



**LGBT
HOUSING
PROJECT**

SAFE AND SECURE? 

LGBT Experiences of Social Housing in Scotland

FEBRUARY 2007

"If I'm having problems at work, I can get another job. If it's on the street, I can take an alternative route home. But it's a bigger issue if it's happening at my home because it's where I'm supposed to feel safe..."

Focus group participant



Stonewall
S C O T L A N D



**Identifying and addressing issues of housing access and service provision for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people and communities in Scotland.
Funded by Communities Scotland.**

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INTRODUCTION

This LGBT Housing Project publication provides an insight into the housing experiences shared by LGBT people in a number of focus groups commissioned by the Project in 2006.

The information gathered in these groups informed the design and delivery of training and the revision of the standards. The *impact* of the introductory courses and the follow-up Train the Trainer event are also highlighted.

A Train the Trainer CD Rom provides participants on the course with a range of additional materials and training resources.

An implementation manual will offer practical guidance on how to implement the LGBT Housing Standards. This, along with the Project Evaluation report will be available in the summer.

If you would like more information on any of the information contained or on any other aspect of the LGBT Housing Project, contact details for the Project Team are in the appendices.



Stonewall Scotland

If the LGBT housing project's focus groups confirmed anything it is the critical value of a safe space for LGBT people. We can all understand the need to feel safe and protected but if your experience of the outside world is characterised by an ongoing attack on something so close to your identity as your sexual orientation or gender identity, the home takes on an increased significance.

That is why the work of the pilot housing associations is crucial. In going beyond merely understanding LGBT issues in housing to implementing standards in service provision, those associations should very soon be able to provide for their LGBT tenants the safe space that we all need.

Calum Irving, Director- Stonewall Scotland

SFHA

The voices of LGBT people in this publication send a powerful message to our sector. We need to build confidence that we value and respect all our applicants and tenants. There are very real fears expressed by focus group participants about reporting harassment and a lack of trust and confidence in housing providers to deal sensitively and appropriately with housing issues related to sexuality and gender.

We can exclude, not through direct discrimination or intent but by failing to recognise the effects of homophobia and to understand and address the specific housing issues for LGBT people. The services we provide must have the trust and confidence of all our service users and the houses we build and manage must be the homes where all our tenants feel safe and secure.

We clearly have a ways to go but the LGBT Housing Project demonstrates that, by working in partnership with the LGBT sector and listening to LGBT people, we can begin to deliver truly inclusive services.

Brian Gegan, Chair, Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (SFHA)



LGBT Centre for Health and Wellbeing

As the Housing Project partner organisation with experience in providing LGBT training and consultancy support, the LGBT Centre for Health & Wellbeing has played a key role in developing and delivering four introductory training courses and the train the trainer event.

With a primary focus on health inequalities and access to health services the Centre's work revolves largely around the NHS but we know that bad and/or inappropriate housing situations can impact on health, so having the opportunity to get involved in equalities work within the housing sector has been a useful, interesting and at times uplifting process!

One of the pleasures in working with others around LGBT issues is when participants are open to learning - and tangible shifts are evident in awareness and understanding.

This Project has been particularly memorable as these changes in perception have been matched by a growing commitment amongst participants to implement the LGBT Housing Standards.

Doing so is only a starting point but to use a housing analogy, Associations that have got to this point have 'opened the door' and put out the welcome sign! We commend them.

Tony Stevenson, Training and Consultancy Manager, LGBT Centre for Health and Wellbeing, Edinburgh



Previous research has highlighted serious concerns about equal access to housing and support for LGBT people. LGBT issues are an area that the least attention and progress is evident in social housing providers equality work.¹

Stonewall Scotland, the LGBT Centre for Health and Wellbeing and the Scottish Federation of Housing Standards (SFHA), with funding from Communities Scotland, have developed a set of LGBT Housing Standards designed to address the social housing needs and concerns of LGBT people.

The Standards were drafted by the project team, drawing on previous work done in this area. They were reviewed by focus groups involving LGBT people across Scotland, and revisions were made based on the feedback from the focus groups. Additionally, an electronic housing survey was available for people who were either unable or unwilling to attend a group.

Feedback from the focus groups not only confirms findings from previous research but also casts further light on the issues that effectively act as barriers to equal access to social housing provision for LGBT people in Scotland.

