

Executive Summary



Education and youth

Singaporean schools often fail to provide a safe and nurturing environment for LGBTQ+ students. **Nearly half** report experiencing discrimination in school and LGBTQ+ students are **31%** less likely to feel safe than their cisgender and heterosexual counterparts, indicative of systemic issues within the education system.

- Discrimination reported includes bullying, attempts to change LGBTQ+ students' 'lifestyle', and being outed without consent, with the most common example being taught false and discriminatory narratives about LGBTQ+ identities.
- This has led to greater risk of mental health issues, self-harm and suicide among LGBTQ+ youth.
- **64% of transgender students** face discrimination such as forced gender conformity or being denied access to gender-affirming care.
- MOE's current educational policies reinforce heteronormativity, marginalising and **erasing LGBTQ+ identities** in the classroom, allowing harmful stereotypes to perpetuate. Educators are ill-equipped to support LGBTQ+ students due to a lack of clear, inclusive policies and insufficient training.
- Teachers and staff sometimes perpetuate or fail to address abuse, while those that try to be affirming risk accusations of advancing a "personal agenda".

Policy recommendations

Inclusive and transparent policies

- Set public policies for LGBTQ+ students including standards of care and inclusion
- Introduce framework to assess implementation of these policies in a manner that does not compromise LGBTQ+ students' privacy

Anti-bullying protections

- Set clear and transparent anti-bullying policies with specific protections for LGBTQ+ students
- Educate students and staff on bullying awareness, prevention and intervention
- Facilitate spaces and support groups for bullied students that are inclusive, safe and help promote peer support and understanding

Student-centered care and support

- Enable access to LGBTQ+-affirming counselling. Support should prioritise the student's well-being and autonomy, and should take into account the complexities surrounding parental consent
- Prohibit conversion "therapy"
- Provide sensitivity training for counsellors, staff, teachers

Non-discriminatory curriculum

- Include evidence-based education (including sex education) acknowledging LGBTQ+ relationships and identities are valid

Safe and welcoming environment

- Allow and respect gender-related choices (e.g. uniforms, amenities, pronouns, names, processes, documents)
- Review potential discrimination against queer teachers

Employment and the workplace

Workplace discrimination takes a significant toll on LGBTQ+ Singaporeans, with **7 in 10** citing instances including losing job opportunities, a skewed hiring process, being treated badly at the workplace and being paid or promoted less.

- Beyond the significant personal toll, such discrimination contributes to wage gaps, decreases productivity, and may drive talented LGBTQ+ individuals to leave the country, harming Singapore's competitiveness.
- Discrimination is compounded by factors including age, race and gender, with **transgender individuals** particularly vulnerable.
- Work-related discrimination is **severely underreported** due to fear of retaliation or lack of faith that issues will be addressed.
- The Workplace Fairness Legislation (WFL) does not protect against SOGIE-based discrimination – a failure of justice to prevent harm against queer Singaporeans.

Policy recommendations

Expand legal protections

- Make SOGIE a protected characteristic under WFL
- Revise guidelines to expressly prohibit SOGIE-based discrimination
- Establish protected whistleblowing channels

Public service taking the lead

- Revise and improve transparency of HR policies in public sector to cover SOGIE-based discrimination
- Ensure equal benefits
- Provide sensitivity training

Promote best practices

- Implement best practices for LGBTQ+ inclusivity in guidelines
- Partner with LGBTQ+ groups for employer education



Health and well-being

LGBTQ+ individuals face major barriers in accessing healthcare. Harmful medical practices often go unchecked, worsening the health and well-being of queer Singaporeans and making healthcare difficult and costly.

- Mental health issues are prevalent, with **59%** of LGBTQ+ respondents reporting that their mental well-being has been impacted by discrimination.
- **HIV-related stigma** persists and is perpetuated by society, while both preventative (e.g. pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP)) and post-exposure treatment (e.g. post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP)) remain costly and under-promoted.
- Harmful **conversion “therapy”** practices continue to be unregulated, causing significant and long-lasting psychological harm.
- A lack of government support and recognition for LGBTQ+ affirming services further exacerbates these issues, especially during crises like the Covid-19 pandemic.

Policy recommendations

Safe settings

- Implement anti-discriminatory guidelines
- Provide LGBTQ+-specific training to healthcare professionals
- Develop and fund LGBTQ+-specific programmes and policies in healthcare, social services and mental health

Inclusive care

- Subsidise and cover vital, evidence-based treatments for LGBTQ+ individuals (e.g. HIV prevention or gender-affirming care)
- Recognise LGBTQ+ relationships in healthcare financing schemes

Ban conversion “therapy”

- Legislate protection for LGBTQ+ minors and vulnerable adults from conversion practices
- Require professional associations to adopt rules against conversion “therapy”



Family and future

The government's national policies and nation-building narrative centre a cisgender, heterosexual "traditional" family that has long excluded LGBTQ+ families and other models of kinship, while misleadingly **portraying LGBTQ+ Singaporeans as a threat** to wider society.

