# Impact Report

## LGBT Age Capacity Building Project

Supporting organisations and services working with older people to become more LGBT-inclusive, May 2012 – June 2015

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The quotes and statistics in this report come from evaluation forms filled in at the end of training and events, and an online follow-up survey with 52 respondents.

## Introduction

**This report aims to share the learning from the LGBT Age Capacity Building Project, which was set up in response to the barriers that older lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people face in accessing services. It was funded by Reshaping Care for Older People's Innovation Fund.**

**This report will be useful to those who are interested in understanding how to change services to better meet the needs of older LGBT people, whether within their own organisation or in a wider capacity building role. It may also be of interest to members of the LGBT community who would like to know more about the work being done to make services more inclusive. The report details how the project was run, what we learned, and what changes the work created. A shorter summary leaflet is also available.**

## Aims

The LGBT Age Capacity Building Project supported mainstream services and organisations working with older people to better meet the needs of LGBT people, through resources, training and advice.

A central aim of the project was to make services more welcoming and inclusive, with the result that older LGBT people trust services more, and are able to access appropriate support when they need it, without fear of encountering discrimination.

A key part of the ethos of the project was to include the voices and input of older LGBT people in this capacity building work, ensuring that the recommendations of the project reflect the needs of the LGBT community accurately and meaningfully.

# Background

While many LGBT people can live their lives much more openly today, most still face assumptions and prejudice, and many face rejection by family and friends, harassment, and hate crime. Older LGBT people face particular disadvantages, alongside the many issues they face in common with the older population as a whole. Current research, including our own community consultations, shows that:

- As a result of the serious prejudice they have experienced throughout their lives, many fear or expect discrimination and prejudice within services, which results in them being unable to access services, or feeling unsafe to be themselves when they do
- Older LGBT people have significantly diminished support networks when compared to the general older population, and they are much more likely to experience isolation
- Their peers are more likely to have negative views about LGBT people

(Further information and references are included in the Ten Top Tips booklet)

When it comes to accessing care and support services, the fear of discrimination (from staff or peers) can be as damaging as active discrimination. Many feel unable to access preventative services, leading to more acute problems later on. Those who do access services may hide their identities, which has negative repercussions for their mental health and wellbeing, and makes utilising support networks centred around same-sex partners and/or LGBT communities difficult. It also makes them "invisible" within services – a common response has been "we don't have any LGBT people using our services." With 5-7% of the population identifying as LGBT, this is unlikely – so the question is, what can be done to make LGBT people feel safer and more comfortable to use services and be open about their identity?



*The Invisible Woman*

Siân Lovell

Created and exhibited as part of the *Lifelines* intergenerational storytelling project

While outright discrimination in services has dropped, it is still a surprisingly common problem. A more widespread problem is inappropriate assumptions and language: many professionals continue to assume that all the people they work with are heterosexual, and use language which reflects this. Many also feel uncomfortable talking about sexual orientation and/or gender identity when it does come up.

This moment in our cultural history is an important, and fertile, time to create the change that the LGBT community needs in order to access services safely and positively. The Equality Act (2010) requires services to consider the needs of LGBT people, and to tackle inequality and discrimination. While discrimination does persist, and progress is often imperfect and uneven, general attitudes towards LGBT people continue to change for the better – it seems that the tide is turning. While some professionals remain unwilling or unable to engage, or indeed hold discriminatory attitudes, the project was able to connect with a wide range of committed and enthusiastic professionals who are willing and able to champion LGBT rights.

However, while there is a great deal of willingness, because these changes are recent and ongoing, there is not always the knowledge and understanding necessary to create truly inclusive and welcoming services. There is the danger that the positive changes that we are starting to see could solidify into tick-box exercises and "treating everyone the same", rather than genuinely inclusive practices which celebrate diversity and welcome people as they are, whoever they are. There is also the danger that those who continue to be particularly marginalised, such as transgender people and people with intersecting marginalised identities and experiences, could be left behind.

This is where the Capacity Building Project comes in. Over the last three years we have offered resources and training, in consultation and partnership with the older LGBT community, to support services to create real and lasting change based on the genuine needs of older LGBT people.

> *"I have to be careful... because it can get very difficult to be ostracised in sheltered housing."*
>
> *"It makes me very anxious and very upset, after marching and coming out [that] as my last years approach, I think I have to be cautious."*
>
> \-    Responses to our Community Consultation

## So what do older LGBT people need?



Wish tree and worry box – *Lifelines* exhibition and performance event

We set up a Reference Group of older LGBT people, to be a touchstone for the project, as well as providing consultations for mainstream organisations. The group decides its own agenda, considering requests from other organisations and working on issues that concern its members. We also conducted a Community Consultation, with 182 respondents. The summary report is available online.

