

LGBTQ+ and Caring



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About this guide

16% of people who identified themselves in the 2021 Census as being part of the LGBTQ+ community also identified as being a carer. This means being part of the LGBTQ+ community means you are more likely to be a carer than someone who is not part of the LGBTQ+ community.

At times, caring can bring many positives and rewards. Unpaid carers are people providing support or care to a friend, family member or neighbour. There's nothing more natural and human than helping our loved ones get the most out of life. There's also nothing more difficult than focusing on someone else's needs without neglecting our own. Whether we're caring around the clock or balancing caring with work and family life, it can be exhausting. The 'system' can be bewildering. The emotions can be shattering.

If you or the person you care for identifies as LGBTQ+, you may find you have additional concerns and challenges to consider. Some people feel support services are 'not for them' and won't understand their needs. Some people may access support late or not at all, because they anticipate stigma or discrimination. This adds to the impact on the carer's life and can increase feelings of isolation.



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However caring impacts you, we're here. This information explores the experiences of LGBTQ+ carers, and outlines what support is available.

"I feel as if during the time I was caring, I spent six years back in the closet, after the journey of coming out"

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Challenges of being an LGBTQ+ carer

In addition to the usual demands of caring, LGBTQ+ carers can face a range of additional challenges in terms of accessing services, finances and mental health.

Research by Carers UK of the experiences of carers during the Covid-19 pandemic showed that when comparing the experiences of lesbian, gay and bisexual carers to heterosexual carers, that lesbian, gay and bisexual carers were:

- more anxious about their current financial situation
- more likely to say they were struggling financially
- more likely to feel lonely or isolated
- more likely to have poor mental health.

In the Carers UK briefing on LGBTQ+ Carers³, research from organisations like Stonewall, as well as unique research finds that LGBTQ+ carers may face a range of challenges when caring. These can include:

- Caring for a family member who may not be aware of their LGBTQ+ identity, or who has rejected them because of their LGBTQ+ identity.

Some research has found that bisexual people are less likely to be out to all their family.

- Losing aspects of their LGBTQ+ identity as a result of the demands of their caring role. This might include not being able to attend LGBTQ+ events, connect with others or have opportunities for self-expression. As a result, carers may feel they have gone back 'in the closet' and their self-esteem, mental health and opportunities to connect with others may be impacted.

“As a queer carer looking after someone, I’ve had a challenging time with regards to my sexuality. Caring put me in an uncomfortable position of more proximity to someone I found difficult to be around. Compared to other people and places where I can be my full self, I noticed that I minimised aspects of myself that would set my mum off, in a way partly retreating into the closet. The intimacy that exists between a disabled person and their carer has scope to really strengthen some relationships, but instead it made me feel unsafe and performative at times.”

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- For young LGBTQ+ carers, there may be fewer opportunities for them to explore their LGBTQ+ identity with less time to go out with friends and meet new people.
- Experiencing mental health issues or loneliness may make the caring role more challenging. Some people may be estranged from family or have difficult relationships with family members who are not accepting of their LGBTQ+ identity, resulting in increased loneliness or lack of support with their caring role. LGBTQ+ people can also be subjected to abuse or attacks which may cause or exacerbate mental health problems. Some LGBTQ+ carers may not be accessing support for mental health issues due to concerns that support services are heteronormative.
- Experiencing prejudice, discrimination or harassment when accessing services, and feeling distrustful of support services as a result.
- Many carers are aged over 65; older LGBTQ+ carers may have lived through times of legal and structural discrimination and be reluctant to access support services or to share their LGBTQ+ identity because of previous negative experiences.

“My ex-girlfriend who had self-harmed tried to look for support and counselling, however she was directed to a Christian counsellor funded by the church, and the general consensus was being gay is making you self-harm so you can be healed by returning straight.”

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- Feeling like they should be the one to care for a family member if they are unmarried and do not have children, and not wanting to ask other family members for support.
- Having to continually ‘come out’ to services when assumptions are made about their sexuality and/or gender identity and/or their relationship with the person being cared for.
- Not feeling comfortable about sharing their sexual orientation or gender identity, or feeling that they need to go ‘back in the closet’ due to fears of discrimination or unfair or biased treatment by services.