This paper highlights individual housing experiences and concerns expressed by participants in the focus group discussions, along with a range of observations and suggestions offered by participants on how Housing Associations can develop more inclusive LGBT practice.

¹ *Communities Scotland Review of Equality Thematic Study 2006*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



The project team are very appreciative of the contributions of those who attended the focus groups and to those who took the time to complete the online housing survey.

Thanks also to Alastair Smith (Glasgow LGBT Centre), Annabel Mowat (ReachOut Highland), John Thomson and the Prime Time group for their assistance in organising focus groups in Glasgow, Inverness and Edinburgh respectively.

We are grateful to the pilot Housing Associations for their investment, and in particular to the staff who as active participants have contributed much to the project.

A special note of thanks is due to Mairi Nye, who facilitated the groups with skill and compassion and who in doing so created the conditions in which participants felt able to share experiences openly and honestly. Their contribution, some of which is included in this publication, brought the LGBT Housing Project to life.

THE FACILITATOR'S VIEW



Mairi Nye, commissioned by the LGBT Housing Project Team to facilitate the Focus Groups, offered her own observations of the process of working with participants in the groups...

"Whilst facilitating the groups I was struck by the often painful and distressing experiences some of the participants shared in relation to their sexual orientation or gender identity and past or present housing difficulties.

Many of them had experienced verbal abuse and intimidation from neighbours or local residents. As a way of minimising feeling unsafe in and around their homes, participants acknowledged they would keep their sexual orientation hidden.

They expressed fear about drawing attention to themselves by reporting intimidation, verbal abuse, graffiti etc. This was not the case for all participants some of whom felt confident in being 'out' and they said they would report and challenge homophobic, biphobic or transphobic abuse.

These participants also expressed a hope that where challenging abuse, housing association staff would do so in a way that would not invite an escalation of the intimidation. Mediation was mentioned in a number of group discussions.

I was aware of how anxious some LGB or T people were when they considered a time they may no longer be able to live independently due to disability or old age and would require support in their own homes or residential care."

Mairi Nye, August 2006

VOICES OF LGBT PEOPLE



LGBT people are not a homogeneous group and the focus group participants were concerned that they would be perceived (or that the project team would portray them) as such. The LGBT community is diverse with a wide range of needs and concerns. Different factors influence the extent to which LGBT people feel able to be 'out' in housing either as employees or tenants. Individual circumstances such as effective support networks while personal factors such as resilience, allied to levels of self esteem and self-confidence, will affect how 'safe' people feel about being able to come 'out' or to be 'out'.

It is also important to stress that not all focus group participants' experiences of housing were negative and there were examples of good practice from landlords who responded appropriately and sensitively to issues.

Experiences of Homophobia

Focus group participants, when asked about experiences of homophobia, spoke of a range of behaviours and incidents; from name-calling and derogatory graffiti to other forms of vandalism.

Participants also spoke of threats, threatening behaviour *and* of actual physical violence.

-  *Local youths shouted 'only gay in the village' at me and vandalised my car. It didn't feel safe enough to approach the parents*
-  *Windows were smashed on a regular basis. We'd call the police, the windows would be boarded up, but nothing was done to prevent it happening again and again*
-  *...neighbour repeatedly threatened me with violence and called me names such as 'poof' and 'faggot'*
-  *I have (since) been assaulted by the same people the judge gave bail to. I was harassed just for being gay and I still live in fear of retribution and reprisals*
-  *They didn't consider the impact of homophobia and vandalism on me personally. I had to leave that flat*
-  *I just wouldn't go out to the shops after a certain time*

VOICES OF LGBT PEOPLE

These comments are representative of experiences shared by LGBT people in the focus groups.

The First Out report (2002), the largest survey of LGBT people in Scotland to date (924 respondents) revealed that 75% of those surveyed had experienced verbal abuse *within* the previous five year period relating to being LGBT or the *assumption* that they were LGB or T.

One in three gay and bisexual men and one in four lesbian and bisexual women reported violent assault in the same timeframe, again relating to being LGBT or the *assumption* that they were LGB or T.

Is Homophobia taken seriously?

A 2005 stocktake of Scotland's local authorities revealed that, when 'asked to rank the priority given to the 6 equality themes, sexual orientation was ranked 6th highest' (lowest in terms of priority).

Similarly, and despite the increasing volume of evidence of LGBT health inequalities, a 2003 stocktake of Scotland's Health Boards revealed that LGBT people's health needs were given little or no priority in health service planning *or* in funding support for LGBT organisations.

