



BUILDING SAFE CHOICES 2020

Our voices: LGBT+ later life
housing demand in London

TONIC



**OPENING DOORS
LONDON**

**“WE FEEL
LIKE THE
FORGOTTEN
GENERATIONS”**

**“I AM PREPARED
TO DOWNSIZE,
BUT WANT
TO STAY
IN LONDON”**

**“WHEN WILL
SOMETHING
TANGIBLE BE
AVAILABLE FOR
LGBT+ PEOPLE?”**

**“THE FINANCIAL
IMPLICATIONS
OF BEING TRANS
IMPACT ON
YOUR HOUSING
OPTIONS”**

**“I’M SCARED OF
MY NEIGHBOURS
FINDING OUT
I’M GAY”**

**“UNLESS YOU
HIDE YOUR
TRUE IDENTITY
YOU WILL
NOT RECEIVE
SUPPORT FROM
YOUR FAMILY”**

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About

Tonic, Stonewall Housing and Opening Doors London (ODL) jointly carried out this research to better understand the housing, care and support requirements of older LGBT+ people in London. We aimed to capture 'the voice of the demand' of older LGBT+ people.

Our common ambition is to see that older LGBT+ people, whatever their history and background, are able to make choices about their housing, care and support from a range of safe and appropriate options.

We were supported in our research steering group by Professor Andrew King of the University of Surrey, and Dr Sait Bayrakdar of King's College London, along with Julia Shelley, author of the original Building Safe Choices report in 2016.

We are extremely grateful for the support of funding from Mayor of London, the Tudor Trust and Commonweal Housing, without whom this work could not have been done.

TONIC

Tonic is focused on creating vibrant and inclusive urban LGBT+ affirming retirement communities where people can share common experiences, find mutual support and enjoy their later life. Tonic was established in 2014 to address the issues of loneliness and isolation of older LGBT+ people and the need for specific housing and support provision as there is currently none in the UK. Driven by the demand of older LGBT+ people for better choices in housing, support and care we co-produce to create community led projects.

tonicliving.org.uk



Stonewall Housing is the specialist lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans-spectrum (LGBT+) housing advice and support provider in England. We have been providing services to the LGBT+ community for over 30 years. We provide housing support for LGBT+ people in their own homes, supported housing for young LGBT+ people, as well as free, confidential housing advice for LGBT+ people of all ages. We also provide services to other organisations including training and our Inclusion Standard, undertake research and lobby for LGBT+ housing rights, so that all LGBT+ people can feel safe and secure in their homes.

stonewallhousing.org



**OPENING DOORS
LONDON**

Opening Doors London (ODL) is the largest charity providing information and support services specifically for lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT+) people over 50 in the UK.

We are a membership organisation providing regular social opportunities across London to help develop networks and communities for LGBT+ people, aged over 50. We also offer specialist training and the Pride in Care quality standard for statutory and voluntary organisations, such as care homes, housing associations and hospitals, to help them understand the needs of older LGBT+ people.

openingdoorslondon.org.uk

Key messages

We are very grateful to everyone who took the time to complete the survey and take part in our focus groups. **This is what they told us:**

1

They want housing, care and support services that are safe, and which recognise their lives, histories and treat them with dignity and respect. The vast majority want LGBT+ affirming or accredited housing with care provision. They do not want what general provision currently offers. The majority want to stay in London in their later life.

2

They want policy makers and providers to recognise their diversity and differences, and to respond to their specific needs that arise from these. Many older LGBT+ people in London are not currently getting the support and services they need. Policy makers and service providers therefore need to respond to this clear message.

3

They want more advice and support around housing and associated services such as health, social care and community services. Some people need these services now and some people need these services to help them plan for their future.

LGBT+ people over fifty years of age are a diverse group of people. They have had wide life experiences and lived through immense social change. Despite this diversity, older LGBT+ people are very clear about what they want and don't want in relation to their housing options both now and in the future.

Our study considers financial variability, as well as different housing tenures when examining what sort of housing and care LGBT+ people want later in life and where they would like it.

We received 624 responses to our survey between February and April 2020, making this the largest study of LGBT+ people, over the age of 50, in London.

Of the 624 respondents:

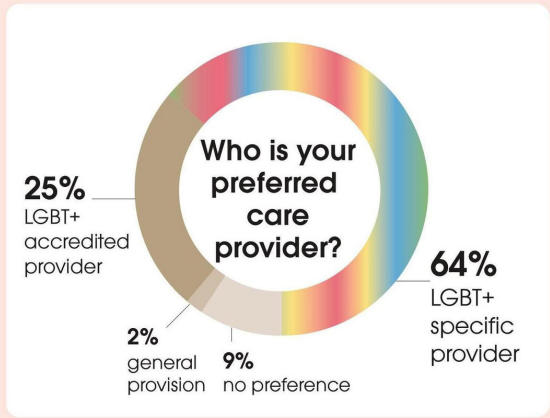
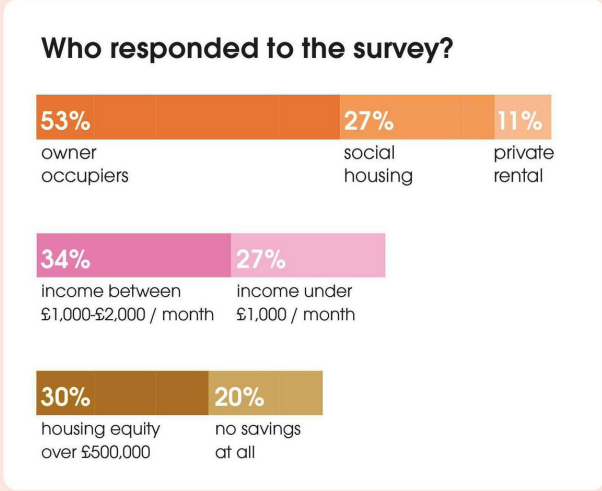
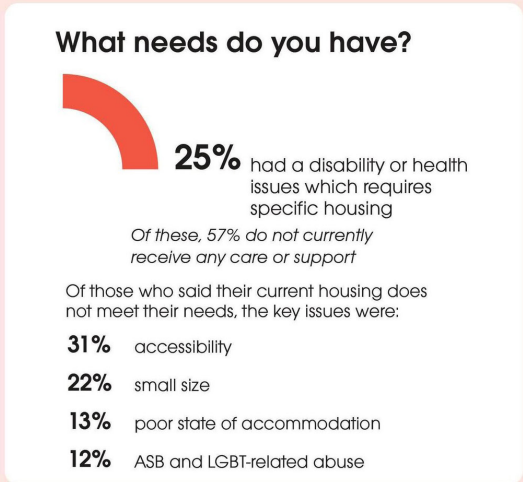
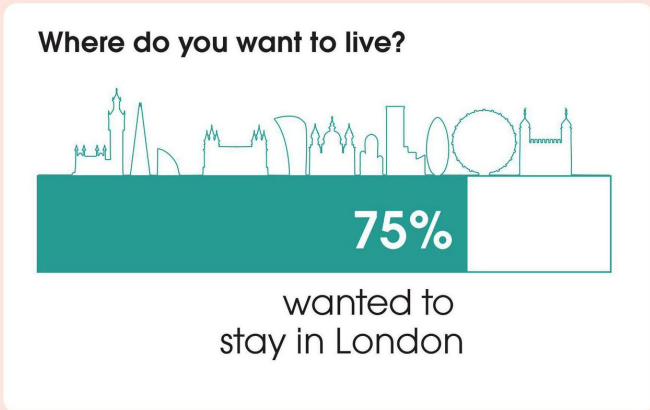
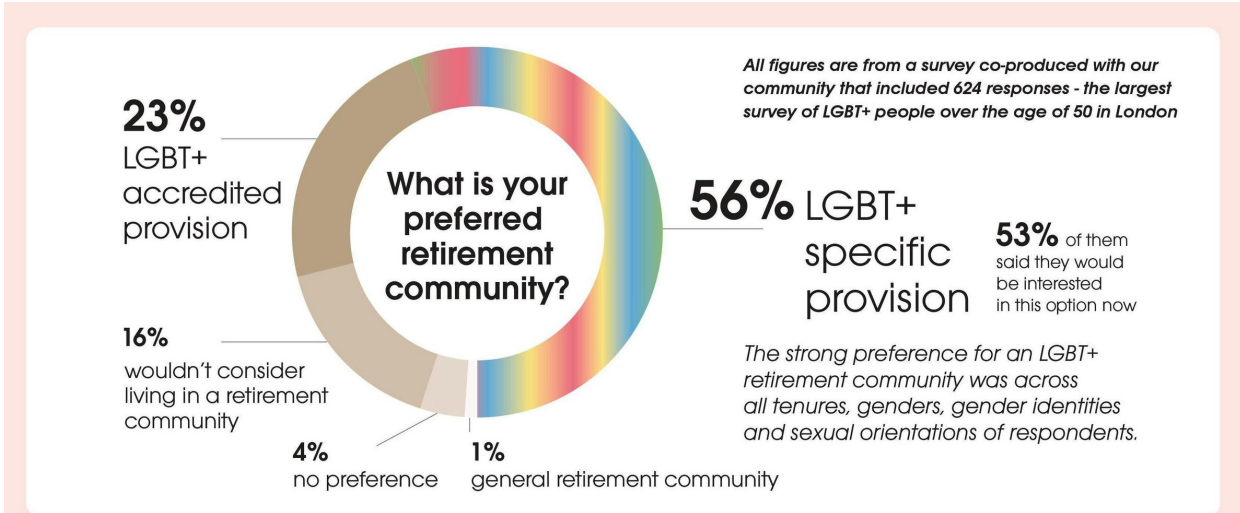
- 58% were over 60
- 56% live alone
- 82% do not have children
- 53% are owner occupiers
- 27% live in social rented housing,
- 11% rent from a private landlord.

