

About this toolkit

This toolkit has been developed for aged care providers that want to improve how they provide specialised care and services for LGBTI people. The resources provide guidance on how to meet LGBTI specialisation criteria as set out in the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing Specialisation Verification Framework.

The use of the initialism LGBTI in this resource is intended to be respectful of the historical trauma and lived experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex older people. The term 'queer' has therefore not been explicitly used due to its history of being used as a derogatory slur and many LGBTI older people having negative connotations or trauma associated with the word. The resource aims to be inclusive of all sexual orientation, gender and bodily diverse older people receiving aged care and services.

LGBTI specialisation in aged care

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) older people have historically been overlooked in aged care. The Australian Government and the aged care sector now recognise this and are taking targeted steps to improve the quality of care and services. Ensuring LGBTI inclusion is essential to creating culturally safe environments where older people can live openly and with dignity. This toolkit supports aged care providers in achieving this by meeting the criteria set out in the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing Specialisation Verification Framework.

Following the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, the Australian Government has introduced a range of reforms to strengthen the rights of older people, with a strong focus on diversity and inclusion. The Aged Care Act (2024), strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards (ACQS) and Statement of Rights require providers to deliver person-centred care that recognises and responds to the needs of individuals from diverse backgrounds, including LGBTI communities.

Beyond meeting the ACQS, providers may choose to pursue specialisation for people from diverse backgrounds under the Specialisation Verification Framework, such as achieving recognition as an LGBTI-specialised service. This represents an ongoing commitment to providing inclusive, welcoming, and culturally safe care and services, supported by staff who understand the unique needs of LGBTI older people.

Becoming an LGBTI-specialised provider is a critical and significant investment requiring a whole-of-organisation response, embedding inclusion at every level - from the governing body and senior leadership through to managers, staff and volunteers. To achieve this, a range of actions are required across an organisation that aim to imbed practices to deliver culturally safe care and services. This may include inclusive policies, staff training, partnering with LGBTIQ+ community-controlled organisations, establishing advisory bodies, celebrating LGBTI cultural events and ensuring LGBTI representation on governance structures. This comprehensive approach helps create aged care services where LGBTI older people feel respected, recognised and supported to live their later years with pride and dignity.

Culturally safe aged care for LGBTI people

A culturally safe aged care organisation is one where LGBTI older people feel visible, welcomed, respected and safe to be themselves - without fear of discrimination or judgment. Cultural safety goes beyond simply being inclusive; it means actively creating an environment where LGBTI older people's true selves, relationships and life experiences are affirmed, valued and protected in all aspects of care and service delivery. A culturally safe organisation ensures that LGBTI older people can live openly, with dignity and pride, and receive care that truly reflects and respects who they are.

Importantly, culturally safe care is also trauma-aware and healing informed. Many LGBTI older people have lived through decades of stigma, discrimination, criminalisation, family rejection or exclusion from services. These experiences can have lasting impacts on health, wellbeing and trust in care providers. A trauma-aware approach acknowledges these histories and seeks to avoid re-traumatisation. Healing informed practice goes further, creating spaces of restoration, empowerment and safety where LGBTI older people can experience affirmation, connection and belonging in later life.

An LGBTI culturally safe aged care organisation is not just welcoming in words but safe in practice.


LGBTI specialisation verification

Aged care providers that wish to claim specialised care offerings on My Aged Care, such as for LGBTI older people, must make an application and meet specific criteria outlined in the [Specialisation Verification Framework](#) (the framework).

Specialisation verification sets a standardised framework for specialised care and helps older people using My Aged Care make informed decisions when choosing providers.






















Providers need to show they provide care that is sensitive to the needs of LGBTI older people that goes beyond the standard obligations of the ACQS. The framework outlines specific specialisation criteria a provider must meet to demonstrate their expertise in providing care and services to LGBTI older people.

An organisation must provide evidence that they meet a minimum of four criteria when applying for specialisation verification. The table below shows how the LGBTI specialisation criteria align with and build upon the ACQS.



