



Country Intelligence Brief

United Kingdom

Overall Risk Rating

2.00 - Low

Table of Contents

Ratings Overview	3
Factbox	4
Overview	5
Security	5
Infrastructure	8
Environment	12
Health and Medical	13
Political	16
LGBTQ Security	22
Active Alerts	25

Ratings Overview

Security

2.25 - Low

Civil Unrest
Crime
Kidnapping
Terrorism
Armed Conflict
Security Services

2.50
2.25
1.00
3.00
1.50
2.00

Infrastructure

1.50 - Low

Ground Transport
Cyber
Maritime
Air Travel
Utilities

1.50
3.00
1.50
1.25
1.25

Environment

1.50 - Low

Man-Made Hazards
Seismic
Storm Systems
Natural Hazards

1.25
1.25
2.00
2.00

Health and Medical

2.25 - Low

Disease and Health Threats
Medical Facilities and Services
Mental Health
Food and Water Safety

2.00
1.50
2.75
1.00

Political

1.50 - Low

Corruption
Government Stability
Rule of Law
Sanctions

1.75
2.00
1.00
1.00

LGBTQ Security

1.25 - Minimal

LGBTQ Legal Environment
LGBTQ Enforcement
LGBTQ Social Environment

1.25
1.25
2.00

FactBox

Location	United Kingdom
Government Type	Parliamentary constitutional monarchy
Population	69,400,000 (2025)
Languages	Official Language: English. Other languages that are considered official or widely spoken: Welsh (Wales). Languages that should only be used discreetly: None.
International Country Code	+44
Time Zones	UTC
Traffic	Drives on the left
Drinking Water	Safe to Drink

Overview

2.00 - Low

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (UK) is an island nation located off the north-west coast of the European continent. It is a modern, developed country with a history of significant global influence and one of the largest economies in the world by GDP. The UK is made up of four constituent nations: England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland, the latter three of which have their own devolved governments. It also maintains jurisdiction over a number of overseas territories around the world as a legacy of its formerly dominant maritime empire.

The UK offers a predominantly low-risk operating environment. While political risk and stability concerns are emerging, political developments, including transitions of power, generally manifest as occasional protests rather than widespread unrest or governance issues, underscoring the country's resilience.

Terrorism dominates domestic security concerns, with Islamist militants and Irish dissident republicans continuing to issue threats. The main terrorist threat comes from small, self-directed groups and lone actors sympathizing with the Islamic State (IS) and other transnational militant groups or foreign states. Strict gun control laws in the UK mean that vehicles and knives, rather than firearms, will remain the most likely weapons used in any future terrorist incidents, although there remains a risk from improvised explosive device attacks.

The UK is a target for foreign state-directed hybrid activity, including terrorist attacks, sabotage, arson, surveillance, information campaigns, and maritime incidents. Russian agents, proxies, and contracted perpetrators operate within the country and have previously conducted operations targeting defense companies and Russian dissidents. Similarly, Iranian agents, proxies, and sympathizers are likely active in the country, conducting surveillance, harassing Iranian dissidents, and potentially directing attacks against Iranian dissident, Israeli, or Jewish interests.

A range of single-issue protest groups stage frequent demonstrations in major towns and cities, but these only occasionally turn violent and generally remain very localized. Most criminal activity affecting travelers in urban areas is associated with petty theft, such as pick-pocketing and bag-snatching. Most violent crime tends to be between rival gangs or drunken aggressors outside bars and nightclubs. Seasonal weather conditions can affect rail and air travel services and result in delays and cancellations.

Security

2.25 - Low

The UK faces an elevated threat of terrorist attacks orchestrated by transnational Islamist militant groups and unaffiliated groups of individuals that could cause mass fatalities or otherwise have a significant disruptive impact. However, most complex attack plots have been disrupted at a relatively early stage in recent years, and terrorist incidents are more likely to take the form of knife and vehicular attacks. There is also a risk of retaliatory anti-Muslim attacks and unrest largely inflamed by and directed via social media. There is a lesser threat of anti-Muslim and anti-semitic attacks launched by far-right extremists. Dissident republicans in Northern Ireland continue to pose a terrorist threat, with small improvised explosive devices (IEDs) frequently being discovered in Belfast and Londonderry, as well as in more rural areas. However, these rarely cause any significant casualties or damage.

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The main threat to travelers in the UK comes from non-violent opportunistic crime, particularly pick-pocketing and bag-snatching in urban centers. Various political and socio-economic issues can be triggers for demonstrations, which are held regularly in London and other major cities. The vast majority of protests are well policed and remain peaceful, although demonstrations can occasionally lead to localized travel disruption.

Civil Unrest

● 2.50

Current Situation

The UK has seen a persistent increase in sustained, large-scale protest campaigns in urban centers nationwide. Conflicts in the Middle East and rival anti-immigration and anti-racism movements are drivers of mass demonstrations in the country. These issues can attract tens of thousands of protesters to the streets, most notably in London.

Mass demonstrations related to developments in the Middle East, including the US-Israel-Iran conflict and the Israel-Hamas conflict, frequently occur in central areas of major cities like London, Edinburgh, and Glasgow. Police can restrict related demonstrations, particularly those that may be interpreted as supporting the Iranian government or Hamas. Large-scale events typically prompt extensive road closures and movement restrictions in central corridors. While the threat of violent unrest is low, confrontations and arrests can occur when rival groups protest nearby or when support is shown for prohibited groups.

Rival anti-immigration and anti-racism protests can draw smaller, fractious gatherings away from city centers. These demonstrations often take place close to one another, increasing the risk of violence and arrest. Protest hotspots include city centers, town halls, and asylum facilities allegedly hosting asylum seekers and other migrants. Police typically deploy heavily to these protests in major cities, prompting significant localized disruptions. The threat of violence and arrest is low-to-moderate, depending on the proximity of rival groups and the status of broader community tensions.

Triggers

- A significant conflict or mass casualty incident in the Middle East will likely intensify anti-war and pro-Palestinian demonstrations, as well as protests denouncing Israel and the US, while also heightening the risk of activists directing their actions toward US, Israeli, and Jewish interests.
- Police bans or restrictions on Middle East-related protests, as well as mass arrests of participants, can spark increased mobilization.
- High-profile crimes committed by perceived foreigners or Muslims may spark race-related riots and subsequent anti-racism protests.
- Anti-immigration and nationalist events take place in major cities, sparking anti-racism protest movements.