We produced *Are We Being Served?*, a short documentary film in which community members reflect on their experiences, hopes and attitudes towards mainstream services as they get older. This serves as both a consultation and a resource for training, and is one of the ways in which the voices of older LGBT people are placed at the centre of the project's work.

Finally, we ran the *Lifelines* intergenerational storytelling project as a creative consultation. This fed into the resources and training that the project produced.

**We asked the Reference Group what they would like to see from services. They said:**

"Remember that there are health inequalities affecting LGBT people, in particular LGBT people are more at risk of mental ill health."

"Remember that everyone has a past, and it's important to be respectful of it."

"Service providers need to work hard to ensure that it is inclusive by challenging discrimination from other service users."

"Respect trans people and their histories, including how they want to be referred to."

"Confidentiality is critical."

"Bystander policy – creating a culture where staff challenge assumptions made by colleagues. Provide training."

"Don't be tokenistic – you're not LGBTI friendly because you've hired a gay person."

"You have a duty to research best practice and improve."

"Make sure the emphasis is on services being inclusive rather than LGBTI people having to make themselves 'fit in' to avoid problems."

"During recruitment, make it clear that being inclusive is part of the job and intolerance will not be accepted."

"In the case of gendered services/care, ensure that people are allowed to be in the appropriate service for their gender. Also be aware that trans people may need extra privacy."

Volunteer Community Champions and Representatives co-delivered training with the Development Worker. These volunteers have personal experience of the issues, and they contributed their own stories and experiences, as well as informing the ongoing development of the training. The involvement of community members was a crucial part of the project, and the volunteers ensured that the training stayed rooted in the needs of the community, as well as humanising the issues for participants.

All of these aspects informed the **Ten Top Tips**, which formed the core of resources and training. The tips are:

1. **Make sure LGBT people are visibly welcomed**
2. **Avoid assumptions**
3. **Ensure that staff receive LGBT awareness training**
4. **Make sure that LGBT people's safety and privacy is protected**
5. **Create a Safe Space policy**
6. **Engage with and respect LGBT people's chosen families**
7. **Monitor gender and sexual orientation across the organisation**
8. **Link up with the LGBT communities in your local area**
9. **Make sure your systems and procedures are LGBT inclusive**
10. **Remember that not all LGBT people are the same**

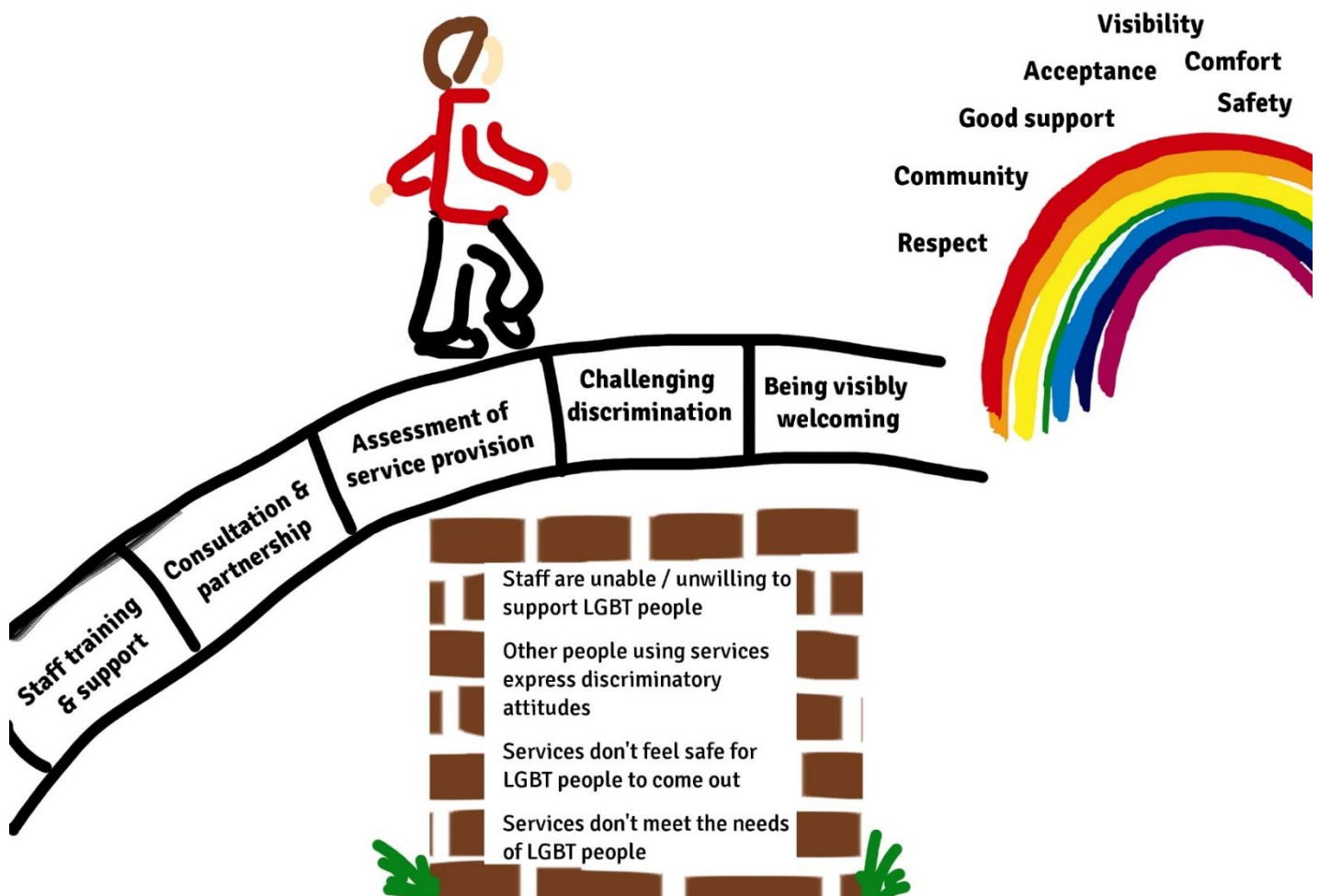**BONUS: Keep up to date with issues, research and good practice.**

