OUR STRATEGY 2026-2030



LGBT Health and Wellbeing

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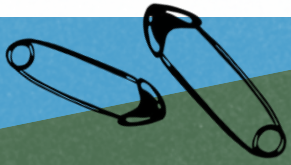


SUMMARY



LGBT Health and Wellbeing exists to improve the health and wellbeing of LGBTQ+ adults in Scotland. This strategy sets out our direction from **October 2026 to March 2030**. It has been developed at a time of significant challenge:



1. **Health inequalities** remain stark
2. Public services are **under pressure**
3. **Hostility** towards LGBTQ+ people have increased
4. Access to **appropriate gender healthcare** remains difficult or impossible for many trans and non-binary people
5. The **funding environment** for charities is increasingly uncertain.



This strategy sets out how LGBT Health and Wellbeing will remain strong, stable, and safe in this external environment, whilst working towards a Scotland where LGBTQ+ people are healthier, connected, and able to live well.

SUMMARY

Connection, belonging, participation, resilience, and queer joy are as important in their own right, as they are as mitigating factors. Our strategy therefore combines the delivery of support services when people need them with a stronger emphasis on prevention, community connection, and continuing to change the systems that contribute to poorer health.

The central organising model for this strategy is our **LGBTQ+ Health and Wellbeing Ecosystem.** It brings together community connection and prevention, targeted wellbeing interventions, and intensive or specialist support.

Alongside this, what we hear and learn through thousands of interactions should inform evidence, policy, practice, partnerships, and wider change.

The first 12-18 months of this strategy will focus on consolidation: protecting effective services, embedding our ecosystem, strengthening pathways and partnerships, improving data and CRM use, investing in our people, and progressing income diversification. From 2028, we will grow where evidence of need and organisational readiness support it.





We will pursue four strategic ambitions:

1. **People get the right support at the right time**
2. **LGBTQ+ communities are connected, visible, and well-supported across Scotland**
3. **Community experience creates lasting change**
4. **We are a strong, sustainable organisation built for the future**

OUR STRATEGY AT A GLANCE

OUR VISION

A Scotland where LGBTQ+ people are healthier, connected, and able to live well.

OUR APPROACH

We bring LGBTQ+ people together, provide support when it's needed, and use our communities' experiences to help create lasting change.

OUR COMMITMENT

Of, for, and by LGBTQ+ communities.

OUR FOUR AMBITIONS:

1. **The right support at the right time**
   Making it easier for LGBTQ+ people to find the support they need.

2. **Connected and thriving communities**
   Creating more opportunities for connection, belonging, and queer joy across Scotland

3. **Community experience creates lasting change**
   Using LGBTQ+ voices and experiences to improve services, influence decisions, and tackle inequalities

4. **A strong and sustainable organisation**
   Investing in our people, strengthening our organisation and securing our future.

OUR JOURNEY TO 2030...

Consolidate → **Demonstrate Readiness** → **Grow**

WHO WE ARE & HOW WE WORK

LGBT Health and Wellbeing is Scotland's national charity dedicated to improving the health and wellbeing of LGBTQ+ people aged 16+

Lived experience, participation, volunteering, community intelligence, and coproduction shape how we work and where we go next. It means recognising and supporting community capacity beyond our own organisation, including 'grassroots' LGBTQ+ activity where direct delivery by LGBT Health and Wellbeing is neither necessary nor the best response.

OUR APPROACH

Of, for, and by LGBTQ+ communities.

We work with LGBTQ+ people and communities: building connection and community, providing support when it's needed, and using what we learn together to create wider change.

OUR AMBITION

A Scotland where LGBTQ+ people are healthier, connected, and able to live well.



OUR VALUES:

Our existing values, coproduced in 2022 and reviewed in 2026 continue to guide how we behave and make decisions:

Collaboration
We build bridges. Together with partners and community members we create change that benefits us all.

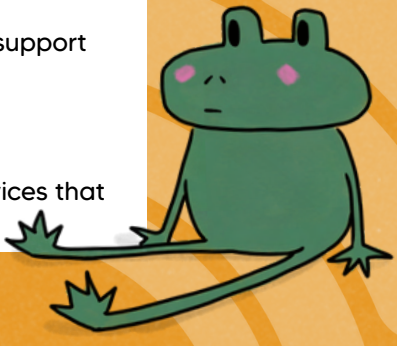
Inclusion
Our services are affirming, intersectional, and accessible. We centre those who've been historically excluded.