“Doctors and nurses are really uninformed. Going for an appointment about my mental health usually ends with me in tears because they’ve decided all of my anxiety and depression is caused by me being trans.”

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- Not being recognised as a carer can be an issue for some LGBTQ+ carers who may be caring for people in their ‘family of choice’ i.e. their support network of friends, neighbours, or ex-partners.
- Feeling like the person they care for has gone ‘back in the closet’, particularly if they have moved into sheltered housing or a care home and they feel they need to hide their LGBTQ+ identity due to fears of discrimination. This can be a particular issue for older LGBTQ+ people who have lived through times of significant prejudice.
- Experiencing physical health issues as a result of medical gender transitioning which, for some trans carers, may affect their ability to carry out their caring role. Some trans carers also change employment after transitioning which can cause additional stress. Trans people can already face significant barriers in accessing employment which has an impact on mental health and wellbeing.

Equality Act 2010

You also have rights under The Equality Act 2010. This Act legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society.

People should not be put at a disadvantage by any of the following ‘protected characteristics’:

- **gender**
- **race**
- **faith or belief**
- **sexual orientation**
- **age**
- **pregnancy and maternity**
- **being married or in a civil partnership**
- **being a disabled person**
- **being transgender.**

Equality objectives have been developed as part of the Welsh Government’s commitment to a fairer and more inclusive society. The objectives ensure public services and employment are fair, accessible, responsive to people’s needs, and that communities are inclusive.

This can be particularly important for carers in the LGBTQ+ community if they feel they, or the person they are looking after, have been discriminated against because of their gender or sexual orientation.

If you think you've been unfairly discriminated against you can:

- complain directly to the person or organisation
- use someone else to help you resolve the matter, for example an organisation, union or legal representative
- make a claim in a court or tribunal.



For further information on discrimination visit:

[carersuk.org/work](https://www.carersuk.org/work) and <https://www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/practical-support/what-are-your-rights-as-a-carer/protection-from-discrimination/>



Getting support to help you care

Support from the local authority

Caring can be hard work – physically and emotionally. Often, support from professionals may focus on the person you are looking after, instead of you as a carer.

This can be particularly relevant for carers in the LGBTQ+ community if you feel that your relationship with the person you are looking after is not properly recognised or if you feel that your needs won't be understood by professionals.

However, it's important to find out about the different ways you might be able to get support as a carer, and getting a carer's needs assessment could be a good place to start.

Carer's needs assessment

If you are a carer who appears to have a need for support, you should be offered a carer's needs assessment by the local authority of the person you are looking after. If you are not offered a carer's needs assessment, you should contact the local authority and ask for one.

You can have a carer's needs assessment no matter what your level of need, the amount of care you provide or your financial means.

Don't be put off by the word 'assessment' – it's certainly not a

test of your abilities as a carer. It's a chance to let your local council know how your caring responsibilities affect you physically and emotionally. They will use the assessment to find out what support you need, whether you're willing or able to carry on caring, what you want to achieve in your daily life and whether you qualify for help.

Most assessments are carried out face to face, although some local councils offer the option to have the assessment online or over the phone. It should be done at a time and place that is convenient for you.



You can find out more about getting a carer's needs assessment by visiting our pages on carers assessments here: www.carersuk.org/wales/help-and-advice/practical-support/carers-assessment/

Some local carer centres will also carry out carers' assessments – it's worth checking with your **local carers' organisation**.

Following the carer's needs assessment, the local authority will decide if you are eligible for support to be provided either to you or to the person you are looking after to reduce the impact of caring on you. Support could be provided by the local authority, or in the form of a direct payment.

What are direct payments?

Generally, direct payments for carers are a one-off payment given to support the carer to have some time to look after their own wellbeing. For example, the payment could be used to go to the gym, or pay for driving lessons or a break away. These are sometimes called a carer direct payment or carer budget payment.

Direct payments for the person being looked after are more commonly ongoing payments used to employ a care worker or personal assistant to help with their day-to-day needs or for a period of respite care. These

payments are instead of having those services provided directly by the council or trust.

