



Research and progress report

September 2013



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Introduction

SAND was set up to raise community awareness and help local authorities, care providers and carers to address the fears and discrimination that may be experienced by older LGBT people and carers by overcoming prejudice in care, stopping negativity, protecting those who are vulnerable and encouraging openness about specific LGBT needs. The website is: <http://lgbsand.wordpress.com>

SAND is overseen by an Action Group made up of local LGBT people, as well as other organisations and professionals.

Dr Judith Wester is Director of CEDAR, a non-profit organisation dedicated to bringing knowledge, understanding and acceptance of death through education and consultancy. CEDAR provides death education to those working in the public and private sectors, community groups and individuals needing to know how to talk about death and deliver bad news in compassionate and appropriate ways.

Kay Davies is a local Matron and Care Manager who has worked to improve standards in Care Homes for the last 20 years.

Betty Halford is an older woman passionate about her community and looking ahead to when she may need to call on care services.

Geoff Hardy is a volunteer with the Shropshire Rainbow Film Festival, an annual festival which aims to entertain, educate, challenge and change.

Heather Osborne is Chief Executive of Age UK Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin - a local independent charity committed to pursuing equality for older people.

Paul Craig works for Severnside Housing/ Sustain consortium, providing support to keep people living independently in their own homes supporting them with many issues that could make them homeless or having to go into care. Paul has an NVQ in supported Housing, Diploma in Health and Social Care, Professional Certificate in managing Health and Social Care, and a Certificate in Mental Health Studies.

Lee Lewis is a service manager for the Royal Voluntary Service. She visits clients and holds reminiscing sessions in nursing homes in the Shrewsbury area.

SAND is supported by [changes](#) – a workers co-op committed to equalities and focusing on community empowerment. Two of [changes'](#) Directors are also film programmers for [SpringOut](#) which works with the Shropshire Rainbow Film Festival.




The Project Working Group has identified three key priorities to guide SAND's work:

1. **Empowering older Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Trans (LGBT) people** - identifying issues impacting on them in care settings, ensuring access to information, supporting them to 'come out', outreach to isolated older LGBT people.
2. **Targeting organisations (working together / empowering others)** - developing an approach to help care staff to 'get that there is something to get'. Advising on good practice, holding organisations to account.
3. **Influence** - to embed good working practice, encouraging appropriate service provision, being advocates, gathering information, research and statistics.

The research

The bulk of the research has been undertaken through a review of resources and materials, all of which are captured on the 'Publications and Links' page of the website. They include:

The Rainbow Lives Project



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

Jenny-Anne Bishop, Lynne Harwood & Phil Johnson

31/05/10


The Rainbow Lives Project Liverpool

Equality and Human Rights Commission

Equality and Human Rights Commission Policy report

Beyond tolerance Making sexual orientation a public matter

Sexual Orientation A guide for the NHS



Stonewall

EUROPEAN CHARTER OF RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF OLDER PEOPLE IN NEED OF LONG-TERM CARE AND ASSISTANCE

ACCOMPANYING GUIDE

NOT JUST A FRIEND

best practice guidance on health care for lesbian, gay and bisexual service users and their families


UNISON

Not just a friend


best practice guidance on health care for lesbian, gay and bisexual service users and their families

UNISON

Older lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) people




Supporting older Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender people




A checklist for Social Care providers

Supporting older Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender people




A checklist for Social Care providers

Implications for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people




Experiences of healthcare




Stonewall health briefing

All but invisible: older gay men and lesbians

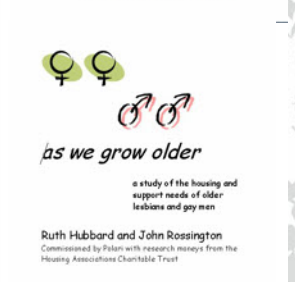


Highland Rainbow Folk




Working with older lesbians, gay men, bisexual men and women and transgender people (LGBT) in the North of Scotland

Supporting older Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender people




A checklist for Social Care providers

Moving Forward: Working with & for older Lesbians, Gay Men, Bisexuals & Transgendered people




training and resource pack


Equality for older lesbian, and intersex people




Building a sense of community: Including older LGBT in the way we develop and deliver housing with care




Assessment of Care Needs and the Delivery of Care for Lesbians Living in Residential Care Homes in Bradford and Calderdale



Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender experiences in Somerset

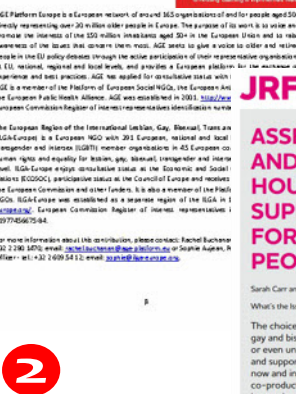


Mental health




Stonewall health briefing

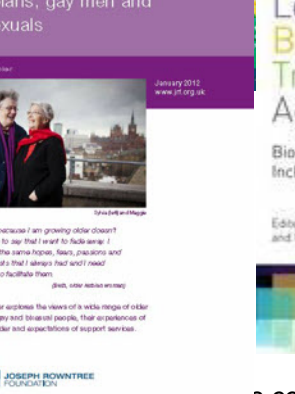
Assessing Current and Future Housing and Support Options for Older LGB People




Assessing Current and Future Housing and Support Options for Older LGB People




Perspectives on ageing: lesbians, gay men and bisexuals



Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Ageing



Lesbian, Gay, Male, Bisexual and Transgendered Elders: Elder Abuse and Neglect Issues



Key Themes

After some pilot research in a care home regarding staff LGBT knowledge, lengthy discussions with the Action Group, and additional literature reviews, several key themes have been identified. These themes are related to and impact upon the three key SAND priorities.

The ultimate purpose of SAND is to ensure that older lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT) people are supported and not discriminated against. LGBT people often face unique challenges as they grow older.

Therefore, it is vital that those providing them with care and support understand their needs, wishes and experiences.

Our challenge is to get across to carers and care organisations that there is something to 'get'. While it is easy to say 'we don't discriminate' or 'we treat everyone the same', this misses the subtleties and complexities faced by the LGBT community.

We need to communicate these ideas to both LGBT and non-LGBT people. Because we live in the world that we do, the fact that there are more 'out' LGBT people and we have civil partnerships and equal marriage, does not necessarily mean that discrimination and homophobia does not exist. Inequality and the impact of this does not and will not suddenly disappear and indeed, in spite of political gains, entrenched attitudes remain prevalent. Social policy, equalities policies, anti-harassment policies are crucial but this doesn't necessarily filter down to the way we think about or treat people. Our society generally assumes heterosexuality and this has huge implications, for LGBT people and organisations providing care and other services.

-  1 LGBT people may be afraid to come out as they are unsure about the response they will get. Organisations then say 'there are no gay people here' so it isn't an issue
-  2 Coming out isn't a one-off – it's constant and can be very wearing
-  3 Growing up in homophobic families, workplaces, environments has an impact on LGBT people's mental health and how they manage situations
-  4 Being part of a group that is, in many parts of our society and many parts of the world, 'not normal' has an impact on how LGBT people see themselves and each other
-  5 Treating everyone 'the same' means that LGBT people's life experiences are unlikely to be considered
-  6 It's not always about being actively 'excluded', but more about not being 'included'
-  7 Isolation can be a serious issue amongst older LGBT people and although not exclusive to them, they may have/feel they have less choice in accessing support networks
-  8 LGBT people don't necessarily know how to access information and support – if they don't see themselves represented on leaflets, posters etc. they are likely to feel excluded
-  9 Being LGBT isn't all people are but, it can be a part of their identity that gets left out in order to survive in the world
-  10 The concept of 'family' may be very different for LGBT people

[Gen Silent](#) is a film - it is where it all started. It was screened by the Shropshire Rainbow Film Festival for LGBT History Month 2012. It consists of interviews with older LGBT people in Boston and exposes some of the raw issues they are facing in a predominantly heterosexual society. It was shocking and moving - and there is currently no British equivalent film - but what about the issues being experienced here? SAND wants to have a look and do something about them!

Members of the SAND Action Group visited a care home and showed the film [Gen Silent](#) - the session confirmed the issue of invisibility as staff said that 'it is not an issue - there isn't a problem'. There was a sense that some staff may welcome the opportunity to talk about the issues raised and this was difficult to say when others don't recognise the issues. This was a home with a very enlightened manager.

So, what's the issue?