Equality and Diversity
We celebrate the full spectrum of LGBTQ+ identities. Our team reflects our community, and our work uplifts every voice.

Respect
We value everyone and treat people fairly. We are open, accountable, accepting, trustworthy, and supportive.

Participation
Our work is co-created. We empower our community to lead, shape, and grow the support they need.

Excellence
We strive for high-quality, innovative services that make a real difference in people's lives



WHY THIS STRATEGY, WHY NOW?





Throughout the history of LGBT Health and Wellbeing, we have witnessed significant progress towards legal and social equality for LGBTQ+ people. **But this progress hasn't translated in to equality in health.** Moreover, hard won rights and progress feel less secure now than they have for many years, and the **increasingly hostile external environment is directly impacting** people's health and wellbeing.

At LGBT Health and Wellbeing, we recognise that good health is about **more than physical or mental health alone.** It includes sexual wellbeing, healthy relationships, feeling safe, being connected to others and having access to the care and support we need.

This evidence reinforces the importance of our work: providing welcoming spaces, building connections, supporting mental health and wellbeing, and working with others to tackle the inequalities LGBTQ+ people face.

Understanding LGBTQ+ health inequalities in Scotland:

We now have **stronger evidence than ever** of the health inequalities experienced by LGBTQ+ people in Scotland.

These inequalities are not caused by being LGBTQ+. They are linked to people's experiences of **discrimination, prejudice, isolation, poverty and barriers** to accessing healthcare. These experiences can build up over a lifetime and have a lasting impact on health and wellbeing.

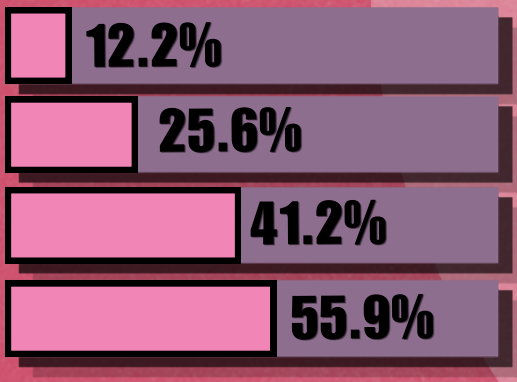


THE STATS

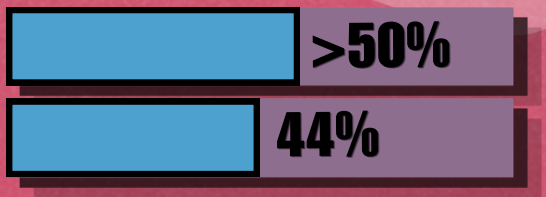
THE STATS :

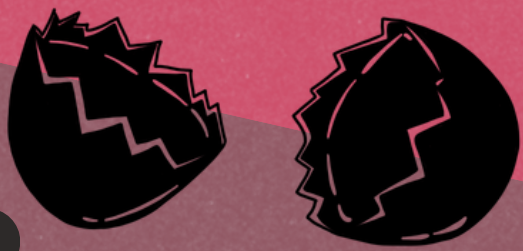


Our research with Glasgow Centre for Population Health, using Scotland's 2022 Census, found significant differences in mental health. While **12.2%** of heterosexual people reported a mental health condition, this rose to **25.6%** of gay and lesbian people and **41.2%** of bisexual people. The figures were even higher for trans and non-binary people, reaching **55.9%** among non-binary people.



Further research commissioned by NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde and NHS Lothian in 2022 found that **more than half** of LGBTQ+ people surveyed had experienced mental health difficulties, isolation or loneliness. Almost half **(44%)** had experienced discrimination in the previous year.





A changing Scotland:

The world around us is changing, bringing new challenges for LGBTQ+ people and the organisations that support them.

Growing hostility towards LGBTQ+ equality, particularly affecting trans and non-binary people, is creating uncertainty and concern. At the same time, pressure on health and public services, rising living costs and difficulties accessing appropriate care are making it **harder for many people to get the support they need.**



These challenges are not experienced equally. LGBTQ+ people who are older, disabled, from minority ethnic communities, or who have come to Scotland seeking safety may face additional barriers. Where someone lives can also affect their access to LGBTQ+ inclusive services and support.

Charities like ours are also working in an increasingly difficult funding environment, while demand for support remains high.

