

Exploring queer care in social work – Meeting the needs and interests of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT) carers.

With the recent introduction of the Equality Act 2010, social workers are under increasing legal pressure to meet the diverse needs of adult carers as a protected group. Furthermore, carers are now a priority for the Coalition Government (DH, 2010) alongside a formal commitment from the Government to deliver services that consider the needs of LGBT citizens (GEO, 2011). Although there is a clear legislative framework, there is a lack of research into the needs and wishes of LGBT carers. This paper focuses on the interests of LGBT adult carers in practice and research – the aim is to develop a firm research agenda in this relatively new field. The presenters are a recently formed collaboration of researchers seeking to develop the social care agenda for LGBT people.

In this presentation, we feedback on findings generated from two discreet projects recently conducted in England and Wales about identifying the needs of LGBT carers from the perspectives of carers and service providers. Both projects were completed by August 2010. Our wider aim is to identify knowledge gaps in providing inclusive and personalised services to LGBT carers. To this extent, we wish to address a number of critical questions about the unexplored topic of 'queer care' – *How are concepts of care and caring defined and demonstrated in queer and LGBT communities? What are the differences in caring practices between different LGBT groups? What are the experiences of practitioners working with LGBT carers?*

References:

Department of Health (DH) (2010). *Recognised, valued and supported: next steps for the Carers Strategy*. London: HM Government.

Government Equalities Office (GEO) (2011). *Working for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender equality: Moving forward*. London: HM Government.