The Ten Top Tips booklet goes through each of these statements, explaining why it's important and giving a series of practical and realistic actions. It also includes artwork from the *Lifelines* project, which facilitates a deeper, emotional understanding of the issues, experiences, and what is at stake – as well as providing a way for community members' voices to be directly included.

The consultations and community engagement also fed into the development of training, presentations, and other resources.

# How do we support services to meet these needs?

As well as working with community members to identify how services might best meet their needs, we also worked with professionals to address the barriers that they encounter to changing and improving their services. The following image is based on an exercise that was developed by Open Clasp Theatre, who ran a workshop during one of our seminars. Participants identified what they would like from services (the ideal – depicted as a rainbow), what might stop LGBT people getting those things (the barriers – depicted as a wall), and what we might do to overcome the barriers (a bridge).

Visibility
Acceptance
Comfort
Safety
Good support
Community
Respect

Challenging discrimination
Being visibly welcoming
Assessment of service provision
Consultation & partnership
Staff training & support

Staff are unable / unwilling to support LGBT people

Other people using services express discriminatory attitudes

Services don't feel safe for LGBT people to come out

Services don't meet the needs of LGBT people

These discussions resulted in a wealth of strategies and actions (a more detailed list on which the image is based is available online). It was clear from both community members and professionals that the necessary change would need to reach across different aspects of service provision; as a result, the capacity building work took place on three levels:

- training, resources and events for front-line staff supported them to improve everyday care
- work with service managers through training, events, an audit tool and other resources supported change to systems within each organisation
- work with commissioners, inspectors, and other umbrella bodies created changes in the expectations of services, including changes to contracts and commissioning documents

# What we delivered

Over the course of the project, we developed and delivered a range of support and resources, which directly influenced practice and services, and contributed to a more general culture change within services. In our follow-up survey, we asked how useful respondents found each aspect of the project; the average for every strand was more than 4 out of 5.

## Volunteering opportunities

Initially, volunteers were recruited for the Reference Group – providing consultation and input into the earlier stages of the project, and getting involved in committees relating to services.

Two more volunteering roles were developed as the project continued: Community Champions and Community Representatives co-ran training sessions with the Development Worker, contributing their stories and experiences. As their experience and confidence increased, they took on more roles within the training, running activities and answering questions. Input from the volunteers was consistently mentioned in feedback as one of the most informative and impactful aspects of the training sessions: hearing about the issues from the people who they most affect is not only an important way of ensuring that the training is rooted in the community, it is also creates an emotional and meaningful impact for the participants. Volunteers have reported very positive experiences of their roles, including increased confidence, feeling involved in the community, feeling well-supported, being able to give something back and make a difference, and an increased sense of pride in their LGBT identity.

