

IMPACT CASE STUDY

Improved access to education on LGBTQ+ inclusion for the adult social care workforce



Introduction

Many older LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer) people still face inequalities and discrimination when engaging with care home services. Consequently, they are hesitant to access services, are forced to hide their identity, and face poorer health outcomes. This issue affects a large group of people, as at least 1 million people over 60 in the UK identify as LGBTQ+.

At the same time, many care home staff lack the confidence, awareness and knowledge to provide LGBTQ+ inclusive care. There are educational materials on LGBTQ+ inclusion available, but these are not widely used.

Why was this work needed?

The Creating Inclusive Residential Care for LGBTQ+ Elders ([CIRCLE](#)) study was developed to address these barriers and inequalities when engaging with social care services in the UK. Previous research shows that care providers severely disregard LGBTQ+ identities and relationships, as well as their relevance for care needs. It builds on previous research conducted in similar care settings and extends this by examining different ways of supporting residential care providers to be more inclusive for LGBTQ+ residents.

The study aimed to better engage the care home workforce in England on the topic of LGBTQ+ inclusion by offering several ways of support, including: a comprehensive inclusion programme, an online community of practice, and a [co-designed resource on LGBTQ+ inclusion for care homes](#).

What impact did this study make?

As a result of this work:

- Care home staff can provide better and inclusive care to residents, with the educational materials specifically designed to work well in a care home context.
- Better collaboration between older LGBTQ+ people and care staff through co-design work.
- Increased awareness and attention of the subject.
- Changes to commissioning processes (Brighton and Hove City Council's change in commissioning contracts was informed by involvement in the study).
- Relationship building with local authorities (West Sussex, East Sussex, Brighton and Hove, Kent, Sheffield, Lambeth) and regulators (Care Quality Commission (CQC) and Scottish Care Inspectorate) who are interested in continuous improvement in LGBTQ+ inclusion.
- Spread of good practice nationally and internationally through physical and online co-designed resource.
- Changes to practice in care homes going through the inclusion programme, in attendees of the community of practice, and in care home staff involved in co-design work.

Who has benefitted and how?

At least 20,000 care home staff will have access to the physical version of the co-designed resource. These are being sent to care staff in: West Sussex, East Sussex, Brighton & Hove, and Kent, as well as to individual providers in: London, Sheffield, Cornwall, and Scotland. The free, online version is available worldwide, was downloaded 200+ times in 14 days, and can be accessed [here](#).



Four care homes (with a total of 127 staff) benefitted from the inclusion programme they were offered as part of the study. Four care home staff who benefitted from their involvement in the co-design of the resource have shared it with their teams. At least 50 people who attended the community of practice meetings have benefitted from access to the free, online community of practice.

The resource was launched in September 2024 and has been positively reported in the press in multiple regional and national outlets, raising awareness for this topic and the study outputs, including:

- [BBC News online](#)
- [Yahoo! News](#)
- [Heart FM](#)
- [Care Home Professional](#)
- [Attitude](#)
- [GScene](#)
- [LaingBuisson](#)
- [Pharmi Web](#)
- [Hawkinge Gazette](#)
- [Outstanding Society](#).

How this was achieved

The CIRCLE study implemented and evaluated three different ways of supporting the care home workforce to increase their knowledge and confidence on LGBTQ+ inclusion, and to make their practice more inclusive.

As a result of the project, many people working in care homes increased their capability to provide inclusive care, because of improved access to training, educational materials, and advice on LGBTQ+ inclusion in care. The project raised awareness of the importance of LGBTQ+ inclusion in care homes and spread good practice nationally and internationally.

What's next?

- Further promotion and dissemination of the [co-designed resource](#). Potentially acquiring further funding from individual organisations that want to print further physical copies.
- Presence at national and international academic and practice-focused conferences, and local care home forums to share findings and outputs from the study.
- The write-up and dissemination of a policy brief to highlight the policy implications and recommendations following on from the study and to emphasise the important role policymakers have in improving LGBTQ+ inclusion in adult social care and care homes.
- Continuous engagement with commissioners in various local authorities to support the integration of findings in commissioning processes.
- An online, impact survey will be sent to individuals, across local authorities who received the physical resource, to find out if and how they have used it, and what difference it has made to their care practice. It will also be sent to anyone who downloads the online versions of the resource.

[CIRCLE project homepage](#)