

LGBTQI+ Disabled People using Self- Directed Support

This was written in October 2017

These are the things the summary is about:

LGBTQI+ people

People who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, questioning, intersex or who see themselves as things like non-binary.

Self-Directed Support means

Self-Directed Support is a way of having more choice and control over our support.

It can be a Direct Payment, a Personal Budget or using our own money. We can use these to employ people to work for us. It means we employ people we like to work for us.



Other important words in this summary are underlined and are in a list at the end.

Important in this summary:

- LGBTQI+ Disabled People have the right to be treated with dignity and respect.
- We have the right to live our lives free from discrimination.
- We have the right to a personal and social life of our choice.
- Self-Directed Support can be a way for us to have more choice and control over the social care support we get.
- It is our choice whether or not to be out with our personal assistants (PAs) or support workers.
- Having more control over our support can help us do more with our friends and in our communities.

About this summary

This summary gives information for LGBTQI+ Disabled People who are or wish to be in charge of their social care support. It will be useful for LGBTQI+ Disabled People who have PAs or support workers who work for them.

It has been written from the viewpoint of LGBTQI+ Disabled People.

It is based on research which was done in England by a partnership of:

- The University of Bristol
- Regard, the national LGBTQI+ Disabled People's Organisation
- The Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE)
- Stonewall

The research was funded by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) School for Social Care Research.

We have also done a summary for PAs and support workers and two films. There is one for LGBTQI+ Disabled People and one for PAs and support workers.

www.scie.org.uk/lgbtqi/disabled-people/

Our rights

Everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect.

The Equality Act 2010 makes discrimination illegal.

It covers discrimination based on:

- age
- disability
- gender
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- being pregnant and having a young child
- race
- religion and belief
- sexual orientation.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities also gives rights to disabled people.

It includes the right to be free from discrimination and the right to have the family life we choose.

We have the right to have our gender identity and sexual orientation respected by anyone who provides us with support.

An LGBTQI+ Disabled Person told the researchers:

“I have the right to be who I am in my own home, so I need people working for me who can see me for who I am.”

Being out to our PAs

We have the right to be out to our PAs, support workers and social workers without fear of them thinking we are bad or discriminating against us.

Our research found that some LGBTQI+ Disabled People are not out to their support workers or PAs.

Some people are frightened of people thinking they are bad or discriminating against them. Some people choose not to be out because they want to keep their personal lives private.

LGBTQI+ Disabled People who were out to their support workers or PAs said that they felt more relaxed in their own homes. They said they felt more able to ask for support to go to places where LGBTQI+ people meet and do things.

It is important to remember that it is our choice whether or not to be out to our PAs or support workers.

We should also make plans for times when we might need a PA to know about our sexual orientation or gender identity, for example if we are ill.

An LGBTQI+ Disabled Person told the researchers:

"My PAs all know I'm gay and if they don't like it, tough. It took a long time for me to come out of the closet and I think it's very important that people's sexual orientation should be accepted."

Having a social life

Disabled People from the LGBTQI+ communities can be lonely if we do not get enough support. LGBTQI+ Disabled People are also shut out from a lot of places where LGBTQI+ people meet or do activities because these are not accessible.

If we are out to our support workers or PAs (and have enough money), then we can employ them to support us to go to the places where LGBTQI+ people meet and do the activities of our choice.

An LGBTQI+ Disabled Person told the researchers:

"My PA was very happy to come on Pride with me... I'm very open with my PAs about my work, my lifestyle, about my sexual orientation and about my gender. I need people to work with me that respect my independence and who are happy to see me participating in my community doing things that I like."

If we have funding for social activities, our PA must provide support for anything we choose. The only thing they cannot help us with is anything that is illegal.

Some LGBTQI+ Disabled People have PAs who help them with meeting people or go out on a date with partner, a boyfriend or girlfriend.

An LGBTQI+ Disabled Person told the researchers:

“One of my PAs helps me to set up my computer so that I can meet people online. It took a bit of time before we got to that stage but now we have a system, it’s fairly easy and comfortable.”

Sometimes we want our PA or support worker who is straight to support us to attend LGBTQI+ activities. If and they do not feel confident about this it can help if you talk to them before you go and tell them what to expect from the event or the place you are going to.

An LGBTQI+ Disabled Person told the researchers:

"Communication is very important. It's important to have talk about it before you go on a date or to a social event."

Some people do not have funding to pay for support with social activities. Other people do not want their PA to support them with social activities.

Recruiting personal assistants (PAs) and support workers

An LGBTQI+ Disabled Person told the researchers:

"Well, what I tend to do when I'm placing adverts is say, 'Disabled lesbian, dogs, cats'."