Background

There is a low threat of violence at most protests in the UK; however, protests related to the conflict in the Middle East typically prompt widespread disruption and arrests in major cities. The Iranian diaspora, pro-Palestinian groups, anti-racism activists, or other human rights and civil society organizations, as well as pro-Israel groups, may organize simultaneously, increasing the risk of clashes. The scale and frequency of demonstrations often strain police resources; arrests are common at pro-Palestinian rallies in the UK due to the ban of the Palestine Action group in July 2025. Individuals displaying support for Palestine Action are subject to arrest. Demonstrations have also targeted facilities linked to Israel, including diplomatic missions and defense companies, with several repeatedly vandalized by pro-Palestinian or anti-war activists.

Immigration-related protests organized by anti-migrant groups and anti-racism or pro-migrant groups can attract fringe elements that seek to confront rival groups and police. Participants occasionally vandalize private property or facilities that are allegedly housing migrants. The risk of violence increases after dark, as fringe groups seek to escalate confrontations.

Strikes and demonstrations can prompt varying degrees of disruption. The perceived rise in the cost-of-living has prompted major sector-wide strikes, resulting in disruptions to healthcare, education, and public transport services nationwide. Strikes have disrupted the rail industry in recent years. Other issues with the potential to draw large attendance to demonstrations include government policy, particularly on welfare, regional conflicts, and Scottish Independence.

Crime

 2.25

Pickpockets and bag-snatchers operate around tourist attractions and restaurants, and on public transport, including buses, trains, and the London Underground. Thieves may also target unattended items in restaurants, pubs, hotel lobbies, and parked vehicles. Individuals openly displaying electronic items or cash may become targets for muggers. However, violent crime is significantly less likely to affect travelers. Most assaults involve alcohol and occur around taxi stands, pubs, and clubs in the early hours. Most violent assaults involving knives and firearms occur between members of rival criminal gangs and rarely have a significant impact on travelers. In recent years, moped gangs have become a concern in some city centers, with those carrying expensive electronic items, including phones, often being targeted in drive-by thefts.

Some inner-city areas can have dangerous gang cultures in which youths carry out robberies, deal drugs, and engage in anti-social behavior. Racially-motivated crimes also continue to be reported in some mixed communities. Unlicensed taxis or private cars posing as taxis operate in some cities, and travelers have occasionally been robbed or sexually assaulted while using these services. Cybercrime has risen in recent years, and accounting fraud is also increasing. British police and Europol have previously stated that the UK's cosmopolitan nature has helped the growth of transnational criminal gangs and trafficking organizations, and the UK has become one of Europe's key destinations for cocaine, heroin, and cannabis. Some organized criminal groups in the country concentrate on the theft of high-value articles such as art, antiques, watches, and luxury vehicles.

Kidnapping

 1.00

For most foreign nationals, the threat of kidnapping in the UK is minimal. Kidnappings are not regularly reported, and kidnappers are more likely to target locals. The most likely types of kidnapping in the UK are abductions related to personal, familial, or criminal disputes, and virtual kidnapping. Victims are usually released unharmed and relatively quickly.

Terrorism

 3.00

Following a series of low-level terrorist attacks, attempted attacks, arson targeting Jewish interests, and foiled plots targeting Iranian dissident interests, authorities raised the national terrorism threat level to "Severe" on April 30, indicating that a terrorist attack is highly likely. The UK is facing a sustained increase in threats from multiple ideologies, including Islamists and the extreme right-wing, and has been impacted by several recent violent incidents, including a knife attack targeting members of the Jewish community in Golders Green, London, on April 29. Increased security measures are highly likely near sensitive locations, including transport hubs, places of worship, government facilities, and sites associated with Jewish and Israeli or Iranian communities.

Within this context, the UK faces a persistent threat of low-level terrorism linked to the Iran-US-Israel conflict, including activity by self-radicalized individuals and actors enabled through Iranian-aligned networks. Although remaining under investigation, a Sept. 27 security incident near the RAF Fairford airbase in Gloucestershire may be indicative of the threat posed by foreign states, specifically their ability to threaten US interests in the UK through relatively complex plots. Recent incidents in Europe have primarily targeted Jewish and Israeli sites,

as well as US-linked interests, and indicate a pattern of small-scale attacks with deniable attribution. In the UK, this threat remains consistent with the already elevated terrorism risk following previous Israel-related conflicts. Additionally, the UK continues to face a threat from Iranian state-linked actors and proxies, who primarily target Iranian dissidents but may also pose a risk to US and Israeli interests.

Transnational terrorist groups, including IS and al-Qaeda, continue to encourage supporters to carry out attacks using whatever means available against targets in the UK. The vast majority of plots fit the lone-actor model, with no clear command and control from terrorist organizations. UK security services and law enforcement have disrupted a significant number of attack plots in recent years, underscoring a strong counterterrorism capability. The UK has experienced several high-profile Islamist terrorist attacks in recent years, the deadliest of which resulted in 22 deaths.

Far-right extremism remains a threat, and retaliatory attacks targeting Muslim and other minority groups may become more likely following Islamist militant incidents. While casualty-causing attacks continue to be rare, authorities occasionally foil suspected far-right attacks on minority groups or events.

Dissident republican groups remain active in Northern Ireland, with UK security services maintaining the Northern Ireland-related terrorism threat level at "Severe." These groups continue to conduct small-scale targeted attacks, including targeted shootings, improvised explosive devices (IEDs), and criminal activity. Targets primarily include the Police Service of Northern Ireland, prison staff, and, occasionally, British military personnel and loyalist paramilitary groups. Belfast and Derry, as well as counties Tyrone, Fermanagh, and mid-Ulster, remain key areas of activity. While incidents persist, they are unlikely to directly affect foreign travelers.

The threat from terrorism is varied; future attacks may involve stabbings, IEDs, and vehicle attacks. Strict gun control laws in the UK mean that attacks are less likely to involve firearms, although targeted gun attacks occur relatively frequently in some areas of Northern Ireland. Soft targets such as public transport hubs, music and sports venues, restaurants and cafes, shopping centers, and public spaces near tourist attractions are generally considered to be at increased risk of attack. Other targets may include members of the military and police or politicians.