A Community Champion Advisor offered their experience of running training sessions, supporting the Development Worker and offering advice through the final year of the project.

## IN NUMBERS

22-minute film produced, capturing the needs, experiences and stories of 6 older LGBT people

A comprehensive suite of 11 resources developed

Community Consultation with 187 respondents carried out

Intergenerational storytelling project delivered, with 80 participants

20 workplace trainings sessions delivered to 215 professionals

Co-delivered with 4 volunteer Community Champions and Representatives

4 seminars delivered to 99 participants

6 presentations given to health and social care team meetings and council providers' meetings, with 97 attendees

168 printed copies of the LGBT Age Audit Tool distributed, with more accessed online

252 printed copies of the Ten Top Tips resource distributed, with more accessed online

4 meetings of a supportive Professionals' Forum, with 29 attendees

*"I am excited about being involved. It feels positive."*

*"[I enjoyed] meeting new people from a wider range of life experience."*

*"It's good for developing confidence."*

- Volunteers

*"[The volunteers'] insight and personal stories were better than any literature… They made all the labels real and human for me. This touched me and made me understand more."*

- training participant

## Training

Twenty training sessions were delivered to a range of different organisations, with a total of over 210 participants. These sessions focussed on:

- improving knowledge of language relating to sexual orientation and gender identity, and confidence in talking about them
- increasing understanding of the life histories of LGBT people, in order to have a better understanding of why they might have particular needs and fears
- creating a general awareness of the issues that older LGBT people face in accessing services
- suggesting strategies for improving inclusivity, specific to the service or organisation

*"We do a lot of training, and this is the best training session we've ever had. The next day we were all buzzing with it, talking about the things we had learned and what we might do."*

*"It was informative and helpful in a non-threatening way for someone coming to the course with no LGBT awareness training behind them."*

*"Useful tips and resources to help me support people effectively."*

- training participants

## Events

The initial learning from the project was shared at **Best practice for working with older LGBT people** in September 2013. This was attended by 58 people, representing 35 organisations including statutory, voluntary and private sector providers. The day was chaired by volunteer Community Champion Tim Puntis, and included presentations from a range of speakers. This event lauched *"Are We Being Served?"*, our short documentary film.

In 2014-5, a series of seminars were developed in response to requests from professionals for more information on particular topics. There were four events:

- **Practical strategies for making services more inclusive:** a general introduction to the issues, which launched the Top Tips and the LGBT Age Audit Tool resource, as well as the workplace training programme.
- **Transgender Ageing**: this session responded to the lower levels of knowledge around transgender identities and the needs of transgender people. Speakers included two Community Representative volunteers, and staff from the Scottish Transgender Alliance and the Equality Network.
- **Make Your Own Roadmap**: this session responded to requests for more time to focus on specific, practical actions and strategies. It was based on the LGBT Age Audit Tool.
- **Diversity and Dementia**: this session responded to a dearth of research and information on the needs of LGBT people living with dementia. It was held in partnership with Alzheimer Scotland; it will inform their upcoming work to make their own organisation more LGBT inclusive.

*"Open and informative environment."*

*"It was fantastic! I've never thought about these things before, and it was just a lightbulb moment."*

*"I found it incredibly inspiring and really pertinent."*

*"It was helpful to get into my mind from the outset that I should always be looking to build equalities issues into our work."*

*"Lots of actions to take forward!"*

*"Personal stories made it very real and brought the event to life."*

- Seminar attendees

Overall, the seminars attracted almost 100 participants – a much higher number than expected, illustrating the hunger for this kind of learning within health and

social care. In particular, the Diversity and Dementia seminar accounted for 40% of this number, reflecting the lack of support and knowledge on the topic, as well as the thorniness of the issues.

A round-up event, **Onwards!**, was held to celebrate and consolidate the work, as well as contributing to the evaluation of the project. Attended by both community members and professionals, the he session included a panel discussion with volunteers and professionals, and performances from participants in the *Lifelines* project.

*"The diversity of impact was inspiring. I enjoyed bouncing ideas for the future of LGBTI support in later life."*

*"A wonderful, informative and celebratory event: very uplifting and inspiring and fun – and poignant."*

- Onwards! participants

## Presentations

Six presentations were delivered to a range of different groups at the City of Edinburgh Council, to an overall audience of almost 100. This was a good way to reach people who may not otherwise engage with the project due to lack of time, and it acted as a gateway for further involvement with the project.

