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Developing an LGB T&I inclusive environment for older people living in care homes:

Community Advisors' Assessment and Development Tool

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Introduction to the tool

This assessment and development tool was developed for use in residential care settings by academic partners at Middlesex, Nottingham, Bristol and Edge Hill University, UK. Its development was sponsored by the Comic Relief Care Home Challenge fund. Comic Relief's 'Care Home Challenge Fund' aimed to support innovative schemes to make substantial improvement to older people's experiences of care and support. This tool was used in a project in which a national care home provider was piloting an approach to developing and enhancing a more inclusive environment for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender and intersex (LGB T&I) older people, their families and support networks. The project was developed with the support and guidance of the providers LGB T&I national advisory group. The assessment was done using a co-productive approach through the recruitment of 'Community Advisors' – volunteers from the LGB T&I community and supporters. Following a training programme, the Community Advisors piloted the tool with care homes to develop, pilot and embed an improved infrastructure. The pilot was successfully evaluated and this tool is now being made available to provide the inspiration for learning how to increase LGB T&I inclusivity in all of the care home services.

It is well known that older LGB T&I people face specific challenges and issues alongside ageism when accessing and using support services. Research on LGB T&I older people's experiences indicates that they are an invisible and marginalised population in later life—moving into and living in a care home can be an isolating and fearful experience which may often reinforce multiple discrimination where older people are forced to return to the closet and be silent about their culture and identities. Our project facilitated care homes to take a step further towards improving customers' experiences. Many LGBT older people want the same things in later life as heterosexual older people, including being treated with respect and dignity and having the opportunities to talk about their lived experiences with other service users carers, staff members and managers without fear of being judged or at worst reprisals. Providing a person centred and quality service to older people is about ensuring every individual is respected and can discuss their support needs with staff. This project aimed to support our staff in being confident in this area and for all customers to have confidence in them. Care home residents can benefit through the knowledge and experience of their exchange with the project staff and the opportunities for increased contact with members of the LGB T&I community as with any other groups that are important to us. Also it is important to remember that LGB T&I older people come from a range of diverse backgrounds too, and commitment to equality will be holistic throughout this project. This assessment and development tool was developed based on the research and best evidence available. It comprises topics for exploration in several different areas of policy and practice and is designed to promote constructive conversations and consideration about everyday systems, processes and interactions that could be re-examined and unpicked to ensure inclusivity for LGB T &I communities.

This tool is being made available so that it can be adapted and used further in other care organisations. We would however appreciate any information or feedback on its use and we are also happy to share our own experiences. Please contact p.hafford-letchfield@mdx.ac.uk

How can the LGB T&I Assessment and Development tool be used?

The tool can be used in the following ways:

- To inform a detailed review of organisational and team policies and procedures to identify areas for improvement
- As a guide to focus on and discuss issues impacting on LGB T&I ageing between individual managers and care home staff.
- As a range of topic areas for consultation with service users, informal carers, loved ones and advocates.
- To inform topics on LGB T &I good practice in team meetings and during staff supervision
- As a tool to record specific issues and areas for development concerning LGB T&I inclusivity.
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Sections - The tool is divided into 7 sections which are not exhaustive:

1. Policies and procedures
2. Environment
3. Consultation
4. Risk management
5. Issues specific to Gender - Trans support and care
6. Cultural safety
7. End of life care planning and bereavement

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1. Policies and procedures		
Areas for discussion/observation/comment	Methods used to collect information	Who and How
• What policies are in place? (with a focus on how equalities are addressed in policy documents and how and how/if LGB T&I feature within any equalities documentation) List all. • Do all policies and procedures about residents' relationships apply equally to LGB T&I people and heterosexual people? • Do policies make reference to legislation relevant to provision of equality and protection for LGB T&I citizens? More specific questions relating to policies and procedures: ***Disclosure and documentation*** Does the care home include monitoring questions about sexual orientation and gender identity of residents and staff? If yes, does the care home have a policy or additional procedures in place to clarify? • The purpose and any uses of the monitoring information (who may have access to it; how it will be stored; how it may be used) • What guidance is available for staff on strategies for responding in a positive and respectful way to any disclosures? • Clarity on confidentiality around disclosure of sexual orientation and gender identity **Access and Admissions** What strategies could be or are in place to welcome and recognise LGB T&I residents to individual care homes? Are promotional materials LGB T&I inclusive (e.g. using the wording lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex; images that LGB T&I people would recognise such as a rainbow flag, same sex couples; LGB T&I specific information) •If yes, where can these be found? (e.g. posters; information documentation; website)		

Are admissions forms LGB T&I inclusive (e.g. are questions open enough to allow for diversity? How are heterosexist assumptions avoided? How are people given the opportunity to nominate anyone of their choosing as next of kin? **Assessor's Notes**		

2. Consultation		

What are the structures and processes that are in place to consult service users and their loved ones / carers? How can these be used to promote inclusion to LGB, T&I people?
 	
