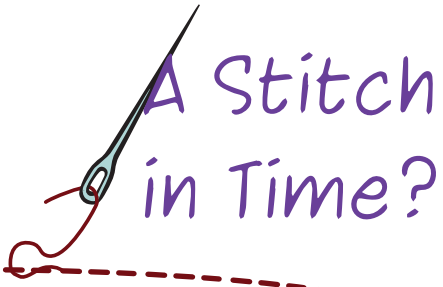


The LGBT Age Project Case Study: Explaining and measuring outcomes from the project

Evaluation Support Scotland

joint improvement team
creativity, collaboration and continuous improvement

The Scottish Government

Introduction

In the Stitch in Time? programme we identify the role of the third sector in Reshaping Care for Older People.

In addition to an overall model, we are using a range of case studies to showcase particular interventions or types of project.

In this case study of the LGBT Age Project we focus on a series of activities aimed at improving health and social care services for older lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people.

This document looks at the model adopted to improve services for older LGBT people. It explores how that project was evaluated and some of the evidence of success.

Go to www.evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk for "A Model to explain the third sector contribution to Reshaping Care for Older People"

Background

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

This is one of a number of projects funded through the Innovation Fund[1]. The work is carried out by LGBT Health and Wellbeing within the City of Edinburgh.

Edinburgh's Change Fund Partnership funded LGBT Health and Wellbeing to work with older LGBT people to begin to tackle health inequalities for this group and to strengthen the ability of older LGBT people to advocate for their community.

The project involves capacity building work with a range of public, private, and third sector services, through workplace training, advice and events, as well as dissemination of learning through written resources and a film. Volunteers from the older LGBT community have taken on the roles of Community Champions and Representatives contributing to training and resources.

Go to www.evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk for "Same yet different: a review of the needs of older lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people and access to health and social care services"

1 The Innovation Fund forms part of The Edinburgh Change Fund Partnership's Third Sector response to Reshaping Care for Older People. The fund was administered by Edinburgh Voluntary Organisations' Council between 2011-2015.

The current situation

Older LGBT people will often have experienced a lifetime of prejudice and discrimination. This can affect their willingness to use mainstream services. It can also affect their support networks, which means they have different and sometimes greater needs than other groups.

Until 1980 in Scotland and 1967 in England and Wales homosexuality was criminalised. Transgender identities were deeply misunderstood. LGBT individuals were fearful for their position within society and may frequently have been dismissed from their jobs, or may have broken ties with their families under acrimonious circumstances.

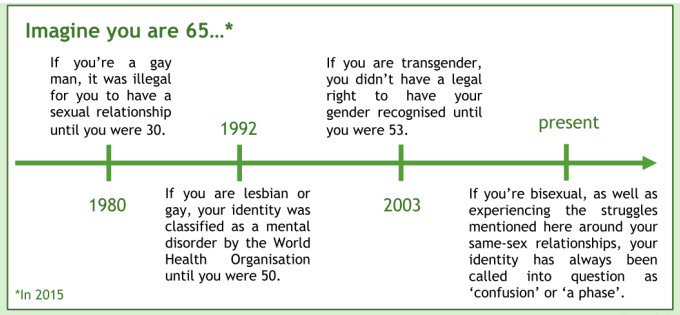
Recent legislative changes have improved the situation for many LGBT people. But for many older LGBT people past experience of discrimination can leave a lasting impact, which, for many, will result in a deep seated reticence to access mainstream services.

This anxiety about approaching services can take a variety of forms:

- Individuals might simply 'sit on their symptoms' longer than perhaps a non-LGBT person would, or may refuse crucial home based services due to concerns about service providers.
- People may not have similar levels of support from their family. Many LGBT people are estranged from their families of origin, often in unpleasant circumstances.
- Others may be fearful of attending services which they perceive to be threatening. Often older LGBT people will be anxious about being received poorly, be that in the form of bullying or name calling, which might not be appropriately challenged or through being ostracised.
- At its extreme these concerns can lead older LGBT people to hide elements of their personality, even individuals who may have been very open about their sexuality or gender identity at earlier times in their lives.

Older LGBT people have significantly diminished support networks compared to the general older population, and they are much more likely to experience isolation. Their peers are also twice as likely as the general population to have negative views about LGBT people[2]. Many LGBT people have experienced rejection from their families. LGBT people often create their own, non-traditional families and forms of support; however, these can go unrecognised by those who provide formal care. In addition, these networks are more likely to be formed of people who are ageing together, and may find it harder to look after each other as they get older.