This is echoed in Stonewall Cymru's research² into the housing needs of LGB people in Wales where 18 out of 29 social landlords thought that LGB people did not have specific housing needs that differentiated from other housing needs groups, had a significant reliance on an *assumed* equality of opportunity and a gap between policy and practice was evident. None had done any specific LGB training and generic equality policies contained little practical information on addressing the needs of LGB tenants and applicants sensitively and appropriately.

² *The housing needs of lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) people in Wales (October 2006), Stonewall Cymru*

VOICES OF LGBT PEOPLE













These findings support a perspective shared by many LGBT people that their needs and concerns are neither sought nor given value in mainstream life. These concerns include housing provision:

- *The (focus) group felt that suffering from homophobia wouldn't necessarily give them any sort of priority*
- *Concerns that a Housing Association would not acknowledge; give weight to or record it as a homophobic incident*
- *I have no confidence in the ability of the HA to deal effectively with harassment.*
- *Perception that transphobic experiences are not recognised or given weight, or that they don't fit into HA 'boxes'*
- *Concern that HA would not see it (homophobia) as an offence, give it value, or see any reason to act*
- *Think (the HA) will say not relevant*
- *If it was racism it would be treated more seriously*
- *The group did not feel positive about how the HA would respond, feeling ethnic minorities issues would be dealt with before LGBT issues. LGBT discrimination is seen as less of a priority to racial discrimination and is tagged on*

Reporting homophobia

The prospect of reporting homophobia to a Housing Association raised real anxieties for some participants:

-  *Reporting is too scary to think about. Preferable to accept a bad situation rather than it becoming horrendous*
-  *What's the point? It would make it worse*
-  *If there wasn't proof HA and police wouldn't take notice*
-  *I might report damage to property but not give reasons for fear of disclosing*
-  *(staff would need to) understand that if for example a straight person's window was smashed they wouldn't have to think twice about it. If I did I'd have to go into the reasons (including the need to disclose)*
-  *It would be Impossible to tell the HA as I would have to 'out' myself*
-  *Individually I would report but I know 'K' would not ('K' nodded head in agreement)*
-  *It depends on the individual. Strong personal character would be required to report*
-  *Reporting? It depends. I might face up to an individual but group harassment? I would phone the police first, but it would have to go on for a while*
-  *I know what I would do but I am an activist and not really representative. I am better informed, but most people I know would not report until escalated to being unbearable. Because they don't report they have no proof how long it has been going on, and if there is no evidence it's harder to get action*

Coming out?

Many focus group participants felt that the consequences of coming out to landlords was too high a price to pay and that they would rather put up with bad housing situations. The importance of knowing how a landlord is likely to respond was an important part in the decision of participants to report harassment or tell landlords about housing issues which related to sexuality or gender.



- 📖 *Would feel risky and there might be a price to pay. Knowing that other people have had a bad experience would prevent me from speaking out*
- 📖 *You refrain from being true to yourself because of the risk that it will prejudice against you*
- 📖 *Fear of harassment, feel very vulnerable, would talk to friends but apprehensive of informing others, very confidential and sensitive issue*
- 📖 *I would only disclose as a last resort*
- 📖 *I would feel concerned if I outed myself*
- 📖 *Embarrassment would prevent me from explaining. (It) would make a difference if I knew they were gay friendly (otherwise) they may think the issue is with me*

📖 Being 'outed'

Continuing stigma, prejudice, discrimination and exclusion from mainstream life mean LGBT people often associate higher levels of personal safety with not being 'out' about their sexual orientation or gender identity.

This perception is reinforced by real experiences of how people (and services) have responded in the past.

However, there are times when exposure or 'outing' by others takes that control away from an individual:

- 📖 *I was a HA tenant living in the centre of (city in Scotland). I was involved in the residents group but was not out. Some residents started a petition against two gay pubs locally. It was assumed that I would support the petition but when I didn't I was harassed by late-night phone calls and a whispering campaign*
- 📖 *I was resident in X and a cleaner found a copy of the Gay Times. No confidentiality as other residents soon knew and stopped talking so I was excluded and isolated. I felt like a pariah but didn't want to take things further*
- 📖 *I'm very 'out' but in housing I keep myself to myself. I've had homophobic comments but I have kept it to myself*



Being 'out' in Housing?

Of course many LGBT users (and staff) are 'out'. Some have complained too.

