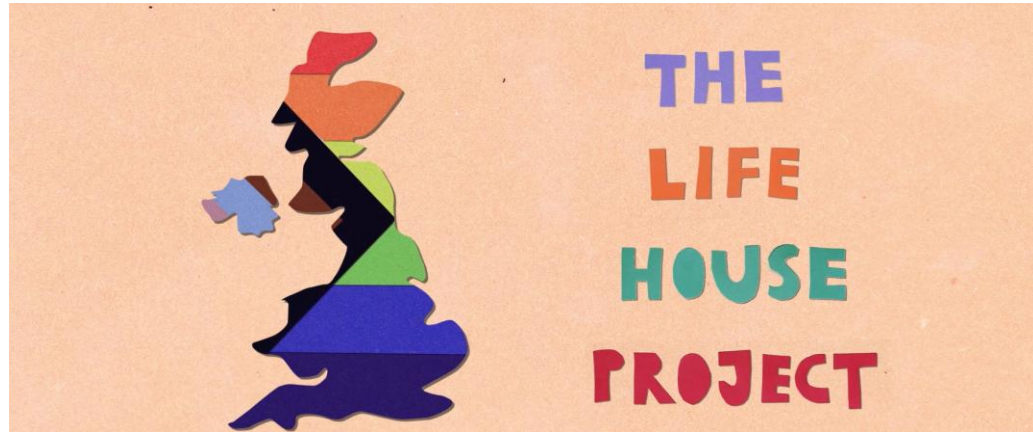


The Life House Project

By
Dr Georgia Bowers
(Lead Researcher – Guildford School of
Acting, University of Surrey)



Context: Identified Barriers

- Negative experiences with health and/or social care workers and other support staff
- Fears of prejudice, discrimination, or social isolation if sexual orientation or gender identity is disclosed

100% of participants had concerns/anxiety regarding adult social care & housing in later life

“I was in hospital for eight weeks, and there’s no way I would have come out. I was scared that something bad might happen, especially when I was so vulnerable” (Participant, 2024)

“The staff refused to recognise his relationship because it was with a man ... cigarette burns from the carers were found on him” (Participant, 2024)

“.. theatre takes the fear away from talking about these things’ and ‘brings us all together to share how we feel and to get people listening” (Participant, 2024)



Project Design & Delivery

- Funded by the ESRC Impact Acceleration Account
- Co-created theatre workshops with London Bubble Theatre Company
- Animation by Izzy Barszcz
- Piloted with United St Saviours (House Provider) & Care Outlook (Care Provider)
- Impact evaluated across awareness, attitudes, and practice





AGEING

CARE

HOME



Immediate Impact (Post Training)

- 95% would recommend the animation as a training tool
 - 95% increased confidence in providing care
- 90% had an improved understanding of LGBTQ+ issues

Sustained Behaviour Change (6 Weeks Post-Training)

- Staff reporting they often or always meet service users' needs increased from 55% to 85%.
 - Use of inclusive language increased from 70% to 95%
 - 95% said the training continued to influence their work

Qualitative Insight (Senior Staff / Management)

“I think people felt quite personally, like emotionally moved by that which, I think, is a good way to get people to learn, you know, rather than just ‘here’s the data, here’s the information, learn it’





PETER

Peter, an 80-year-old army veteran, moves into a care home where staff mock him after learning about his past male love, leaving him isolated and withdrawn.

Key Issues:

- Homophobia and judgment from care staff
- Loss of autonomy and personal space
- Lifelong stigma and internalised fear of rejection
- Social isolation and emotional withdrawal



ROSE

Rose, a trans woman in her late 60s, sought safety with her wife in sheltered housing but faces intrusive questions from staff, leaving her wanting to be seen as more than her gender identity.

Key Issues:

- Transphobia and inappropriate questioning
- Lack of understanding of trans healthcare and support needs
- Past and current trauma affecting trust and sense of safety
- Desire for authentic acceptance and belonging

Reflecting on Peter, Ritu, and Rose

As you watched their stories,

- What feelings came up for you?
- What do you think were the toughest moments or worries for each of them?
- If you could make a difference in their situations, what might help?
- Thinking about your work or volunteering, what might you do differently to really support people like Peter, Ritu, and Rose?

Ritu, Peter, and Rose remind us that no one should feel compelled to hide as they age. The Life House Project strives to ensure the safety, dignity, and pride of all older LGBTQ+ individuals.



To learn more, email Dr Georgia Bowers: g.bowers@gsa.surrey.ac.uk



The Life House Project

THE LIFE HOUSE IMPACT PROJECT:

Transforming LGBTQ+ EDI training in Housing and Social Care through creative approaches.

2026 Summary Report



The Life House Project – Official Launch – Come and Join us !!!

19 June | 10am–12pm (online webinar)

The Life House Project Needs You !!!

We are now seeking partners, collaborators, and advocates to help grow and sustain this work.

We are looking for:

- Future housing and care partners to help expand the project
- Support to develop a standalone online training programme building on the animation and research findings
- Funding opportunities to support the next phase of project development
- Industry professionals, activists, and collaborators to join our steering group
- Opportunities to share and promote The Life House Project and promote the urgent need for creative, inclusive, and community-centred approaches to housing and care

Get Involved

If you would like to support, collaborate with, or learn more about *The Life House Project*, please contact: **Dr Georgia Bowers** g.bowers@gsa.surrey.ac.uk

