



LGBT+ PEOPLE IN READING SHED LIGHT ON HOW THEY ARE TREATED BY HEALTH & CARE SERVICES

People who describe themselves as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender, have described how health professionals treat them, in a survey by Healthwatch Reading carried out with local LGBT+ charity Support U.

The survey was answered by 35 people and found that:

- Just over one-third were not 'out' to their GP about their sexual orientation
- People were more willing to be 'very open' about their identity with sexual health, mental health or fertility services compared with A&E and other hospital services
- Some people said they would not disclose their sexuality if they did not feel it was relevant
- 11 out of 35 (31%) had experienced anxiety and 13 (37%) had sought help for depression, much higher rates than the general population
- Nobody felt they had been discriminated against by a health professional due to their sexuality, but 17% reported some prejudice, and others felt health professionals showed a lack of knowledge or respect (see box).

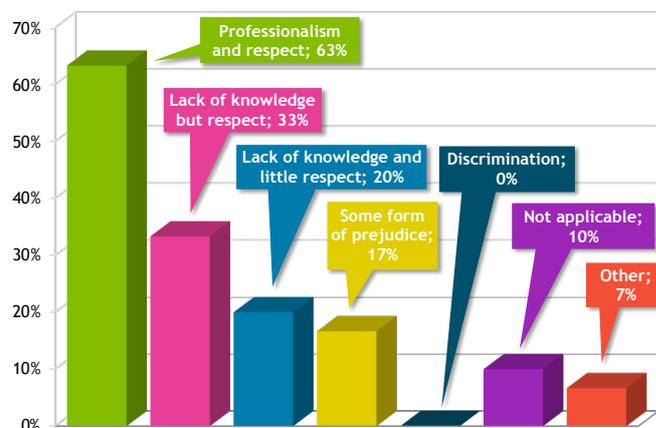
The main improvement suggested by respondents was improved training for health and care

professionals, as well as more visible signs that a service was LGBT+ aware, such as posters or LGBT+ pins on staff lanyards: 'Visual clues so I don't think I'm going to expect judgement for 'coming out'.'

Our survey findings were similar to that of a government survey of 108,000 LGBT+ people undertaken last year.

We will be discussing our report findings with local services in the coming months to get feedback on suggested improvements.

Our full report is on our website or telephone us to be sent a copy.



In their own words:

'[When I went for a] Regular abdominal scan related to gender transition - operator did not read my medical record and assumed I was cisgender male there for prostate scan.'

'Being asked continually about pregnancy tests when I have a female partner, am female-bodied and have stated multiple times that I will not be conceiving and there is no chance of being pregnant gets very tiring very quickly!'

'Some people are very good or at least act professionally, while others are completely ignorant and/or have no idea how to behave, but I have no way of knowing how they will react or what assumptions they will make until I am actually talking to them.'

'More conclusive information [shown by healthcare professionals about the necessity or otherwise of] cervical screening for lesbians. This caused some confusion at my GP practice.'



FIND OUT WHAT 65 PEOPLE TOLD US ABOUT CARE HOMES IN READING

5 STEPS TO HELP YOU CHOOSE A CARE HOME

Healthwatch England has produced a guide for the public. Here is a summary of their 5 steps:

1. CONSIDER ALL YOUR OPTIONS

Think about the least disruptive and costly options first, such as support to live independently at home or sheltered accommodation.

2. UNDERSTAND THE TYPES OF HOMES AVAILABLE

The type of care home you need will depend on the level of care you require. Some are purely residential, some offer nursing support or help with specific disabilities.

3. BE CLEAR HOW YOUR CARE WILL BE FUNDED

Speak to your local authority to see if they can help with the costs of your care. The Money Advice Service can give the public free and impartial advice about funding for care costs, via a website and telephone service.

4. FINDING A SUITABLE HOME

Do your research before visiting a home. Consider the location, the costs and the services that the home provides. You can read the latest official inspection report of the care home, from the Care Quality Commission, as well as using visit reports from Healthwatch Reading to give you an idea of the feel of the home.

5. MAKING YOUR CHOICE

Make a checklist of things to look out for and questions to ask staff to help you decide. There are free checklists available from Age UK and Independent Age.

The views of 65 people living in various care homes across Reading have been collected by the Healthwatch Reading team in our latest series of 'Enter and View' visits.

Comments we collected show most people thought staff were kind and caring and treated them with dignity and respect.

During the visits to the care homes, Healthwatch Reading staff observed clean, welcoming and person-centred environments with some residents being able to bring their own furniture or a favoured pet with them.

There were some improvements suggested by people, such as better food, activities or English skills among staff - see the individual boxes for more details.

We are aiming to visit all care and nursing homes in Reading to give older, frail or unwell people a chance to have their say about their care. The short visit reports on each home - including the full response from each home's management - are being published on our website, or you can request a paper copy by phoning us.

BEACHER HALL NURSING CENTRE, Bath Road

Residents interviewed: 12

Selection of comments:

'I am happy here - they just let you get on with it - and if you ring they come - you can't say fairer than that.'

'You can choose what you prefer to eat.'

One person praised staff for meeting personal care needs by giving them a bed bath, which they found 'more comfortable' than using the bathroom.

'Happy' here, 'loves' the gym [on site, staffed by physios].'

Healthwatch Reading observations:

The home was welcoming, there was a pet guinea pig in the reception area, and activities coordinators seemed to know residents well.

Residents' main suggestion for improvement:

Would like all staff to speak good English to help general conversation and communication about care needs.

ST LUKE'S CARE HOME,
Emmer Green

Residents interviewed: 24

Selection of comments:

'I like living here very much - they are helpful & kind.'

'Staff are observant, they spotted that my cough was a sign of a chest infection.'

