? XY? INTERSEX VARIANT? PRODUCE YOUR CERTIFICATE.”
A queue forms.
Someone demands a blood test. Another requests a pelvic scan. A man from the Daily Mail appears holding calipers. Meanwhile, an actual predator quietly walks into the cubicle beside them because, as always, people intending harm do not generally obey signage.
But never mind that.
The important thing is that Susan, who played netball in 1978 and looks a bit “mannish” in a raincoat, has now been publicly interrogated by three amateur sex inspectors and a security guard named Clive.
Women everywhere must surely feel safer already.

The Impossible Rules of “Biological Sex”

The guidance speaks with enormous confidence about “biological reality,” which is fascinating because biology itself has spent decades explaining that sex characteristics are considerably more complicated than primary school worksheets suggest.

What exactly are we checking?
Chromosomes? Hormones? Genitals? Birth certificates? Fertility? Secondary sex characteristics? Brain structure? Medical transition? Legal status?
Will there be a government app?
“Welcome to GOV.UK Verify Your Bits™.”
Perhaps every citizen will soon carry an officially approved laminated crotch passport.
At this point, many trans people would genuinely love to know what their own “biological truth” supposedly is.
Most people have never had their chromosomes tested. Many intersex conditions go undiscovered for decades. Brain sex research continues to evolve. Hormonal profiles vary wildly.
Yet somehow politicians and newspaper columnists possess magical X-ray powers allowing them to determine someone’s “real sex” from thirty feet away in a Wetherspoons.
Remarkable.

Congratulations, You’ve Just Sent Bearded Men into the Ladies

One of the oddest consequences of this guidance is the situation involving trans men.
Under strict “biological sex” logic, many trans men, including those with beards, deep voices, bald heads, tattoos, muscles, and an appearance resembling an off-duty rugby coach — would theoretically be expected to use women’s spaces.
Imagine the public reaction.
A six-foot trans man walks into the ladies.
Karen gasps into her cappuccino. Children scream. Someone presses a panic alarm. A columnist faints theatrically into a copy of The Telegraph.
The poor man then has to explain:
“No, no, it’s okay. The government says I’m biologically female.”
At which point everyone involved develops a migraine.
The policy achieves the extraordinary feat of making absolutely nobody safer while making everybody more uncomfortable. A rare accomplishment.

Women Who Fail Femininity Exams

Of course, the truly dangerous part of this moral panic is not what happens to trans women.
It is what happens to ALL women.

Because once society begins treating womanhood as something that must be visually verified, every woman becomes subject to inspection.
Too tall? Suspicious.
Short hair? Suspicious.
Strong jaw? Suspicious.
No makeup? Suspicious.
Athletic build? Suspicious.
Too old? Too loud? Too masculine? Too unfeminine? Too… something?
Suspicious.
And who decides?
Usually strangers. Often men. Frequently men with very strong opinions about what women should look like.
Which is ironic.
The same people who spent years mocking feminism suddenly want to patrol women's toilets ensuring everyone is sufficiently decorative.
A woman could survive childbirth, sexism, workplace discrimination, and twenty years of being ignored in meetings only to be stopped outside a public loo because Darren from Swindon thinks her haircut looks "a bit trans."
Progress.

Predators Must Be Delighted

Actual predators could not have designed a better distraction if they tried.
Because this entire debate trains the public to focus not on behaviour, but appearance.
A threatening man behaving aggressively? Potentially ignored.
A quiet woman washing her hands while tall? NATIONAL EMERGENCY.
And now every creep, bully, and self-appointed culture warrior has been handed social permission to challenge women in public.
"Excuse me," they can say, "are you really a woman?"
How empowering.
Women fought for generations to exist freely in public spaces. Now they may need to pass a femininity checkpoint before entering Boots.
The guidance effectively creates a society where harassment can disguise itself as safeguarding.
Which, historically speaking, never ends well.

The Airport Security Model of Gender



Perhaps we should simply commit fully.
If toilets are now high-security biological checkpoints, let us modernise the process.
At every public bathroom entrance:

- Full-body scanners
- Hormone testing booths
- A panel of retired PE teachers
- Live chromosome analysis
- A government-approved “femininity score”
- Sniffer dogs trained to detect eyeliner fraud

Anyone scoring below the required threshold will be redirected to a new neutral facility called:
“The Department of Unclear Vibes.”
Naturally, there will be a waiting list.