I have been looking at training for domiciliary care and support services for our requirements. I have been looking on the internet for suitable training and have not found any. I have also called the Chartered Institute of Housing, who run lots of training programs and they don't have anything that would meet our needs.

I also rang the Social Care Institute for Excellence, who also provide training and they say they don't have anything but could put together a training package.

I rang several managers of domiciliary care and they too said they didn't know of any training in this area. There are about 351,400 care staff caring for 550,000 older people in their own homes so a serious gap here (social services statistics).

I have also been looking at Severnside Housing's annual customer survey (December 2012). Severnside Housing has 569 people living in sheltered accommodation (95% over 65 years of age), 411 of which receive support. We don't have figures for how many receive care at home as we are not care providers and some use personal budgets.

What I thought was interesting was that according to the whole survey; sheltered accommodation and general needs accommodation we only have 1 gay male and 1 lesbian over the age of 65, which I think says a lot.

SAND – moving forwards

Since seeing the film [Gen Silent](#) in 2012, an action group has formed, a website www.lgbtsand.wordpress.com has been developed, initial research has been undertaken and an action plan has been drawn up.

It is clear that there is a need to make sexual orientation more of a public issue – information should be collected and disseminated about all aspects. Further research needs to provide both qualitative and quantitative information about people's lived experiences. A key issue here is how to make it safe enough for people to give information without fear about how it might be used.

Legal aspects

SAND is aware that there are many legal aspects that need to be highlighted and awareness raised both among LGBT people in relation to their rights, and to those providing services to older people. For example:

- Awareness of equality legislation, both generic and for specific aspects of service delivery.
- Awareness of legal issues and how these might impact on clients/residents e.g. 'next of kin', Lasting Power of Attorney, if no marriage/civil partnership.
- Importance of Wills.

Involving older people

We need to be considering how we engage older LGBT people in a way that resonates with them, for support, so that they can influence, challenge and change the way services are delivered.

Influencing health and social care provision

To create real and lasting change we need to be influencing health and social care provision at all levels and this must be a major function of SAND. This includes:

- At policy level.
- At the level of individual service delivery and priorities.
- At the level of individual behaviour via training, awareness, support.

Good practice project

SAND will endeavour to highlight examples of good practice and challenge organisations to adopt these ways of working. We need to consider how people access information.

Target groups/organisations to aim at:

- Carers organisations
- Homecare providers
- Care homes
- Day care provisions
- Housing providers
- Health services
- Mental health services
- Dementia care
- Adult protection services
- Domestic violence services

SAND has started to develop an action plan to work towards its 3 priorities. Progress on this will be posted on the website against each priority, alongside a growing resource bank of publications and links to other work. Initial stages of the action plan are underway

	Phase I includes actions to
Empowering older Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Trans (LGBT) people ... identifying issues impacting on them in care settings, ensuring access to information, supporting them to 'come out', outreach to isolated older LGBT people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertise SAND to older LGBT people • Identify older LGBT people in care settings • Talk to older LGBT people (outside as well as inside care settings) about their fears • Send a questionnaire out to care home managers and domiciliary care • Assess information needed • Make links with others e.g. gay friendly solicitors; information giving services locally • Develop a policy around confidentiality • Develop promotional materials
Targeting organisations (working together / empowering others) ...developing an approach to help care staff to 'get that there is something to get'! Advise on good practice, hold organisations to account	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support organisations to understand different 'family' models – include awareness work specifically with managers and matrons • Research adult protection guidance & treatment in care • Review existing quality standard (Merseyside) • Support housing organisations, care home managers and Dom Care managers to word their policy documents and tenancy agreements
Influence ...to embed good working practice, encourage appropriate service provision, to be advocates, to gather information, research and statistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scope links to be made e.g. PCT, HealthWatch, OMEGA, CRUSE, CEDAR • Lobby politicians • Look at student nurse curriculum – advise on how to include • Scope a training programme for bereavement workers • Scope routes to influence local commissioners, CQC and national guidance • Visit care homes and ask questions about provision and attitude for LGBT people

The SAND Action Group now meets monthly in a meeting room donated by Age UK Shropshire Telford & Wrekin. Others are now being encouraged to get involved in working towards SAND priorities and activities are underway. The group is currently unfunded and is looking into different ways of resourcing its activities – fundraising and finance are an integral part of the SAND strategy.

This report was approved at the SAND Action Group meeting, 12/09/13