A detailed breakdown of the respondents is provided in Appendix 2.

After the initial survey analysis, we decided to host four focus groups specifically where there had been under-representation in the survey responses, to ensure that we included the wide range of voices and important intersectional perspectives in this study. These voices are included throughout the report.

Key messages

These are the headlines from the survey responses:



Context

Over the past ten years, there has been a growing international research evidence base concerning the lives and experiences of older LGBT+ people, which has included their housing, care and support needs later in life – we provide a list of useful sources of this existing evidence base in Appendix 4.

These studies demonstrate that LGBT+ people have concerns about their safety and well-being in relation to housing, care and support as they get older. They are consequently likely to change their behaviours to address these concerns, such as hiding their authentic selves, ‘going back into the closet’, or living more restricted lives compared to their cisgender and/or heterosexual peers.

In the UK, despite the Equality Act (2010), as well as more positive social attitudes towards LGBT+ people compared to the past, many LGBT+ people over fifty years of age remain wary of housing and care service providers and how they will be able to manage their needs in the future. Trust is a key issue – many older LGBT+ people are sceptical that those providing housing, care and support will be inclusive of them and that they will be treated with dignity and respect. Additionally, existing research highlights how diverse older LGBT+ communities are – not all older LGBT+ people will want, need or have access to the same services; yet there currently is little choice. Some studies do identify good practices and make suggestions for improving services and care and support. There is also some evidence which indicates that older LGBT+ people do have clear ideas about what sort of services they would like to see, but generally evidence is minimal.

Stonewall Housing’s Building Safe Choices 2016 report concluded that there is currently no housing and related support specifically for older LGBT+ people in the UK. A number of housing options were identified as ways to address these gaps.

Tonic, Stonewall Housing and Opening Doors London (ODL) agreed a common objective

in 2018 to take forward the Building Safe Choices work into a plan for action, that would influence public policy and funding, to improve choice in housing provision and services for older LGBT+ people. We agreed to focus our work on new and existing housing with care provision, initially in London, which has the highest older LGBT+ population in the UK, with a view to expanding this to other areas in the future.

We identified that the research evidence base was lacking regarding specific demand information, particularly on what housing and services people require and are willing and able to pay for. We identified that London boroughs do not have any information on the specific housing and support requirements of older LGBT+ individuals. We believe this is critical strategic information that should be available to inform housing and support service planning and commissioning to meet public bodies responsibilities of the Equality Act 2010.

Our action research oriented project aimed to capture ‘the voice of demand’ of older LGBT+ people and gather more information about what older LGBT+ people might choose and how their financial and other circumstances affect these choices. Building Safe Choices 2020 is therefore an important development in the evidence base and at the end of this report we provide our call to action for next steps.

Key themes

We are using three key themes to draw our findings together. These are:

Needs and Resources

Under this theme we look at the diverse housing, health, care and support needs of the older LGBT+ people who participated in our study. We outline the financial and other assets they have as resources. This thematic section illustrates that the needs and resources of older LGBT+ people are wide ranging, and that housing and care providers need to recognise and respond to this diversity of need.



Housing Options

With diverse needs and resources amongst older LGBT+ people, this section looks at their current and future housing options and choices. It shows that many older LGBT+ people have housing needs that differ from heterosexual people and they are clear about what housing options they want, where they want them and what they do not want both now and in the future.



Provision, Advice and Support

This thematic section looks at what services respondents said they would like to see provided, what advice about housing and support they would like, and how and where it should be provided. Older LGBT+ people want access to good quality, appropriate provision, and advice and support about their housing and care choices.



Focus Group Feedback

Look out for these purple boxes, where we'll be sharing feedback from the focus groups.

Needs and Resources

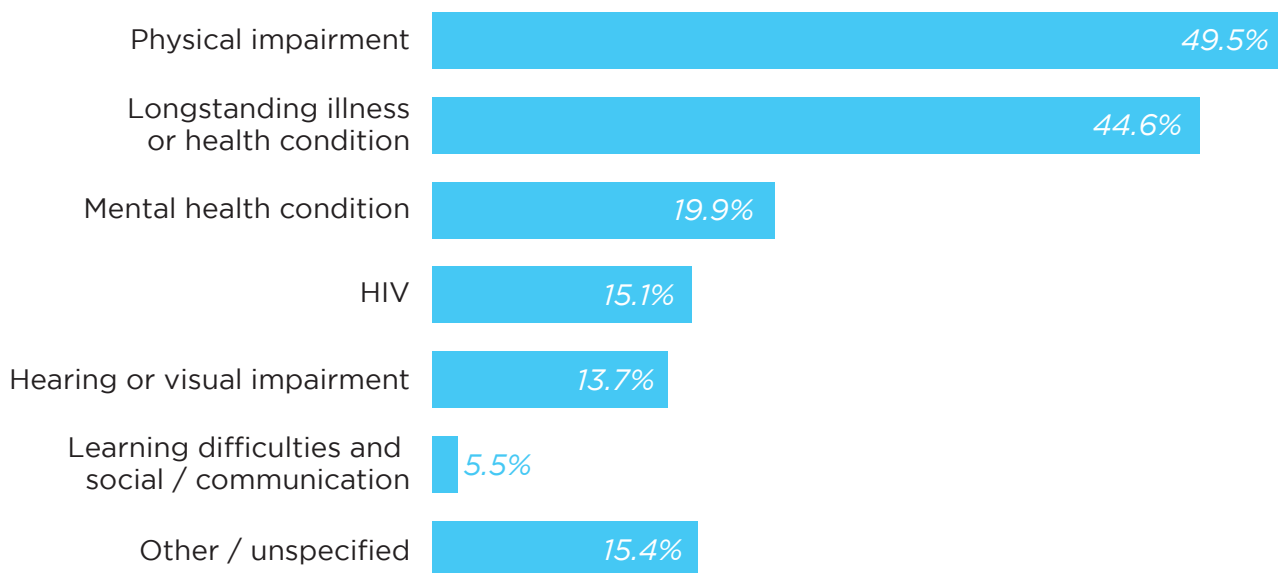


Older LGBT people have diverse needs and varied levels of resources. Many of these needs are not being met, and choices are restricted by limited resources

Health and Care Needs

A quarter of those completing our survey had disabilities or health issues which require specific housing. We found that this was greater amongst those living in some tenures compared to others i.e., 47% living in social housing, 30% in private rented housing and 13% amongst owner occupiers. Age groups did not show substantial differences. The main reasons given are illustrated in Figure 1:

Figure 1: Type of disabilities and/or health issues which require specific housing?