## In the Frame: image focus group

One of the key recommendations for services is to be visibly welcoming of LGBT people, part of which means making sure that publicity includes diverse imagery. A very significant barrier to this is the lack of appropriate images of LGBT people in stock image catalogues. Added to this, there is often the conundrum of how to include visibly LGBT images without resorting to stereotypes. A focus group on inclusive imagery was held to try and find some ways around these problems. Community members spent the morning discussing what kind of images would make them feel welcomed and visible; their views fed in to an afternoon session with professionals, which aimed to provide participants with some ideas and strategies. A resource was created to share the learning.



This was the kind of image that the focus group liked – showing people who look "real" and affectionate. It's a positive, joyful image, shot from a slightly lower angle, which empowers the people in it. See the resource for more details.

## Professionals' Forum

A forum was held to provide a space for professionals to get support and explore issues and challenges in a safe space. Four meetings were held over the course of the project, with 29 attendees.

## Advice and support

Several organisations requested support with the changes that they are making, including advice around ways to create visible markers of inclusivity, advice on developing training (including induction training and dementia skills training), and support to develop a poster pack to go out to all council health and social care services.

## Resources

- **LGBT Age Audit Tool**: an easy to use and straightforward workbook, designed to assess inclusivity and identify practical steps towards ensuring LGBT-inclusive practice.

- **Ten Top Tips for becoming more LGBT-inclusive**: an introduction to the issues, with a wealth of practical actions and strategies. It was developed in consultation with older LGBT people, and includes poetry, prose and visual art created as part of our *Lifelines* intergenerational storytelling project.

> *"Following review of current practice in relation to the LGBT audit tool I am hoping that we will provide some awareness raising training and review/change publicity materials. We will also be encouraging projects to review monitoring forms and procedures."*
>
> - Seminar participant

- **Five tips for providing services to older transgender people:** an infosheet based on learning from our Transgender Ageing seminar, providing specific, practical tips for supporting older transgender people.

- **Top Tips Poster:** this poster includes four tips for supporting older LGBT people along with practical, straightforward actions. It was developed in response to the barriers that many professionals face in having the time and capacity to engage with resources; it is designed to go up on staffroom noticeboards.



**Top tips** for supporting older lesbian, gay, bisexual & transgender people

Many older LGBT people **find it difficult to access services** because of their experiences of prejudice, and they sometimes have **particular needs** as well. Here are **four of our top tips** for making LGBT people feel **welcome and included** in your service:

1. **Be visibly welcoming**
   Put up a poster for an LGBT-specific service

2. **Avoid assumptions**
   Ask open questions and use gender-neutral language

3. **Hold awareness training**
   Take a look at our website for free learning resources

4. **Protect people's safety**
   Always challenge discrimination and prejudice

Our full Top Tips booklet is available for free on our website: search for "Top Tips" at
**www.lgbthealth.org.uk**

- **Community Consultation Executive Summary**: we surveyed 182 older LGBT people to find out what they want in terms of social opportunities, information and support. The report informed the project; it is now available as a resource for professionals**.**

- **How to run your own LGBT awareness training:** a how-to guide to support and encourage professionals to run their own training sessions; includes some example session plans and tips.

- **Quiz – PowerPoint presentation and notes:** an introduction to some of the barriers that prevent older LGBT people accessing services, designed to be used in training sessions to get people thinking and talking, and to build knowledge and understanding of the issues.

- **Looking at language – instructions, cards and answers:** another activity for training sessions, this time designed build understanding of some of the words that relate to sexual orientation and gender identity.

- **LGBT Timeline - Instructions and Worksheet:** a creative activity designed to support people to think about LGBT life histories, and to understand some of the issues that older LGBT people face as a result.

- **In the frame – inclusive imagery**: a resource supporting the use of diverse, inclusive, and representative imagery in publicity and information materials. Designed to support people choosing images from stock photo libraries as well as those taking their own photographs.

- **Creating a safe space:** a how-to guide designed to support and encourage professionals to develop a safe space commitment and put it into practice; it also includes some useful phrases for upholding it in trickier moments.

- **Are We Being Served?:** a 22 minute video in which LGBT community members reflect on their experiences, hopes and attitudes towards mainstream services as they get older. Accompanied by **training notes** to support its use in training sessions.

## Reach

With so many different organisations and services across the public, private, and voluntary sectors, reaching as many of them as possible was an important challenge.