This can be particularly relevant for those in the LGBTQ+ community as it could enable you to employ care workers who understand your situation and specific needs or help you to purchase services which you feel comfortable with.



You can find out more about direct payments here: www.carersuk.org/wales/help-and-advice/practical-support/arranging-care-and-support-for-someone/direct-payments/

www.carersuk.org/wales/help-and-advice/practical-support/arranging-care-and-support-for-someone/direct-payments/



Healthcare and hospital admissions

As a LGBTQ+ carer, you may find that not only are you more likely to care for someone who has a mental health condition, but that you face your own challenges with your mental and physical health.

Almost 4 in 10 (37%) of bisexual carers rated their physical health as 'bad' or 'very bad' compared to 22% of heterosexual carers, 19% of gay carers and just 16% of lesbian carers.

In addition to these pressures, you may feel worried about the potential for being treated differently because of your or the person you care for's identity, or face challenges such as feeling you have to come out to services.

"I was going for my PIP assessment. I held my hand out to shake and the nurse didn't look at myself or my wife after I introduced who she was and no eye contact throughout the interview. We felt we wanted to leave."

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"I'm worried my healthcare provider will not take my gender identity seriously."

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According to a [report by Marie Curie](#), health and social care professionals often assume that LGB people using services are heterosexual. Trans people also report that they are often referred to by the pronouns of their birth gender, asked insensitive questions about being trans, or even 'outed' as trans in front of other patients and staff.

"I think there needs to be more of a realisation that people are gay because there is an assumption that everyone is straight. You know, I'm forever being called Mrs somebody or other. Just to think about it before they assume. And my partner would not be amused by me saying this but she's older than me, so we've got nearly 19 years of an age gap; I think a lot of people do assume she's my mother, actually."

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In Wales, **NHS Wales make it explicitly clear** that everyone is entitled to good quality healthcare regardless of sexual orientation. You and/or the person you care for have the right to be open with your GP and healthcare professionals about your sexual orientation if you choose to.

Many LGBTQ+ people who come out to their GPs and healthcare professionals have a good experience. However, if you do not, for example you feel you have been bullied, harassed or discriminated against on the grounds of sexual orientation, gender expression or identity – you can raise a concern using the **Putting Things Right process**. You can read more about making a complaint in the next section.



Please visit NHS Wales for more information by clicking this link:

<https://111.wales.nhs.uk/lgbt/AccessstoHeathcare/>

“I was informed, when looking for mental health resources, that my depression and stress were wholly the fault of my gender identity and expression, rather than due to the strange working hours I keep and the stress of buying my first home.”

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Hospital stays and coming out of hospital

If the person you care for needs treatment in the hospital, you may feel concerned about whether you as a carer need to come out to services or be considered as their next of kin, particularly if you are in a relationship with the person you care for.

People often think that next of kin is only a blood relative or spouse. However, you can be nominated as someone’s next of kin. Someone you care for can nominate you as their next of kin, even if you are not in a partnership – for example, if you are friends. LGBT Foundation highlights the importance of nominating next of kin for LGBT people, as they are more likely to be estranged from biological family and have families of choice comprising of friends, neighbours and other people in LGBT communities. Read more here: <https://lgbt.foundation/prideinageing/next-of-kin>

It is also important that as a partner or spouse, you have the same legal rights in a medical setting as someone who is cisgender. The NHS in Wales has legal duties to protect your identity but support your rights, so if you have concerns over revealing your identity while still having access to your rights, talk to a nurse, doctor or administrator confidentially and a support plan should be put in place.

Coming out of hospital

If the person you care for has been in hospital and is going to be discharged, you have a right to be involved in the planning for their care – and to make decisions about the level of care you are able or willing to provide. You may find you are taking on a caring role for the first time, or that the needs of the person you care for have increased or changed. It's important to be aware that you have the right to refuse to do more care than you want or able to and that in that instance, social services have a legal duty to provide the care needed.

Planning for discharge is a process that should take place as soon as the person you care for enters hospital, so it is important that you let staff know if you are a carer or considering taking on this role. Guidance by Welsh Government about hospital discharge emphasises the importance of involving carers and patients at all stages of the planning process.