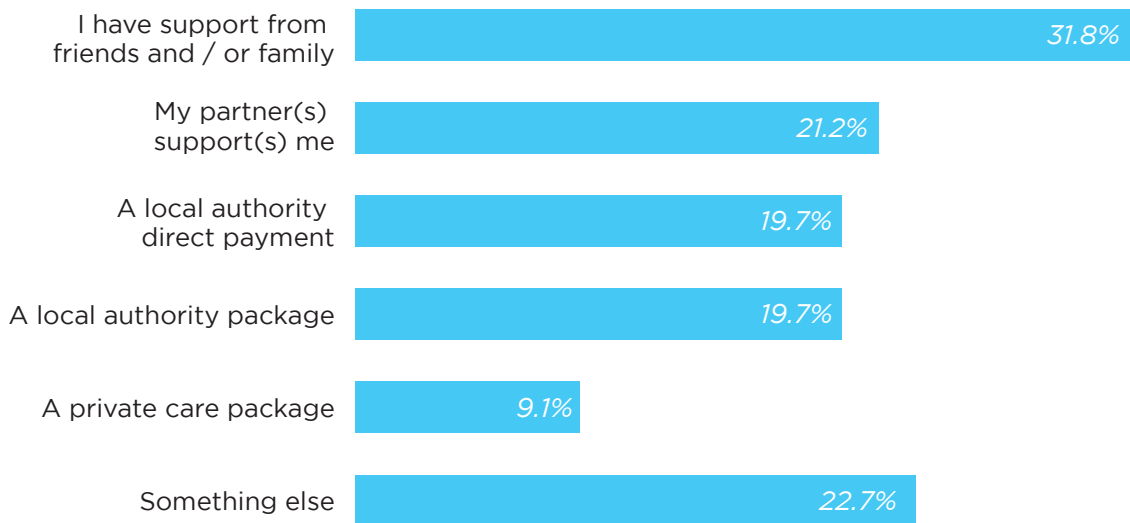
Note: The total exceeds 100% as respondents were allowed to choose multiple conditions



Yet despite the variety illustrated in Figure 1, the majority of those living with disabilities or health issues that require specific housing, (57%) do not currently receive any care or support.

Of those who do receive care or support, as Figure 2 illustrates, most have local authority support, but almost as many rely on their personal support networks such as family, friends, and partners, and less than 10% purchase private care packages.

Figure 2: Who provides care or support?



Note: The total of the percentages exceeds 100% as individuals were allowed to choose more than one option.

Housing Needs

82% of our survey respondents indicated that the housing they are currently living in meets their needs. However, their responses varied depending on other factors, including health/disability, tenure and other issues they identified with their housing.

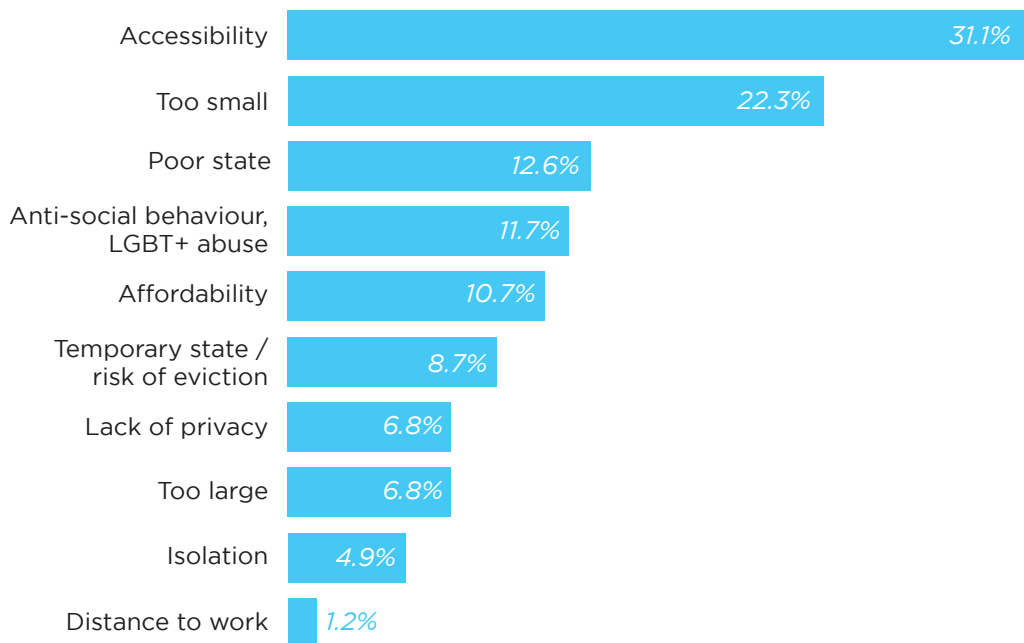
Amongst those with disabilities or health issues only 64% said their current housing was meeting their needs.

Owner occupiers were substantially more likely to report that their current housing meets their needs (85%), compared to private renters (42%).

Figure 3 shows the range of issues that respondents identified with their current housing that meant it did not meet their current needs. Accessibility (31%), small size (22%), poor state of the accommodation (13%), and antisocial behaviour and LGBT-related abuse (12%) were most frequently selected.



Figure 3: Reasons given for housing not meeting current needs



Note: The total exceeds 100% as respondents could give multiple reasons. This question was asked as an open-ended question, so the answers reflect what the respondents think of when they were asked the question.

Focus Group Feedback

"Being BAME and LGBT+ means you experience double stigma and discrimination. If BAME people come out to their families, there is a high chance you will be rejected. So, you turn to the LGBT+ family but then you have a double slap if they reject you as well." - **Cisgender gay man, 50s.**

Some trans participants had experienced overt discrimination against them when seeking accommodation. Even in self-contained flats the possibility of intolerant neighbours was a real threat. Communal areas were regarded as threatening places and possible opportunities for confrontation, harassment, intimidation and even violence against trans people.

"The main thing is you want to feel safe and secure, even if you have your own flat you have to share entrances and hallways, it's ok if your neighbours are LGBT+ friendly and accepting. I always worry if there are new neighbours moving in." - **Cisgender bisexual man, 50s.**

"I live in a small London basement flat which means below stairs, it's okay now but will not be suitable as I get older." - **Cisgender lesbian, 50s.**



Respondents' written responses to this question provide informative details, showing some of the lived experiences and concerns behind these issues. These include comments specifically about the built-environment and how these intersect with people's gender identity and/or sexual orientation to create multiple and complex concerns:



"I am scared of neighbours finding out I am gay and also about HIV status and find this extremely stressful at times." - Cisgender gay man, 50s

"I am effectively a lodger, living in my landlord's house. There is a lack of privacy, autonomy, and agency. It feels increasingly precarious." - Cisgender queer man, 50s

"I'm on the second floor, my mobility is not good and the lift is out of order a lot of the time which makes me totally housebound" - Cisgender bisexual man, 50s

"Neighbours intimidate me. Staring at me, making loud noise, ignoring me when I've tried to speak with them." - Trans queer woman, 50s



Financial Resources

LGBT+ people's ability to meet their housing needs later in life are in part determined by their financial resources, as well as the options available. Our respondents reflected a broad spectrum, ranging from those with very little, to those who have considerable economic advantages. We asked respondents about their income, savings and pensions.

The majority of our respondents (39%) had an income over £2,000 per month after tax, a similarly large proportion had an income between £1,000 and £2,000 per month (34%), followed by those with an income lower than £1,000 per month (27%).

There were more cisgender men in our study with higher monthly incomes than other groups. Gay men were slightly more likely to have higher monthly incomes, whilst bisexual respondents were more than twice as likely to be in the lowest income band as lesbian and gay respondents.

Higher monthly incomes were more common in older age cohorts and amongst owner-occupiers.

Figure 4: Monthly income after tax

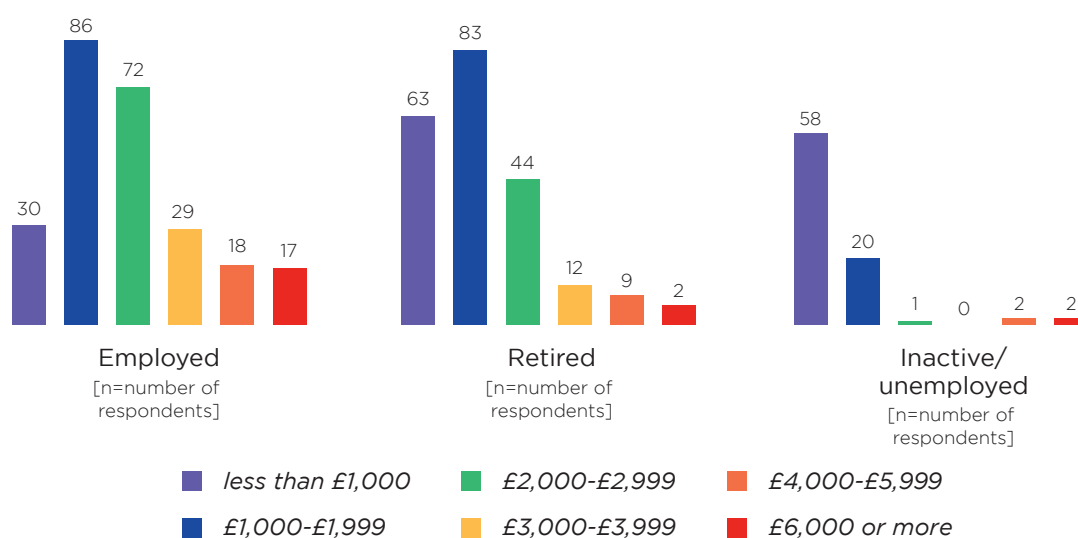


Figure 4 illustrates monthly income after tax by employment status. Unsurprisingly, financial resources were related to employment status, although those who have retired mirrored those who are employed in some income ranges.