The most effective way to both advertise events and training, and to disseminate resources, was to tap into networks which already exist. Key contacts within organisations were essential to this:

- The Council Communications and Information Officer passed on emails regularly to around 300 contacts within health and social care
- Scottish Care forwarded details of the project to private sector providers
- A range of allies disseminated information within their own organisations and teams, including contacts at the NHS and within several Council departments
- Through the work of a Community Champion on the City for All Ages committee, the project presented to an exchange programme with European health and social care providers, and was followed up with the promotion of the project's resources on the return visit to Italy – extending the reach of the project internationally.

In addition, a number of articles appeared in newsletters and on websites:

- The Scottish Older People's Assembly featured the project in their May 2015 newsletter

### WHO WAS INVOLVED

Professionals from a wide range of roles were involved in the project, representing a diverse set of services and organisations.

Our final evaluation survey (52 respondents) found that:

- 23% work in housing
- 23% work in social work
- 15% work in assessment, inspection or regulation.

Other areas of work included care at home, day services, befriending, policy, advocacy, communications, and others.

There was a fairly even split between people who directly deliver services (54%) and those who have other roles (46%).

A clear majority work in the public sector (62%), while 28% work in the voluntary sector. The private sector was particularly hard to reach, with only 10% of participants.

- Care Inspectorate included an article in their magazine, which is distributed to 17,000 care services and people involved in care
- Two articles were published on Creative Quarter, a blog run by the Institute for Research and Innovation in Social Services (IRISS)
- Local Opportunities for Older People (LOOPS) featured an article in their October 2014 newsletter
- The Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) included an article on their news website
- An article will be published in Advantage, the Age Scotland magazine (forthcoming)

Two case studies of the project were published:

- Stitch in Time?, a project by Evaluation Support Scotland, produced a case study looking at the way the project made an impact
- Outside the Box, a project designed to support the development of user-led social care services, produced a case study to encourage the development of LGBT inclusive services (forthcoming).

Finally, the closing event of the project was recorded for a podcast on IRISS FM.

## Outcomes and Impacts

### Staff have increased awareness of the needs of older LGBT people, and change their practice to meet them

Through training sessions, resources, and seminars, staff gained knowledge of the issues facing LGBT people. They also gained confidence in discussing these issues and challenging prejudice. One concern that came up a lot was that although many staff were aware of the need to be proactive in meeting LGBT people's needs, they were often worried that they would say the wrong thing or offend someone. That said, there were also many staff for whom it was a new area of learning or thought - many were surprised to hear about the struggles that older LGBT people faced in the past and continue to face.

Participation in many of the trainings was voluntary. This means that there was a bias towards people who already had a willingness to engage with the issues, which has its pros and cons: these participants are the most likely to change their practice, disseminate their learning, and contribute to wider culture change, which is important given that the project was only able to deliver training to a fraction of staff working with older people in the area.

*"When I'm working directly with older LGBT people the historical context that has been provided may make me more patient."*

*"I will be more open."*

*"I will make a point of ensuring clients know it is a safe environment for any sexuality."*

*"Greater awareness of resources and confidence to raise issues."*

*"Thinking more before making assumptions, using correct language, focussing being led by individuals re how/if they describe gender and sexuality."*

- training participants

*"I have spoken to a lot of my colleagues about what I learned. It highlighted the need for a more informed approach."*

*"Normally the first thing I would say to people was 'Good Morning Mr / Mrs, Ms, Miss, Dr' etc – now I just call them by their name. I have mentioned this practice to my work colleagues."*

- Survey respondents

**MAKE YOUR OWN ROADMAP**
FOR LGBT INCLUSION

A practical session for professionals working with older people to: *imagine* how your service could better welcome LGBT people, *celebrate* good practice, *explore* possibilities, and come up with *action plans*
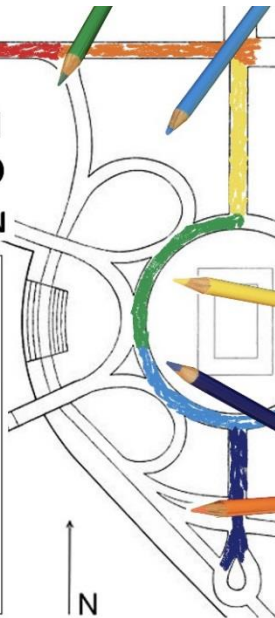
Thursday 26th March, 9.30am-12.00pm
Quaker Meeting House, 7 Victoria Terrace

For more info or to book your free place,
email katherine@lgbthealth.org.uk
or call 0131 652 3284

However, it does mean that the people who still hold discriminatory attitudes were much harder to reach. Indeed, in trainings which were compulsory for a staff team, there was a lower base level of knowledge, and even the occasional discriminatory attitude expressed. The recommendation was made in all areas that training should be compulsory - part of induction as well as ongoing professional development for current staff. The enthusiasm of the self-selected participants is an important step to making this a reality.