You can read the full guidance by clicking this link: <https://www.gov.wales/hospital-discharge-service-requirements-covid-19>

You can also read detailed information and advice about coming out of hospital in our guide: carerswales.org/comingoutofhospital

Managing someone's affairs

As a carer, you may want to help manage the affairs of the person you are looking after, as well as how to plan for doing this in the future.

There are different ways of managing someone's affairs. Which option is appropriate depends on whether the person you are looking after can currently make their own decisions (which is called having mental capacity) or whether they are unable to make their own decisions (which is called lacking mental capacity).

One of the most common ways of managing someone's affairs is through a lasting power of attorney.

If the person you are looking after can currently make their own decisions but wants to make arrangements in case they are unable to make their own decisions in the future, then they could make a lasting power of attorney.

This means that they appoint a specific person (for example you) to have the authority to make certain decisions on their behalf. This could be useful if you are worried that your views wouldn't be taken into account if the person you are looking after lost mental capacity, as it makes it clear that they wanted you

to have this authority. There are two types of lasting power of attorney:

- power of attorney for property and financial affairs – which covers things such as bank accounts, paying bills, collecting benefits or pensions and selling a home
- power of attorney for health and welfare – which covers things such as medical care and social care.

The person you look after can make just one type of lasting power of attorney, or both types of lasting power of attorney. A property and financial affairs lasting power of attorney can be used before the person you look after is unable to make their own decisions, if they so wish.

However, a health and welfare lasting power of attorney can only be used if the person you look after is unable to make their own decisions.

You can find out more about [managing someone's affairs by viewing our resources](#).

Making a complaint

If something goes wrong with services that have been provided, you may want to find a way to put things right. Some people find making a complaint difficult – you may be feeling frustrated and angry, or the thought of complaining may be frightening or may make you feel like you are moaning.

However, local public bodies must provide services within a framework of laws and guidance, and both you and the person you care for have a right to receive services that keep you safe and that support you.

There can be many reasons for wanting to make a complaint, but some include:

- delays or cancellations to services
- poor quality or price of services
- poor behaviour from health or social care staff
- changes or reductions to the care given to the person(s) you look after.

This mechanism can also be used to highlight any discrimination you or the person you care for has experienced due to being part of the LGBTQ+ community.

Making a complaint can be a way to remedy a wrong, get an apology, find out what went wrong, and/or make sure it doesn't happen again to you or anyone else.



You can find out more about making a complaint about services in Wales in our guide – Making a complaint: <https://www.carersuk.org/wales/help-and-advice/guides-and-tools/our-factsheets/>

Balancing employment and caring

If you are juggling work with caring for family or friends, you are not alone – there are three million working carers in the UK.

- On average, 600 people a day leave work to care – with over 500,000 people leaving work to provide unpaid care pre-pandemic
- 75% of carers in employment worry about continuing to juggle work and care
- 1 in 3 NHS staff provide unpaid care
- Between 2010 and 2020, more than 1.9 million people in paid employment became unpaid carers every year

There are rights that most employees have in work which can be helpful for carers, such as the right to request flexible working and the right to time off in emergencies.

Many of the support mechanisms carers have are informal. You may get support from friends and family, charities or community groups. However, you also have legal rights as a working carer, and you may have rights as part of your contract of employment.

These are:

- statutory rights under the Social Services & Well-Being (Wales) Act

- statutory rights under the Equality Act
- statutory rights under Employment Law
- contractual rights as part of your contract of employment.

It is your choice whether to tell your employer about your caring role. However, there may be additional contractual rights or support at work for carers and so it may be worth exploring if your employer does offer any such support.

If you are struggling to juggle work and care and are thinking of leaving work, it is important to consider the full implications it could have on your income, quality of life and future pension entitlements.

At some point in your caring role, you may decide you want to combine work with caring, or you may want to work if your caring role changes or ends. The thought of working for the first time, or getting back into work, may feel like a big step, but there is support available.