But being LGBTQ+ is not a problem to be solved. Our communities have enormous strengths, and our work is about much more than responding to difficulties. We want to create more opportunities for people to connect, build friendships, feel confident, celebrate who they are, and experience queer joy.

HOW WE WORK: Connected Support

We know that **people's needs change throughout their lives.** Sometimes we need information or a sense of community. At other times, we might need more focused or specialist support.

Our services and activities are designed to work together, making it **easier for LGBTQ+ people to find the support that's right for them**, when they need it. People can access different services, use more than one at a time, or return to us as their circumstances change.



No Wrong Door

We want everyone who comes to us to feel welcome and supported. If we can't provide the help someone needs, we'll do our best to connect them with another organisation or service that can.

Creating wider change

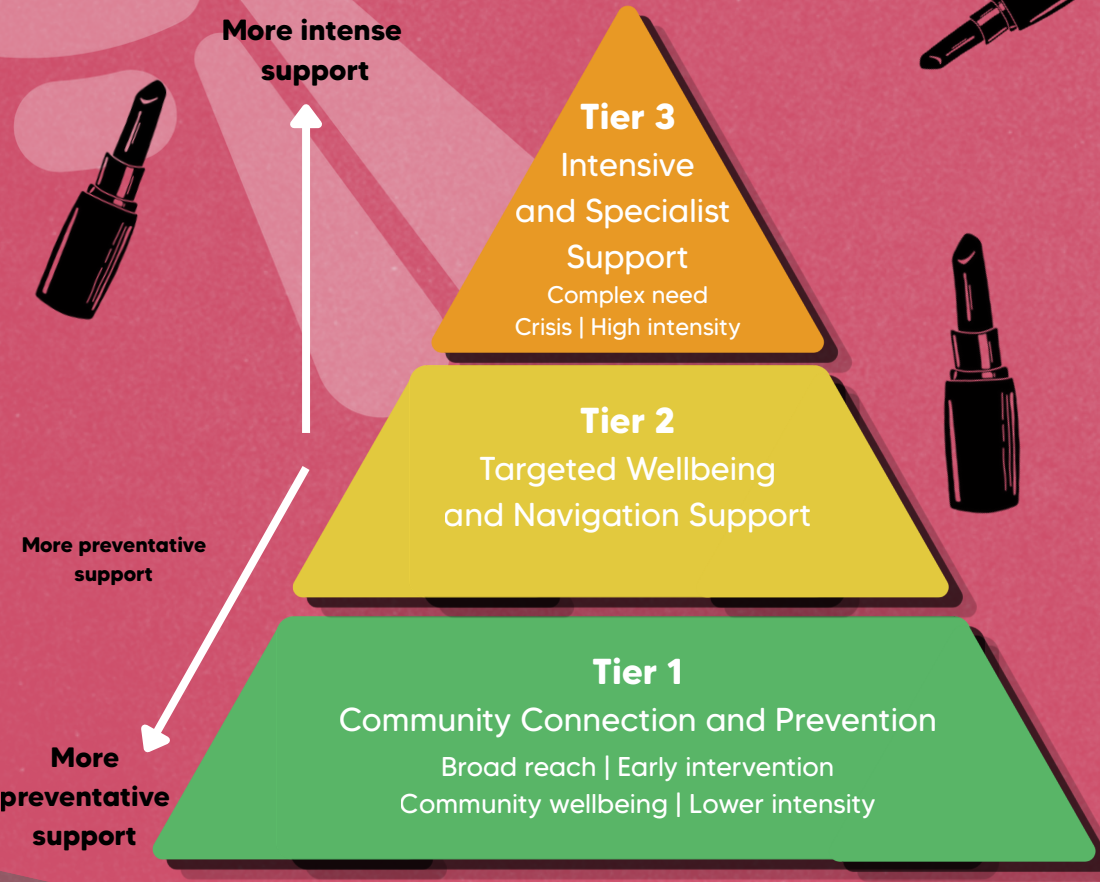
Our work is about more than supporting individuals. By listening to the experiences of LGBTQ+ people and bringing these together with research and evidence, we can identify what's working, where things need to improve and what needs to change.



Deep dive into how we developed our strategy on Page 21

OUR LGBTQ+ HEALTH AND WELLBEING ECOSYSTEM

Our LGBTQ+ Health and Wellbeing ecosystem provides a layered ecosystem of support that meets Scotland's LGBTQ+ community where they are. We build connection and wellbeing, provide targeted help when challenges arise, and offer intensive support when people need it most.