The following illustrate some of the experiences and perspectives shared in the focus groups.

Positive Experiences

- *My HA would write to everyone in the stair, including the person who made the complaint. The last thing you want is to identify the complainant. It would be useful to remind everyone in the stair of the equal opportunity terms of the contract which they've signed. No one is singled out that way*
- *Two people who identified as transgender (and who lived together) had been experiencing threatening harassment at the 'hands of neighbours on a daily basis'. This was reported to the HA and they were 're-housed in a nicer area where it was felt that there was less risk'. They felt that their safety appeared to have been given priority by the HA*
- *(one 'out' participant had) 'never had a negative experience' (in housing)*
- *I did report threatening behaviour, firstly to the Police and then to the HA, and was satisfactorily re-housed*

Negative Experiences:

- *I've complained about homophobic abuse before to a local authority, and been told by them that 'these people have issues' and as I've got a job I don't understand*
- *I reported it (harassment and assault by HA neighbours) to the Police, Social Work Department, my carers at X, my Doctor, my sisters and my mum but nothing was done, even though I had witnesses and CCTV*
- *My sexual orientation is seen as a 'lifestyle choice' (by staff)*
- *I was sexually abused by a partner and was offered a place within 2 weeks. It was fast-tracked, but the flat was in a very bad area so they weren't sensitive to the situation or had even thought about my vulnerability*

The impact of exclusion on LGBT mental health and wellbeing

The invisibility of ordinary LGBT lives, allied to apprehension and fear of homophobia and transphobia, have an insidious, corrosive and damaging long-term impact on the mental health and wellbeing of LGBT people.

The **Equal Minds report (2005)**³ summarised the issues well in highlighting the growing body of evidence about LGBT mental health:

"...some communities and people are exposed to greater risk than others. In particular: The experience of discrimination, prejudice and stigma on the basis of aspects of social identity, such as gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, disability or religion or belief can both be detrimental to mental health and well-being, and increase the risk of being in poverty or socially excluded.




Studies found higher rates of depression among gay men, lesbians, people who are bisexual or transgender than the general population.

A Glasgow study suggests young LGBT people may be particularly vulnerable to depression and anxiety...

Studies...point to higher rates of suicidal thoughts and attempted suicide among young LGBT people.

Attempted suicide and self-harming behaviour is also prevalent..."

Again, these issues are illustrated by focus group discussion:

-  *HA staff may not be discriminatory but the LGBT person may have baggage from negative experience with other organisations which will make it difficult for them to trust, HA staff must be aware of this*
-  *Someone could be traumatised by the experience if coming out is not okay. The person's level of 'out-ness' is a factor here*
-  *It slowly erodes your confidence, and someone less confident would end up depressed, a prisoner in their home, sneaking in and out. It's no way to live*

³ *Equal Minds: addressing mental health inequalities in Scotland, Scottish Executive*

MESSAGES TO LANDLORDS



We asked participants in the focus groups what they felt Housing Associations needed to consider in developing LGBT inclusive practice.

These have been organised into broad themes which we used in the training programme to raise awareness of the issues and to highlight the relevance of the LGBT Housing Standards.

Perhaps not surprisingly given that safety was a major issue for participants, the majority of comments were about how associations should address homophobia, biphobia and transphobia.

Dealing with homophobic harassment and abuse

HA position on Homophobia - what people had to say

- 📖 *Don't just target us focus on acceptable and unacceptable behaviors in general*
- 📖 *Every tenant has the right to feel safe and secure not making special cases but as standard*
- 📖 *Record homophobic abuse*
- 📖 *(concern about) not being taken seriously*
- 📖 *That my complaint is listed as harassment and that they are sensitive to the issue and consider my concerns seriously*

Dealing with homophobic/transphobic complaints - what people had to say

- 📖 *If (perpetrator) not a HA tenant, would expect HA to assist in process (e.g. contacting police)*
- 📖 *If name calling I wouldn't expect to move house but I would want the HA to act and do something. Follow a procedure when the report is made. I would expect that this would be in place. I would want to be involved; part of the process.*
- 📖 *To approach the guilty party confidentially. It may make the situation worse though. Perhaps offer mediation.*
- 📖 *Everyone agreed that tenants should face eviction if they were discriminating against people. It would be nice if the people causing disruption were moved rather than the innocent parties being moved on from place to place*



