

# No Easy Path

The realities of LGBTQ+ young people estranged from their families

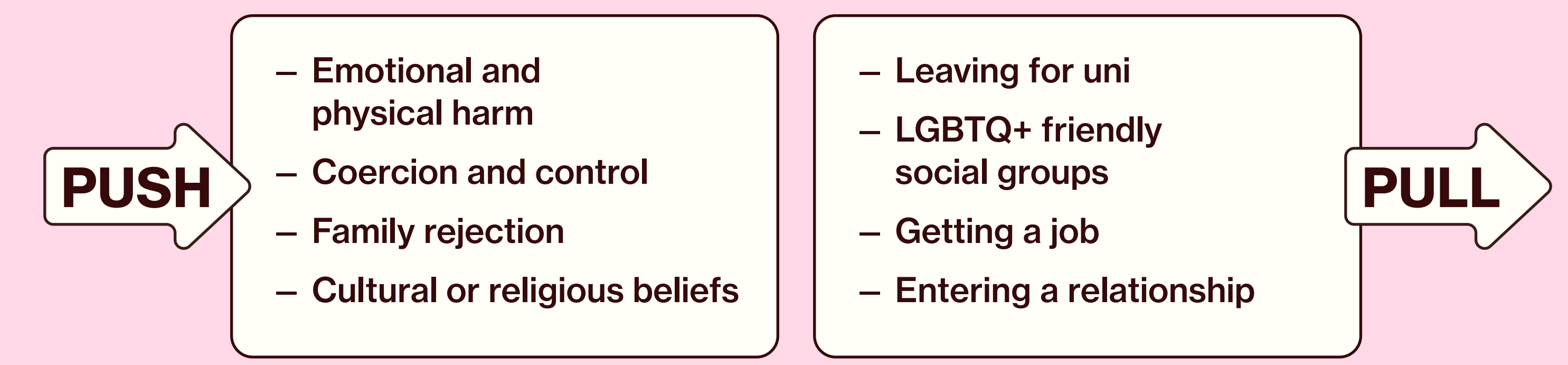
In 2025, Buttle co-delivered a year-long research project with six young people estranged from their families. It explored the role that sexuality and gender identity play in estranged young people's experiences.

- 50 young people completed an online survey
- 10 young people took part in online 1-1 interviews with our young researchers
- 10 more young people took part in focus groups, led by our young researchers

## Key findings

There were many pushes and pulls that led to young people's estrangement

The key "push" was emotional and physical harm, made worse by family members' reaction to young people's LGBTQ+ identity



LGBTQ+ estranged young people face many challenges...

- Mental health
- Financial and housing insecurity
- Isolation
- Disrupted education

..and barriers to support:

- Navigating systems alone
- Long waiting lists and complex criteria
- Postcode lottery of support
- Lack of understanding from professionals

"What I think organisations and governments and services do not understand is that... I have nowhere else to go. I can't pack a bag and go and live with my family. Can't pack up and go home. Can't pack up and go and move in with someone. It is all on me and they don't get it."

Estranged Young Person

What matters most to LGBTQ+ estranged young people:

- 1. LGBTQ+ specific support**  
Young people valued professionals and organisations with a deep understanding of the issues affecting them.
- 2. Support from friends and community**  
This was often more useful than formal services, helping young people become estranged and feel accepted after coming out as LGBTQ+.
- 3. Mentors and trusted adults**  
Young people valued having someone "in your corner" to talk to about everyday things and provide support when things were difficult.
- 4. Financial support**  
This made a huge difference to young people's lives. For students, bursaries and scholarships can be a lifeline, but are often competitive.

## What needs to change

To improve support for all estranged young people, Buttle wants to see:

- 1 The Government formally recognise estranged young people as a group in need of support.
- 2 The Government provide all estranged young people with statutory support across social care, education, health, welfare and housing.

We're also calling for:

- A clear, simple way of proving that a young person is estranged.
- Professionals to receive training on estrangement and LGBTQ+ issues.
- Funders to increase their support for specialist LGBTQ+ youth organisations.

**Thank you!** A huge thank you to the young researchers who co-delivered this project, the young people and organisations who took part, and George Michael Fund and The Talent Fund for supporting this project!