OUR FOUR AMBITIONS

1 THE RIGHT SUPPORT AT THE RIGHT TIME

We want LGBTQ+ people across Scotland to find the **support, information, and connections** they need to live healthier, happier lives.

We know that **everyone's needs are different and can change over time.** Our ambition is to make it easier for people to access **the right support,** whether that's finding community, getting trusted information, or receiving more specialist help.

WHAT WE'LL DO

1. **Protect** and **strengthen** our existing services, making sure they remain safe, welcoming and effective.
2. **Make it easier** for people to find and move between our services, and connect with other organisations when we can't provide the support they need.
3. Help people **access information** and support earlier, before difficulties become more serious.
4. **Develop our services** in response to changing needs, particularly where LGBTQ+ people face barriers to getting appropriate support.
5. **Listen** to the people who use our services and use their experiences to improve what we do.

HOW WE'LL KNOW WE'RE MAKING A DIFFERENCE

1. More people can **access appropriate support** when they need it.
2. People tell us that our services have **improved their wellbeing** and helped them feel more connected.
3. We're reaching LGBTQ+ people and communities who have **previously faced barriers** to accessing support.



OUR FOUR AMBITIONS

2 LGBTQ+ COMMUNITIES ARE CONNECTED, VISIBLE, & WELL SUPPORTED ACOSS SCOTLAND

We want more LGBTQ+ people, wherever they live in Scotland, to feel **connected, supported and part of a community** where they belong.

We know that **opportunities** to meet other LGBTQ+ people and find welcoming spaces and support **can vary drastically** depending on where someone lives. We want to change that by **extending our reach,** supporting local communities, and making it easier for people to find opportunities for connection, friendship, and queer joy.

WHAT WE'LL DO

1. Reach more LGBTQ+ people across Scotland, particularly in **areas where support and opportunities for connection are limited.**
2. Further develop our **telephone and online services** so more people can access support and community, wherever they live.
3. **Help local LGBTQ+ groups establish themselves,** grow and thrive, building stronger and more sustainable communities.
4. **Work with local organisations** and partners to improve access to LGBTQ+ inclusive spaces, services and support.
5. Make it easier for people to find out what's available, including through our **QueerScot community map** and better communications.

HOW WE'LL KNOW WE'RE MAKING A DIFFERENCE

1. More LGBTQ+ people are accessing our services and activities from across Scotland, including **beyond our established locations.**
2. More **local LGBTQ+ groups are developing and sustaining** opportunities for community connection.
3. People tell us they **feel more connected,** supported, and part of their communities.
4. More people **know where to find LGBTQ+ inclusive support,** groups, and services.

OUR FOUR AMBITIONS

3 COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE CREATES LASTING CHANGE

We want the **voices and experiences** of LGBTQ+ people to **shape the decisions, policies, and services** that affect their lives.

Through our services and community work, we see first-hand the challenges LGBTQ+ people face. By listening to these experiences, bringing them together with research, and working with others, we can help **tackle the causes of health inequalities** and **create lasting change** across Scotland.

WHAT WE'LL DO

1. Listen to LGBTQ+ people's experiences and use what we learn to improve our services and influence wider change.
2. Support LGBTQ+ people to have a stronger voice in decisions that affect their health, wellbeing, and lives.
3. Work with government, the NHS, researchers, and other organisations to tackle health inequalities and improve access to appropriate care and support.
4. Help health and social care services become more inclusive through our Inclusive Care Standard, training, and consultancy.
5. Share our knowledge, research, and expertise to raise awareness of LGBTQ+ health inequalities and influence policy and practice across Scotland.

HOW WE'LL KNOW WE'RE MAKING A DIFFERENCE

1. LGBTQ+ people's experiences are helping shape services, policies, and decisions.
2. We can demonstrate improvements in health and social care practice that we've helped bring about.
3. More LGBTQ+ people are actively involved in influencing decisions that affect their lives.
4. Our research, expertise, and partnerships are contributing to positive change across Scotland.

OUR FOUR AMBITIONS

4 A STRONG, SUSTAINABLE ORGANISATION BUILT FOR THE FUTURE

We want LGBT Health and Wellbeing to be a **strong, resilient organisation** that can continue supporting LGBTQ+ people across Scotland, now and in the future.

To achieve this, we need **secure and diverse funding, skilled and supported staff and volunteers,** and **effective ways of working.** We want to build on our strengths, make the best use of our resources, and grow responsibly, so we can respond to the changing needs of our communities.