The People Missing from This Debate

What is perhaps most exhausting is how rarely trans people themselves are treated as human beings within these discussions.
Not headlines. Not symbols. Not talking points.
People.
People trying to buy toothpaste. People trying to go swimming. People trying to survive another Tuesday.
Most trans women are not entering public toilets thinking:

“At last. Time to undermine Western civilisation.”
They are thinking:
“I hope nobody screams at me today.”
That is the reality.
The overwhelming majority simply want to exist quietly and safely.
But modern Britain has somehow transformed ordinary bodily functions into ideological warfare.
Historians will be baffled.
“They had collapsing infrastructure and climate crises,” future students will say.
“And they spent six years arguing about cubicles.”

A Modest Proposal

Perhaps there is a simpler solution.
Perhaps we stop obsessing over strangers’ bodies.
Perhaps we judge people by behaviour rather than conspiracy theories about chromosomes.
Perhaps women’s safety is improved by tackling violence, harassment, stalking, abuse, and misogyny instead of launching amateur biology tribunals beside the soap dispensers.
Perhaps trans people deserve dignity.
And perhaps a society that encourages citizens to interrogate random women about their bodies is not defending womanhood at all.
Perhaps it is simply teaching fear.
Because once public womanhood becomes something requiring proof, nobody truly wins.
Except, of course, the men who always wanted the right to decide which women are acceptable.
They must be absolutely thrilled.

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ASK CARLA

"I am a trans woman and am really worried about the latest guidance from the UK government stopping us using women's changing rooms and toilets. How do I live my life now? I'm very worried".

It’s completely understandable to feel shaken by news like this, but it’s important to remember that your day-to-day life is not suddenly defined by headlines or political statements.

Across the UK, many workplaces, gyms, leisure centres, cafés, and community spaces continue to operate with inclusive or case-by-case approaches. In practice, this means there is still a wide and growing network of places where trans people are welcomed and respected. You are far from alone in that.

It may help to focus less on the most restrictive interpretations and more on building a life around the spaces and people who already see you as you are. Over time, most people naturally develop a map of “safe” and comfortable environments, and that becomes a source of confidence rather than fear.

It’s also worth remembering that public debate can sound more absolute and settled than reality actually is. Policies shift, are challenged, and are interpreted differently on the ground every day. Your lived experience is still shaped far more by those everyday interactions than by any single piece of guidance.

You deserve to move through the world with ease and dignity, and many people and places will continue to support exactly that.

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Step-by-step: your first full makeup routine as a mature trans woman

By Penny

1. Prepare your space

- **Mirror:** Sit somewhere with good natural light if possible.
- **Tools ready:**
  - Clean makeup sponge
  - A couple of brushes (one for blush, one for eyeshadow)
  - Brow pencil
  - Eyeliner pencil
  - Mascara
  - Lip liner + lipstick/gloss
- **Mindset:** Give yourself time. This is *your* moment—no rush, no pressure.

2. Skin prep



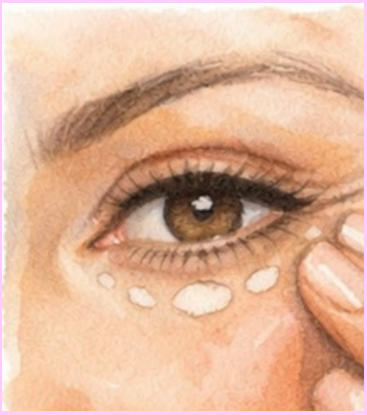
1. **Cleanse:**
   - Wash your face with a gentle, creamy cleanser.
2. **Serum (optional but lovely):**
   - Apply a hydrating serum, especially on cheeks and under eyes.
3. **Moisturizer:**
   - Use a rich but not greasy moisturizer. Let it sink in for a couple of minutes.
4. **Primer:**
   - Apply a silicone-based primer mainly to the T-zone, around the nose, and where pores or texture show.
5. **Correct beard shadow (if needed):**
   - Dab a peach/orange corrector over any blue/grey areas.
   - Tap it in with your finger or sponge—don't rub.

3. Foundation



1. **Choose the right formula:**
   - Hydrating or serum foundation, light to medium coverage.
2. **Apply:**
   - Put a small amount on the back of your hand.
   - Pick it up with a damp sponge and tap it onto the face—cheeks, chin, nose, forehead.
3. **Blend:**
   - Use bouncing motions, not dragging.
   - Take it slightly down the neck so there's no line.
4. **Check:**
   - Look in the mirror from a little distance.
   - If you see heavy patches, tap with a clean part of the sponge.