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Table 1: Mapping of LGBTI specialisation criteria to the Aged Care Quality Standards

LGBTI specialisation criteria	Standard 1 The Individual	Standard 2 The Organisation	Standard 3 The Care and Services	Standard 4 The Environment	Standard 5 Clinical Care	Standard 6 Food and Nutrition	Standard 7 The Residential Community
[B2.2] Staff members act as 'champions'	 1.1	 2.2					
[B2.3] Engage with a local LGBTI community organisation							 7.1
[B2.4] Deliver annual training in aged care needs of LGBTI people	 1.1, 1.2	 2.9	 3.2		 5.6, 5.7		
[B2.5] A person who is LGBTI sits on governing body		 2.2					
[B2.6] Establish an LGBTI advisory group		 2.1, 2.6b					
[B2.7] Participate in LGBTI celebrations and events	 1.1						 7.1
[B2.8] LGBTI inclusive policies and procedures are in place	 1.1, 1.2, 1.3	 2.3	 3.1, 3.2		 5.6, 5.7		 7.1, 7.2
[B2.9] Deliver specialised aged care to people living with HIV	 1.1, 1.2, 1.3	 2.1, 2.3, 2.6, 2.7, 2.9	 3.2	 4.2	 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7		
[B2.10] Displays evidence of public commitment							

Refer to the framework for information on the application process and a step-by-step guide on how to apply.

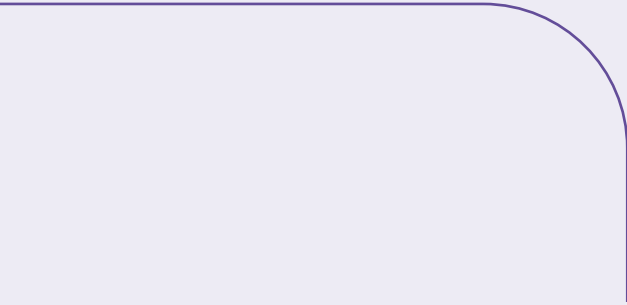
How to use this toolkit

This toolkit includes a range of resources such as infosheets, guides, checklists, frequently asked questions (FAQs), case studies and templates to support aged care providers to meet the requirements of the framework. Each resource in this toolkit is aligned with the LGBTI specialisation criteria as shown in the table below.

Table 2: Alignment of toolkit resources to LGBTI specialisation verification criteria

LGBTI specialisation criterion	Toolkit resources
[B2.2] One or more staff members are resourced and supported by management to act as ‘champions’ within the outlet to support care recipients and other staff.	FAQs: LGBTI Champions in Aged Care
[B2.3] There is an established connection and regular engagement between the outlet and a local LGBTI community organisation.	GUIDE: Partnering with LGBTIQ+ Community Organisations (including memorandum of understanding template in Appendix A)
[B2.4] At least 90% of staff have completed annual training in the aged care needs of LGBTI and other sexual orientations, gender diverse or bodily diverse people which includes the delivery of trauma-aware and healing informed care.	CHECKLIST: LGBTI Inclusion Training in Aged Care CASE STUDIES: Lucia’s story, Bill’s story, Gavin’s story, Cassie’s story, John’s story
[B2.5] At least one LGBTI person sits on the governing body of the provider relevant to the outlet level.	FAQs: LGBTI Representation on Aged Care Governing Bodies INFOSHEET: Tips for LGBTI Governing Body Members to Promote Inclusion in Aged Care
[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 (including terms of reference template in Appendix A)
[B2.7] The outlet recognises and participates in local LGBTI celebrations and events.	INFOSHEET: Acknowledging and Celebrating LGBTI Events in Aged Care
[B2.8] Policies and procedures are in place to support and promote the delivery of specialised aged care to LGBTI and other sexual orientations, gender diverse or bodily diverse aged care recipients.	CHECKLIST: Developing LGBTI Inclusive Policies and Procedures
[B2.9] Policies and procedures are in place to support and promote the delivery of specialised aged care to people living with HIV/AIDS.	GUIDE: Deliver Specialised Aged Care to People Living with HIV (including policy template in Appendix A)
[B2.10] The outlet displays evidence of its public commitment to supporting LGBTI and other sexual orientations, gender diverse or bodily diverse aged care recipients.	CHECKLIST: Public Commitment to Supporting LGBTI People

Note: This toolkit provides guidance on Tier Two criteria only (refer to the framework for more information).