Armed Conflict

1.50

The country maintains good relations with its neighbors and is a member of NATO. While the British military is engaged in deployments overseas, it is unlikely that these will negatively threaten the UK's territorial integrity. Any temporary escalation of disputes over the Falkland Islands' sovereignty with Argentina or Gibraltar's with Spain is unlikely to lead to military confrontation.

Historically, the UK has experienced a trend of domestic instability due to internal conflict linked to the secessionist insurgency in Northern Ireland. Although the risk of renewed conflict in Northern Ireland is highly unlikely due to the cessation of Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA) activities, the presence of small dissident splinter groups like the New IRA (NIRA) continues to generate a minor risk of violent activity directed against the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI). Contention around the status of Northern Ireland following the United Kingdom's departure from the European Union may also increase the risk of clashes in the province in the medium term.

Security Services

2.00

The capabilities and responsiveness of security services in the UK are generally excellent. Although the UK has a number of different security forces, the civil police are likely to be the most relevant for foreign nationals and local staff. Police officers are typically unable to speak languages other than English.

Infrastructure

1.50 - Low

Air travel is safe and in compliance with international safety standards.

Road conditions are excellent in the UK.

Ferries are generally safe, reliable, and professionally operated.

Access to utilities is excellent and comparable to other developed countries in Western Europe.

The risk of cyber attacks and data breaches for companies in the UK is increasing.

Ground Transport

 1.50

The UK's road network is generally of an excellent standard, resulting in a relatively small number of deaths compared to other European countries. Driving laws are strictly upheld, and failure to adhere to these laws can result in a fine, court appearance, or prison sentence. The most common causes of road traffic collisions are speeding, ignoring traffic signals, and incorrect overtaking.

Signs are mostly standardized in line with the rest of Europe, although speed limits are displayed in miles per hour. In large towns, taxis can be found at taxi ranks and train stations, or you can phone for a radio taxi. Unlicensed minicabs operate in some cities. There are good local bus networks year-round in cities and towns, but services in rural areas are more limited. Bus services between major towns and cities are also available.

The rail network covers all major population centers in the country. The system is generally reliable, although signal failures and industrial action can result in significant disruption. Journeys may involve changes since most lines radiate from London, which has seven major terminals. There is a rail link with continental Europe on Eurostar. The majority of the UK rail infrastructure is old and operates at or near capacity, but several major new projects have been launched in recent years, including the HS2 high-speed railway link connecting London with northern England and the Crossrail public transport project in London. The Crossrail service began operating in 2022, while the HS2 project is expected to be fully completed around 2030.

Local Buses

 Unrated

Intercity buses are available between most major cities. Intercity buses in the UK have a good safety record. Petty theft and other criminal activities pose a low threat to travelers. Terrorists have not attacked buses in the UK in the past decade.

City buses are available in most urban centers. City buses in the UK have a good safety record. Petty theft and other criminal activities pose a low threat to travelers. Terrorists have not attacked city buses in the UK in the past decade.

Mass Transit

 Unrated

Metro systems are available in some major cities in the UK. The country's metro systems are generally efficient and safe. Derailments and other accidents are rare. Securing personal items onboard metro trains is important, as theft is a standard threat. Terrorism poses a moderate threat to metro networks. Terrorists have attacked metro systems in the UK in the past decade. Terror warnings are uncommon on the UK's metro networks.

Taxis

 Unrated

Taxis are readily available in all major cities in the UK. Taxis arranged in advance by upscale hotels or trusted business associates are generally safer than those hailed on the street.

Ride-sharing services or vehicles ordered through online apps are available in most major cities in the UK.

Train Travel

● Unrated

Train Safety

Trains in the UK have a good recent safety record. Derailments and rail accidents involving passenger trains rarely occur. Rail stations in the UK are generally safe. Petty crime poses a low threat at rail stations. Security services have excellent capabilities at most major railway stations.

Reliability and Availability

The UK has an extensive intercity passenger rail network. Rail travel is available between almost all major cities and many smaller cities and towns. Commuter rail services are available in most major cities. Trains in the UK generally run on time.

International Rail Travel

The UK's mainland has international rail connections with France, Belgium, and the Netherlands, while Northern Ireland has rail connections to the Republic of Ireland.

Vehicles and Roads

● Unrated

Road safety conditions in the UK are generally good. Traffic in the UK drives on the left. Roads in the UK are generally well-maintained. Drivers generally follow traffic laws. Police rigorously enforce traffic laws. Serious traffic accidents are rare. Heavy traffic congestion is common in major cities. Foreigners planning to drive in the UK must have a valid driver's license. Car rentals are available in most major cities.

International Road Travel

The UK has international road connections with Ireland.

Cyber

● 3.00

Geostrategic Concerns

The UK presents a high cyber risk, moderated by strong national cyber and intelligence capabilities. Russia presents a sustained state-linked threat, driven in part by the UK's military, financial, diplomatic, and logistical support for Ukraine. Russia and Russia-aligned threat actors have targeted UK and other NATO entities in retaliation for perceived Western support for Ukraine, including organizations in critical-infrastructure sectors. UK authorities assess that Russia is conducting broader hybrid activity against the UK and Europe. China remains a sustained espionage threat to government and commercially sensitive networks, while Iran and North Korea present more targeted risks.

The National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) coordinates civilian cyber defense with government, industry, and international partners. National capability does not ensure consistent organizational protection: older systems, incomplete security controls, and uneven preparedness remain weaknesses. The UK General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018, amended by the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025, govern personal data protection. The Network and Information Systems Regulations 2018 impose separate security and reporting duties on specified essential and digital services.

Internet access is largely open, but UK authorities retain broad surveillance powers. The Investigatory Powers Act 2016, amended in 2024, allows intelligence agencies, law enforcement, and specified public authorities to intercept communications, acquire and retain communications data, conduct targeted and bulk equipment interference, and retain or examine bulk personal datasets. Telecommunications providers can be required through statutory notices to retain specified communications data or maintain technical capabilities needed to support lawful surveillance.

Cybercrime

Cybercrime is widespread and primarily financially motivated. Phishing and impersonation expose organizations to account theft and payment fraud. Ransomware and data extortion create substantial continuity risks, including prolonged outages, disclosure of sensitive information, and recovery costs. Smaller businesses often have fewer dedicated security resources, but exposure extends to major companies and public services. Shared technology providers and other suppliers can spread disruption to customers whose own systems were not breached.

