

The Furzedown Project

Yesterday, the Furzedown Project launched 'Ageing on Our Own Terms' a new booklet for health and care commissioners, providers, and regulators, designed to assist in meeting the needs and aspirations of LGBT+ people as we age.

It was created by members of our 50+ LGBT+ group, based around their hope to live a fulfilling life into older age. Proposals include community based mutual support and steps to ensure inclusive services, as well as guarding against discriminatory or unwelcoming practices.

The booklet is rooted in:

- A growing body of research evidence
- Our shared histories of discrimination and criminalisation, as well as progress and celebration
- Our hopes for a fulfilling older age, with support we can trust
- Our fears of having to 'go back into the closet' simply to access and use services, for fear of discrimination or abuse
- Proposals for inclusive and respectful support, with suggestions for commissioners, providers and regulators of social and health care: from values-based recruitment to contract monitoring, training, practice development and support for community led mutual support that promotes well-being and reduces reliance on formal services.

The launch was attended by representatives from Wandsworth Council, Adult Social & Health Care, Wandsworth based stakeholders, Community Groups and our members.

Quotes

Liz Sayce, Chair of Trustees of the Furzedown Project, said: *'Older LGBT people are imagining and shaping the futures they want as they age. We are delighted to share the conclusions with colleagues across health and care services, to inform development of great, respectful support for older LGBT people. The Furzedown Project is proud to have set up the LGBT group 8 years ago and we are very grateful to Wandsworth Council for providing a grant to support this booklet and event'*

Cllr Graeme Henderson Wandsworth Council Cabinet Member for Adult Care and Health and Community Safety.

"Research has shown that LGBTQ+ and especially older members of the LGBTQ+ community, are one of those cohorts of the population that experience greater levels of health inequalities. In particular, the early identification and diagnosis of many conditions, especially cancer, is much poorer than other population cohorts. We need to tackle the many barriers to tackling health inequalities amongst the LGBTQ+ community"

Penny Newman, Furzedown Member

"The booklet produced by the Furzedown Project is of great importance to our continued wellbeing. Many of our age group had to grow up in a society hiding our true identities. We fought for the right to be ourselves. Our generation are having to encounter abuse and discrimination in care homes and other social services. It is important to address the care issues now, that are affecting some of us or that may do in the future and to be recognised and accepted for who we are, in an inclusive environment."

Further Info

You can read a copy of the report on our website here:

<https://www.furzedownproject.org/gallery/news/>

and you can watch a short 10 minute video of the how the project came about, here:

<https://youtu.be/42lzn9RB2j8>

Please help us spread the word across our social media accounts:

X: furzedwnProject | Instagram: thefurzedownproject | Facebook: FurzedownProject

Photo Credit: Joel Ryder Media

For further information please contact David Robson

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About the Furzedown Project:

The Furzedown Project provides older people with opportunities to connect, contribute and be active - tackling isolation and improving well-being. We are a charity led by our members and offer a vibrant activity and friendship hub.

www.furzedownproject.org

About the 50+ LGBT Group

The 50+ LGBT Coffee Morning is a weekly group that has been running at Furzedown for 8 years, since April 2017.

The session takes place every Thursday morning from 10-12 and welcomes anyone over the age of 50 (who defines as LGBTQ+) from Wandsworth and neighbouring boroughs, Lambeth & Merton.

The group is a mix of very relaxed, warm, and friendly people who have used the morning to meet other people with a shared experience of being LGBTQ+. This has also led to being involved in other activities either at the Furzedown Project and other community groups across London.

The morning also hosts an array of Guest Speakers as well as regular external activities and discussions.