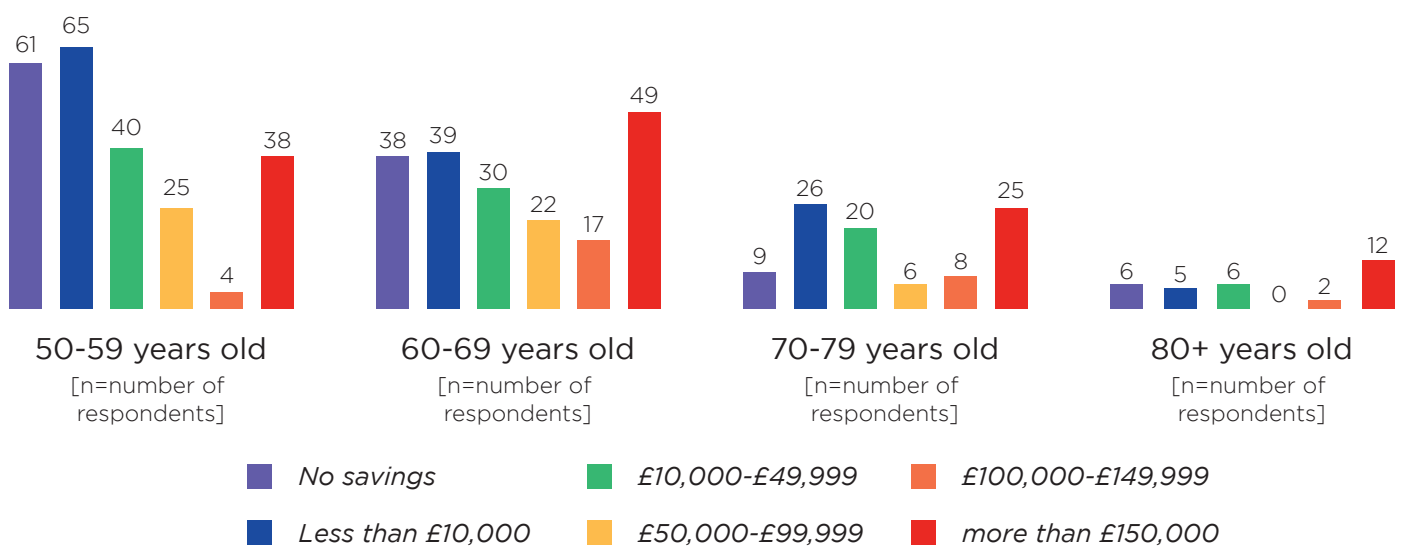
Around one in ten respondents who were currently in employment had a monthly income of less than £1,000. The same is true for three in ten respondents who were retired and seven in ten respondents who were neither in employment nor retired.



Almost 30% of our respondents did not have a private pension, while 20% did not know the value of their pension. A quarter of our respondents had an annual private pension of less than £20,000 with the cisgender gay and bisexual men and trans men more likely than cisgender lesbians or trans women not to have a private pension.

Nearly 80% of respondents had some savings, with 24% having savings over £150,000. One in five respondents had no savings at all. Figure 5 shows savings by age group. Those respondents in younger age groups were less likely to have savings although almost 50% of those in the 60-69 age group had significant savings. Homeowners are more likely to have savings than any other group, those in social rental housing are the least likely group to have savings.

Figure 5: Savings by age group



Focus Group Feedback

Transitioning often brought several additional challenges, that are not experienced either by the general public or by LGB people. These often have a negative impact on finance, employment, housing and relationships. First there is the cost of physically transitioning and surgical reassignment procedures often costing £25,000 or more. Trans people often must change jobs in order to transition. One participant explained how they lost out on their legacy once they started living openly as a trans person.

'The financial implications of being trans impact on your housing options. Many trans people do not have stable housing options and homelessness is a major concern among the trans population.' - Trans queer woman, 50s.



Housing Equity

Over 30% of survey respondents had a housing equity above £500,000 showing that a considerable number have significant equity to finance their retirement/later life. However, this would very much depend on where they wanted to live.

36% of our survey respondents were not homeowners, so unable to use their home as a financial resource. Home ownership was slightly more common amongst cisgender lesbians in our survey than any other group.

Reflecting trends identified in the English Housing Survey¹ younger cohorts were less likely to be homeowners than those in older cohorts. This suggests that the housing needs of LGBT+ individuals will become more significant as these relatively young (50-59 and 60-69) groups move into retirement and through retirement into later life.

Summary of Needs and Resources

A substantial number of our survey respondents were living in unsuitable housing and did not currently have their health, care and support needs met.

Our survey respondents reflect the wide diversity within LGBT+ communities regarding financial resources and equity. Our findings show that common stereotypes about the so-called 'Pink Pound' and the supposed privilege of older LGBT+ people does not reflect many peoples' situation. It should not be assumed that all older LGBT+ people have economic resources that will enable them to buy their housing and care requirements later in life, neither should it be assumed that all older LGBT+ are without financial resources to do so.

Overall, our findings demonstrate that any housing and care options must take account of this diversity and be inclusive of a wide range of needs and resources amongst older LGBT+ people.

¹ English Housing Survey Headline Report, 2018-19 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/860076/2018-19_EHS_Headline_Report.pdf

Housing Options



Whether or not they have already decided to move home later in life, older LGBT+ people do have clear ideas about what housing options they do or do not want now and in the future. Their reasons include the wish to maintain or extend LGBT+ social networks and avoid discrimination as they get older.

Moving home in later life

When respondents who had not yet retired were asked if they would move home when they did, 34% indicated they planned to move, 42% were undecided and 24% indicated they were not planning to move. One third of those who planned to move in retirement indicated that they were seeking an LGBT+ housing option as a reason for their plans.

Tenure is important here. Those currently living in social housing indicated they were less likely to move (7%) than those in private rented housing tenures (28%) or owner occupiers (29%).

There was some limited diversity depending on gender identity and sexual orientation regarding plans to move, but across all groups the share of those undecided or planning to move were larger.

Later life housing options: retirement communities

Respondents were asked if they would consider moving into a retirement community and could indicate preferences about it.

LGBT+ specific/affirming retirement communities

LGBT+ specific or affirming retirement communities are ones that set out to specifically meet the needs and wants of older LGBT+ people. The term does not imply exclusion of those who do not identify as LGBT+ but actively values those who respect and celebrate LGBT+ people. LGBT+ affirming is also often used in this context, to explain that these are not only “LGBT+-friendly” but genuinely affirming of the lives, histories, needs and desires of LGBT+ people.

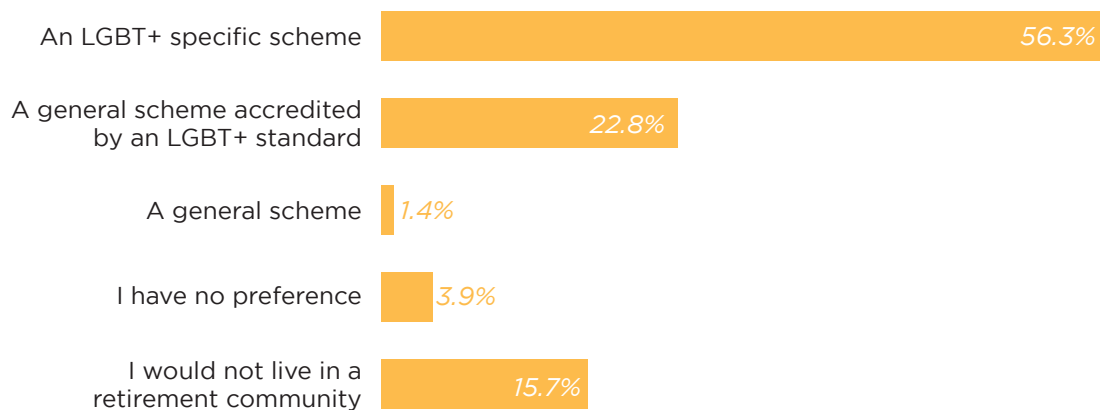
LGBT+ accredited retirement communities

LGBT+ accredited retirement communities are ones in which the provider has worked to gain an accreditation, such as Opening Doors London Pride in Care award or the Stonewall Housing Inclusion Standard. Such accreditation seeks to ensure the needs and equality of LGBT+ people are actively embedded in how a scheme operates at all levels from equality monitoring, staff training and education, to day to day activities and events, but the provision is not LGBT+ specific.