The National Crime Agency and specialist police teams conduct international investigations and disrupt criminal infrastructure. Overseas offenders, underreporting, and adaptable criminal networks constrain deterrence.

Maritime

1.50

The United Kingdom has a number of overseas territories and crown dependencies, some of which such as the Falklands and British Indian Ocean Territories are disputed by neighboring countries. Its European territories - and the vast majority of its Economic Exclusive Zone - do not have any maritime concerns.

Air Travel

1.25

The UK is rated Category 1 in the Federal Aviation Administration's International Aviation Safety Assessment Program (IASA). The UK has a number of international airports around the country. Most travelers will fly into one of London's five international hubs, but travelers to the north of the country or Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland may fly into regional international airports.

The main airport for business travelers is London Heathrow (LHR), around 24km (15 miles) west of central London. LHR serves about 185 destinations in 84 countries. The airport is spread across five passenger terminals, each with shops, restaurants, currency exchange facilities, information counters, and accommodation desks. Trains from Heathrow leave frequently and the journey to London Paddington takes an average of 25 minutes. The fastest journey takes 15 minutes .

Other major airports include London Gatwick, (LGW), London City Airport (LCY), Manchester Airport (MAN), Cardiff Airport (CWL), Glasgow International Airport (GLA) and Belfast International Airport (BFS). Taxis are readily available outside airports and use meters or fixed rates.

As a result of an EU ban in connection with Russia's invasion of Ukraine, British airspace is closed to all Russian aircraft and flights.

Utilities

1.25

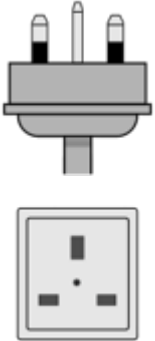
Service delivery is of a high standard and reliable. The UK has one of the most developed and competitive communication sectors in Europe. Over 90 percent of the population has access to the Internet, via any device and connection, although speeds can be relatively slow in rural areas. The mobile phone network provides extensive coverage at standard speeds. Faster data speeds such as 4G can be found in nearly all major cities and their suburbs but coverage can be sparse in rural areas.

Electricity

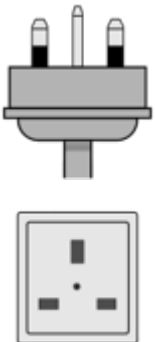
● Unrated

Electricity in the UK is supplied at 230 V, 50 Hz. The UK uses Type G plugs.

Plug Types



Types de prises



Internet and Telecommunications

● Unrated

Internet service in the United Kingdom is readily available in most public and private accommodations, restaurants, the London Underground, and internet cafes. Internet activity is considered private and secure in most areas - see our Information Security advice sheet.

Environment

1.50 - Low

The UK has a temperate climate, with the temperature varying with the four seasons. In general, there are warm summers and cool winters. Rainfall is fairly evenly distributed throughout the year. Flooding can occur during periods of heavy rainfall and cause damage to property and disruption to travel. Air pollution occasionally spikes in London and other major cities but generally presents a negligible risk to travelers.

Man-Made Hazards

● 1.25

There are few man-made hazards in the UK. However, air, water, and noise pollution are a growing concern. Clean-air legislation has brought some progress in controlling air pollution, partly by establishing smoke-control areas in most cities. Some rivers are polluted by agricultural wastes, with a subsequent decline in inland fisheries. Coastal waters are polluted in some areas due to the large-scale disposal of sewage at sea.

Seismic

 1.25

The UK occasionally experiences minor earthquakes but these generally do not cause any significant damage.

Storm Systems

 2.00

Heavy rains and associated floods are fairly common in some areas of the UK, especially during the slightly wetter months in autumn and winter (October-February). Extreme rainfall can disrupt travel and on occasion cause casualties and damage, with Wales, Northern Ireland, Northwest and Southwest England, and Scotland the most likely to be affected due to weather systems typically moving in from the Atlantic. Flooding can directly affect homes and businesses, with lengthy power cuts due to damaged electricity substations. There are sometimes evacuations, particularly in the coastal regions, but most severe flooding tends to occur in rural areas. Snowstorms, strong winds, and fog during winter can cause delays and cancelations at major transportation hubs in the UK, with rail travel being particularly badly affected.

Natural Hazards

 2.00

The overall climate in the UK is temperate maritime. This means that it is mild with temperatures not much lower than 0 C (32 F) in winter and rarely higher than 32 C (89 F) in summer. The UK has four distinct seasons of fairly equal length; spring, summer, autumn, and winter. The southeast of England is generally sunnier and warmer than the rest of the country. The coldest months are January and February and the warmest months are July and August. Rainfall varies greatly from region to region. It is generally wetter in the west than the east and wetter in the highlands than the lowlands. Scotland tends to be worse affected by severe weather than the rest of the UK. In mountainous regions, avalanches may present a risk at times but rarely result in injuries or fatalities. Wildfires can pose a hazard during summer heatwaves due to parched moors and grassland.

Air Quality

 Unrated

Air pollution may on occasion exceed recommended thresholds in urban areas. Individuals with asthma or chronic cardiorespiratory conditions should consult with a healthcare provider prior to travel and carry sufficient medications. On days when air quality is particularly poor, affected individuals should take personal precautions to reduce respiratory stress.

Health and Medical

2.25 - Low

There are no particular health concerns for travel to the UK, and only routine precautions and standard vaccinations are recommended. Medical services are widely available throughout the UK and are of a high standard. Pharmacies are widely available and are generally well-stocked with prescription medicine and over-the-counter drugs. Tap water is considered safe for drinking unless otherwise specified.

Disease and Health Threats

 2.00

Diseases of High Risk

- None identified

Diseases of Moderate Risk

- **Lyme disease:** Transmitted through the bite of an infected tick. Bite prevention is essential. Symptoms of Lyme disease vary depending on the stage of the disease. Early symptoms include a red, expanding rash that looks like a bullseye, fatigue, chills, fever, headache, muscle aches, and joint aches. These symptoms generally appear days to weeks after exposure. In some cases, individuals develop chronic symptoms months to years after exposure. The most common symptom is bouts of arthritis with severe joint pain and joint swelling. Risk of infection exists nationally. Risk is year-round.
- **Hepatitis E:** Transmitted by contaminated food and water. Symptoms appear two to eight weeks after exposure and include fever, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, dark urine, joint pain, and jaundice.