- Exclusion from marriage denies LGBTQ+ people access to various **rights, benefits, and protections** across areas such as housing, healthcare, parental rights and citizenship/residency.
- **Barriers to housing** are the most urgent issue facing the community, such as barriers to accessing more affordable public housing and an often discriminatory rental market.
- These barriers prevent escape from family violence and abuse (exacerbated by societal stigma), causing lasting psychological damage and other harms.
- LGBTQ+ couples wishing to start families cannot legally adopt children, causing them to face a plethora of legal, logistical and other administrative obstacles that ultimately compromise the safety and well-being of their children.
- LGBTQ+ individuals are only **half as likely to be confident** of planning for the future as other Singaporeans, facing legal barriers for healthcare and retirement.
- A lifetime of discrimination compounds the financial insecurities and legal issues faced by ageing LGBTQ+ individuals (e.g. end-of-life decisions).

Policy recommendations

Legal recognition

- Recognise LGBTQ+ partnerships to ensure equal access to healthcare, housing, and social security benefits

Equal access

- Review policies for citizenship and residency, housing, Central Provident Fund (CPF) and MediSave, and other benefits (e.g. financial assistance, taxes) to ensure equality for same-sex couples

Inclusive housing

- Allow LGBTQ+ individuals and couples earlier access to public housing
- Protect LGBTQ+ people from rental discrimination
- Fund shelters for homeless LGBTQ+ youth and seniors

Support abuse victims

- Implement protocols and training to protect LGBTQ+ victims from family abuse, with a focus on youths and transgender individuals

Parental rights

- Update adoption and reproduction laws to be more inclusive
- Protect the integrity of same-sex families
- Ensure children's rights regardless of family structure

Ageing and death

- Treat LGBTQ+ seniors as a valid stakeholder group
- Conduct research around the needs of ageing LGBTQ+ Singaporeans



Transgender community

Trans Singaporeans face the highest incidence of discrimination among LGBTQ+ groups, with **8 in 10** facing discrimination in the last five years, including verbal abuse and a lack of physical security in schools, workplaces and wider society.

- Trans people are the most likely within the LGBTQ+ community to face **violence** over their identity, with more than 1 in 5 reporting being threatened or physically assaulted.
- Transgender individuals face significant **job search and workplace discrimination**, including misgendering, harassment, and lack of promotion opportunities.
- There are many barriers to legal **gender recognition** in Singapore, including the requirement for genital surgery, which is costly, risky and fails to account for the diversity of transition journeys.
- Trans people also face several challenges in accessing gender-affirming care, including high costs, limited availability and discriminatory attitudes and practices.

Policy recommendations

Protection against violence

- Enact specific legislation against SOGIE-based violence and offer SOGIE-based protections
- Conduct sensitivity training for law enforcement
- Fund shelters for victims of SOGIE-based violence

Gender self-identification

- Review gender markers on legal documents
- Allow legal gender changes without requiring surgery
- Provide sensitivity training for public servants
- Review gender-determined national policies (e.g. NS)

Healthcare access

- Include gender-affirming treatments in national healthcare financing
- Train healthcare providers in gender-affirming care

Workplace

- Ensure safe, supportive workplaces with gender-neutral practices
- Provide education and sensitivity training for employers, starting with the civil service

Media and public discourse

The government's censorship regime reveals a deep misunderstanding and **pathologisation** of LGBTQ+ identities, an attitude that has permeated into other public or educational bodies and spaces, perpetuating discrimination against queer Singaporeans.

- Media censorship by IMDA restricts LGBTQ+ content across all mainstream platforms, with LGBTQ+ themes often rated M18 or R21 even if they have no explicit or adult themes, effectively marginalising queer identities in Singapore.
- **Negative portrayals** of LGBTQ+ individuals in mainstream media reinforce harmful stereotypes and stigma, while IMDA's content codes group LGBTQ+ identities with objectionable and criminal practices (e.g. incest, drug abuse and bestiality).
- Educational and public events related to LGBTQ+ topics often face **censorship or cancellation** due to pressure from conservative groups.
- The denial of fair and positive representation of LGBTQ+ stories or people leads to further marginalisation and a lack of understanding.

Policy recommendations

Review content codes

- Remove the automatic assignation of higher ratings to LGBTQ+ content
- Allow balanced discussions and non-explicit depictions of LGBTQ+ issues
- Remove references to LGBTQ+ content alongside criminal behaviour
- Permit ads that promote LGBTQ+ health and well-being

Negative portrayals

- Sanction discriminatory portrayals in a proportionate and sensitive manner
- Introduce SOGIE as protected characteristics in content regulations

Transparency and accountability

- Make the decision-making process for censorship known
- Ensure censorship bodies are free from discriminatory influence
- Publish IMDA's censorship decisions