

# LGBTQ+ Older Adult Social Care Assessment (LOASCA) study

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# Outline

- **Knowledge Review**
- **LOASCA Project & Findings**
- **Recommendations**
- **Case Scenarios**
- **Q&A**



# **Aim of the study**

To investigate the ways social care professionals engage with sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) when assessing the care and support needs of older LGBTQ+ people.

Health disparities between LGBTQ+ older people and heterosexual counterparts

Increased demands on social care to develop inclusive services

Services are required to collect data about gender and sexual identity – not always happening.

Social work and social care accused of being sexuality and gender-blind

Historical experiences for older LGBTQ+ people matter

LGBTQ+ older people less likely to have familial support

LGBTQ+ older people often describe going back into 'the closet'

LGBTQ+ older people often seek social support from within LGBTQ+ groups

# Methodology

- Multiple case study approach x 3
- Survey, professional interviews, case files, organisational documents, service user interviews
- Collaborative with 8 employed PPI co-researchers

| Survey     | Staff interviews | Organisational documents | Case files | Service user interviews |
|------------|------------------|--------------------------|------------|-------------------------|
| <b>138</b> | <b>28</b>        | <b>18</b>                | <b>55</b>  | <b>13</b>               |

# Case Sites Overview


## Diverse size, ethnic diversity, population, setting

**Urbantown** – Densely populated metropolitan council, with substantial ethnic diversity, substantial number of ASC users and staff, low % of LGBT residents for population

**Suburbia** – Small suburban council, with midrange ethnic diversity, disproportionately low number of ASC users

**Ruralshire** – large, rural, remote council, very low ethnic diversity, mid-range number of ASC users and staff

\*data from the 2021 National Census



# Key Findings

- LGBTQ+ people are **often missing** from **policy considerations** and **staff discussions**.
- Challenges with **data collection** about service user's sexual orientation and gender identity.
- The '**double-bind**' of professional and service user anxieties
- Social work staff are seeking **greater knowledge** about how LGBTQ+ issues apply in their practice.

# Qualitative Survey Findings

"In my 27 years, I've never seen any training specifically on this area [LGBTQ+ people]."

"I do not think there are any barriers - **everyone should be treated equally** and with respect regardless of sex, gender, orientation."

"**I feel very uncomfortable asking** citizen's I support. Now we need to consider the pronouns of a citizen - he/she/they? - how should we approach asking this without possibly causing offence?"

"As social workers, it is our vocation to create the core conditions for therapeutic discussions. Supporting people to discuss their sexual orientation and gender identity is an essential part of this, often overlooked. When we leave this out of our assessments, we lose half the story, and miss our opportunities to validate and respect a person in need."



# Professional Interviews

## **Most unable to identify any LGBTQ+ service users**

"I haven't knowingly come across someone who's LGBT in practice."

## **Fear of 'saying the wrong thing' about sexuality and/or gender**

"I think at the time I did feel uncomfortable because I just didn't want to offend anyone. I didn't want to say anything wrong."

## **'Treating everyone equally' mentioned as one of the reasons for not asking about sexuality/gender**

"I don't ask the question because I think it's irrelevant, so I don't ask it. That doesn't matter what your identity is as to how I do my assessment; I would do everybody equally and fairly."



## **Able to raise EDI issues with management?**

“It could be that you raise it with your manager depending on the gravity of what you’re talking about and the impact it could potentially have upon people [...] But I would feel comfortable having that discussion definitely.”

## **Need for more LGBTQ+-related training and education, pre- and post-qualification**

“I said there’s this training, it’s to do with LGBTQ, and I said on a particular day, a particular time – it was online...There was me, the chap from the NHS...and a female social worker from another authority. Full stop. What a waste...Not one of my colleagues let alone anybody in the department.”

“But specific [LGBTQ+] training certainly I've not seen any.”



# Case Files, Document and Service User Findings

Missed opportunities to discuss SOGI

Using relationships as a proxy for identity

Trans identities often missed from strategies and plans

LGBTQ+ usually unspecified, included in broader EDI

Need for professionals to support engaging with LGBTQ+ services

Need for a better awareness of LGBTQ+ service user needs



# Implications

## Local Authority, Practitioner, Policy

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Greater emphasis on **data collection**;  
asking SU about SOGI in assessment

Supporting access to current **knowledge**  
about LGBTQ+ people

**Training** on LGBTQ+ issues – should be  
mandatory and coherent; applying  
training in practice

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Ensure **environments** include pro-LGBTQ+  
symbols for service users and staff; include  
SOGI-related considerations in inspections

Ensure staff are **aware** of local and national  
LGBTQ+ support organisations

Ensure that SOGI-related topics are included  
in practice and **EDI discussions**

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# SOGI Questions to use in Assessments

As part of this assessment, it is important we get a sense of your entire life and needs. We need to discuss how you experience the world around you, so I need to ask you about your identities, such as your ethnicity.

Which of these best describes how you think of yourself?

- 1.Heterosexual or Straight
- 2.Gay or Lesbian
- 3.Bisexual
- 4.Another

How would you describe your gender and gender identity? (some examples include cisgender, transgender, non-binary)



# Outputs

- SCIE knowledge repository
- Graphic novel
- Animated video
- Briefings
- Academic outputs



# Case Scenario 1 & 2

Tejpal, a 72-year-old, Asian man from a Sikh family, has recently been moved into a privately-run care/nursing home and is in the later stages of dementia (Alzheimer's disease). His verbal communication is limited and some of what he says does not make much sense to many people. He cannot wash, feed or care for himself. Tejpal was once married but now has no contact with his former wife. His brother and sister visit him fairly regularly but his most recent partner, Roy, died a few years ago. The care home needs to know what mental capacity Tejpal has and what his care needs are.

Fran, a 60-year-old, lesbian lives alone in her own flat. She struggles with isolation and depression. She has little contact with her family, as many of them do not approve of her 'lifestyle' and, although she has a number of lesbian and/or bisexual friends, she struggles to maintain contact with them. Fran is a white woman and she comes from a large, working class, Christian family background. She used to work as a teaching assistant but she had to take early retirement. Her G.P. is worried about Fran's mental health and, with Fran's consent, has asked for an assessment of her support needs.

# Case Scenario 3

Faye, a 65-year-old, trans woman lives with her partner, Bob, in a sheltered housing complex which offers some support to residents. She also attends a local trans people's support group and is quite active in the LGBTQ community. But recently, her physical health has begun to deteriorate, and she now struggles with her mobility. Although Bob cares for Faye as best he can, they are both worried that he may not be able to cope with all her physical care, and so they have asked for someone to visit their home to see if there is any other support available.





SCIE knowledge repository

# Thank you!

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LOASCA website

# Co-researcher experience

What did you enjoy most about being part of the research teams?

What did not work very well for supporting your engagement?

What do you think is the most important message from this research?

What's next for you?

