

1. Do you think the Action Plan will increase equality for LGBTQ+ people and what do you think the priorities should be?

Age Cymru welcomes the development of the LGBTQ+ Action Plan. Over time, actions included should assist in increasing equality for LGBTQ+ people in Wales. It would be helpful if further detail were included on how actions will be achieved.

We welcome the intersectional approach of the plan in recognition of how discrimination impacts people differently in different circumstances. As such the incremental experiences over time for older LGBTQ+ people should be captured and understood, and so appropriate actions can be developed to assist them to more confidently access the services and support that they need.

Priorities should include actions to reduce barriers to accessing public services that LGBTQ+ people face. In practical terms this is the area over which Welsh Government has influence and the ability to make changes sooner than in seeking further devolved powers to address specific concerns.

2. Do you agree with the overarching aims? What would you add or take away in relation the overarching aims?

The overarching aims do identify areas that require attention to overcome inequalities.

3. Do you agree with the proposed actions? What would you add or take away in relation the actions?

The consultation details many actions intended to improve lives of LGBTQ+ people in Wales. The actions focus on areas of life where changes are needed, but in looking at all areas this results in a long list. These would benefit from being broken down into short, medium and longer term actions. It would be helpful to detail timescales for completion.

We note that the consultation has primarily relied on social media, which is entirely understandable during the pandemic. However, many older people in Wales do not have access to the internet and some will have limited digital literacy¹. As such their voices, views and experiences are less likely to have been captured in comparison with younger LGBTQ+ people.

We therefore suggest that action 6 on formalising the Expert Panel should be strengthened to state that the panel should include an appropriate level of representation from older LGBTQ+ people. Older LGBTQ+ people have lived through times where their identity has not been accepted and so they have disproportionately been affected by these experiences. This inclusion will assist in ensuring that people from the older LGBTQ+ community's experiences and views are heard and understood and actions taken to make services more accessible, so allowing older LGBTQ+ people the confidence to access the services and support that they need.

Actions under 'human rights and recognition' include the banning of conversion therapy. In April, UK Govt announced plans to ban this, it may be helpful to re word this action to work with UK government on this to ensure it addresses the needs of LGBTQ+ people in Wales.

Action 40 calls for a review of mental health services specifically refers to the need for an additional focus on children and young people's mental health. We welcome this focus for children and young people in recognition of the high levels of need for child and adolescent mental health services. However, we would also point out that older people's mental health provision is largely focused on dementia related conditions. This does not adequately cover wider mental health needs in older people. Older LGBTQ+ people can be disproportionately affected by mental health issues, which also need care and support for in later life. The incremental and intersectional effects of longevity of conditions also needs a focus in addressing mental health.

4. What are the key challenges that could stop the aims and actions being achieved?

Appropriate resourcing is vital to the success of the plan and more information on resourcing would be useful to enable an assessment as to whether this could be a barrier. It is vital that resources are directed where they are needed the most in order to be effective. This should include resources for community based organisations with the local knowledge that is vital to success.

5. What resources (this could include funding, staff time, training, access to support or advocacy services among other things) do

¹ [National Survey for Wales, 2018-19: Internet use and digital skills \(gov.wales\)](https://gov.wales/national-survey-for-wales-2018-19-internet-use-and-digital-skills)

you think will be necessary in achieving the aims and actions outlined?

The Action Plan will require resourcing for all of the above in order to be effective. Further work is likely to be needed to look at resourcing requirements for different actions.

For example, in focus groups with Age Alliance Wales, older LGBT+ people spoke of additional concerns they can experience in rural areas and how their remoteness can be very socially isolating.² Rurality and distance from services can mean that there will be higher resourcing requirements for all services and groups to be within reach of reach older LGBTQ+ people in rural areas than in urban ones.

In developing advocacy services that meet the needs of LGBTQ+ people, this will require additional resourcing. There are currently insufficient advocacy services across Wales to meet the various needs of the people of Wales that are trying to address the increased demand from the pandemic so it is unlikely that existing 'generic' services will be unable to adequately advocate for specific LGBTQ+ concerns appropriately. Other models of delivery may need to be considered in different areas of Wales.

6. Do you feel the LGBTQ+ Action Plan adequately covers the intersection of LGBTQ+ with other protected characteristics, such as race, religion or belief, disability, age, sex, and marriage and civil partnership? If not, how can we improve this?

The Plan overall addresses intersectionality but does not include all details on how intersectionality is experienced and the effects that this has on LGBTQ+ people. For example, younger LGBTQ+ people are growing up in a world where there are legal protections in place around their identities (though we acknowledge the huge gap between legal protections being in place and change in culture that legal protection hopes to achieve). Many older LGBTQ+ people have often felt stigmatised and lived with the anxiety of violence, exclusion and criminalisation. The legacy from those times means that now it is daunting coming out to services they need.³ As such, it is important that the lived experiences of older LGBTQ+ people are considered.

For example, older people in same sex relationships are more likely to be a carer for their partner than those in heterosexual relationships as they are more likely to be estranged from their biological family. Caring responsibilities can affect people's

² Age Alliance Wales and Age Cymru (2019) The concerns of LGBT+ people in later life. Focus Group responses: 2018/19 <http://agealliancewales.org.uk/briefings-publications>

³ [hiding-who-i-am-the-reality-of-end-of-life-care-for-lgbt-people.pdf](http://mariecurie.org.uk/hiding-who-i-am-the-reality-of-end-of-life-care-for-lgbt-people.pdf) (mariecurie.org.uk)

physical and mental health. When coupled with an aversion to accessing public services, this suggests that LGBTQ+ people are likely to have lower health outcomes in later life. Achieving equality will necessitate an additional need for care services to be understanding and inclusive of LGBTQ+ people's needs. This requires health, social care and housing to work together. Age Cymru believes that it is important that local authorities and other housing providers are aware of additional barriers that older people with multiple protected characteristics may encounter when accessing housing services. Older LGBTQ+ people should be able to access the variety of housing options and support models available for all older people knowing that they will be accepted and can live in an inclusive, safe environment.⁴

Though anxieties also exist in younger LGBTQ+ people, older people's experiences mean that they need an additional focus in considering barriers to engagement.

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⁴ Age Cymru (2020) Housing public policy statement [housing-policy-statement-march-2020.pdf](https://ageuk.org.uk/housing-policy-statement-march-2020.pdf) (ageuk.org.uk)