4. Concealer (optional but helpful)



1. **Under eyes:**
   - Use a peachy or slightly brightening concealer.
   - Apply a tiny amount in the inner corner and blend outward.
2. **Blemishes or extra shadow:**
   - Dot a little on any areas that still show through.
   - Tap gently to blend.

5. Brows



1. **Brush brows:**
   - Use a spoolie (or clean mascara wand) to brush hairs upward and outward.
2. **Shape with pencil:**
   - Use a pencil slightly lighter than your hair.
   - Start at the middle of the brow, drawing tiny hair-like strokes.
   - Lightly define the tail.
3. **Front of the brow:**
   - Use whatever is left on the pencil to softly fill the front—no harsh blocks.
4. **Final brush-through:**
   - Brush again to soften and blend.

6. Eyes



Eyeshadow

1. **Base shade:**
   - Use a soft taupe or rosy brown.
   - Sweep it through the crease (the fold above your eyelid) with a fluffy brush.
2. **Lid shade:**
   - Use a slightly lighter shimmer or satin shade on the mobile lid.
   - Press it on with your finger or a flat brush.
3. **Outer corner (optional):**
   - Add a slightly deeper shade to the outer corner and blend in small circles.

Eyeliner

1. **Pencil liner:**
   - Use brown or plum for softness.
   - Draw a thin line as close to the upper lashes as you can.
2. **Soften:**
   - Smudge gently with a cotton bud or small brush so there’s no harsh edge.

Mascara

1. **Curl lashes:**
   - Gently curl for a few seconds.
2. **Apply mascara:**
   - Wiggle at the base, then sweep upward.
   - One or two coats is enough.

7. Cheeks



1. **Choose cream blush:**
   - Pick a soft rose, peach, or mauve.
2. **Placement:**
   - Smile slightly and place blush high on the cheekbones, not on the apples.
3. **Blend:**
   - Tap upward toward the temples with fingers or sponge.
   - Aim for a soft, natural flush.

8. Lips



1. **Prep:**
   - Apply a bit of lip balm and blot.
2. **Lip liner:**
   - Use a shade close to your natural lip color.
   - Trace your natural lip line, then slightly overline the cupid's bow if you like.
3. **Lipstick:**
   - Apply a creamy lipstick over the liner.
4. **Optional gloss:**
   - Add a touch of gloss in the center of the lips for fullness.

9. Final check & soft set

1. **Step back from the mirror:**
   - Look at your whole face, not just one feature.
2. **Adjust:**
   - If something feels too strong, tap over it with the damp sponge.
3. **Setting (optional):**
   - Use a light dusting of translucent powder only where you get shiny (T-zone).
   - Or a hydrating setting spray for a softer finish.

10. Practice ritual



- **Take a photo:** same spot, same light each time.
- **Notice progress, not flaws.**
- **Repeat:** Do this look a few times until it feels like muscle memory.

Snow and the the Seven Socially Diverse Dwarfs

Once upon a time, there was a princess called Snow White. Well, technically she now preferred “Snow Ethically-Off-White” after several complaints from the Royal Diversity Council.

She lived with her stepmother, the Evil Queen, who spent most of her day asking her magic mirror questions.

“Mirror, mirror on the wall, who’s the fairest of them all?”

The mirror replied, “The term ‘fairest’ promotes outdated beauty standards.”

“Oh, for heaven’s sake,” snapped the Queen. “Who’s prettier than me?”

“Snow White currently polls very well with younger audiences.”



The Queen was furious. She ordered a huntsman to take Snow White into the forest and get rid of her.

But when he met Snow White, she spoke kindly to him about stress, mental health, and toxic bosses. The huntsman burst into tears, handed in his resignation, and let her escape.



Snow White wandered through the forest until she found a little cottage.

A sign outside read:

“Home of the Seven Socially Diverse Dwarfs.”

Inside lived seven very different dwarfs.

First was Glimmer, a proud trans dwarf who corrected everyone’s language before breakfast.

Then there was Chadwick, a gay dwarf who decorated the mine with scented candles and fairy lights.

Orbit was autistic and loved rules, schedules, and organising everyone’s mining equipment alphabetically.

Wheels used a wheelchair with giant off-road tyres and could move faster than anyone else downhill.