These are some ideas about how to recruit PAs who will respect our sexual orientation and gender identity:

- Give details about your sexual orientation or gender identity in the adverts you put out about working for you and the information about working with you.
- Try advertising on LGBTQI+ websites and Facebook pages and other social media. Some local organisations have noticeboards and publications that might be useful.
- Local colleges or universities may have a worker who can put you in touch with students looking for a job. They can be a good place to find people training to work in health or social care.

- Always get someone else to help you in recruiting workers.
- Never meet applicants alone in your home.
- Ask a test question in interviews, such as 'I like to go to Pride each year – are you confident you can support me at this type of event?'
- Before you pick someone to work with you, try having them work for you for a little while so you can see what it is like to have them working for you.
- Always check with people they have worked with before and get a reference to see if they are good workers. You should do this even if someone you know has put you in touch with them.
- It is always a good idea to ask for a Disclosure and Barring service (DBS) check. This will tell you whether someone has been convicted of a criminal offence in the past.

- Make sure any contracts that you issue or sign have been checked by someone who knows about contracts.
- Include a four-week trial time when someone starts work with you. Check things at the end of this and decide if you want them to keep working for you. If you are not sure, you can make this trial longer.

Skills for Care has produced a toolkit to help us employ our own PAs. www.employingpersonalassistants.co.uk

Resources / further reading

Films that go with this summary

- Understanding Self-Directed Support: a film for LGBTQI+ Disabled People
- Understanding Self-Directed Support for LGBTQI+ Disabled People: a film for personal assistants and support workers

Organisations



Stonewall is Britain's leading LGBT charity which campaigns for lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans equality in Britain and abroad.

www.stonewall.org.uk

Email: info@stonewall.org.uk

Information Line 08000 50 20 20 open Monday to Friday, 9.30 – 5.30pm

Regard :)

Regard is a national LGBTQI+ Disabled People's organisation; associate membership for allies and organisations is also available.

www.regard.org.uk

Post: BM Regard, London, WC1N 3XX

Email: secretary@regard.org.uk



The Equality and Human Rights Commission is an independent organisation set up by the government to support equality and diversity, stop unlawful discrimination, and protect and promote the human rights of everyone in Britain.

www.equalityhumanrights.com



The Equality Advisory and Support Service (EASS) offers expert information, advice and support on discrimination and human rights issues and the law.

FREEPOST EASS HELPLINE FPN6521

Tel: 0808 800 0082

Textphone: 0808 800 0084.

www.equalityadvisoryservice.com



Disclosure &
Barring Service

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) helps employers make safer recruitment decisions and prevent unsuitable people from working with vulnerable groups, including checking people's criminal records.

Email customerservices@db.s.gsi.gov.uk

DBS helpline 03000 200 190

Minicom 03000 200 192

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service

Important words

Lesbian – a woman who loves and wants to have sex with other women

Gay - a man who loves and wants to have sex with other men

Bisexual – a man or woman who may love and want to have sex with a man or a woman

Trans – someone whose gender does not match the body they were born with. So a girl may be born in a boy's body or a boy in a girl's body.

Gender reassignment – The legal and medical processes that a trans person has to go through to be recognised as the person they really are. Some people may have operations to change their body, but this is not necessary for a trans person to live in their real gender.

Gender identity – most people identify as being either a man or a woman.

Queer – this is a word to describe everyone from the LGBTQI+ communities. Some people who are not from the LGBTQI+ communities use it as a bad word, so not everyone likes to use it.

Sexual orientation – who someone wants to have sex with. So someone's sexual orientation might be lesbian, gay or bisexual.

Questioning – someone who is not sure about their sexual orientation or gender identity

Intersex – some people are born with bodies that are slightly different to other girls and boys. They may identify as a man or a woman, or as non-binary.

Non-binary – Identifying as neither a man nor a woman but including elements of both in their identity.

Discrimination – being treated badly because you are Disabled, a woman, come from a different background or religion to them, or are from the LGBTQI+ communities.

Personal Assistants (PAs) and support workers – people who are paid to support you with things that are difficult for you. So a PA might help a wheelchair user to get into bed at night, or might help someone with learning difficulties to pay their bills.

Out – telling people you are from the LGBTQI+ communities instead of keeping this a secret.

A Personal Budget – money that the Council agrees to pay for a disabled person's support after carrying out an assessment of their needs.

A Direct payment – money paid directly by the Council into a disabled person's bank account or onto a special bank card so that Disabled People can employ their own PAs or support workers