This combination of increased isolation and need for support, alongside actual and feared discrimination, is a serious problem for older LGBT people, with the result that older LGBT people do not get the help that they need as they age.



2 Scottish Social Attitudes Survey, Scottish Government, 2010.

The policy context

The Equality Act (2010) requires public services to consider the needs of people with protected characteristics including LGBT people, and to tackle inequality and discrimination. This includes protection in employment, and in accessing services.

Protected Characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Current policy emphasises person centred approaches. This means basing care and support around the needs, concerns, and interests of each individual.

Our activities

- A reference group of older LGBT people informs the learning of the project itself, and provide an LGBT viewpoint for others (re: policy, guidelines and strategies).
- Training for professionals in their workplace, offering flexible and tailored sessions to start thinking about how to improve their practice.
- Recruitment, training and support of volunteer Community Champions and Community Representatives who deliver training and take representative roles within consultation groups.
- A Professionals Forum and seminars based on professionals peer support and looking more in depth on requested topics.
- Resources available through the LGBT Health web pages[3]

- **The LGBT Age documentary film 'Are we being served?'**, in which older LGBT people discuss their experiences of services and hopes for the future. This is useful for awareness training (it includes trainer's notes).
- **'The LGBT Age Audit Tool'**: a guide for services and organisations working with older people to becoming more LGBT inclusive. This gives practical support and ideas for action.
- A **'Ten Top Tips'** resource to support service providers to make change within their workplaces, to improve inclusion and accessibility, and to work to make spaces safer (informed by the Lifelines intergenerational storytelling project).

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

Outcomes

Short term outcomes:

- Staff have increased awareness of LGBT peoples' needs
- Organisations have more relevant policies and procedures to support LGBT inclusive practice
- Organisations are pro-active in engaging with LGBT people, and are visibly welcoming and safe

Long term outcomes:

- Services are more accessible for LGBT people
- Older LGBT people have increased trust and use more services
- Older LGBT people feel they have a voice and can shape services

Contributing to the following outcomes for older people:

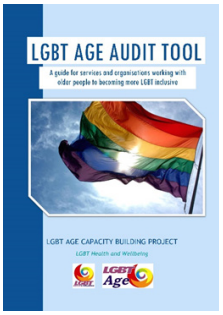
- Reduced isolation
- Improved mental health and wellbeing
- Increased community capacity
- Increased social capital
- Increased personalised care and resilience
- Increased flexibility in support provision

What makes us successful?

Because capacity building work needs to change complex systems and broad cultures, it can be challenging to achieve the reach that we would like. We work at several levels:

- Training, resources and events for front-line staff supports them to improve everyday practice
- Work with service managers through training, events, using the Audit Tool and other resources which supports change to systems within each organisation
- Work with commissioners creates changes in the expectations of services, including changes to contracts and commissioning documents

This helps to ensure that work is complementary and one level does not hamper another (e.g. day-to-day good practice as a result of staff training can be backed up by policies which provide structure and support). It also means that professionals can get involved in the project in a number of ways, depending on what suits them.



Free resources are available online which can be used independently. By making them clear, practical and easy to use, professionals and organisations can benefit from the project even if they are not able to come to our events.

The input of older LGBT people is essential to making this capacity building work meaningful and effective. The involvement of volunteer Community Champions and Community Representatives consistently comes up as one of the most useful and enjoyable aspects of training sessions.

Measuring capacity building work outcomes

Many of the outcomes identified for capacity building work, focus on long term change across systems and cultures.

This takes time, and may not be visible immediately; changes may have to filter through structures via policies and procedures, which can be a long process. Changes in attitudes among staff and people using services is also an organic process which may be uneven. These outcomes can be difficult to measure, and it may not be possible to focus on longer term outcomes. It can also be difficult to pick apart the effects of a specific project when there are other organisations doing similar work, or where this is a wider change in society.

Our approach is to use a range of methods to capture wide-ranging data. While the finite timeline of the project means that it is not possible to capture some of the longer term outcomes, the aim is to take a longitudinal approach for the duration of the project. The table in page 7 illustrates some projected outcomes for the project, and the ways in which we will measure them.