Ahmed was Muslim, calm, kind, and secretly the best cook in the cottage.

Dash was Black, confident, and constantly annoyed that fantasy stories only recently discovered Black people existed.

Finally there was Nigel, the white British dwarf, who drank tea nonstop and complained about absolutely everything.



Snow White said, “Wow. This is a lot more diverse than the old version of the story.”

“Representation matters,” said Dash.

“Apparently,” muttered Nigel.

The dwarfs agreed Snow White could stay if she helped with the cleaning and attended their weekly inclusion meeting.

Life in the cottage was actually lovely.

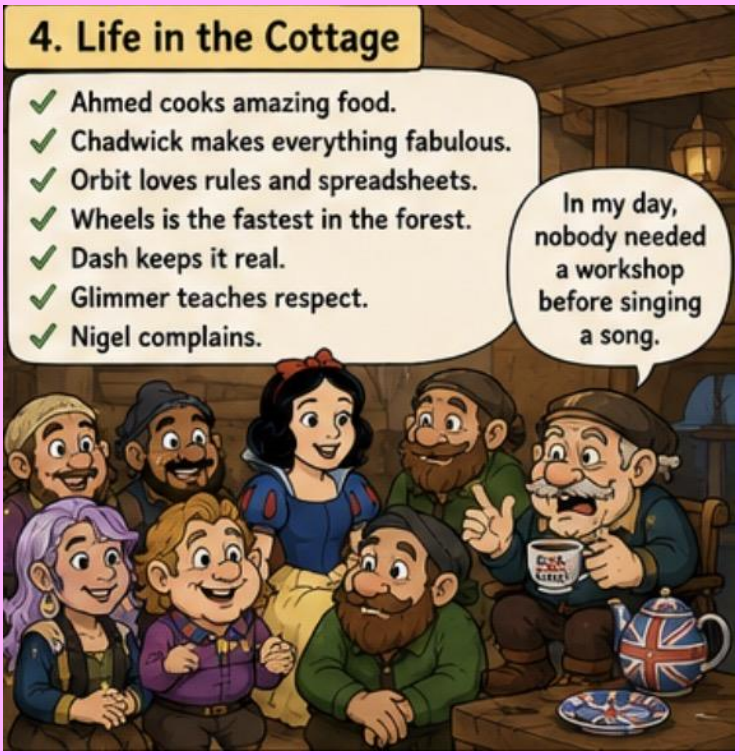
Ahmed made amazing curries.

Chadwick redesigned everyone’s outfits.

Orbit created a spreadsheet for housework.

Wheels beat everyone at racing through the forest.

And Nigel sat in the corner saying things like, “In my day, nobody needed a workshop before singing a song.”



One day, the Evil Queen disguised herself as a wellness influencer and arrived at the cottage carrying apples.

“Free organic, gluten-free, ethically sourced apples!” she announced.



Nigel immediately whispered, “Bet they taste woke.”

Snow White took a bite and instantly collapsed.

The dwarfs panicked.

It’s poison!” shouted Dash.”



Orbit examined the apple carefully.

“No,” he said. “It’s mostly essential oils and internet misinformation.”

Ahmed called for help while Wheels performed first aid.

Just then, a handsome prince rode up on a horse.

“Stand back,” he said proudly. “I shall wake her with a kiss.”

All seven dwarfs stared at him in horror.

“You can’t kiss unconscious women,” said Glimmer.

“Did she consent?” asked Dash.

“Have you completed sensitivity training?” added Chadwick.

The prince looked terrified. “I only came to help!”



Eventually Snow White woke up on her own after Nigel loudly complained for twenty straight minutes about “modern nonsense.”

She sat up and smiled.



“You know what?” she said. “This is actually the happiest I’ve ever been.”

