



# COMMUNICATING SENSITIVELY WITH LGBTQ+ PEOPLE OF DIFFERENT GENERATIONS IN EDUCATION & HEALTHCARE SETTINGS

Project team

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**IncludeAge** Inclusion of diverse older people in community and public places and virtual spaces

## 01 Context

As part of the ESRC-funded IncludeAge project (2022-26), over 70 LGBTQ+ people aged 40+ were interviewed about their life experiences of feeling included or excluded in different places and spaces. Schools and healthcare settings emerged as places of possible exclusion. At the same time, participants stressed the need for better communication across generations, to support LGBTQ+ inclusion.

## 02 Original plan

The original plan was to work alongside 3 LGBTQ+ IncludeAge co-researchers to co-produce three workshops for up to 30 trainee education and healthcare professionals at UH, which would equip them with toolboxes to be more knowledgeable and confident to talk to LGBTQ+ students / patients / colleagues across generational gaps, and thereby nurture inclusion. 2 in-person workshops would be separated by sector; the online workshop would mix sectors.

## 03 Co-production

The IAA team met in November 2024 to begin planning, followed by further planning with co-researchers plus a stakeholder consultation with the Intergenerational National Network in February, 2025. The outcome of this process was a shift in focus from creating toolboxes to focusing on inclusive communication strategies across generations in these settings.

## 04 What happened

Recruiting students to events outside their degree programmes is difficult!

As a result, we scaled down to 2 mixed-sector workshops: 1 in-person, the other online. Staff were also invited.

Across both workshops, there were 7 attendees. Attendees used written prompts from the IncludeAge data, including hybrid vignettes, to reflect on how best to communicate with LGBTQ+ people of different generations in their professional practice. Asked for one thing they would do differently to communicate more sensitively with LGBTQ+ people of different generations in their professional practice, attendees said:

- *Not being afraid to ask, but being aware of how questions are framed. Anticipating I might get it wrong.*
- *Remember that everyone has a different history that affects how they are today.*
- *Try to avoid assuming anything on their identity that may stem from their [gender] presentation.*
- *Ask patients and members with them what their relationship is without assuming, especially with different age dynamics.*

## 05 Further activities

Pathways to impact are rarely linear! The IAA helped establish a co-production process for envisaging wider impact from the IncludeAge project, beyond the IAA. Since January 2025, there have been several further activities designed to build inclusion for LGBTQ+ people across the generations, including:

- Embedding age-friendliness into the UH LGBTQ+ Ally scheme, with the UH LGBTQ+ Staff Network
- Creating a Memory Scrapbook at UH during LGBT+ History Month 2025
- Securing additional funding to (1) hold an online forum discussion for 32 arts/wellbeing organisations to reflect on using LGBTQ+ history in intergenerational practice in the heritage sector & (2) hold a day workshop with Dr Helen Kara to develop UH researchers' confidence to use creative research methods to build LGBTQ+ inclusion.



## 06 Moving forward

A key finding from this work is the importance of the arts & creativity in changing perceptions and building inclusion for LGBTQ+ people across generations.

We will build on our success by focusing our efforts on this area and identifying new beneficiaries in the arts/heritage sectors.