Evidence that our approach works

Feedback from participants at different levels shows that our approach works. The following are typical comments:

"I feel more aware of the issues and more able to challenge prejudice." ***Training participant***

"I will be reviewing our systems and procedures to specifically mention LGBT people." ***Professionals' Seminar attendee***

"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." ***Caroline Clark, Planning and Commissioning Manager – Older People, City of Edinburgh Council***

The Lifelines intergenerational storytelling project

This was a project to collect and collate people's stories, which were then showcased in an evening of poetry and storytelling from a diverse range of LGBT people. This acted as a creative consultation, and provided the project with a rich resource for sharing real life experiences.

"[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."

Involvement in the project also built community members' own capacity to make their voices heard by services and organisations. Participants in the Lifelines project reported increased confidence, particularly in speaking in public, speaking about their experiences and expressing themselves. Notably, 58 per cent said they felt more able to support others in the community, and 92 per cent said that they felt better about themselves.

Projected outcomes, indicators and data collection methods for capacity building work

Outcomes	Indicators	Methods
Staff have increased awareness of LGBT peoples' needs	Staff say: • We regularly have awareness raising sessions and learning is shared and fed back to the team • We care about equalities • I feel supported to challenge inappropriate behaviour and discrimination • I don't make assumptions about people's sexual orientation or gender identity	• Pre-training questionnaires • Feedback forms at the end of every event (training, seminars and forum), including questions about how participants will change their practice as a result of the session, and how they will share their learning
Organisations have more relevant policies and procedures to support LGBT inclusive practice	• Policies and procedures are visible, accessible, and used by staff and people using the service • LGBT status is seen as confidential information • Relevant equality monitoring is undertaken regularly • Policies are regularly reviewed and discussed as a workforce/service • The organisation has a Safe Space policy, or equivalent, which mentions LGBT people	• Follow up training participants to check what has changed, and asking for feedback from staff and service users • Focus group with organisations who have used the Audit Tool and Top Tips resources • Case study with one or two organisations • Notes from the Professionals' Forum on good practice and challenges
Organisations are pro-active in engaging with LGBT people and are visibly welcoming and safe	• There are visible signs that LGBT-inclusive practice is promoted • Literature is pro-active in encouraging LGBT people to use the service and is inclusive • Same-sex partners and chosen families are fully involved • The service actively promotes itself to LGBT communities • The organisation has links with LGBT organisations	
Services are more accessible for LGBT people Older LGBT people have increased trust and use more services	Older people say: • I feel safe using the service • I feel confident that discrimination will be challenged • The people who are important to me are involved in my care • I know what to do if I need to complain, and I feel that I can report discrimination • I feel welcomed and understood • I receive information and support in a way that is appropriate for my needs • I trust the service as a good quality service • I feel well treated and valued • I feel comfortable accessing information/services • I am taking part in activities • I feel settled • Service statistics • People came back: attendance and activity records	
Older LGBT people feel they have a voice and can shape services	Older people/carers say: • I feel confident in speaking about my needs in relation to services • I feel informed and knowledgeable about issues that affect me • I feel supported and connected to the services I need • I feel understood and listened to • I can assert my rights • I make informed choices about my own health • I am consulted/asked my opinion about services that I use	• Feedback forms for volunteers and those involved in the Reference Group and consultations, such as Lifelines • Consultation with older LGBT people who use services

A Stitch in Time?

A Stitch in Time? is a partnership project to support the third sector to collect and present evidence about its contribution to Reshaping Care for Older People (RCOP). The programme runs from April 2013 to March 2015 and focuses on third sector organisations working with older people and carers in Lothian.

A Stitch in Time? publications

A model to explain the third sector contribution to Reshaping Care for Older People

Indicator Bank for third sector outcomes for older people

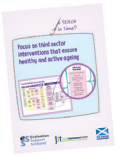
Focus on third sector interventions that make the physical and social environment more age friendly

Focus on third sector interventions to enable older people to keep or be more socially connected

Focus on third sector interventions that allow older people to stay positive and in control

Focus on third sector interventions to enable older people to keep or be more financially and materially secure

Focus on third sector interventions that make the system work better for older people



Focus on third sector interventions that ensure healthy and active ageing

To accompany this series there are **evaluation case studies** and a number of **evidence reviews**.
To see all publications associated with A Stitch in Time please see Evaluation Support Scotland website.

Evaluation Support Scotland (ESS) works with third sector organisations and funders so that they can measure and report on their impact.

Evaluation Support Scotland

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