To read more about your rights, and get support and advice as a working carer please visit our Working carers guide: carerswales.org/workingcarers

Talking about caring

For many LGBTQ+ carers, talking about their caring role will not intersect with their sexuality. However, for those where it does, it can be uncomfortable whether in a workplace, medical setting or asking for support from the local authority.

If you have already experienced discrimination or persecution due to sexual orientation, adding the vulnerability of revealing the delicacies of a caring role can be stress inducing.

Ultimately, it is best to share this information and get the support you need. The key is finding the best way and understanding your legal rights as a carer and as someone with a protected characteristic so you can be as confident in the process as possible.



Your rights

You have the right not to be identified by your sexual orientation and have equal rights as a carer to anyone else. This means that sometimes the discussion can be as simple as referring to your legal or preferred status with the person you care for and then refusing to engage otherwise. The onus is on the professional to make the suitable adjustments.

When the situation is more complex, you have the right to engage separately with the professional body. For instance, if you are caring for a family member and other family members are uncomfortable with your sexual orientation, you can highlight this to staff who can look to make reasonable adjustments like offering different visiting hours.

You may also request different professionals to speak to if you are unhappy with the conversation and think you are receiving worse treatment due to being LGBTQ+. This extends to the workplace where you do not have to speak to your direct line manager if you have concerns that this may discriminate your chances with work or promotion opportunities.

Talking about your caring role is tough on anyone, and may be especially challenging if you are an LGBTQ+ carer. However, some planning, and the admitted bravery to make that first step is the only way to getting more support.



Support to help your wellbeing

As we discussed in the opening section of the guide, LGBTQ+ carers often find that they have challenges to their financial, emotional and physical wellbeing. You may suffer greater levels of loneliness for example or challenges with your mental health. The person you care for may also be more likely to face difficulties with their mental health if they identify as LGBTQ+.

Help with finances

Our [research report](#) shows that lesbian, gay and bisexual people are disadvantaged financially compared to their heterosexual counterparts. The National LGBT Survey found that 47% of respondents were earning less than £20,000 a year, below that year's median annual income of £23,474. A YouGov survey of 4,000 workers across the UK in 2019 also found that LGBT workers earned on average 16% less than heterosexual workers, the equivalent of losing £6,703 annually.

Our surveys confirm that caring is having a negative impact on the finances of lesbian, gay and bisexual carers. All three groups were more likely to state that they couldn't afford their rent or mortgage payments and that they are in or have been in debt as a result of caring than heterosexual carers.

These challenges, in addition to the ongoing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, and the pressures of the

cost of living crisis, mean that you may be worrying about your finances. There is help and support available to you as a carer and if you are on a low income.

This includes help with energy bills, as well as grants and other resources you may be able to access. Because so much of the support is targeted and will depend on your unique circumstances, we have produced a Money Matters hub on the carers wales website, which aims to help signpost you to a range of support. This includes help with benefits, debt, grants, energy bills and signposting to Welsh Government support.



Visit the Money Matters hub: <https://www.carersuk.org/wales/moneymatters>

We also have other pages available with a range of signposting to information on help with bills and household costs, as well as saving money.

Mental health and caring

In our State of Caring 2021 survey, bisexual and gay/lesbian carers had the same likelihood of caring for someone with a physical disability (54%, compared with 47% of heterosexual carers), but bisexual carers were more likely to be looking after someone with a mental health condition (40% compared with 30% of gay/lesbian carers and 30% of heterosexual carers) or autism (37% compared with 21% of heterosexual carers and 13% of gay/lesbian carers).

This may be due to higher rates of mental health conditions and substance abuse amongst the LGBT+ community. Caring for someone with a mental health condition is likely to involve different experiences and challenges compared to caring for someone with a physical health condition. For example, many carers find they are not fully included due to strict confidentiality protocols and there is still widespread stigma around mental health conditions.

Why you might care for someone with a mental illness

Someone who cares for a person with a mental illness might help them to:

- book, prepare for and attend appointments
- organise and take their medication

- do practical tasks that they might be physically able to do but find emotionally challenging eg making phone calls or meal planning
- communicate their wishes, as in some cases people won't be able to do this for themselves and might need their carer to do it for them
- recognise and accept their condition. This can help to encourage someone to take their medication, go to appointments and take care of their physical and mental health
- share information about their health. Carers might help to share information with health professionals if for some reason the person they care for can't do so.

