

The Rainbow Lives Project



**Enhancing the lives of older LGBT People
in
Social Care and Care Homes**

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The Rainbow Lives Project Liverpool



Who I am Jenny-Anne Bishop

- **Trans-Woman (Transsexual Woman)**
- **Member of Parliamentary Forum on Gender Identity**
- **Coordinator** **TransForum** Manchester
- **Board Member** **LGBT Excellence Centre Cardiff & Metropolitan Community Church Manchester**
- **Networking & Training Committee Member Unique TG Network North Wales**

Older LGBT People & Social Care Issues

- **The Number of LGBT people in Wales over 50 is Approx 50,000; in the whole UK it's around 1.1 million**
- **They are a largely unseen and reluctant to identify group who's needs are often neglected**
- **Their potential care providers are largely untrained in awareness and in their appropriate health and care needs**
- **They May not be accepted by their peers or their Care Workers**
- **LGB may have to go back in the closet to survive**

Older LGBT People & Social Care Issues

- **Older LGBT couples may not be offered shared accommodation, even those in a civil partnership**
- **Families may insist that Gay couples are separated**
- **Can be ostracised and denied normal care**
- **Great need for Education & Training**
- **The E&HRC reports that one of the worst areas of Discrimination & Abuse of LGBT people is in Social care and the NHS**

Older LGBT People & Social Care Issues

- **Family support for older LGBT people is often denied or just not available**
- **Issue of support for older people who are partners or parents of LGBT people (visiting and “next of Kin” rights etc.)**
- **Families often see LGBT people as single and therefore available to care for elderly parents & family children ignoring their relationships, especially if the LGBT person has health issues**

Older LGBT People & Social Care Issues

- **Refusing to celebrate one's real life at the funeral. Arranging it far away at an inconvenient time to exclude LGBT friends**
- **No research to show if being a Welsh speaker can inhibit care and health treatments for LGBT people.**
- **Some Evidence of Ageism in the Welsh LGBT community**

Older LGBT People & Social Care Issues

- **Socially Excluded because straight Women may feel threatened by Lesbians & Straight Men by Gay Men**
- **LGBT people from Ethnic minorities, or who have disability or learning difficulties may be doubly discriminated against**

Gay Men's Issues

- **Refusal to accept someone is Gay**
- **Finding & dealing with Porn collections**
- **Having to pretend not to be gay**
- **Having your or your partner's history erased**
- **Families preventing access to long term partner**

Gay Men's Issues

- **Need Sympathetic Executors**
- **Exposure (Outing) of a relatively open life, lived in the shadows after having to go back to being totally hidden**

Gay Men's Issues

- **Only those who have been totally out may have the confidence to obtain good service**
- **Isolation can cause LGBT men (& Women) to commit Suicide**
- **Partnerships threatened by exclusion**

Older Trans Issues

- **Refusal to accept someone is Trans**
- **Trans probably Unable to go back into the closet**
- **May have ambiguous physiology**
- **Losing your freedom & your identity twice at a most Vulnerable Time in your life**

Lesbian Issues

- **Refusal to accept someone's Lesbian Identity**
- **Older Lesbian Women may loose part of their marriage settlement & pension entitlement if they are in a civil partnership, but they need the partnership for “next of Kin” rights**
- **Partnerships threatened by exclusion**

Lesbian Issues

- **Lesbian Women particularly value feeling Safe once Safety Issues have been tackled**
- **Isolation and feeling lonely is common amongst Lesbian Women**
- **Most would greatly value a chance to mix socially with other Lesbians**
- **Some fear “Sexist” men in Care & Care homes not respecting they are Lesbian**

Older LGBT Health Issues

- LGBT people are more likely to be smokers, heavy drinkers, overweight and substance users**
- HIV issues are often not discussed and just ignored. Similarly Sexuality Issues**
- Some doctors still regard homosexuality as an illness and many Medical Students still regard gay activity as unacceptable**
- Some cancers are more common in LGBT people**

Older LGBT Health Issues

- **Higher rates of stress from Homophobic & Transphobic behaviour leading to depression & mental health Problems**
- **1 in 5 have attempted suicide and few report hate crime or abuse for fear of being “outed”**
- **Continuous Stress can cause auto immune deficiency leading to Heart and digestive system problems**

Older LGBT Health Issues

- **Many LGBT people see their community friends as their “Family” who may have no rights to be involved in their care or visit them**
- **Some evidence of Poorer benefit uptake by LGBT people due to fear of Homophobia / Transphobia in the application process causing depression**
- **Many LGBT people have low confidence in challenging Homo / Transphobia**