Figure 6 illustrates, there was a very clear preference for LGBT+ specific retirement communities (56%), with LGBT+ accredited retirement communities as another popular option (23%). 16% said they would not consider living in any retirement community, and a general retirement community i.e. for anyone and without LGBT+ accreditation, was preferred by only 1%.

Figure 6: Retirement community preferences



Note: In these questions the term LGBT+ specific scheme was used for clarity. This does not imply exclusion of those who do not identify as LGBT+ but is a scheme that sets out to specifically meet the needs and wants of older LGBT+ people. The term LGBT+ affirming scheme is also often used in this context to embrace those who respect and celebrate LGBT+ people.

The strong preference for an LGBT+ specific retirement housing was regardless of gender, gender identity or sexual orientation, while cisgender and transwomen and trans men were slightly more likely to choose an LGBT+ accredited general scheme than cisgender men or non-binary people.

Focus Group Feedback

'It becomes more difficult as you get older unless you hide your true identity you will not receive support from your family, your community or the church.' - Cisgender gay man, 60s.

All BAME participants were adamant they would not prefer BAME LGBT+ accommodation and would prefer a mixed community. The most important requirement was that whoever provided or worked in the accommodation had to be LGBT+ affirming as people wanted to be open about who they were, and this would be essential as they grew older and their dependency needs increased.

When asked what type of future accommodation they would prefer most trans participants stated they would prefer a mixed tenure LGBT+ affirming community as they wanted to live in an environment that was accepting and understanding of trans needs.



When respondents were asked whether they would prefer a general LGBT+ specific scheme or a scheme specific to their gender/sexual identity (for example, a lesbian-only or men-only scheme), on average two in three respondents opted for a general LGBT+ scheme. However, open text responses did indicate the importance of intersectionality:



"I would prefer a mixed community where I am free to express myself as a gay man. Being a gay man is only one part of me and I have other characteristics which are just as important to me" - Cisgender gay man, 50s

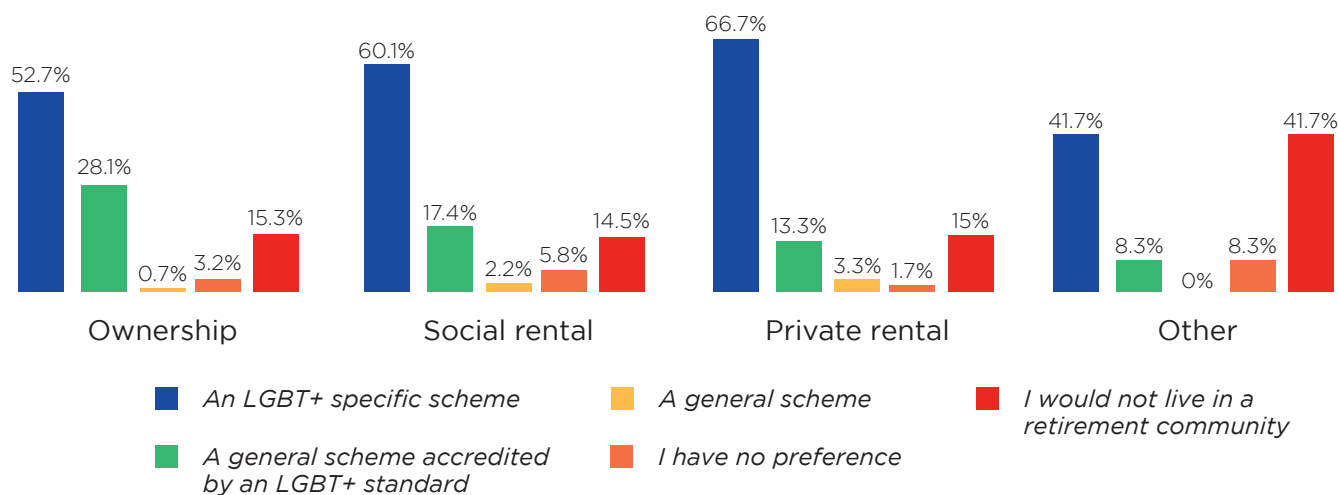
"I am bi sexual. When I have a male partner I'm often discriminated against within the LGBT community. When I have a female partner then I experience a similar but often less difficult response dependant on the community we are in. Due to a lifetime of experiencing exclusion from many so-called inclusive communities I feel it's more important to tackle inequality and discrimination throughout society. Care homes and retirement communities must be safe and welcoming for all the occupants who will have had a diversity of experience throughout their lives. As I am rooted within my local community it is important that I have an option to stay within the borough. Familiar landscape and the pleasure of local connections has become more important as I've grown older." - Cisgender bisexual woman, 50s

"Often LGBT is only a label and the T receives zero consideration. My experience is it is weighted heavily to G, some L, B is invisible and T not even an afterthought." - Trans asexual woman, 60s.



As figure 7 illustrates, it was notable that both LGBT+ specific and LGBT+ accredited retirement communities were popular amongst respondents regardless of their current tenure.

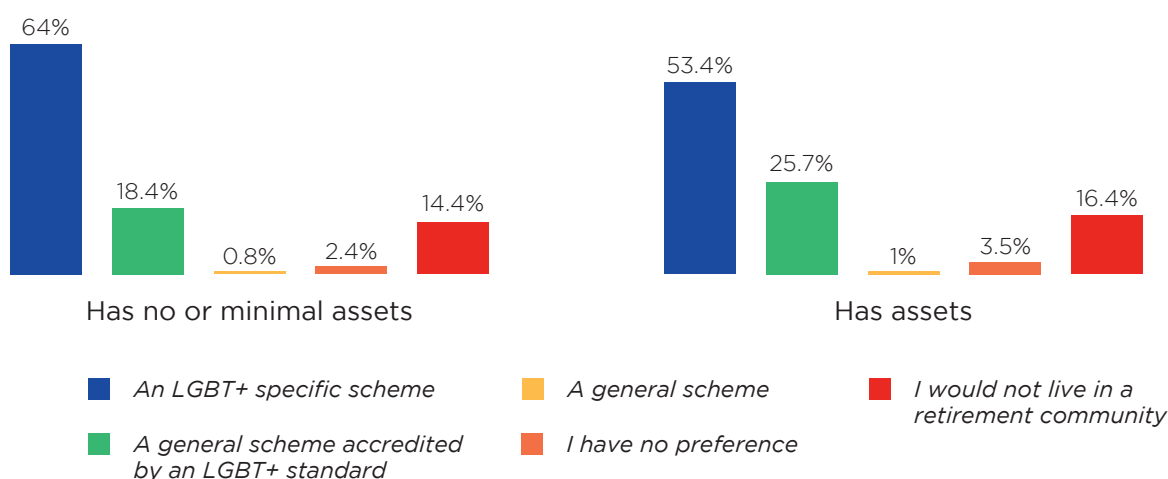
Figure 7: Retirement community preferences by tenure (percentages)



Note: Number of cases for each group is as follows: 281 homeownership; 138 social rental; 60 private rental; 12 other.

We devised a criterion for financial resources which combined homeownership, a sizable pension and assets and savings. Our results show that more than half of those with or without financial assets would prefer an LGBT+ specific scheme as a retirement community.

Figure 8: Retirement community preference by assets



Note: Having assets are defined as having at least one of the followings: homeownership (including shared ownership and mortgage), having annual pension value over £20,000, and having assets or savings over £50,000. Number of cases for each group is as follows: 311 with assets; 125 with no assets.



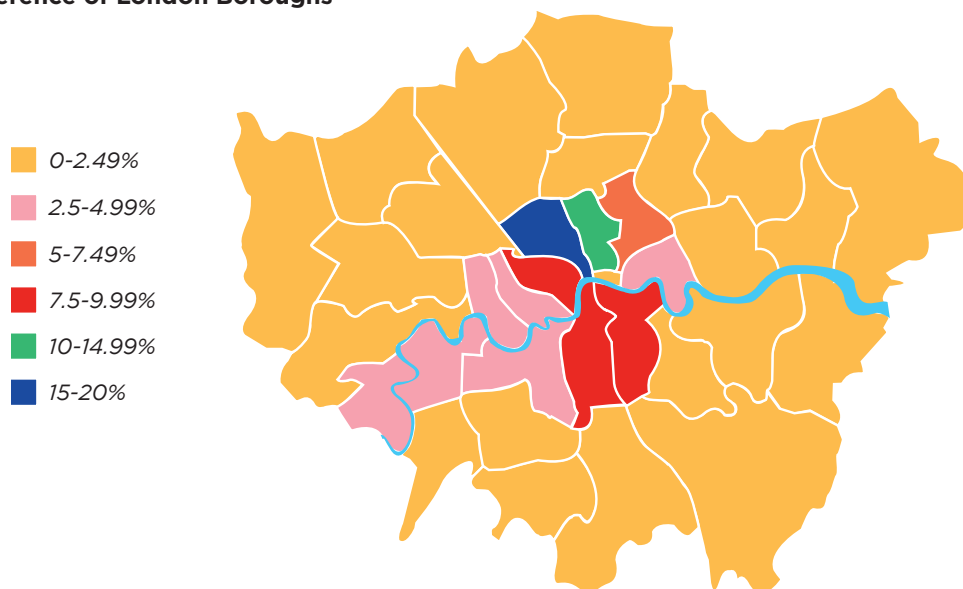
Later life housing options: LGBT+ specific retirement communities

To extend previous research we wanted our study to gain more detail about older LGBT+ people's preferences and requirements for LGBT+ specific retirement communities.