Diseases of Low Risk

- **Traveler's Diarrhea:** Transmitted by contaminated food and water. This is the most common illness in travelers. People who become ill by an infectious agent that causes traveler's diarrhea most often experience nausea, vomiting, fever, bloody stools, and/or the urge to constantly pass stools despite an empty gastrointestinal tract.
- **Hepatitis A:** Transmitted by contaminated food and water. Hepatitis A does not always cause symptoms. If they occur, symptoms appear two to six weeks after exposure and include fever, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, fatigue, dark urine, loss of appetite, joint pain, and jaundice.
- **Hepatitis B:** Transmitted through infected blood and bodily fluids and effectively prevented with vaccination. An unexpected medical or dental emergency may place the unvaccinated traveler at risk. Practice safe sex and ensure medical procedures, tattoos, or piercings are conducted using sterile equipment. Symptoms include fever, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, fatigue, dark urine, loss of appetite, joint pain, and jaundice.
- **Tick-borne Encephalitis (TBE):** Transmitted through the bite of an infected tick. Bite prevention is essential. In rare cases, people can become infected by consuming unpasteurized dairy products. Early symptoms include fever, fatigue, headache, myalgia, and nausea. These symptoms generally appear two to 10 days after exposure. In some cases, infection can progress to encephalitis (inflammation of the brain), which can be life-threatening.
- **Tuberculosis:** Transmitted through respiratory droplets released by coughing or sneezing. Individuals planning an extended stay should consider obtaining a PPD skin test to reference against future suspected infections. Symptoms commonly include chest pain, a bad cough lasting three weeks or longer, and coughing up blood and/or sputum. Some people also experience chills, weight loss, fever, weakness, night sweats, and loss of appetite.
- **HIV/AIDS:** Transmitted through infected blood and bodily fluids. Practice safe sex and ensure medical procedures, tattoos, or piercings are conducted using sterile equipment. Within two to four weeks of HIV infection, many people, but not all, experience influenza-like illness, including fever, swollen glands, sore throat, rash, fatigue, muscle and joint pains, and headache. These symptoms, also called acute retroviral syndrome (ARS), can last from days to weeks. Without treatment, the infection can lead to AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome).
- **Rabies:** Transmitted through the saliva of infected wild or domesticated mammals, usually by a bite or scratch. Do not approach unfamiliar animals. No known risk.

Health Requirements

● Unrated

Yellow Fever: Vaccination Not Required

There are no recommendations or requirements for yellow fever vaccination in the United Kingdom. There is no risk of yellow fever.

Health Recommendations

● Unrated

Recommended Immunizations for Travel to the UK

Travelers should ensure that they have routine vaccination courses and boosters. You should visit a healthcare professional at least four to six weeks before the trip. Routine vaccines include measles-mumps-rubella (MMR), diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis, varicella (chickenpox), polio, and the annual flu vaccine. Travelers should consider obtaining COVID-19 vaccination where available, even if the destination country does not require it.

- **Hepatitis A:** Recommended for most individuals unless contraindicated. Two doses, administered at least six months apart, are required for long-lasting protection. It is recommended that all susceptible people traveling for any purpose, frequency, or duration to countries with high or intermediate hepatitis A endemicity be vaccinated or receive immune globulin before departure. A booster is recommended for partially vaccinated travelers.
- **Hepatitis B:** Recommended for most individuals unless contraindicated. Widely used formulations require three doses administered over the course of six to 18 months, depending on the recipient's age and vaccination history. Booster doses after a complete series are usually not required to maintain immunity. If exposed before finalizing the full series, individuals may receive a special booster within 24 hours for short-term protection.
- **Rabies:** Unless contraindicated, the WHO and CDC recommend vaccination for individuals who will be performing occupational or recreational activities that increase the risk for exposure to potentially rabid animals, such as animal handlers, field biologists, cavers, missionaries, veterinarians, and some laboratory workers. It is also recommended for travelers who might have difficulty getting prompt access to safe post-exposure prophylaxis. There is no risk in animals. Low risk in bats.
- **Tick-borne Encephalitis:** Recommended for individuals trekking, working, or engaging in outdoor activities in high-risk, endemic areas, particularly heavily forested areas where the disease occurs and ticks are likely to be found. Currently, a tick-borne encephalitis vaccine is available in many countries. The initial vaccine consists of three doses and requires six months or more for completion. Tick bite prevention is also essential.

Medical Facilities and Services

● 1.50

Medical services are widely available throughout the UK and are of a high standard. However, free care under the National Health Service is only available for UK residents, certain EU nationals, and travelers from countries such as Australia with reciprocal healthcare agreements. Tourists and short-term visitors will be charged for medical treatment while in-country. General practitioners provide primary health care for common and minor medical conditions and typically serve as the first point of contact within the UK health system. They refer patients to consultants when specialist assessment, investigation, or treatment is required. The UK has a relatively strong private healthcare sector funded largely by private insurance contributions. Ambulance services are available for emergency medical care, and response times are generally good nationwide.

Medications and Pharmacy

● Unrated

Pharmacies across the United Kingdom are readily available. Supply of most medicines needed by travelers is high. Prior to travelling confirm the status of your "over the counter" medicines with accredited foreign government offices of the United Kingdom in your country. Always carry your prescription medication in its original packaging, along with your doctor's prescription and any other relevant documentation.

Mental Health

● 2.75

Mental health service availability is limited and conditions are moderately managed.

Food and Water Safety

1.00

Drinking water is generally safe in the UK. However, officials still recommend drinking bottled or otherwise purified water whenever possible to reduce the risk of traveler's diarrhea or other gastrointestinal illnesses. Ensure that food is properly handled and prepared. Wash raw produce before eating. Consume only pasteurized milk and dairy products, or use powdered or canned milk and cured cheeses. Consider avoiding street vendors and unregulated food establishments.

Political

1.50 - Low

While the UK is a unitary nation, it has introduced a gradual devolution of political power to its constituent entities, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. In England, some county councils and the Greater London Authority exercise devolved executive powers over several functions, including transport and water. However, it is in Wales and particularly Scotland, where devolution has fed into persistent calls for greater autonomy and, occasionally, for independence.

The UK is proceeding through a sustained period of relatively moderate political uncertainty, with the terms of the previous Prime Minister, Keir Starmer, ending prematurely amid political and public pressure. However, Starmer's resignation and subsequent replacement with Andy Burnham have not impacted the broad delivery of services or caused shifts in strategic policy.