How does the individual care home promote the work of its national /local LGB T&I Advisory Group?
 	
When and where is consultation taking place with:
   ➢ Service users
   ➢ Carers
   ➢ Members of staff from the LGB T&I community
What are the communication channels to take any issues from consultation forward?
 	
Is there a 'champion' or nominated person that could assist with consultation issues?
 	
Assessor's notes		

3. Risk management		
• Does the care home have policies to deal with any negative attitudes towards LGB, T&I people from others (other residents; visitors, staff)? • Are policies to respond to harassment, homophobia, biphobia and trans phobia explicitly mentioned in safeguarding policies in places? These might include complaints policies and procedures. • What would happen if there is an incident, how are procedures followed if another resident or visitor expresses prejudiced or hostile attitudes? • What support is in place for residents, family, friends who experience any incidence of harassment, homophobia, biphobia and trans phobia? **Assessor's notes**		

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4. Issues specific to Gender identity - Trans support and care		
How well are staff able to promote positive health care of Trans service users?		
How is confidentiality around Trans gender history guaranteed and maintained (what guidance about record-keeping and confidentiality is in place)?		
How are staff trained and briefed in providing personal care for Trans people according to their needs and preferences?		
What arrangements are in place with community health services to provide support and respond to medical issues that some Trans people may experience in association with their gender reassignment?		
What support and advocacy services could support an older Trans person living in care homes including social networking opportunities? **Assessor's notes**		

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5. End of life care planning and bereavement		
• Does the care home plan and have discussions about planning ahead for future care and end of life care with residents? • If so – how does the care home identify who the important people are for the resident in identifying next of kin or someone to consult with on decisions about the end of life and following a person's death? • How would this be handled if the person's family deny the sexuality of the older person and exclude their partner at the point of nearing death or afterwards? **Assessor's notes**	Interviews with care home staff, desk top research	

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6. Cultural safety		
• Does the care home promote an LGB T&I- friendly environment in any of the following ways (additional to those outlined above)? • Have an LGB T&I champion on any boards and advisory or user groups? • LGB T&I magazines and newsletters freely available alongside other magazines in shared areas? • Does the care home have connections with any local LGB T&I services that could provide support or social activities for LGB T&I residents? • How could LGB T&I news items and issues be openly and positively discussed in the care home? • Does the care home engage in outreach work with LGB T&I communities and groups to promote their services to LGB T&I communities? • What does the activities programme look like in terms of being inclusive? For example film night (what films are shown and whose lives do they depict?) • What sort of events or festivals are regularly celebrated and how inclusive are they? • How are the personal relationships and family/social networks promoted in the care home and how do the staff encourage and recognised family and friends from LGB T&I communities? **Assessor's notes**	Meeting with the Activities organisers	

7. Training and current awareness		
• If any staff are undertaking NVQ (or equivalent) training is support or encouragement in place for them to look at how they might support a LGB T&I resident as part of their course work? • Are staff aware of any LGB T&I residents in their care home at this current time? • Are staff aware of any LGB T&I residents who have lived in the care home in the past? • Do staff feel they have sufficient knowledge about LGB T&I issues? • Do staff feel they have sufficient knowledge about Trans issues? • Do staff feel they have sufficient knowledge about Intersex issues? • What training has been held in the care home specific to LGB T&I issues? • What training has been held in the care home on diversity? • What training has been held in the care on sexuality of older people? • Do staff express the need for some or further training on the above? • Do staff have an awareness of legislation relating to LGB T&I people? • Supervision and appraisal: how are equality issues discussed in staff support and review procedures and does this include LGB T&I issues? • Interviewing new staff – is a question included at interviews for new staff that ascertains how that worker would respond to an older person from a minority group, for example a LGB T&I resident? **Assessor's notes**	Training programme/content/records	

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Other relevant issues discussed or raised:		

Assessor's own observations and notes **Name:** **Dates and times of assessment:** **Headline recommendations:**		