WHAT WE'LL DO

1. Build a broader range of funding and support, reducing our reliance on public sector funding to **no more than 50%** of our income by **March 2030.**
2. **Invest** in our staff and volunteers, ensuring they have the **skills, support, and opportunities** to develop and do their best work.
3. **Strengthen how we work together,** with clear responsibilities, good communication, and a culture of inclusion, collaboration and accountability.
4. **Improve our systems and ways of working** so we can deliver services effectively, understand our impact and make better decisions.
5. Make **careful decisions about developing and expanding our work,** ensuring we have the people, funding and resources needed to do it well.

BUILDING FINANCIAL RESILIENCE

Public sector funding remains an important part of how we support LGBTQ+ communities, and **we value our partnerships** with government, the NHS, and local authorities. Our aim is not to move away from these relationships, but to **reduce the risks** that come from relying too heavily on any one source of funding.

We know there is more we can do to grow support from individuals, businesses, trusts and foundations, and through income we generate ourselves. By building a broader mix of funding, we can **become more resilient,** plan with greater confidence, and **protect the services** our communities rely on.

OUR FOUR AMBITIONS

4 A STRONG, SUSTAINABLE ORGANISATION BUILT FOR THE FUTURE

HOW WE'LL KNOW WE'RE MAKING A DIFFERENCE

1. Our income comes from **a wider range of sources,** with public sector funding accounting for no more than **50%** by **March 2030.**
2. Staff and volunteers **feel supported, valued,** and able to contribute effectively.
3. Our systems and ways of working help us **deliver high-quality services** and demonstrate our impact.
4. We're **financially and organisationally prepared** to meet changing community needs.



OUR FOUNDATIONS



These are the foundations on which the whole strategy depends. They will enable all four ambitions.

1 Community Voice & Participation

We will make sure LGBTQ+ people have meaningful opportunities to **shape our services,** priorities, and the changes we work towards. We recognise that people's **lived experiences** bring valuable knowledge and expertise.

2 Our People

We will **invest in our staff and volunteers,** ensuring they have the skills, support, and opportunities to develop and do their best work. We'll create a culture where people feel safe to speak openly, share ideas, challenge decisions and learn from mistakes, alongside clear responsibilities and accountability.

3 Evidence & Learning

We will use research, information from our services, and the experiences of LGBTQ+ people to understand what communities need, learn, what works and **continually improve what we do.**

4 Partnerships

We know we can't achieve lasting change alone. We'll work with LGBTQ+ community groups, charities, public services, researchers, and others to **reach more people, share knowledge** and make a greater difference.

3 Financial Sustainability

We will manage our resources carefully and build a **wider range of funding and support,** helping us remain strong and sustainable for the future.

4 Equality & Inclusion

LGBTQ+ people have different identities, backgrounds, and experiences. We recognise that some people face additional barriers and inequalities, and we'll work to make our services **accessible and inclusive** for everyone. This includes continuing our commitment to becoming an **anti-racist organisation.**

OUR JOURNEY TO 2030

We have ambitious plans for the future, but we know that **lasting change takes time.** Our strategy takes a phased approach, focusing first on **strengthening** what we already do before **expanding** our reach and impact.

PHASE 1

Strengthen our foundations (October 2026 - March 2028)

Our first priority is to **build on what we've achieved** and make sure our existing services and activities are as effective, accessible, and sustainable as possible

We'll focus on:

- Improving how our services **work together**
- Investing in our staff and volunteers
- Strengthening our systems and develop more **diverse sources of funding**
- Building a better understanding of **where LGBTQ+ people need more support** across Scotland, helping us plan for the future



PHASE 2



Extend our reach and impact (April 2028 - September 2030)

As our organisation becomes stronger, we'll look for opportunities to **reach more LGBTQ+ people** and respond to needs that aren't currently being met.

This might mean:

- Developing **new services**
- Expending telephone and online support
- Working with local partners
- Helpling LGBTQ+ communities build their **own groups and activities**

We'll only expand where there is clear evidence of need, where communities have helped shape our plans, and where we have the resources and capacity to deliver effectively and sustainably.



MAKING OUR STRATEGY HAPPEN



Our strategy sets out what we want to achieve by 2030. Each year, we'll agree clear priorities and actions to help us make progress towards our four ambitions.

We know that circumstances can change, sometimes quickly. We'll regularly review our progress, listen to LGBTQ+ communities and adapt our plans to respond to changing needs and challenges, while protecting the services people rely on.