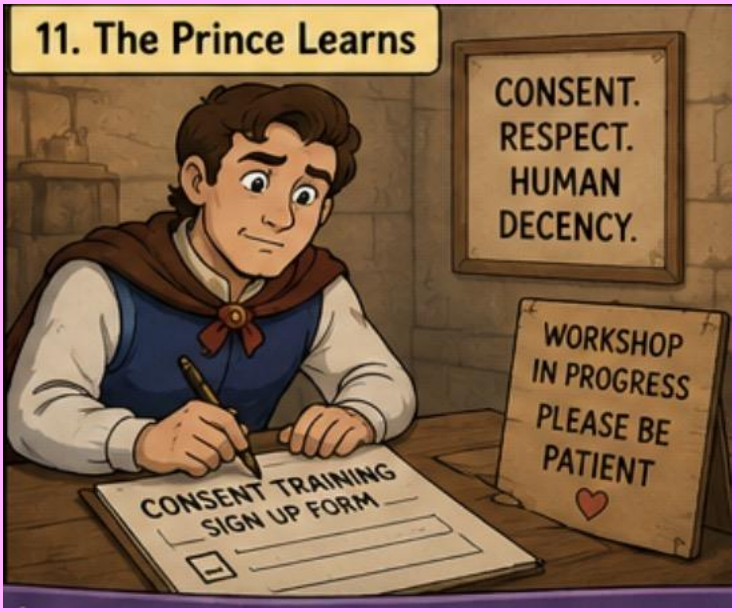


Snow White was duly invited by Glimmer on a Costa Blanca T-Girls event. She was so overwhelmed by the support she had from such a wonderful and diverse community, she shed a tear of joy.

The Evil Queen was arrested shortly afterwards for attempted murder and running a toxic parenting podcast.



The prince enrolled in a consent workshop.



Nigel still complained every single day.

But at least now he used everyone's correct pronouns.

And they all lived inclusively ever after.



The real moral of the story…

Don't be a Nigel
Be kind
Be inclusive
Be excellent to each other

And If youre at a loose end and in the Costa Blanca South area,
Join Costa Blanca T-Girls



Proudly Standing by Their Son:

Annette Bening and Warren Beatty's Support for Stephen Ira



ABC News

For many transgender people, coming out can mean stepping into uncertainty — wondering whether family, friends, or the wider world will truly accept them. When that journey takes place under the intense glare of celebrity culture and public scrutiny, the pressure can become even more profound. That is why the support shown by Annette Bening and Warren Beatty toward their son Stephen Ira has resonated so strongly with many in the transgender community.

Stephen Ira came out as a trans man in 2012 at the age of 20. At a time when public understanding of transgender lives was far less developed than it is today, his decision to live openly was both deeply personal and quietly courageous. The years since have seen dramatic political and cultural battles

over transgender rights, with trans people increasingly targeted in media debates, legislation, and online harassment. Against that backdrop, visible parental support matters enormously.

Rather than treating Stephen's identity as controversial or something to be explained away, Bening and Beatty have consistently spoken about him with warmth, admiration, and unmistakable pride. Their comments have never framed their son's transition as a loss or a struggle for them as parents — a narrative often pushed by transphobic voices — but instead as simply part of who he is: a gifted, thoughtful, creative human being.



People.com

Beatty's 2016 description of Stephen as "a revolutionary, a genius, and my hero" was striking not only because of its affection, but because it challenged outdated stereotypes surrounding transgender people. Too often, trans individuals are discussed solely through the lens of politics or controversy. Beatty instead centred his son's intellect, humanity, and individuality.



Purepeople.com

Similarly, Bening's comments to the Hollywood Reporter in 2023 reflected something equally powerful: active respect. She spoke not merely as a supportive mother, but as someone who genuinely admires her son's artistic voice and perspective. "I've learned a lot," she said — a simple but meaningful acknowledgement that listening to transgender people can deepen understanding rather than threaten it.

That kind of public affirmation can have a profound impact. Many trans people face rejection from family members after coming out, while others endure subtle forms of invalidation — being misgendered, ignored, or treated as though their identity is a phase. In contrast, the support Stephen appears to receive from his parents offers a visible example of what acceptance can look like: not performative, not conditional, but rooted in love and respect.

It is also important to recognise Stephen Ira beyond his identity as a celebrity's transgender son. He has established himself as a talented poet, filmmaker, and teacher, with work appearing in respected literary publications including The Paris Review, Fence, and DIAGRAM. His creative work often explores identity, memory, vulnerability, and transformation with remarkable honesty and intelligence.

In an era where transgender lives are frequently politicised and attacked, stories like this matter because they remind us of something very simple: trans people thrive when they are supported. Family acceptance does not erase the challenges transgender people face, but it can provide the foundation from which confidence, creativity, and self-worth grow.

For many readers, especially trans young people navigating their own journeys, seeing parents stand beside their child publicly and unapologetically can be deeply affirming. It sends a message that love does not diminish when someone comes out as transgender. If anything, understanding each other more fully can strengthen those bonds even further.

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