

# Flowers growing through concrete

LGBTQIA+ people with multiple marginalised identities, and their experiences of health and social care services in the North East of England



Joined Up North East is a project funded by the National Institute of Health and Care Research. It aimed to find out about the experiences of LGBTQIA+ people with multiply marginalised identities within health and social care services in the North East of England. Seventy-two interviews took place between August 2022 and August 2023 with LGBTQIA+ people from diverse backgrounds and experiences, and professionals who work with them. Four members of the public worked alongside academic researchers to add their lived experience to the project. This is their summary.

## What is working well

### 1 Peer support

Receiving support from people who have had similar backgrounds or experiences can be very valuable to LGBTQIA+ people with additional marginalised identities.

### 2 Services that are culturally aware

There are services that appreciate other cultures, with the voluntary sector tending to be more open and responsive to cultural needs. Within most services there were individual staff who understood LGBTQIA+ people's diverse needs. Their support and understanding made a big difference to people's lives.

### 3 LGBTQIA+ development

Young LGBTQIA+ people now have role models who can help to guide them, and they have more options open to them than previous generations.

*We use the term 'multiply marginalised identities' to refer to additional life experiences or cultural backgrounds that might make people more likely to feel socially excluded. For example, this could be people with experiences of homelessness, poverty, domestic violence, disabilities, or those who also experience racism, in addition to being LGBTQIA+.*

## What is not working well

### 1 Systemic oppression

People in the study experienced oppression and discrimination within systems that were often designed for people from majority backgrounds (white, heterosexual, male, able-bodied, cis-gender\*, and financially stable).

### 2 Intersectional challenges

Services failed to understand people's intersecting identities, leaving many LGBTQIA+ from multiply marginalised backgrounds isolated and alone.

### 3 Educational challenges

While many professionals were asking for more information and training, some showed little interest in LGBTQIA+ issues, or different ways of working.

\*cis-gender people are those whose gender identity is the same as the one they were given at birth (i.e. not trans)



## What could help to make things better

### 1 Continual professional development

Services to adopt an ongoing approach to learning about diversity, different cultures and intersecting identities. When working with different cultures, we recommend listening and asking, rather than assuming.

### 2 Creating and nurturing community links

Voluntary sector organisations are often better equipped to support marginalised people. Better links with community organisations would help statutory services to improve their services.

### 3 More LGBTQIA+ representation

"We can't be what we can't see". Having more LGBTQIA+ staff, including those from other races and cultures, will create richer, more diverse and supportive services.

*'Intersectionality' is a term that came from Black feminist thinkers, and is used to describe how our different social positions can interact. For example, a Black woman may experience race differently than a Black man.*

*Within LGBTQIA+ groups, sexual orientation and gender identity can be experienced very differently when it intersects with other social identities, such as race, gender, social class, or physical ability.*

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In the world of inclusion, we need a space for people to put their head above the parapet, and let us know they don't feel included.

This work is a snapshot of the information at hand. We understand that it is not a comprehensive overview of the landscape, because we have to actively leave space for others to speak, and to shape the services of the future.

We are however proud to have started this conversation together. ”

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