A barrier that the project faced was that staff often lacked time and capacity to engage with the project. Many front-line care workers, in particular, are not able to free up time for training, or for studying resources; many do not even have access to a computer to access the resources. The Top Tips poster was developed in response to this - designed to be put up in staff rooms, it starts conversations and gives practical tips without demanding a large amount of time. Again, this contributes to visibility and culture change.

78% of people who participated in workplace training, professionals' forum and professionals' seminars said that they would change something about their practice. These changes included: asking open questions, not making assumptions, introducing a safe space policy, using the LGBT Age Audit Tool, reviewing publicity, including LGBT people in organisational strategy, putting up LGBT-affirmative posters, reviewing systems and procedures to explicitly mention LGBT people, signposting to LGBT organisations, organising staff trainings, discussing learning with colleagues, and a range of other actions.

A follow-up survey asked what changes had been made. While some people said they had not yet had time to implement changes, 41 (of 52) people said they had already made changes, or were in the process of doing so; significantly, 49% said that they now use different language as a result of the project.

## Organisations are proactive in engaging with LGBT people and are visibly welcoming and safe

One of the most common changes cited by people who responded to our follow-up survey was putting up posters or other materials which are visibly LGBT-friendly: 71% of the people who answered the question said they had done this. 17% are changing publicity / information materials.

The project contributed to wider culture change across the sector, in particular in

*"I am in the process of proposing to put an LGBT rainbow on every staff member and volunteer's name badge to show the charity is LGBT inclusive."*

- Survey respondent

*"When we redo our publicity material I will endeavour to source LGBT accessible materials."*

- Image Focus Group participant

*"I am going to discuss with my CEO the possibility of opening an LGBT sheltered housing complex."*

*"Look at the way the service can be more creative/inclusive so that we can personalise support for people."*

- training participants

council-run services. Council workers reported that, increasingly, discriminatory attitudes among staff are considered unacceptable; even more significantly, they reported that a more proactive approach is becoming more common. This is due to a number of people becoming "champions" within services; with increased knowledge and confidence, and the resources produced by the project, these staff members are able to affect change within their team or organisation by starting conversations and sharing resources. This is an essential step towards making sure that there is an awareness of the need for a proactive approach.

## Organisations have policies and procedures to support LGBT-inclusive practice

For staff to be able to change their practice - for them to be supported and encouraged, and for organisational barriers to be removed - change also needs to happen on a broader level. Participation in the project was split fairly evenly between people who directly deliver services, and those who have a different role, such as management. It was essential that people with oversight engaged with the project: one danger of a project which seeks to create these kind of changes, is that even if it is successful in inspiring and equipping people to champion the cause, sometimes they come up against internal barriers in the form of restrictive policies or unsupportive managers.

> *"One change that I intend to incorporate is more training and info about LGBT into the volunteer training that I do."*
>
> *"I have shared the resources on our intranet. We are hoping to review our policies and materials shortly to ensure that they are as inclusive as possible."*
>
> - Survey respondents

The project was able to advise and inspire changes to policies within organisations; the suggestion of a safe space policy was cited as a particularly useful one, which supports staff structurally to challenge prejudice. These changes are difficult to assess without a longer evaluation period, as the internal processes can sometimes take a long time. However, we do know that some changes have already been made: of the 41 people who answered the question on our follow-up survey, the following percentages had made organisational changes already:

- Providing training for current staff: 32%
- Getting in touch with LGBT communities / groups: 15%
- Changing organisational policies: 10%
- Changing induction training to include LGBT awareness: 10%
- Updating monitoring forms / procedures: 10%
- Introducing a safe space or inclusiveness commitment: 5%

The project also engaged with regulatory bodies such as the Care Inspectorate and the Council's commissioning department. These bodies set some of the expectations and standards within the sector, and it is extremely positive to see their engagement. The Care Inspectorate is planning further training for its inspection volunteers, to ensure that inclusivity is built into the standards they enforce; the council is incorporating LGBT awareness into its induction training for health and social care staff.