Coalitions featuring a cross-section of political parties are not typically required to form the government. However, government collapses occasionally occur.

The judiciary is independent of the executive and the legislature. State institutions are competent and effective and provide reliable services across the country. Minority and labor rights, freedom of speech, and religious freedoms are all well-protected. Corruption is assessed to be slightly higher than in the highest-performing European countries, but similar to economic equals such as France.

Corruption

1.75

The perception of corruption in the UK is low.

Corruption is not a major concern or obstacle to business in the UK. The country has a high degree of press freedom. The UK takes anti-corruption legislation seriously and has solid institutional and legal frameworks. However, the perception of corruption has increased due to the many scandals among high-level executive officials in recent years. The lack of integrity and transparency has become a growing public concern. The UK's efforts at further reducing corruption are insufficient.

Government Stability

2.00

There is a low risk of government instability in the UK, despite the country recently proceeding through a period of heightened political uncertainty following the resignation of former Prime Minister Keir Starmer and the appointment of new Prime Minister Andy Burnham. While the political situation has stabilized following Starmer's resignation, underlying political tensions remain, driven by structural economic, social, and immigration concerns.

Heightened political tensions following the May 7 local elections, which saw the ruling Labour Party lose numerous council seats in England, as well as parliamentary seats in Scotland's Holyrood and Wales' Senedd, led Labour MPs to pressure Starmer for his resignation. Burnham will likely prioritize economic interventions to reduce the cost of living and push for greater devolution of power to regional governments and

councils; his appointment will likely usher in a period of reduced political tensions. However, Burnham is the UK's sixth prime minister in seven years, and his premiership takes place within the broader context of a shifting and unpredictable political landscape.

The UK's political system, which the two largest parties - Labour and the Conservatives - have typically dominated, is facing near-unprecedented challenges from parties previously considered outsiders, including Reform UK, the Greens, and Plaid Cymru.

In England, Reform UK emerged from the May 7 elections with the greatest number of councilors, with both major parties losing a significant number of seats. Plaid Cymru won the local elections in Wales, and in Scotland, the SNP retained a narrow lead in Scottish Parliament members. Although local elections play a minor role in overall government stability, the fractured political environment indicates a greater challenge to overall stability that could be experienced following the 2029 national elections. Unless the Labour Party is able to repair public trust, pressure will quickly intensify on the new Cabinet. Victories for Scottish and Welsh nationalist parties could increase destabilizing pressure on the UK's devolved system of governance, particularly if regional parliaments push for greater power via constitutional amendments.

Following a landslide victory in the July 2024 general election, the Labour Party remains in a position of relative strength, with a comfortable majority in Parliament, despite recent challenges resulting in an overall decrease in support for the ruling party. Nonetheless, the government is expected to respect checks and balances on its authority, and deliver a relatively high quality of services to residents.

Rule of Law

 1.00

Rule of law is well established in the UK and there is minimal political interference in the judicial process. The police are generally professional, well trained, approachable and available for assistance at all times. However, police forces have had budget cuts in recent years, gradually affecting their ability to provide frontline services. Key priorities are maintaining public order, neighborhood policing and countering the threat of terrorism.

Only a small proportion of officers are authorized to use firearms but each police force has its own specialist firearms unit. Police armed response vehicles are deployed when required, particularly in London and other large cities. An increasing number of trained officers carry Tasers. Armed police officers are routinely deployed at airports, embassies and other security-sensitive locations as a precautionary measure given the threat of terrorism.

The legal drinking age in the UK is 18 years. There are no legal restrictions on same-sex sexual relations. There are very strict gun control laws. Convicted drug offenders can expect jail sentences and heavy fines.

Sanctions

 1.00

There are currently no sanctions against the UK, companies or members of the country's political and/or business elite being imposed by the UN, EU or US.

Legal

Unrated

Visitors to the UK are subject to local laws, which may not mirror, either in whole or in part, those of their home country. Those deemed to be in violation, even unknowingly, may be fined, detained, imprisoned, temporarily or permanently expelled, or tried *in absentia* depending on the nature of the offense. Home-country consular officers are typically systematically informed of a detention and permitted to provide support services to their detained citizens. When there is no treaty in force, notification and access depend on whether the two countries have direct or

indirect diplomatic relations. Consular officers cannot interfere with local judicial proceedings, nor provide legal advice or representation at trial, and are unable to pay legal fees or fines with government funds. The status of dual nationals will be determined by local officials, with all attendant ramifications for access and support.

Emergency Contacts

● Unrated

Emergency Contacts

Ambulance 999

Fire 999

Police 999

Embassies and Consulates

● Unrated

French Embassy

Address 58 Knightsbridge, London, SW1X 7JT, Royaume-Uni

Telephone Number +44 20 7073 1000

Email presse.londres-amba@diplomatie.gouv.fr

Web Site <https://uk.ambafrance.org/>

Opening Hours Monday to Friday: 0900-1700

US Embassy London

Address 33 Nine Elms Lane, London, SW11 7US

Telephone Number +44 20 7499 9000

Email SCSLondon@state.gov

Web Site <https://uk.usembassy.gov/>

Opening Hours Monday to Friday: 0830-1700

US Consulate General (Northern Ireland)

Address Danesfort House, 223 Stranmillis Road, Belfast BT9 5GR

Telephone Number +44 28 9038 6100

Email acsbelfast@state.gov

Web Site <https://uk.usembassy.gov/belfast/>

Opening hours Monday-Friday 0830-1700

US Consulate General (Scotland)

Address 3 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh EH7 5BW

Telephone Number +44 131 556 8315

Email EdinburghConsular@state.gov

Web Site <https://uk.usembassy.gov/edinburgh/>

Opening Hours Monday to Friday: 0830-1700

Austrian Embassy

Address 18, Belgrave Mews West, London SW1X 8HU

Telephone Number [+44 20 7344 3250](tel:+442073443250)

Email london-ob@bmeia.gv.at

Web Site <https://www.bmeia.gv.at/oeb-london>

Opening Hours Monday to Friday: 0900-1200

Australian High Commission

Address Strand, London WC2B 4LA

Telephone Number [+44 20 7379 4334](tel:+442073794334)

Email consular.lhlh@dfat.gov.au

Web Site <https://uk.embassy.gov.au/>

Opening Hours Monday to Friday: 0900-1700

Canadian High Commission

Address Canada House, Trafalgar Square, London, SW1Y 5BJ, England

Telephone Number [+44 20 7004 6000](tel:+442070046000)

Email ldng@international.gc.ca

Web Site https://www.international.gc.ca/country-pays/united_kingdom-royaume_uni/london-londres.aspx?lang=eng

Opening Hours Monday to Friday: 0830-1700

German Embassy

Address 23 Belgrave Square, London, SW1X 8PZ

Telephone Number +44 20 7824 1300

Email bristol@hk-diplo.de

Web Site <https://uk.diplo.de/uk-en/01/embassy>

Opening Hours Monday to Thursday: 0830-1200 and 1300-1600 Friday: 0830- 1200

Entry/Exit

Unrated

Travelers can obtain specific information about visas and other entry-exit requirements at: <https://entry-exit.crisis24horizon.com>.