When asked about a preferred location for LGBT+ specific retirement communities, our respondents expressed a strong preference to stay in London rather than moving away. Less than 1 in 4 individuals wanted to live somewhere else. While around 39% were happy to live anywhere in London, 37% stated that they would prefer specific areas of London.

In figure 9 we illustrate the most preferred London boroughs. Most respondents wanted to live in central London with Camden and Islington being the most popular boroughs, followed by Southwark, Lambeth and Westminster.

Figure 9: Preference of London Boroughs



Note: Based on the answers of the respondents who mentioned preference for specific boroughs of London.

Respondents could add open text responses to their selections and these indicate that preferences were driven by: proximity to facilities and public transport networks; areas where people had friends; areas where they felt safe; areas which had a strong LGBT+ presence; and areas located near to LGBT+ support organisations. Overall the respondents' responses suggest that LGBT+ people are concerned about social isolation and safety and form their neighbourhood preferences to address these concerns.



“Lambeth, Hackney etc. - cosmopolitan areas with a high number of LGBT people” - Non-binary gynoromantic, 50s.

“I feel I want to stay in London whilst I am fit enough to enjoy all that London offers including LGBT+ community and events. There may come a time when I feel less strongly about this, but would still want my identity and my dignity respected so LGBT+ affirmative care would be important even if wasn't able to take an active part in the community anymore.” - Cisgender lesbian, 60s.

Policy makers need to create an inclusive London where older LGBT+ people can actively participate in city life. These findings also indicate that gender identity and sexual orientation need to be at the heart of debates about Age-Friendly Cities.

Figure 10 shows respondents' preferences for LGBT+ retirement communities with optional support. 55% of the respondents who agreed that this is something they would like, indicated that they would be interested in this option now, if available. Strikingly over 80% expressed that they would be interested in this option at some point, potentially at an older age.

71% of people currently living in the private rental sector wanted an LGBT+ affirming retirement community now, compared to 64% of social renters and 48% of owner-occupiers. For those who wanted this in the future these figures increased to 93% of private renters, 83% of social renters and 82% of owner-occupiers.

Focus Group Feedback

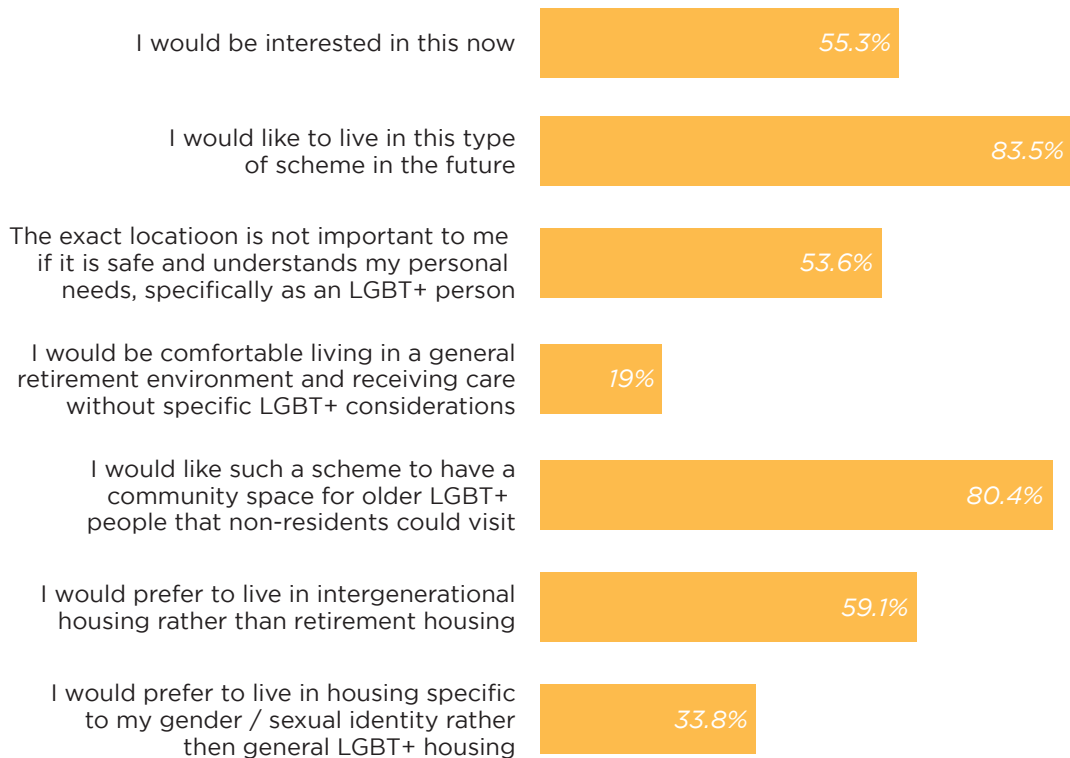
“Despite being expensive London is a much easier place to live if you are trans” - Trans queer woman, 50s.

No BAME participants had a local LGBT+ networks but had LGBT+ friends across London and wanted to stay in the city.

“You have to be proactive and have some idea what you want in the future. I would hate to be in a residential care home, and although I would like to stay here I am prepared to downsize but want to stay in London.” - Cisgender gay mans, 60s.



Figure 10: Preferences for an LGBT+ affirming retirement community with optional support



Note: Share of those who 'agrees' or 'strongly agrees'.

The respondents also showed a strong preference for a scheme with community space where non-residents could visit (80%); there was also strong interest in housing that brings different generations of people together rather than retirement housing (59%).

Focus Group Feedback

'Many bisexual people are married or have been married and have children, so any future accommodation needs to have room for them to visit and stay.' - Cisgender bisexual woman, 50s.

"Pet ownership is popular amongst the LGBT+ community and should be a consideration for future accommodation" - Cisgender bisexual woman, 50s.

Although there was considerable diversity amongst our participants, it was clear that the need and demand for LGBT+ affirming retirement communities is one which the majority have in common.



Respondents were invited to provide open text responses to provide reasons for their choices. These quotes highlight their varied reasons, but also key factors housing providers need to consider.



"I am not going to be rich in retirement & I hope LGBT+ schemes would not just be for the well-heeled." - Cisgender gay man, 50s

"My mother recently has moved into a very sheltered housing development. There is a real community here, based on genuinely friendly and supportive people and very caring staff. An LGBT positive version would be a great option for when I get older!" - Cisgender gay man, 50s

"English is not my first language, a care provider that can help keep this in mind when caring for me is important too." - Cisgender gay man, 50s

"In addition to LGBT+ affirming housing, I would welcome LGBT+ affirming healthcare, dementia support and hospice. Also palliative care. And gay bingo." - Epicene gay, 60s

"I think Intersectionality is important as my wife is non-White" - Cisgender lesbian, 60s

Focus Group Feedback

Most Lesbian participants felt there was a need for more information about the accommodation needs of older LGBT+ people, including retirement communities and care homes. Most information is directed at the heterosexual population and is not LGBT+ friendly or useful.



Summary of Housing Options

Our findings extend earlier studies by clearly showing that LGBT+ specific/affirming retirement communities are overwhelmingly popular regardless of financial assets or tenure, but also that LGBT+ accredited retirement housing would be popular.

The near complete rejection of general, mainstream retirement housing, without any direct LGBT+ inclusion policies shows that older LGBT+ people, regardless of their financial assets, are clearly saying that policy makers and service providers need to act now to provide these options.

We have identified some differences within and between LGBT+ people who responded to these questions, but they are not sizable, although we acknowledge that open text responses do indicate important, intersectional differences that must be considered. Despite these differences, older LGBT+ people are overwhelmingly clear that they want equal, accessible housing that meets their needs and in which they feel safe and treated with respect. They also make it clear that they want these housing options to be available in London, where they have networks they want to remain part of as they get older, as well as services/organisations that they want to continue to use.