Reporting a homophobic/transphobic incident what people had to say

- 📖 *I would report it to the HA but wouldn't expect anything to be done about it*
- 📖 *I would think twice about reporting to Housing Association*
- 📖 *If the abuse was someone in the stairwell on a regular basis, then I'd go to the HA. Luckily, my Housing Officer is gay too.*
- 📖 *Everyone should have a named Housing Officer and an alternative contact of someone higher than that person. At present associations don't have anything like that so if you don't get on with your Housing Officer you're screwed.*
- 📖 *Put a protocol/time limit on when a reply/action will be made to each complaint so that you are confident something will be done and a resolution is in sight*
- 📖 *They should take ownership not having to sit and think about it because the person who usually deals with LGBT issues is on holiday*

Where participants would report?

- 📖 *If the abuser is a HA tenant they should be approached by the HA and warned about their conduct. If not a HA tenant it would help to have a process in place for the HA to approach the police with or on behalf of...*
- 📖 *A set hour where confidential services could be contacted regarding LGBT issues*
- 📖 *If it was something which had to be reported, it wouldn't be to the police as I had a negative experience with them in the past.*
- 📖 *If it was graffiti or things through letter box, I would definitely go to the police*
- 📖 *If it's serious enough, like death threats, I'd go to an LGBT liaison officer like the one in Gayfield Square (Edinburgh). I've spoken to them a few times and they're very good*



Policies and Processes

- 📖 *There is nothing on forms that asks (about sexual orientation or gender identity)*
- 📖 *Publicised procedures, standard policy*
- 📖 *If the HA position is explained (e.g. inclusive practice, attitudes)*
- 📖 *Pro-activity would be reassuring (e.g. if Application forms are clearly inclusive)*
- 📖 *There should a blanket discrimination policy for racism, homophobia, etc.*
- 📖 *It's important that we know what happens to the information we provide*
- 📖 *If LGBT people were more aware of their rights as tenants*
- 📖 *If the HA has information on harassment of LGBT people, stating that they won't tolerate it.*
- 📖 *The group felt that there should be something in place to assure them that staff are LGBT friendly or a specific LGBT/ Equalities worker within the office*

Going public on commitments - what people had to say

- 📖 *If housing associations are going to be positive about being inclusive of LGBT people they need something demonstrable to show this i.e. a LOGO and a strong equal opportunities policy for employees.*
- 📖 *If a housing association says they promote equality people don't know unless they are going to be proactive*
- 📖 *Let applicants know that staff have been trained*
- 📖 *Knowing what the HA has done in the past e.g. knowing of good practice*

MESSAGES TO LANDLORDS



Building Trust and Confidence

Attitudes and behaviours

- 📖 *Housing Association staff (need to) demonstrate; understanding, trust, acceptance, comfort with the issues*
- 📖 *If Housing Association staff are not appropriately trained or are impolite, or obviously unpleasant, they will be given less info by the LGBT person*
- 📖 *I would need to have confidence in the association that the way I am treated has nothing to do with sexuality*
- 📖 *If I am treated like a whole person being gay is just a bit of who I am*
- 📖 *The group explained that they did not trust the integrity of the staff that they had experiences with*
- 📖 *Homophobia is much more prevalent in some small towns than cities like Edinburgh. It's much more difficult for a HA in a smaller area to control and deal with situations like this.*



Transgender people's concerns

The housing needs of transgender people have received little attention and it should be acknowledged that much of the existing housing research focuses on lesbian, gay and bisexual issues. However trans people did contribute in the focus groups and the following comments cast some light on the kinds of experiences and concerns people have.

- 📖 *Attitude of Housing Officer is really important. I went with a friend to the homeless unit a couple of weeks ago after he was assaulted by a gang who tried to strip him to see his body parts...*
- 📖 *I did disclose but felt small and stupid, and that they would think that I chose to be transgender, and anxiety then as to how I would be treated; i.e. not as a male*
- 📖 *After my flat was repossessed I informed a housing officer at X City Council and was assured that my gender identity would be confidential and that any temporary accommodation I was offered would be suitable. I was assured that I would not be offered B &B or hostel accommodation. However, on the day of eviction, I was only offered a tiny room (in a B & B) and told I would have to share a communal bathroom which was completely unsuitable. I would suggest that Councils adopt a sympathetic policy for addressing housing needs for transgender people and staff are educated in the differing needs of its population.*

Is it me? what people had to say

- 📖 *Sometimes it's important not to read too much in situations*
- 📖 *Check with myself am I doing anything to provoke or invite it?*
- 📖 *Not over-reading situations that might not be intentional*
- 📖 *I would check my own actions to see if I am doing anything to provoke*



As project partners we set out to develop a process which would support organisational and cultural changes, making a positive and lasting contribution towards meeting the needs and concerns of LGBT people in social housing.