Our **Board of Trustees** will oversee progress, and we'll share updates on what we've achieved, the difference we're making and where we still have work to do, including through our **annual Impact Report.**



WHAT SUCCESS WILL LOOK LIKE IN 2030



By **2030,** we want to be making a bigger difference to the health and wellbeing of LGBTQ+ people across Scotland.

1 More people getting the support they need

LGBTQ+ people can find welcoming, inclusive and effective support when they need it. Our services work together, making it easier for people to get the right help, build connections, and improve their wellbeing.

2 Stronger, more connected communities

More LGBTQ+ people across Scotland have opportunities to connect, build friendships, and feel a sense of belonging, wherever they live. Local LGBTQ+ groups are thriving, and more people know where to find support, community, and opportunities for queer joy.

3 LGBTQ+ voices creating lasting change

The experiences of LGBTQ+ people are shaping decisions, policies, and services across Scotland. We're recognised as a trusted national voice on LGBTQ+ health and wellbeing, helping to tackle inequalities and improve how people are treated and supported.

4 A strong organisation for the future

We have a skilled and supported team, effective services, and a more secure and diverse funding base. We're less reliant on public sector funding and better equipped to respond to the changing needs of LGBTQ+ communities.

Together, these changes will bring us closer to our vision of a Scotland where LGBTQ+ people are **healthier, connected,** and **able to live well.**



RESEARCH & EVIDENCE

Our strategy is informed by **research into the health and wellbeing of LGBTQ+ people in Scotland,** alongside what we've learned from our **services, community engagement,** and **previous strategies.**

KEY RESEARCH INCLUDES:

LGBT Health and Wellbeing in Scotland: A landmark census analysis (2026) – Glasgow Centre for Population Health and LGBT Health and Wellbeing.

Examining the social determinants of LGBT+ health and wellbeing (2024) – Glasgow Centre for Population Health and LGBT Health and Wellbeing.

LGBT+ Health Needs Assessment (2022) – NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde and NHS Lothian.

We've also drawn on our community surveys and the experiences and knowledge of our staff, volunteers, community members, and trustees.

How we developed our strategy:

Our strategy builds on what we've learned from **delivering our services and working alongside LGBTQ+ communities** across Scotland. It has been shaped through discussions with our staff, volunteers, and trustees, alongside research and evidence about LGBTQ+ health inequalities.

We've reflected on what's working well, where we need to improve and how we can make the greatest difference with the resources we have. The result is a clearer set of priorities that will guide our work over the coming years.

SYMBOLS KEY



Egg - an 'egg' colloquially signifies a transgender person who hasn't realised their identity yet; 'cracking the egg' is when someone begins to realise and understand their true gender identity



Safety Pin - a symbol of allyship and solidarity, used to indicate 'you are safe with me'



Progress Pride Flag - an updated version of the original flag, created in 2018 to emphasize greater inclusion within the LGBTQ+ community



Cowboy Hat - a symbol of re-appropriated traditional masculinity, also popularised in Queer culture by modern Queer artists such as Lil Nas X



Green Carnation - a flower particularly associated with gay men and popularised by Oscar Wilde, used as a discreet code



Bandana - among gay, bisexual, and leather subcultures, wearing a coloured bandana was known as the 'hanky code'; a non-verbal way to indicate your identity



Carabiner - a subtle symbol of queer identity, specifically among lesbians and sapphics, popularised by butch lesbians



Oat Iced Latte - a popular meme and light-hearted signifier in the LGBTQ+ community where ordering iced or plant-based drinks is an indicator of queerness



Lavender - lavender and purple tones were used as subtle queer markers, leading to the term 'lavender boys' to describe gay men. Lesbian activists reclaimed the derogatory label by calling themselves 'Lavender Menace'



Lipstick - 'lipstick lesbian' is a slang term for a lesbian, bisexual, or queer woman who embraces a traditionally feminine gender expression



You Are Enough - a slogan from our LGBT Health and Wellbeing campaign, alongside 'You Are Loved' and 'You Are Worthy'



Frogs - the unofficial mascot of the queer community, and of LGBT Health and Wellbeing (where there are always lots of crocheted frogs!)

Get involved

@lgbthealthy

The LGBT Healthy Living Centre (known as LGBT Health and Wellbeing) is recognised as a charity by the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator, no. SC034216.

LGBT Health and Wellbeing