

LGBTI Specialisation Verification Framework criterion:
[B2.6] An active and resourced LGBTI advisory group contributes to the development, delivery and evaluation of specialised services.



GUIDE

Establishing an LGBTI Advisory Body

This guide provides information on the important role an LGBTI advisory body can play in developing an inclusive aged care service. Included in this guide is an advisory body terms of reference template in Appendix A.

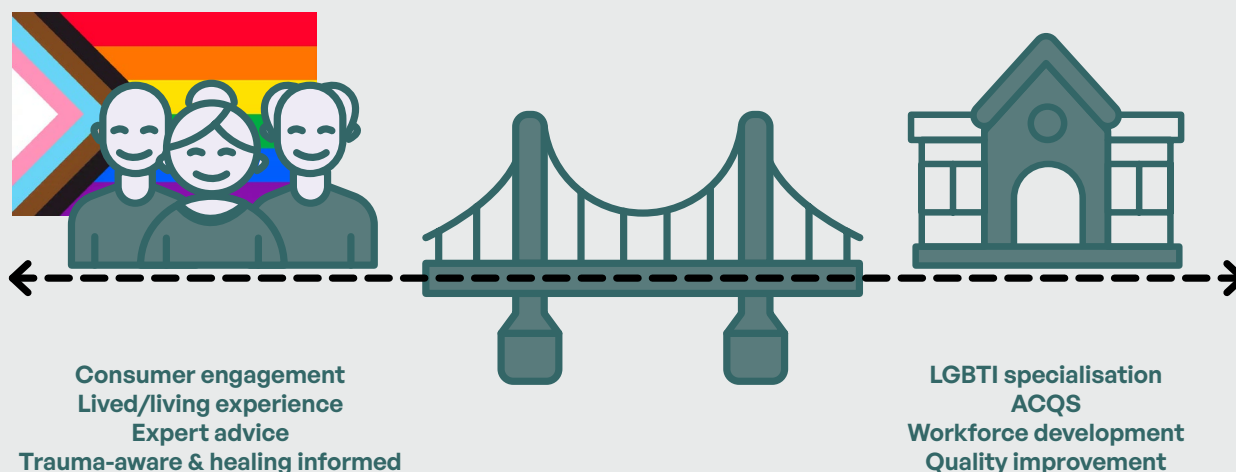
Providers must offer older people and their representatives the opportunity to start a consumer advisory body every 12 months – even if they already have one. By establishing an LGBTI advisory body, aged care providers can support Standard 2 of the Aged Care Quality Standards including Outcome 2.1: Partnering with individuals; and Outcome 2.6b: Complaints and feedback management for individuals. Beyond meeting legislative and quality standards for consumer engagement, it demonstrates commitment to equity, inclusion and cultural safety.

About LGBTI advisory bodies in aged care

LGBTI older people face unique challenges, including discrimination, isolation and past trauma which can impact their experience in aged care. An advisory body helps aged care services understand and respond to these needs by drawing on lived/living experience and expert advice. A successful advisory body provides an aged care organisation with meaningful guidance, reflects diverse perspectives and ensures the organisation takes action to address LGBTI older person's needs.

Why it matters

- The voices of LGBTI people with lived/living experience are central to shaping inclusive aged care.
- Older LGBTI people are empowered to be actively involved in the planning, delivery and evaluation of services that affect them in line with the Statement of Rights outlined in the Aged Care Act 2024.
- The advisory body can provide expert advice on inclusive practice, workforce development and service improvement.
- The advisory body is embedded in the organisation's quality improvement, processes, ensuring continuous progress toward equity and inclusion.
- All services are designed and delivered to be trauma-aware and healing informed, recognising the historical and ongoing impacts of discrimination on LGBTI communities.



Infographic: An advisory body can act as a bridge between LGBTI communities and aged care organisations.

Advisory body success factors

- Ensuring the advisory body has a **clear purpose and role** with a well-defined scope and objectives in the terms of reference (refer to LGBTI Advisory Body Terms of Reference template in Appendix A). It is important for members to understand their role is advisory (not decision-making) and how their input will be used.
- The advisory body is **supported by the governing body** and the leadership team with alignment to the organisation's strategic goals and priorities.
- **Inclusive and representative membership** including people with lived/living experience – e.g. older people receiving care, staff, carers, culturally diverse people and LGBTI community members. Includes a mix of skills and knowledge such as clinical, community, policy or advocacy expertise.
- Meetings are **well-chaired and facilitated** to ensure all voices are heard and discussion is focused. There are clear processes for agenda setting, decision tracking and feedback loops. Confidentiality, respectful communication and inclusive language are expected and upheld.
- There is **genuine influence and feedback** with the body's input valued and acted upon. Feedback is sought early in projects or decision processes, not after the fact. The body is informed and consulted regularly, not just occasionally.
- Members receive **practical support** (e.g. transport, interpreters, honorariums or sitting fees). Background materials are provided in accessible formats and plain language. Administrative support ensures efficient scheduling, documentation and follow-up.
- New members are provided with an **orientation** about the organisation and advisory body's purpose. Ongoing opportunities for training, skill-building or peer support are offered.
- A **respectful and inclusive culture** is fostered. All participants feel safe, respected, and included regardless of status or background. The advisory body actively counters tokenism and promotes meaningful participation. Differences of opinion are welcomed and managed constructively.
- There is regular **review and reflection** on the advisory body's function, membership and outcomes (e.g. annually). Continuous improvement is built into the advisory body's life cycle.