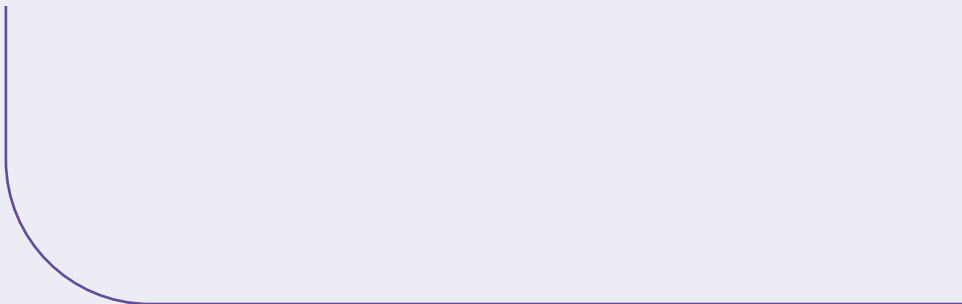


The resources are intended to prompt discussion and assist planning on how to meet LGBTI specialisation criteria. It is important for providers to consider how they apply the criteria to suit their service setting (e.g. residential, in-home, community), geographical region (e.g. metropolitan, regional, remote), needs of LGBTI older people receiving care and services, and organisational requirements (including staff). Additional resources, support and services are listed at the end of this section and in each toolkit resource for further guidance.

Achieving LGBTI inclusion in aged care is not a one-off, tick-a-box exercise – it is a sustained and meaningful commitment to change that makes a real difference in the lives of LGBTI older people. True inclusion requires ongoing reflection, learning and action across all levels of an organisation. It involves listening to the voices of LGBTI older people, embedding their perspectives into policy, practice and decision-making. It means developing inclusive policies and procedures that recognise diverse people, relationships and families. Staff at every level must be supported through regular training, supervision and leadership guidance to build confidence and capability in creating culturally safe environments. Above all, LGBTI inclusion is a continuous journey of accountability and improvement, grounded in respect, empathy and the right of every older person to live authentically and with dignity.

Silver Rainbow recommends that providers prioritise meeting the requirements of the annual training (B2.4) and inclusive policies (B2.8) criteria as these are the foundations of imbedding LGBTI inclusion in aged care. A further two criteria must then be met to achieve the required four criteria for specialisation verification. It is also worth considering if any additional criterion (i.e. more than four) could be met to ensure the program is working across all levels of the organisation to be most effective.

For a glossary of terms used in this toolkit, refer to the [Silver Rainbow LGBTI 101 factsheet](#).



Further support



Silver Rainbow training. Led by LGBTIQ+ Health Australia and delivered by a network of local LGBTIQ+ community-controlled organisations, Silver Rainbow delivers LGBTI inclusion training for aged care workers including in-person and online training.



List of LGBTIQ+ organisations. Refer to the LGBTIQ+ Health Australia members directory for community-controlled organisations across Australia.



Lead with Pride program. This six-month coaching program is delivered by Silver Rainbow for aged care leaders. Participants work closely with a highly experienced advisor to strengthen their knowledge and skills to embed LGBTI inclusive practice in their organisation. The program is structured around the Specialisation Verification Framework supporting organisations to become formally recognised as providing specialised care to LGBTI older people.



Join LGBTIQ+ Health Australia. As the peak body for LGBTIQ+ health and wellbeing in Australia, a diverse and dynamic membership is central to this work. Organisations and individuals are welcome to apply for membership at any time.

Resources



Specialisation Verification for Aged Care Services. The Australian Government Department of Health, Disability and Ageing has developed the Specialisation Verification Framework setting out the criteria for specialised care delivery.



Aged Care Diversity Framework. This Australian Government Department of Health, Disability and Ageing framework ensures our aged care system is accessible to all older Australians. Supporting the framework are action plans that aim to help aged care providers address barriers faced by older people including LGBTI people.



Silver Rainbow factsheet series. LGBTIQ+ Health Australia has developed a series of factsheets for the aged care sector including LGBTI 101, Coming Out and Disclosure of LGBT Older People, LGBT Older People and Social Isolation, LGBT People and Dementia, LGBT Older People and Families of Choice, Older People Living with HIV, Trans and Gender Diverse Older People, Intersex Older People and Ageing, LGBT People and Elder Abuse, and LGBTI Older People and Palliative Care.



Ageing Fabulously podcast series. Developed by the Silver Rainbow program at LGBTIQ+ Health Australia, this podcast series provides aged care workers insight into issues important to LGBTI older people including Introduction to LGBTI Aged Care, Inclusive Language, Families of Choice, Palliative Care, Older Transgender People and Growing Older with HIV.



QLife provides anonymous and free LGBTIQ+ peer support and referral for people in Australia wanting to talk about sexuality, gender, bodies, feelings or relationships. 1800 184 527 or Webchat.