Provision, Advice & Support



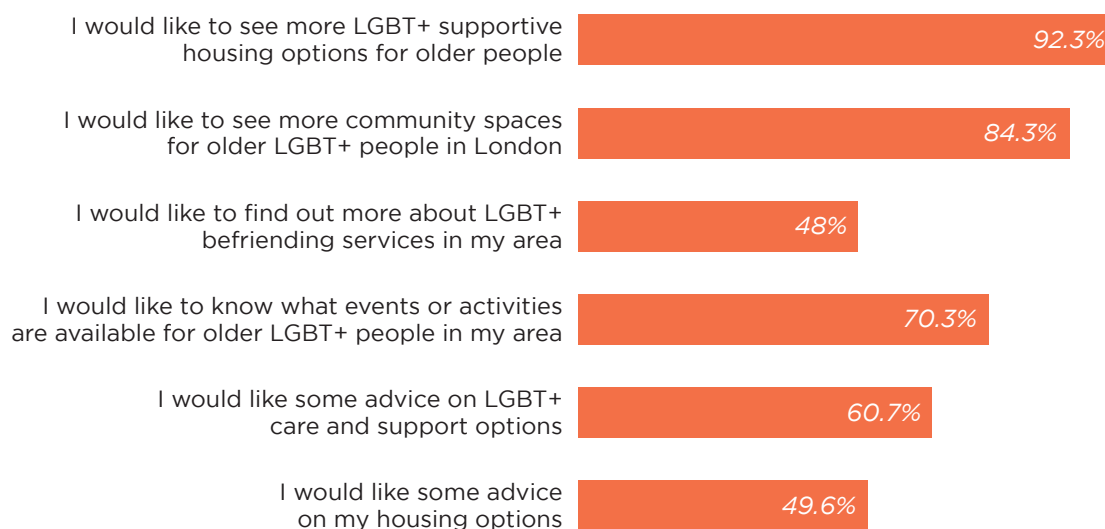
Older LGBT+ people have clear views about their housing and care preferences later in life but often do not know where to find information, especially in a crisis.

We asked our respondents about a range of LGBT+ specific services and forms of provision they might need or like to see available now and in the future. These related to housing, community spaces, befriending schemes, activities and advice regarding care and housing.

Figure 11 shows that LGBT+ supportive housing options are again overwhelmingly popular (92%) as is the provision of community spaces in London for older LGBT+ people (84%).

Gaining information about befriending schemes was of interest to nearly half of respondents, this is notable as most respondents were in younger age cohorts. Similarly, there is a clear need for advice about care and support (61%) and about housing options (50%).

Figure 11: Interest in LGBT+ specific services and provision (percentages)





Open text responses that covered these issues suggest that older LGBT+ people have not always considered their future needs and that signposting to services and organisations that can help and provide advice is important.



“I am currently completely independent and find it difficult to imagine a future where I am not. I am not aware of any available support or housing situations that are LGBT+ specific. Because of this it is both hard to consider and to plan.” - Cisgender lesbian, 50s

“Some of us older people still care for disabled people such as parents and there is no or little support for us. My mother is in her nineties and I must visit her even when I’m not well or the weather is very bad. I cannot even take a holiday.” - Cisgender queer man, 60s

“Right now, at 62, I am nowhere near needing support or retirement housing. I am guessing I might need in 15+ years’ time. What I am a bit concerned about is the future time lapse between realising that I need such support/retirement housing and actually receiving it. Is this something you would be able to apply for without a long wait, or would you need to apply years in advance? Also, I think it’s very important that some kind of choice is available. Thanks very much for this thoughtful initiative.” - Cisgender lesbian, 60s

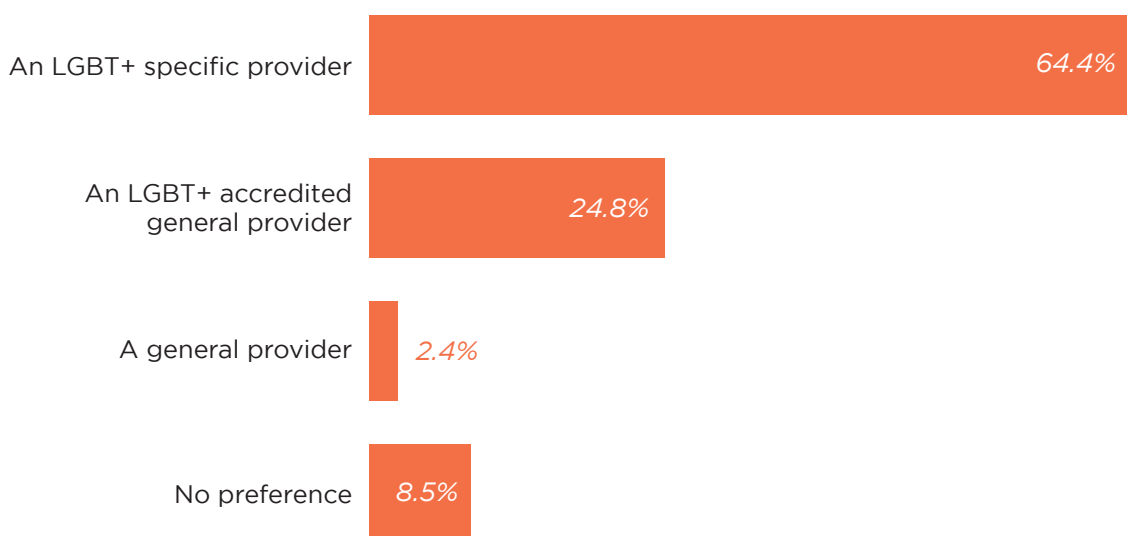


Care Support

We directly asked respondents in our study about care or support options they may require at home either now or in the future.

Their responses are illustrated in Figure 12 and indicate that an LGBT+ specific provider (64%) or an LGBT+ accredited general provider (25%) were the most popular choices.

Figure 12: Care preferences now or in future (If you require care or support at home, either now or in future, which would you prefer (assuming equal levels of quality)?



Focus Group Feedback

There was a need for more targeted information about the accommodation needs of older trans people and the barriers they face. The traditional approaches to housing options is not usually suitable for most trans people many of who probably live on their own and are estranged from their families. - Trans pansexual woman, 50s.

The church played an important part in many BAME peoples' lives, but because being LGBT+ was seen as a sin and unacceptable by the church many BAME people kept their sexuality secret and it was common for people to get married in an attempt to hide the truth and be accepted. The participants felt that as BAME people grew older and perhaps infirm they would not know where to turn for support as usually in their communities it would be their families, their communities and the church. When asked if they knew where older BAME LGBT+ go for support, apart from ODL people did not know of anywhere else.

Most Lesbian participants were knowledgeable about accessing more advice and support around housing and other associated services such as health, social care and community services. This was due to either previously working in these areas or having direct experience through supporting older relatives. The participants acknowledge that it could be difficult finding out such information without prior knowledge and experience.



Summary of Provision, Advice and Support

This section demonstrates that amongst our respondents, services which are LGBT+ specific or accredited are most preferable. This is especially the case for care and support. Our findings also demonstrate that older LGBT+ people like other older cisgender/heterosexual people do not always know where to get advice and support until it becomes urgent.

However, for LGBT+ people this is more significant because most services (general services that are not LGBT+ specific or accredited) are not viewed as desirable. There are many studies in the UK and elsewhere which suggest that these general services are problematic for older LGBT+ people, due to either fear/reluctance to approach authority or providers lack of knowledge/confidence in advising LGBT people or both. Taking steps to provide advice and support to LGBT+ people of all ages to increase awareness and fill this knowledge gap is required. Community spaces for older LGBT+ people in London are also essential, as are events and activities. Finding ways to incorporate advice and support in these spaces and activities should be considered.

It is also evident that there is a need for policy makers, service providers and community organisations to play a leading role in meeting the diverse needs of LGBT+ people as they age.

Our commitments



TONIC

We commit to deliver LGBT+ affirming retirement communities in London and to work collaboratively with other organisations to meet the needs of older LGBT+ Londoners.



**OPENING DOORS
LONDON**

We commit to expanding our Pride in Care accreditation and training services to meet demand, to seek funding to develop LGBT+ financial planning advice services and to work collaboratively with other organisations to meet the needs of older LGBT+ Londoners.



We commit to expanding our Inclusion Standard and training services to meet demand, to seek funding to further develop our housing advice services for older LGBT+ people and to work collaboratively with other organisations to meet the needs of older LGBT+ Londoners.