What the advisory body can advise on

Organisational culture and visibility

- How to create a visibly inclusive environment (e.g. rainbow flags, posters, inclusive language).
- Ways to welcome and signal safety to LGBTI older people, families (including chosen families), staff and visitors.
- Advice on respectful and inclusive staff practices and language.

Policy and procedures

- Review of policies to ensure they are inclusive of the diverse needs of LGBTI people.
- Input on how to handle privacy, disclosure and confidentiality regarding LGBTI people.
- Guidance on recognising chosen family, same-gender partners and diverse relationships.

Staff training and capability

- Recommendations for LGBTI inclusion training and lived/living experience involvement (refer to *LGBTI Inclusion Training in Aged Care* checklist in this toolkit).
- Identifying gaps in staff knowledge or comfort levels and how to address them.
- Co-designing training modules or onboarding content with lived/living experience.

Inclusive care planning and practice

- How to tailor care plans to respect history, specific needs and relationships.
- Advice on respectful personal care for trans and gender diverse care recipients.
- Supporting sexual health, intimacy and sexual expression in residential settings.

Acknowledgement and celebration of LGBTI events

- Advising on inclusive celebrations and participation of older people and staff e.g. IDAHOBIT, Pride Month, Trans Day of Visibility (refer to *Acknowledging and Celebrating LGBTI Events in Aged Care* infosheet).
- Guidance on how to handle resistance or discomfort in inclusive events respectfully.

Mental health and wellbeing

- Identifying the unique mental health, and trauma-aware and healing informed care needs of LGBTI older people.
- Addressing social isolation, loneliness, grief and past discrimination.
- Connecting with peer support or LGBTIQ+ community-controlled organisations (refer to LHA member directory).

Community partnerships and representation

- Building relationships with LGBTIQ+ health and community-controlled organisations (refer to *Partnering with LGBTI Community Organisations* guide in this toolkit).
- Ensuring representation of LGBTI older people in marketing, advisory roles and service feedback.

Feedback and complaints

- Advising on safe, anonymous ways for LGBTI older people and families to raise concerns.
- Reviewing whether complaints systems are inclusive and responsive to LGBTI issues.

Advisory bodies
bring accountability
and inclusion
together

And finally...

Celebrate achievements to acknowledge the advisory body's contributions, highlight successes and keep momentum going through recognition and appreciation.

An LGBTI advisory body is a powerful way to honour lived experience, promote inclusive aged care and build culturally safe environments where all older people can live with dignity and pride.

Resources



Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission. [Consumer Advisory Bodies](#).



LGBTIQ+ Health Australia. [Silver Rainbow factsheet series](#) including LGBTI 101, Trans and Gender Diverse Older People, Intersex Older People and Ageing, Older People Living with HIV and more.



MosaicLab. [11 Advisory Committee Challenges & How to Overcome Them](#).



[List of LGBTIQ+ organisations](#). Refer to the LGBTIQ+ Health Australia members directory for community-controlled organisations across Australia.

APPENDIX A: LGBTI Advisory Body Terms of Reference template

Background

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) older people are most often invisible in aged care with the Australian Government and the aged care sector now recognising this and taking targeted steps to improve the quality of care and services. The Aged Care Quality Standards requires providers to deliver person-centred care that meets the needs of individuals with specific needs and diverse backgrounds. Beyond these standards, [Provider's name] has chosen to meet additional criteria to achieve LGBTI specialisation. One such criterion is 'an active and resourced LGBTI advisory body contributes to the development, delivery and evaluation of specialised services.' Through this advisory body, [Provider's name] is committed to responding to the needs of LGBTI older people by providing inclusive and culturally safe services.

Purpose

The LGBTI Advisory Body will provide advice, lived/living experience insights and community perspectives that informs [Provider's name] planning, services and policies regarding LGBTI inclusive aged care.

Role of the advisory body

Members will provide lived/living experience and expert advice including:

- provide feedback on programs, policies and quality improvement.
- identify issues affecting LGBTI older people, carers and communities including mental health and wellbeing.
- make recommendations about staff LGBTI inclusion training and capability.
- provide guidance on organisational culture and LGBTI visibility.
- guidance on celebration of LGBTI events.
- build partnerships with LGBTIQ+ health and community-controlled organisations.
- review organisational feedback and complaints systems.

Scope

These terms of reference apply to all members of the [Provider name] LGBTI Advisory Body.

Membership

Members of the advisory body include:

- people with lived/living experience of aged care services
- representatives from diverse communities where possible including lesbian women, gay men, bisexual people, transgender people, intersex people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and culturally and linguistically diverse people.
- users of [Provider's name] services
- family (including chosen family) or carers
- service staff or clinicians

Membership is for [e.g. 2 years]. Members may withdraw from the advisory body at any time providing a resignation letter to the secretariat.

Responsibilities of members

It is the responsibility of all members to:

- attend meetings regularly
- participate respectfully and collaboratively
- maintain confidentiality where required
- declare any conflicts of interest

Chairperson:

[add contact details]

Secretariat:

[add contact details]

Meetings

- Frequency: [minimum two meetings per year]
- Meetings may be face-to-face, online or hybrid.
- Agendas and papers circulated in advance.
- Minutes of meetings will be recorded and shared.
- [insert number] members in attendance will be considered quorum for the purpose of making decisions in the advisory role.

Support provided

- Orientation for new members will be provided by [Provider's name].
- Access and inclusion support (e.g. interpreters, transport reimbursement, honorariums or sitting fees).
- Background materials in plain language.

Reporting and accountability

- Advice will be reported to governing body [e.g. Board].
- Outcomes and follow-up actions by governing body will be reported back to the advisory body.

Review

- The terms of reference and group functioning will be reviewed annually.