The Project drew on existing research into LGBT housing needs to identify the barriers LGBT people can face as potential applicants and tenants and to develop the LGBT Housing Standards.

In addition to providing us with valuable insights into the housing experiences and concerns of LGBT people in Scotland the focus groups also reviewed the Standards.

Their comments were considered and the Standards adapted accordingly.

The Standards underpinned the training content and were tested further with participants on the introductory training courses.

What comes through loud and clear from the Project's findings is that gaining the trust and confidence of LGBT people is *critical* if housing providers are to address barriers to LGBT access and equality in service delivery and employment in a meaningful way.

We knew that to achieve this, participating Associations would need better awareness and understanding of:

- 📖 *The cumulative impacts of heterosexism, homophobia (biphobia and transphobia) and the fear of homophobia on LGBT people*
- 📖 *How these influence people's decisions about whether or not to disclose, and how this relates to the significant under-reporting of issues such as harassment or homelessness even where these are directly relevant to the individual's housing situation.*

To successfully implement the Standards Associations would need to develop greater confidence around the issues, be prepared to go 'public' on commitment and to actively promote and support a zero-tolerance approach to homophobia.

TRAINING MATTERS

Recognising this, we invested significant project resources to training. We made it a condition that participating pilot organisations nominate a minimum of two staff at decision-making level to attend.

Two-day introductory training courses in Aberdeen, Glasgow, Edinburgh and Fife were attended by 32 staff representing fourteen housing organisations.

Day one was devoted to LGBT awareness-raising while the second day concentrated on relating the learning to a housing context.

To assess the impact of training we asked participants to complete pre and post-training self-assessment questionnaires.

Notable shifts in participant awareness and understanding, sensitivity towards and confidence around the issues, allied to increased commitment to the LGBT Housing Standards were all evident (see table 1)

Introductory training courses

How would you rate (If 1 represents low and 11 high) your current level of;

AWARENESS OF THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE LGBT HOUSING PROJECT?	3.6	8.9 (147% increase)
UNDERSTANDING OF LGBT HOUSING ISSUES, NEEDS AND CONCERNS?	3.5	8.6 (145% increase)
AWARENESS OF AND SENSITIVITY TOWARDS ISSUES AROUND EQUAL LGBT ACCESS?	4.6	8.5 (84% increase)
COMMITMENT TO ADVOCATING FOR LGBT INCLUSIVE PRACTICES?	6.1	9.5 (55% increase)
CONFIDENCE TO PLAN TOWARDS AND IMPLEMENT LGBT INCLUSIVE PRACTICES?	3.9	8.25 (111% increase)

TABLE 1 **KEY - PRE-TRAINING**  **POST-TRAINING** 



Participants were also asked to evaluate the training and their comments further confirm the impact;

- 📖 *Two days essential, would not have got as much out of the housing side of things if we hadn't spent time on the background issues*
- 📖 *Learned lots of stuff I didn't know before about LGBT issues. Was particularly useful to do this kind of groundwork before looking at specific housing issues*
- 📖 *First equalities session where I felt engaged with issues*
- 📖 *Need to enshrine equal opportunities in everything we do. Need to be more upfront about the work and the need to promote and awareness raise*
- 📖 *Issues surrounding the LGBT community and how we need to understand LGBT people to understand how we take action*

To build on this enhanced knowledge and understanding we followed the introductory training courses with a three day Training for Trainers. Thirteen staff from six pilot Housing Associations attended.

Our aim with second-tier training was to increase the confidence and ability of participants to pass on their knowledge and awareness to other staff and stakeholders. We wanted participants to leave feeling able to confidently lead on and support full implementation of the Standards within their organisation.

Pre and post-training self-assessment questionnaires again demonstrate the value of this additional training input (see table 2...).