Call to action



This study has evidenced a clear demand from older LGBT+ Londoners for appropriate provision of housing, care, support and advice to meet their needs. Public authorities need to respond to this evidence of need. We are asking public bodies to follow these calls to action in order to meet their duties to diverse communities under the Equalities Act 2010 and the Care Act 2014:

1

FORMALLY RECOGNISE THE NEEDS OF OLDER LGBT+ PEOPLE IN POLICY AND PRACTICE

Recognition of the specific housing, support and care needs and wants of older LGBT+ Londoners should be reflected in the policies and practices of the GLA and London Boroughs to create an inclusive London where older LGBT+ people can actively participate in city life. This should include recognition in the Age Friendly Cities initiative.

2

CO-DESIGN A PATHWAY TO ENABLE OLDER LGBT+ PEOPLE TO ACCESS APPROPRIATE SERVICES AND HOUSING

A pathway to enable older LGBT+ people to access housing, care and support services appropriate to their needs should be co-designed, to acknowledge the historic discrimination that many people have faced and their real fear of authority.

3

COMMIT TO DEVELOPING LGBT+ AFFIRMING HOUSING WITH CARE IN LONDON

LGBT+ affirming housing with care options should be developed in London, to recognise the needs of diverse communities within the older population.

4

PROMOTE LGBT+ ACCREDITED HOUSING AND CARE SERVICES

LGBT+ accreditation of housing and care services should be widely promoted to housing providers, to ensure that all housing options for older LGBT+ people are safe and secure.

5

FUND LGBT+ COMMUNITY LED SERVICES FOR OLDER PEOPLE

Advice services for older LGBT+ people should be supported to be developed by LGBT+ organisations and funded appropriately by public bodies.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Study Methodology

With oversight from Professor Andrew King, of the University of Surrey, we took an action research oriented, community-led approach to developing the survey content and to reaching as many older LGBT+ Londoners as possible. Focus groups with older LGBT+ people were used to design and pilot the survey, which was then launched online on 3rd February 2020.

Recognising the issues of digital exclusion, in addition to emails to our contact lists and using social media to promote the on-line survey, we sent out surveys by post to ODL members with pre-paid reply envelopes, advertisements were placed in the Evening Standard and Metro London and postcards with a telephone contact number were distributed at events and local LGBT+ forums.

Our outreach work was cut short by the lockdown and we closed the online survey on 13th April, having received 624 responses.

After analysing the data from the surveys, we published our headline infographic in June, 2020. We used this infographic as the basis of specific focus group discussions in August 2020, where we had under-represented responses to ensure a wide range of views were included in this study.

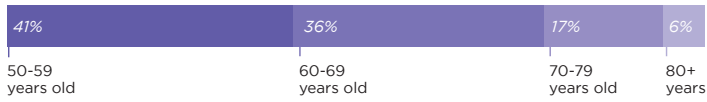
The four focus groups, organised by ODL and held by video conference, were all 50+ LGBT+ with a specific focus:

- BAME
- Trans
- Bisexual
- Lesbian

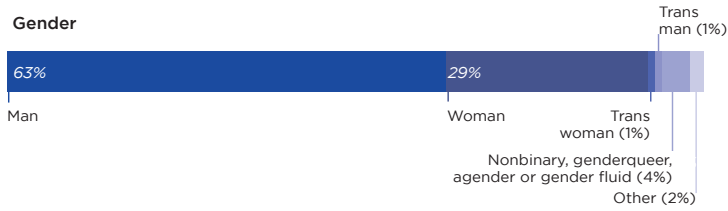
We are also working with other LGBT+ organisations to enable them to use the survey format in other locations, such as Manchester with the LGBT Foundation, so we will overtime be able to map the demand across the UK.

Appendix 2: Respondent characteristics

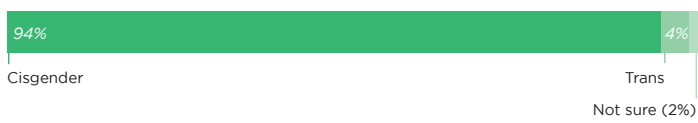
Age range



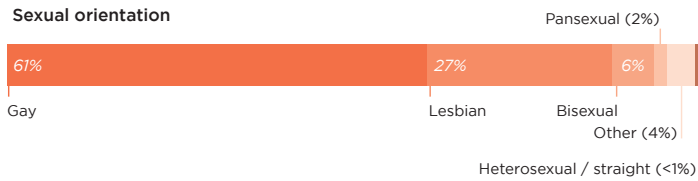
Gender



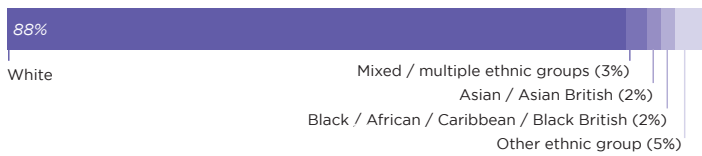
Gender identity



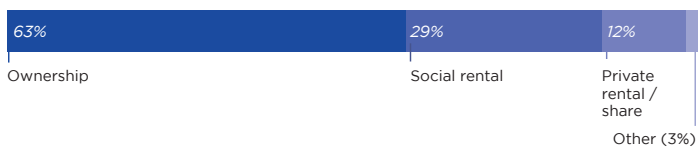
Sexual orientation



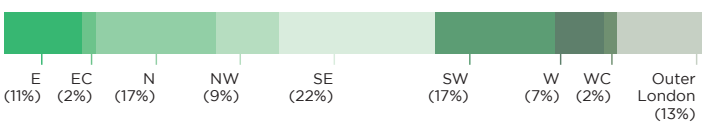
Ethnicity



Tenure



Current residence



Appendix 3: Glossary of Terms

Bi (sexual)

Bi is an umbrella term used to describe an emotional, romantic and/or sexual orientation towards more than one gender.

Bi people may describe themselves using one or more of a wide variety of terms, including, but not limited to, bisexual, pan, bi-curious, queer, and other non-monosexual identities.**

Gay

Refers to a man who has an emotional, romantic and/or sexual orientation towards men. Also a generic term for lesbian and gay sexuality - some women define themselves as gay rather than lesbian.**

Gynoromantic

Refers to someone who is attracted to females and femininity. It is often used by non-binary identifying people, since it doesn't rely on the persons gender.

Lesbian

Refers to a woman who has an emotional, romantic and/or sexual orientation towards women.**

LGBT+

Refers to anyone who identifies within the wide spectrum of sexual and gender minorities and while various organisations use different initials we understand this choice resonates with our communities.

LGBT+ accredited

Services and support where the provider has worked to gain an accreditation, such as Opening Doors London Pride in Care award or the Stonewall Housing Inclusion Standard. Such accreditation seeks to ensure the needs and equality of LGBT+ people are actively embedded in how services operate at all levels from equality monitoring, staff training and education, to day to day activities and events, but the provision is not LGBT+ specific or affirming.

LGBT+ affirming

Services and support that are not only be "LGBT+-friendly" but genuinely affirming of the lives, histories, needs and desires of LGBT+ people. The term does not imply exclusion of those who do not identify as LGBT+ but actively values those who respect and celebrate LGBT+ people.

LGBT+ specific

Services and support that set out to specifically

meet the needs and wants of older LGBT+ people. The term does not imply exclusion of those who do not identify as LGBT+ but actively values those who respect and celebrate LGBT+ people. LGBT+ affirming is also often used in this context.

Non-binary

An umbrella term for people whose gender identity doesn't sit comfortably with 'man' or 'woman'. Non-binary identities are varied and can include people who identify with some aspects of binary identities, while others reject them entirely.**

Pan (sexual)

Refers to a person whose emotional, romantic and/or sexual attraction towards others is not limited by sex or gender.**

Queer

In the past a derogatory term for LGBT individuals. The term has now been reclaimed by LGBT young people in particular who don't identify with traditional categories around gender identity and sexual orientation but is still viewed to be derogatory by some.**

Retirement Community

Retirement Communities combine high quality housing options for older people with tailored support services. They allow residents to rent or own a property and to maintain their privacy and independence, with the reassurance of 24-hour on-site staff, communal facilities, and optional care and support as needed. Retirement Communities may also be referred to as retirement villages, extra care housing, housing-with-care, assisted living, close care apartments, or independent living settings.

Sexual Orientation

A person's emotional, romantic and/or sexual attraction to another person.**

Trans

We have used the term "Trans" to cover the various terms that stem from the prefix trans which is an umbrella term to describe people whose gender is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with, the sex they were assigned at birth.

*** Denotes a definition used by Stonewall.*

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