'The garden is well kept, lots of wildlife to see...'

Activities are 'very good.'

Healthwatch Reading observations:

A homely atmosphere, personalised residents' accommodation and a dementia friendly environment.

Residents' main suggestion for improvement:

Better food choices

THE BOLTONS CARE HOME, College Road

Residents interviewed: 10

Selection of comments:

'Food very nice, choose on the day and very versatile.'

'Go to the charity shops - staff attend with me.'

'Carers do a really good job. Never left alone - they keep an eye out for me.'

'Visitors can come anytime. Sometimes go out. Nice garden, can go out on own.'

Healthwatch Reading observations:

There are many items to stimulate the residents such as arts and crafts and playing cards, and in the corridors there were big signs and visual direction for residents if they got confused about where the lounge was.

Residents' main suggestion for improvement:

No main theme, one person wanted to see a list of medication they were taking.

MOORLANDS CARE HOME,
Oxford Road

Residents interviewed: 8

Selection of comments:

'Food is very good.'

'Staff here brilliant - top notch - very good. It's their attitude - they are kind and polite - nothing dogmatic.'

'More activities - people are different, people like different things. Bingo is not my activity....I have had a physically and mentally active life. I get bored and fed up.'

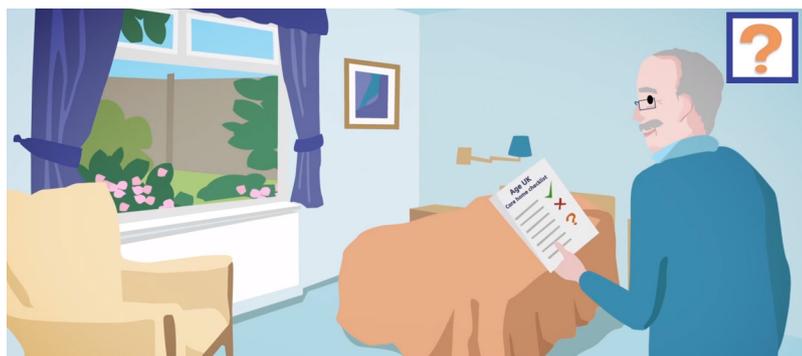
'More exercise, more going out, even if it's around the garden.'

Healthwatch Reading observations:

The daily menu, staff on duty that day, and activities, were written up on a board and we heard background music playing that much older residents would be able to recognise from their younger days.

Residents' main suggestion for improvement:

More varied activities for residents, and short trips out.



Age UK is one of a variety of organisations that have produced a checklist to bring on visits to prospective care homes. You can watch its video on the topic at: <https://bit.ly/2PjU82S>

PEMBROKE LODGE CARE HOME, Alexandra Road

Residents interviewed: 11

Selection of comments:

'Staff are absolutely marvellous.'

'Help when needed, treated with dignity, good response to call bell.'

'Food very good and tasty.'

'Being a part of a family.'

Healthwatch Reading observations: *Residents can bring their own furniture and one had even brought their pet bird, to make their room homelier, and there is a large and attractive garden.*

Residents' main suggestion for improvement: *No main theme, one person asked for more activities in the winter.*



LATEST QUALITY RATINGS FOR LOCAL SERVICES

Here are the latest ratings for Reading services from the Care Quality Commission (CQC).



The CQC is the national body that checks how NHS and social care services are performing.

All health and social care providers must be registered with the CQC.

Livability St Ronans Road, a small care home in west Reading, has been rated overall as 'good' but its leadership 'requires improvement'. The CQC observed a 'calm and relaxed atmosphere' where people were treated kindly and with respect. However the CQC also found some issues that had been recorded by staff but not acted upon. Better records were also needed to show how the management had acted on any issues such as medication errors.

Report published 18 July 2018

Absolute Care has been rated 'good' for the home visits it makes to 120 Reading people. The CQC received feedback from clients and staff with one person saying "I don't feel that they are clock watchers and I don't feel rushed. They do everything very efficiently in a timely manner."

Report published 26 July 2018

The homecare agency Carewatch (Reading and West Berkshire) has been rated 'good'. The CQC said the home care agency had improved its recruitment practices since a previous inspection in 2017 by carrying out full background checks before hiring care workers. During the inspection people told the CQC they felt safe and were being well treated. One relative said: "In the past year I have had a great weight taken off my shoulders, I know my wife is safe and being treated with the respect she deserves."

Report published 8 August 2018

UPCOMING EVENTS IN SEPTEMBER

Friday 7 September 2018

Older People's Working Group, 2-4pm in the Council Chamber, Civic Offices, Bridge Street, RG1 2LU. For further details, telephone 0118 937 2383 or email opwg@reading.gov.uk.

Saturday 8 September 2018

Members' Open Day, Royal Berkshire Hospital, 9am-1:30pm in the Trust Education Centre, RBH. To reserve your place at the event and on any of the tours please telephone 0118 322 7405 or email foundation.trust@royalberkshire.nhs.uk.

Tuesday 11 September 2018

Berkshire West CCG AGM & Governing Body meeting, 9:30am-1:30pm Reading Town Hall, Blagrove Street, RG1 1QH. For further details, telephone 0118 982 2958.

Friday 14 September 2018

Special session of the Access & Disabilities Working Group with Matt Rodda MP attending, 2-4pm in the Mayor's Parlour, Civic Offices, Bridge Street, RG1 2LU. For further details, please telephone 0118 937 2581.

Wednesday 26 September 2018

Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust Board of Directors meeting, 9.30am in the Boardroom, Royal Berkshire Hospital, Craven Road, Reading RG1 5AN. For further details, please telephone 0118 322 5335.

If you would like to publicise an upcoming event via our newsletter or website, please contact us on 0118 937 2295 or email info@healthwatchreading.co.uk