Pre-Departure

Unrated

- Travelers should have adequate travel insurance in place; free medical care under the National Health Service (NHS) is allowed only for UK residents, certain EU nationals, travelers from countries such as Australia with reciprocal healthcare agreements and some visa holders.

- Travelers should provide friends and family with a copy of travel itinerary, and make a copy of important travel and identification documents.

On Arrival

● Unrated

- There are no significant measures to undertake on arrival in the country. Passports must be valid for the whole of the stay.

In Transit

● Unrated

- Public transport is generally safe and the rail network is extensive, although disruption due to weather, signal failures and industrial action is relatively common. Travelers should check [National Rail](#) or the [Transport for London](#) websites for latest service updates.
- Cash cannot be used on board a bus in London; Paper Travelcard tickets, Oyster card or contactless payment are used instead.
- Self-driving may be conducted, and vehicles may be hired at locations throughout the country including airports. Drivers must be aged 17 or over and must hold an international driving license, unless for the EU who only need a driving license valid in their home country.
- Travelers should use a booked and licensed minicab or taxi. The only taxis that may be hailed from the street in London are 'Black cabs'.

At Your Hotel

● Unrated

- There are no significant measures to undertake at hotels in the United Kingdom. It is sensible to familiarize oneself with fire exits and evacuation routes. Luggage should not be left unattended in hotel lobbies.

In the Street

● Unrated

- Terrorism threat levels should be monitored using intelligence sources and local media. The UK Government's assessment of the terror threat level is available via the [government terrorism and national emergencies website](#).
 - Travelers should exercise increased vigilance in crowded areas and heed any advice issued by local authorities. Travelers may also wish to download the CitizenAID app, which provides immediate advice in a shooting, stabbing or bomb incident and how to give life-saving first aid.
 - Petty crime is common at tourist sites, restaurants, on busses, trains, and the London Underground. Travelers should avoid overt displays of wealth, dress discreetly and appropriately to the environment, not display money, jewelry or valuables and maintain a low profile.
 - Travelers should use only small denomination notes, and keep any large amounts of cash and cards in a separate place on their person. The contents of wallets and purses should be reduced, particularly cards which may denote affiliations, memberships or accounts.
 - Travelers should ensure that their mobile phone is carried with sufficient battery life and programmed with appropriate emergency numbers. Travelers should also carry an ID card or passport and emergency medical information.
 - Travelers should be aware of their location and surroundings in major urban centers, avoiding high-crime areas and walking through dimly lit streets after dark. Travelers should know routes and carry a map if necessary, but keep it concealed.
 - In crowded situations, travelers should be aware of jostling as this may be used as a ploy by pick-pockets.
 - Travelers should ignore verbal bait from passers-by, not get into an argument and avoid eye contact with strangers.
 - A range of protest groups stage frequent demonstrations in UK cities. Travelers should avoid any demonstrations, protests and rallies, which may attract security forces and present a dynamic and volatile environment.
 - Travelers should be aware that photographing government buildings or military facilities may result in enquiries from police officers.
-

Culture

Unrated

Standard Hours of Operation

Business: Monday-Friday, 0900-1700

Government: Monday-Friday, 0900-1700

Banking: Monday-Friday, 0930-1630

Business attire is generally semi-formal.

Appointments are best scheduled Monday through Friday between 0900 and 1700. Arriving on time to meetings or social engagements is a common practice. Informal or personal discussions are uncommon. Scheduled meetings will typically end on time. If a meeting includes dining out, the host offers to pay the check. Alcohol taken during dinner meetings is considered appropriate.

English is commonly used for business purposes. When beginning and departing a business meeting, shake hands with everyone.

Gestures

Unrated

Business cards are widely used.

When beginning the meeting, firmly shake hands with everyone. When departing the meeting, shake hands again.

Avoid using the following gestures or habits, as they are deemed offensive or insulting:

- Making the "V for victory" sign with your fingers, and with your palm toward you

Religions

Unrated

Christian (includes Anglican, Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, Methodist) 59%, Muslim 4%, Hindu 1%, other 2%, unspecified 7%, none 26%

Ethnicities

Unrated

White 87%, Black/African/Caribbean/black British 3%, Asian/Asian British: Indian 2%, Asian/Asian British: Pakistani 2%, mixed 2%, other 4%

Significant Dates

Unrated

2026 Significant dates

Jan. 1	New Year's Day
April 3	Good Friday
April 6	Easter Monday
May 4	Early May Bank Holiday
May 25	Spring Bank Holiday

Aug. 31 Summer Bank Holiday

Dec. 25-26 Christmas

Financial

Unrated

Financial systems can differ considerably by jurisdiction. Acceptance of cash, debit, and credit cards also varies across the country. Some locations may only accept cash due to the absence of card-processing machines. Banks or legal money changers typically offer the official exchange rates. While the import and export of both local and foreign currency are authorized, sums should not exceed the amount declared upon arrival.

Currency

Unrated

Currency Name/Code

The official currency of the UK is the pound sterling (GBP). One pound sterling is made up of 100 pence.

Currency Convertibility

Banks or legal money changers offer the best exchange rates in the UK. The use of unofficial or black market money-changers is illegal. The UK forbids foreigners from exiting with undeclared currency in amounts greater than EUR 10,000.

Credit Card

Unrated

Major credit cards are widely accepted in shops, restaurants, and hotels.