Older Gay Men's Health Issues

- **HIV Status assumed**
- **Anyone who is ill is often suspected of being HIV positive without any further evidence**

Lesbian Health Issues

- **A lesbian may not want intimate care from a male nurse.
Generally men are OK with Women**
- **Lesbian Women Threatened & Ostracised including care**
- **Lesbian women under using gynaecological & screening services, together with post menopausal symptoms which may go untreated**

Trans Health Issues

- **Gender Reassignment surgery becomes more of an issue (including those in stealth);if you move into care home or need intimate personal assistance.**
- **Having to take Hormones & Other drugs all your life. How do you explain taking HRT & a Prostate drug which says “Men Only”**
- **Having a “Mixed Gender Body”**

Trans Health Issues

- **Long Term use of Hormones by Trans people may cause additional problems in later life (No Research has been done, except for a 30% increased Breast Cancer risk)**
- **Differences in Male & Female Blood density can cause erroneous diagnosis**
- **What if you are a Transvestite / Cross dresser who just needs to express their “other gender”**

Issue's associated with Dementia

- **A Trans person who forgets they have transitioned / had Surgery**
- **Gay or Lesbian people who “forget” they have come out or are supposed to be in Stealth**
- **Cross dressing issues may be confused with Dementia**

Interacting with LGBT People

- **LGBT People want to be treated with dignity, courtesy & respect – just like you!**
- **They don't want special treatment or to be seen as oddities**
- **Be confident & treat them as you would anyone else**
- **If in doubt ASK!**

Rainbow Lives Project

- **A project engaging with the Care & Social issues facing older LGBT people**
- **It especially confronts LGBT discrimination within hospitals, home care, care homes or other residential settings**
- **In partnership with First Take Films & the Merseyside Navajo Charter Mark, it provides the necessary training and accreditation to insure compliance with all current equality legislation protecting LGBT people**

Rainbow lives- Social Issues

Comments

- **"Feelings are an important aspect of health & Wellbeing so they should be considered. For too long LGBT have been shown little consideration and now is surely the time to focus attention on such an important issue."**
- **"It is really important that training on awareness is made available to staff in residential homes, etc."**

Rainbow lives- Social Issues

Comments

- **LGBT residents in their declining years deserve the right to be themselves, just like anyone else."**
- **"There should be a voluntary buddy scheme for younger LGBT people to befriend or care for older LGBT people"**
- **"My concern is not feeling safe and unable to just be myself."**

Rainbow lives- Social Issues

Comments

- **“I'd so miss the banter and flirting with other LGBT people, I really fear loneliness”**
- **“I fear growing old on my own and being denied the right to be me & to meet other LGBT people”**
- **“Going into a home where there are no LGBT people or anyone I know is very scary – I might hide in my computer”**
- **“Too often Gay men who come out are branded as paedophiles”**

Rainbow lives- Social Issues

Comments

- **“I don't expect my family to care for me in old age”**
- **“I just want to feel part of the“Family” in a care home”**

Rainbow lives- Social Issues

Comments

- **"Why am I frightened? Old, HIV positive and alone - why in 2010?
I Need positive understanding not only of my sexuality, but of my status & my needs, my family and my friends.
My guilt of living when others have died"**
- **"My chance of living not locked in a room"**

Rainbow Lives Project

Social Support

- **Many Older LGBT people are not part of an existing social network**
- **Little or no social events for older LGBT people especially in rural Wales**
- **Silver Pride started with an event called “Over the Rainbow but not Over the Hill” also used to collect views of the older LGBT community about existing services provision and support**

Rainbow Lives

Social Support

- **“Saturday night on a Wednesday afternoon”**
- **Members of Age Concern Liverpool & Sefton Silver Pride group for older LGBT stressed that loneliness and isolation was a significant source of fear & dread**
- **“Out in the City” a Manchester based social group for older LGBT people is another example of good practice**

Contact & Further Information



Rainbow Lives

Compared to heterosexual older people, older LGBT people are:

- * 2.5 times more likely to live alone
- * Twice as likely to be single.
- * 4.5 times more likely to have no children to call upon in times of need.

First Take and Age Concern Liverpool and Sefton want to highlight their concerns for their later years.

We will tell the story but we need your support to make it happen.

Please tell us why it is important to you to share your concerns with us

**Contact Lynne Harwood on
0151 708 5767**



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