TRAIN THE TRAINER

How would you rate (*If 1 represents low and 11 high*) your current level of;

CONFIDENCE TO PLAN FOR AND IMPLEMENT LGBT HOUSING STANDARDS?	5.7	9 (58% increase)
PERSONAL COMMITMENT TO LGBT HOUSING STANDARDS?	8.4	10.4 (24% increase)
CONFIDENCE TO DRAW ON AND PRESENT RESEARCH EVIDENCE ON LGBT HOUSING NEEDS?	5.8	9.25 (59% increase)
CONFIDENCE TO INFORM, EDUCATE AND PERSUADE OTHERS OF LGBT INEQUALITIES?	5.6	9.5 (70% increase)

TABLE 2 KEY - PRE-TRAINING  POST-TRAINING 

It is worth noting here that participants were building on learning from the introductory courses, meaning that the pre-training questions tended to get a higher rating so that the pre-post training contrast is not as marked as in the introductory courses.



Participant comments from the Train the Trainer included;

- 📖 *Valuable ideas about how to answer 'difficult' questions, respond to media presentation issues*
- 📖 *Opportunity to look at one Standard in depth, practical ideas for training in and implementation of Standards*
- 📖 *The course was comprehensive and intensive. It covered a broad range of practical issues from trying to gather support from committee and senior managers to delivery on the ground*
- 📖 *Greater understanding of Standards and much more confidence re the evidence that supports the need for them*
- 📖 *To continue to keep LGBT equalities as a live issue within the organisation; to present a strong case for adoption and more importantly, implementation of the Standards*
- 📖 *The course and involvement in the pilot project has been a very valuable experience. Much different from other equalities training I've done as I'm going away with practical ideas to actually take action*

The training has been an essential component of the LGBT Housing Project, increasing understanding of the issues, what needs to change within the culture of an organisation for it to be inclusive and supporting participants to develop their confidence and capacity to be allies and advocates for LGBT access to social housing.

THE LGBT HOUSING STANDARDS



OUTCOME ONE	KEY TASKS	EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
<p><i>Leadership on and ownership of LGBT inclusion</i></p>	<p><i>LGBT inclusion is visibly and actively promoted by Management Committee members and senior staff</i></p>	<p><i>A SMART LGBT Equality Action plan with clear accountability for implementation</i></p> <p><i>Zero-tolerance on Homophobia and Transphobia</i></p> <p><i>Public face (e.g. website, public waiting areas)</i></p> <p><i>Public documents (e.g. Management Committee papers)</i></p> <p><i>Promotion of Good Practice across the Housing sector (e.g. in development of common housing registers)</i></p>
OUTCOME TWO	KEY TASKS	EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
<p><i>LGBT Inclusive employment practice.</i></p>	<p><i>LGBT inclusive recruitment and selection practices</i></p> <hr/> <p><i>Sexual orientation and gender identity monitoring</i></p>	<p><i>Recruitment advertising dissemination to LGBT networks or organisations locally or nationally</i></p> <p><i>Recruitment and selection panels include staff with LGBT awareness</i></p> <hr/> <p><i>Established baseline of current composition of Association staff</i></p>

THE LGBT HOUSING STANDARDS



	<p><i>Review HR Policies</i></p>	<p><i>Equality-proofed policies and processes</i></p> <p><i>Responsibility for promoting LGBT inclusive practice is included in senior and supervisory staff job descriptions</i></p> <p><i>Staff handbook includes clear expectations of staff, emphasising zero-tolerance</i></p>
	<p><i>LGBT awareness-raising for Association staff</i></p>	<p><i>Responsibility for promoting LGBT inclusive practice is integrated into appraisal and performance systems</i></p>
OUTCOME THREE	KEY TASKS	EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
<p><i>Association services are accessible to LGBT people</i></p>	<p><i>Promoting the Association and its services to LGBT people as potential applicants</i></p>	<p><i>LGBT groups and organisations are aware of Association and its services</i></p> <p><i>Potential applicants can access the Association through LGBT (and other advice and information services, such as Age Concern, CAB) organisations</i></p>