Taxes and Tipping

Unrated

It is customary to tip hotel personnel, wait staff in restaurants, and taxi drivers, unless there is a service charge on the bill. Around 10 percent is appropriate.

Bank and ATM

Unrated

ATMs

Automated teller machines are widely available in the UK. Always choose a machine located in a secure area, preferably within hotels or other populated, well-lit locations.

Bank Availability

Banking hours are generally Monday through Friday 0930 to 1630. Cash advances on major credit cards issued by foreign banks are permitted.

LGBTQ Security

1.25 - Minimal

The LGBTQ community in the UK faces an overall low-threat environment that is worsening as societal acceptance of transgender individuals is mixed across UK constituents. While Scotland and Wales continued to make efforts to extend anti-discrimination provisions to be more

inclusive of transgender individuals, in the UK the Labour government has deprioritized reform of legislation affecting transgender individuals, and many politicians, public figures, and social commentators use their platforms to perpetuate anti-transgender sentiment. Authorities consistently enforce LGBTQ-related laws, although anti-LGBTQ crimes continue to occur and disproportionately affect the transgender community.

LGBTQ Legal Environment

1.25

The UK's legal environment poses a low threat to the LGBTQ community. There are no laws criminalizing consensual same-sex sexual activity between adults. Same-sex marriage and unions are legally recognized in all constituents of the UK. The UK's Equality Act 2010 explicitly prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation in the provision of goods and services, healthcare, education, housing, as well as employment. While UK courts have extended the Equality Act to prohibit discrimination based on gender identity in all facets of society, only England, Wales, and Scotland, but not Northern Ireland, have observed these rulings. Hate crime laws are also inconsistent among UK constituents, with Scotland including sexual orientation, gender identity, and sex characteristics as aggravating factors, England and Wales only including sexual orientation and gender identity, and Northern Ireland only covering sexual orientation. Additionally, all UK constituents criminalize incitement to hatred based on sexual orientation, though only Scotland has adopted legislation that explicitly prohibits incitement to violence, hatred, or discrimination based on "transgender identity" or "variations in sex characteristics." Despite promises from lawmakers, the UK does not ban conversion therapy practices. The new Labour government, elected in July 2024, promised to reform the Gender Recognition Act to simplify the process by which transgender individuals can legally change their gender. However, lawmakers have not introduced legislation to this effect as of April 2025, indicating the pledge has likely been deprioritized. Nonetheless, the promise marks a departure in policy from the previous Conservative government which actively blocked Scotland's attempt to introduce a Gender Recognition Reform Bill in January 2023. In April 2025, the UK Supreme Court issued a ruling that the legal definition of "women," as given in the Equality Act, is based on biological sex and, therefore, does not include transgender women with Gender Recognition Certificates. The ruling has implications for transgender women's use of single-sex spaces and services. However, following the ruling, a Supreme Court Judge stressed that transgender women maintain legal protections under the Equality Act. In December 2023, the UK Department for Education released its non-statutory transgender guidance stating that transgender children should only be permitted to change their name if in the "best interests of the child" and with parental consultation. Also in December, the UK government published a comprehensive guideline for schools in England on how to support gender-questioning students. However, LGBTQ organizations continue to express concern over this framework, arguing that it could be used to out non-binary and transgender students to their parents, place a blanket ban on social transitioning, and allow single-sex schools to refuse transgender students. Although the framework is not legally binding, many schools are likely to implement it if it is approved.

LGBTQ Enforcement

1.25

The enforcement of LGBTQ-related laws poses a low threat to the LGBTQ community. According to human rights organizations, police and other authorities do not use laws to target the LGBTQ community and generally enforce LGBTQ-related laws. However, LGBTQ advocacy groups have expressed that those convicted of anti-LGBTQ hate crimes receive shorter sentences than other hate crimes. While the Crown Prosecution Service consistently prosecutes reported hate crimes and increases sentences for such crimes, the conviction rates for crimes with sexual orientation or gender identity as an aggravating factor are below average compared to other hate crimes. In Northern Ireland, while police record anti-transgender crimes for statistical purposes, they are not covered by hate crime laws and, therefore, do not meet the evidentiary requirements for prosecution as a hate crime. The Public Prosecution Service's Hate Crime Policy suggests that anti-transgender crimes may be prosecuted as "homophobic" hate crimes, but it is unclear whether courts acknowledge this.

LGBTQ Social Environment

2.00

The social environment in the UK poses a low threat to the LGBTQ community. According to various survey data, most of British society is accepting of the LGBTQ community. Many cities across the UK host well-attended pride events and LGBTQ film festivals, and there are several local and international LGBTQ organizations that operate in the country. However, in recent years, polls show that there is a discrepancy between societal acceptance of gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals compared to transgender individuals. Galop, an LGBTQ

organization, reported in October 2023 that anti-transgender attacks in the UK have nearly doubled since 2021, stating that victims do not have access to adequate support and that authorities are failing to hold perpetrators accountable. According to the UK's 2024 annual hate crime report, hate crimes motivated by sexual orientation continued to decrease while anti-transgender hate crimes again increased to a record high. The report partly attributes the increase to anti-transgender media reporting and discussion about transgender issues by politicians and other public figures during the year. Scotland's annual hate crimes report indicates that both hate crimes motivated by sexual orientation and transgender identity decreased in 2024, although the number of anti-transgender hate crimes remained high for the second year in a row and the total number of reported crimes is near the record levels previously seen in 2021-22. In 2024, the UK saw a series of anti-LGBTQ hate speech and harassment incidents, particularly targeting members of the transgender community and other visible LGBTQ individuals. In one case, a passenger on the London Underground was subjected to homophobic slurs and physically intimidated by a group of men, who pushed and threatened him near the platform edge while bystanders looked on without intervening. In another incident, a drag performer was verbally abused and physically assaulted at a busy train station during Pride month, nearly falling down an escalator as a result. Alongside these personal attacks, there was also an increase in hate-related incidents in professional and institutional settings, including cases where religious leaders and healthcare professionals were recorded making anti-LGBTQ remarks or showing discriminatory behavior. Official data recorded over 22,000 hate crimes based on sexual orientation and nearly 5,000 targeting transgender individuals in England and Wales during the year, though many more incidents are believed to have gone unreported due to victims' fear of retaliation or distrust in the system. These events reflect an environment where LGBTQ+ people continue to face targeted hostility in both public and private spaces.

Active Alerts

No Alerts

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