

Active Inclusion for Policy and Practice

Creating genuinely inclusive policy and practice for mid-older LGBT+ people and people with learning disabilities

1. POLICY: From policy to implementation



Make policy do something

- Move beyond 'saying the right things' → build action in
- Set clear ownership, measures, and follow-through
- Treat policy as living – review, adapt, and improve
- Avoid policy as a 'shield' that hides inaction
- Build inclusion into everyone's role, not one specialist.



Build trust, not just consultation

- Trust is earned over time, not one-off
- Work through trusted community partners and gatekeepers
- Acknowledge historical harms and mistrust (e.g. Section 28; institutionalised 'care')
- Show clearly what changed because of input – 'you said, we did, we followed up'
- Avoid encouraging participation that leads to fatigue



See the whole person

- Move beyond deficit views of ageing or learning disability
- Recognise multiple identities and life experiences
- Use accessible, varied ways to engage (including non-verbal options)
- Don't rely on one communication style
- Make inclusion practical and reachable



'Good policies that don't make a difference are not good policies.'

2. PRACTICE: Make it real in everyday work



Talk about identity – don't avoid it

- Silence isn't neutral → reinforces exclusion
- Identity and sexuality can change over time
- Don't be afraid to admit what you don't know; be willing to learn
- Recognise non-verbal communication and consent
- Don't impose an ideal life path on others



Balance safety and autonomy

- Safeguarding can become over-protective
- Gatekeeping can limit relationships, intimacy, and even dignity
- Support staff to handle ethical tensions
- Reduce fear of 'getting it wrong'
- Enable mutually beneficial relationships



Support the workforce

- Staff need confidence and skills, not just policies
- Provide ongoing training and reflection (e.g. on non-verbal consent)
- Embed learning into supervision and appraisal
- Address personal values openly
- Make inclusion part of daily practice



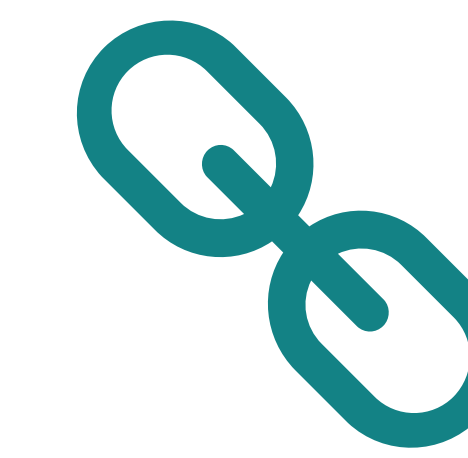
Create inclusive environments

- Visible signs matter – but must be real
- Avoid token gestures
- Design spaces that reduce isolation
- Support tailored spaces (e.g. LGBT+ groups, LD-friendly settings)
- Think beyond providing services to welcoming community input



'Real inclusion takes time.'

3. TOGETHER: What connects policy and practice



Inclusion fails when it is passive or tokenistic

Active inclusion for mid-older LGBT+ people and mid-older people with learning disabilities needs sustained, active implementation, not just 'glossy policies'



Implementation must be intentional, relational, and ongoing

Build trust, listen well, be ready to adapt, and follow through. Revisit conversations and support over time.



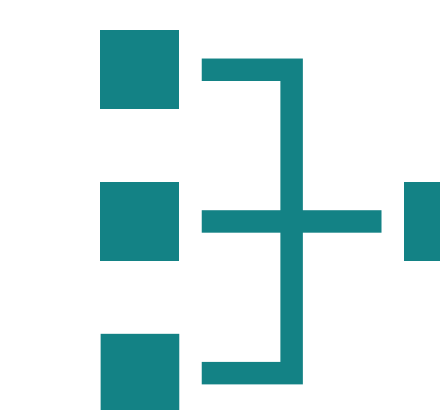
Trust, accountability, and visibility are crucial

People need to see, feel, and experience change. Barriers to participation (e.g. historical legacies) need to be addressed).



Inclusion needs a systems approach

Housing, health, social care, education, transport, community, and culture all matter.



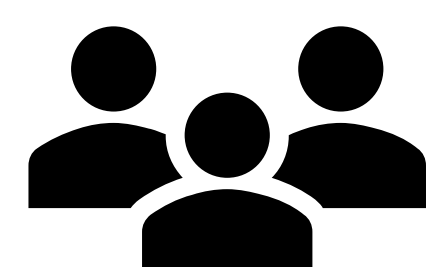
Inclusion is everyone's responsibility

Everyone has a role to play, not just one team or person, but getting leadership buy-in is crucial.



'If we want to influence policy, we need to influence its implementation, too.'

TAKE-HOME POINTS



Do: Build action, measures and accountability
Not: policies that sit on a shelf



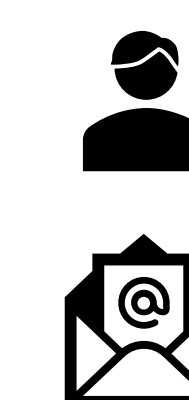
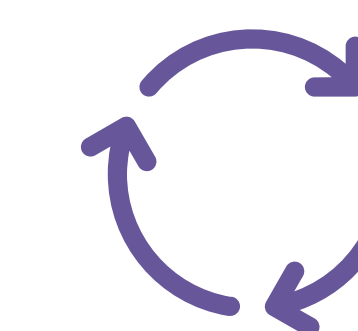
Do: Invest in relationships and trust
Not: One-off consultations



Do: Support staff to act with confidence
Not: Expect policy alone to carry practice



Do: Treat people as complex, whole individuals
Not: Reduce them to categories



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