THE LGBT HOUSING STANDARDS



	<p><i>Review access policies and processes</i></p>	<p><i>Application forms and guidance contain 'prompt' questions relating to potential LGBT housing issues</i></p> <p><i>Allocations policy</i></p> <p><i>Customer Service Policy</i></p>
	<p><i>Sexual orientation and gender identity monitoring</i></p>	<p><i>Established baseline of current composition of Association tenants</i></p>
OUTCOME FOUR	KEY TASKS	EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
<p><i>Association service delivery is LGBT inclusive</i></p>	<p><i>The association is responsive to the housing needs of LGBT tenants and applicants</i></p>	<p><i>User satisfaction surveys</i></p>
	<p><i>Review service delivery Policies and Processes</i></p>	<p><i>Estate management Policy (e.g. dealing with bullying, harassment and anti-social behaviour)</i></p> <p><i>Tenant Participation Strategy (e.g. registered tenant organisation, registration criteria: tenant/resident awareness-raising)</i></p>
	<p><i>Where services are provided in the home, staff are respectful of LGBT people's privacy and dignity and are affirming of their lives and experiences</i></p>	<p><i>Staff awareness of existing research and Good Practice is evidenced by day-to-day practice</i></p> <p><i>Codes of Conduct (e.g. Contractors, consultants, home visit staff)</i></p> <p><i>Complaints procedure makes reference to LGBT Housing Standards</i></p>

THE LGBT HOUSING STANDARDS



	<p><i>Supportively challenge homophobia and transphobia whether expressed by Association tenants, colleagues, clients or contractors</i></p>	<p><i>Monitoring of: Homophobic/transphobic incidents</i></p> <p><i>Actions taken</i></p>
OUTCOME FOUR	KEY TASKS	EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
<p><i>Engagement with LGBT people, groups and organisations</i></p>	<p><i>Establish and maintain a relationship with LGBT people, groups and organisations</i></p>	<p><i>Contact information about LGBT groups and organisations held by Association</i></p>
	<p><i>Include LGBT people, groups and organisations in Service and Policy reviews</i></p>	<p><i>LGBT involvement in Service and Policy reviews</i></p>
	<p><i>Promote Association and Management Committee membership to LGBT people</i></p>	<p><i>LGBT people, groups and organisations are aware of the services we offer</i></p>

LGBT HOUSING PROJECT MILESTONES

APRIL 06 *Review existing Research findings and recommendations*

Develop draft Housing Standards based on above

Consultation through facilitated Focus Groups and online survey questionnaire on:

- *Housing needs and experiences*
- *Draft LGBT Housing Standards*

Project team review feedback and revise LGBT Housing Standards accordingly

Recruit Housing Associations to participate in the Project

Design training programme, aligning content to LGBT Housing Standards

Deliver 4 introductory training courses to participating Housing Associations across Scotland

Invite participating Associations to return to associations to seek senior management commitment to implementation

Provide tailored follow-up consultancy for Housing Associations in their own work setting

3-day Train the Trainer course to increase capacity with housing sector

Development of SFHA website resources to support pilot associations

Launch of LGBT Housing Project and Standards at CIH Conference

Production of:

- *Safe and Secure? LGBT experience of housing in Scotland*
- *Train the Trainer CD Rom resource*
- *LGBT Housing Standards Implementation Manual*
- *Project Evaluation report.*

MARCH 07

The following scenarios and questions were used to stimulate discussion in the Focus Groups and to set the scene for reviewing the LGBT Housing Standards.

Scenario 1: You need to move house urgently due to harassment relating to your sexual orientation or gender identity...

- *What would prevent you from telling this to a Housing Association when you apply?*
- *What would give you the confidence to be open with the Housing Association?*

Scenario 2: You are a Housing Association tenant and you are experiencing homophobic, biphobic or transphobic abuse

- *Would you report it? (and if you wouldn't report it, why not?)*
- *Who would you report it to?*
- *When would you report it (e.g. the first time it happened; after a few incidents?)*
- *What would you want or expect the Housing Association to do?*
- *Reality check: how do you think the Housing Association would react?*

In case the above scenarios didn't allow participants to share specific experiences, do you have experiences of housing issues or concerns related to being LGB or T not covered in the above scenarios?

- *If positive; what was it about the experience that made it so?*
- *If negative; why so, and how could it have been different?*



What would reassure you that a Housing Association was LGBT inclusive...

- From information about the HA that you pick up or which is sent to you (e.g. application form, guidance notes, tenant's handbook)?
- In the public areas of the Housing Association offices?
- In the personal contact you have with HA staff?
- Were you to have any difficulties with other tenants relating to being LGB or T?

Standards (focus is on 'key tasks')

- Do they make sense to you?
- Do they cover the issues you feel are important?
- What have we missed?

LGBT HOUSING PROJECT TEAM



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SCOTLAND



**Identifying and addressing issues of housing access and service provision
for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people and communities in Scotland.
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