

Challenges older LGBT+ people face in being part of a cohesive community

Building Stronger Communities is a project in Nottingham and Bassetlaw that promotes and encourages cohesion and integration by organising activities that bring communities together. Dialogue is one of the tools we use to encourage discussions of sensitive topics allowing people to have their voices heard in a safe environment.

Introduction:

Minority groups can face particular barriers when it comes to being part of a cohesive community. But minorities within minorities face further exclusion due to multiple layers of discrimination. This includes older LGBT+ people who are often stigmatised and stereotyped because of their sexual orientation and age, making it difficult for them to integrate.

Points of discussion:

What are the key challenges for communities?

- More people are coming out later in life leading to isolation and less established personal and social networks, because most support is geared towards younger people
- LGBT+ is a massively diverse group in itself, which includes many differences including age, race, gender etc. Some issues affect people across the LGBT+ community and other issues are specific to particular groups e.g. transgender
- Newer definitions of identity are causing tensions for much sought and fought for recognition. Some feel there is an erosion of identity, whilst for others it is a preference
- Care work is underpaid and attracts workers from other countries who sometimes have negative stereotypes and prejudices against LGBT+ people, leading to inappropriate or poor care
- There is a growing tension as people get older between faith and sexual orientation/identity. Faith may become more important but less accessible due to prejudice that may be present in faith institutions
- People may lack the traditional family structures leading to isolation and loneliness
- Service providers often do not consider the specific needs of older LGBT+ people affecting their access to housing, health and care in later life

Next steps:

What needs to happen to address some of the challenges?

- There is still a need to challenge negative stereotypes particularly when facing double discrimination i.e. ageism and homophobia
- Service providers need to consider how they make their services more accessible
- Health and social care workers need to be aware of the needs of older LGBT+ people through training so they receive care and support that respects their life choices
- Address the important issue of loneliness through another event