> *"Your project has had a real impact. As a result of the training you provided we have made changes to some of our service specifications in the commissioning process, requiring providers to create a welcoming environment for all people and to deal effectively with intolerance".*
>
> - Planning and Commissioning Manager – Older People, City of Edinburgh Council

## Older LGBT people have a voice in shaping services

The changes that were recommended in the project were based on our own consultations with older LGBT people, as well as the research that is currently available.

The *Lifelines* storytelling project brought the creative work of community members directly into the heart of the resources and training that the project delivered, influencing the learning of the project's participants and creating an important emotional connection between the community and the professionals involved in the project.



Through the Reference Group one of the volunteers became involved with several committees, including the Scottish Older People's Assembly and the council's City for All Ages reference group. He ensures that LGBT people are visible in these discussions, contributing to the wider culture change within the sector as well as spearheading specific actions. The Reference Group also provide consultations to a range of service providers. The Reference Group will continue to be supported by LGBT Health after the end of the Capacity Building project, which will contribute to legacy of the work.

The volunteer Community Champions and Community Representatives co-delivered trainings, making the experiences and needs of the community central to the work. Two of the volunteers were also part of the Reference Group, and often brought the issues that the group discussed into training sessions. The volunteers report increased confidence as a result of their volunteering, which supports them to continue to have a say in how services are run; one volunteer has gone on to apply to do similar work with a mental health charity after the end of the project, as well as gaining the experience and confidence to explore the possibilities of working with external committees via the Reference Group.

*"I will promote within services and providers that they should be considering the specific needs of LGBT people."*

- Care Inspectorate training participant

The project also encouraged organisations to seek the views of older LGBT people when designing and developing services.

The work of the project is being communicated to the older LGBT community through a summary report, which will be distributed and promoted by the ongoing LGBT Age project. The aim of this report is to increase trust and confidence in services by detailing the work and willingness of service providers to improve, whilst remaining realistic about the current degree of progress. *Onwards!*, the closing event of the project, was aimed at both community members and professionals; the session included space for community members to find out about the project and see for themselves the engagement of some of the professionals who have been involved, as well as feeding into the legacy and recommendations of the project. One community member made a suggestion of introducing safe space commitments in hospitals – which was immediately taken up by a senior NHS staff member!

# Next steps: a call for action

There is significant appetite for further work. There have been more requests for training and other support than it has been possible to accommodate, and many professionals have been very vocal that they would really welcome further work.

The project has a concrete legacy, however, in its suite of resources, and the participants who are now championing the issues and contributing to a significant shift in the culture of the sector.

The learning and resources from this project are a great starting point for those who want to continue this work. There are a whole range of things that professionals can do – from starting a discussion with colleagues to running a training for them, from putting up an LGBT affirmative poster to creating a new LGBT-specific activity or service for older people.

> *"I have been really impressed with how the project has been facilitated and I strongly believe that there is a greater need for the awareness sessions to be continued and rolled out to reach all of the residential care providers. As the training has already highlighted, it does not cost money to change peoples' attitudes! I believe that the work of LGBT Age has achieved a lot in a very short space of time to promote inclusion across a sector of society that unfortunately often go ignored."*
>
> - Project participant

## Recommendations

- A clear barrier to change is time and capacity. A key change that organisations can make is to ensure that staff have enough time to learn about the issues and discuss them with their colleagues, along with access to learning resources and support.
- Future work might include partnerships to create an organisational "champions" scheme, which would allow for people within organisations to have a remit, and perhaps protected time, to do work towards LGBT inclusivity and deliver training to their colleagues. It would also increase the visibility and validity of the work.
- Compulsory training is essential to making sure that change happens across the board. Introducing high quality and thorough LGBT awareness training into induction training is an excellent way to do this; in addition, current staff should also receive training. The resources produced by this project could help to develop this. Future capacity building projects may wish to focus on supporting organisations to develop their own training; this would fit well with a "champions" scheme.
- Including older LGBT people is essential at every stage of work. While the consultation collected by this project is a great start, those running services should ensure that they are talking to the people who access their services to see what their specific needs are. Future capacity building work should include older LGBT people throughout.
- Disseminating learning (whether from within services or from capacity building projects) is extremely important – while it is unlikely that a capacity building project would have the reach to engage with every service provider, the current culture change means that awareness is increasing, and professionals are looking for resources and models of good practice. The work can have even more impact if others can learn from it and replicate it.

# Further information & resources

For further information, please contact:

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**All the resources developed by the project are available at:**

http://www.lgbthealth.org.uk/services-support/lgbt-age/professional-resources/