When this support is needed will depend on the individual, and might be:

- **all the time** – some people will need help to do daily tasks or to leave the house
- **at a particular time** – some people will need support when they are going through a particular time in their life. For example, coming out of hospital or when they are very ill
- **on particular occasions** – some people will only need support when specific things are happening. For example, if they are going to a monthly appointment.



You can read more about caring for someone with a mental health condition in the resources produced by Carers UK and the Royal College of Psychiatrists: <https://www.carersuk.org/wales/caring-for-someone-with-a-mental-health-condition/>



Your health and wellbeing

As a carer, sometimes it's hard to prioritise your health and wellbeing. You might find you feel isolated or lonely.

"I'm too exhausted to exercise – some days even going out for a walk feels like too much. I tend to just go to work and then come home. I feel completely physically and emotionally drained and lack confidence in my ability to get out and take part in group activities because I haven't used my social skills 'properly' in so long I'm scared they've disappeared."

Lesbian carer, 2019,
(The experiences of lesbian, gay and bisexual carers during and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic)

Finding time to eat well and exercise can be tough but there are small changes you can make to help support your overall physical health

and nutrition. We have developed a range of resources for you to access – from support with your nutrition to how to get better sleep, as well as our Carers Active Hub which features videos from online exercise sessions you can do at home.



<https://www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/your-health-and-wellbeing/looking-after-yourself/>

In Wales, we also have a Wellbeing Hub with advice, videos and articles to help support your wellbeing. This includes a series of bespoke mindfulness for carers videos.



Visit the wellbeing hub: <https://www.carersuk.org/wales/help-and-advice/your-health-and-wellbeing/wellbeing-hub/>

Tackling loneliness

In their [LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales](#), the Welsh government say that according to the report “Is Wales Fairer?”, loneliness, isolation and a reduced sense of belonging are some of the most significant issues facing particular groups, including lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender people, and people from some ethnic minorities.

If you also care, you may find that the time that caring takes up can further isolate you and the person you care for. Feeling lonely and isolated can have a significant impact on your wellbeing – so it’s important to know there is support available and ways to connect with other carers for example. Asking for help may feel difficult, but a really help to connect you with others who understand.

“At the time we didn’t discuss the situation we just got on with it, but looking back we realise it was stressful. We weren’t used to asking for or accepting help, our friends offered but we didn’t stop to think to say yes. In hindsight it would have made things easier”

Carer

Online support sessions and meetups

There are a range of Carers UK online meetups to help you connect with other carers, share experiences and enjoy relaxing activities. We offer Me Time online support sessions in Wales and Share and Learn sessions across the UK, as well as regular Care for a Cuppa sessions.

Sessions range from meeting to chat and share with other carers, to training, events and talks from professionals, as well as physical and emotional wellbeing activities. It can be a great place to start to connect with other carers, and do something for yourself without needing to leave the house. Visit our pages on online support sessions to find out more and sign up for a session. All sessions are free.

 <https://www.carersuk.org/wales/help-and-advice/your-health-and-wellbeing/me-time-sessions/>.

 <https://www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/your-health-and-wellbeing/online-support-sessions/>.

 You can also find local support here - [carersuk.org/help-and-advice/support-where-you-live/](https://www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/support-where-you-live/)

LGBTQ+ groups and befriending

If you would like to connect to other LGBTQ+ people, some of whom may be carers, you could try contacting organisations such as Umbrella Cymru, who collate a range of online and in-person meetups that take place across Wales.

 <https://www.umbrellacymru.co.uk/social-groups/>

There are also organisations such as Mind Out who offer LGBTQ+ befriending services.

 <https://mindout.org.uk/get-support/telephone-befriending/>

If you are older, you could contact Reengage who offer rainbow call companion services to people who are 75+ and LGBTQ+ and would like to talk to another person who also identifies as LGBTQ+

 <https://www.reengage.org.uk/join-a-group/get-a-rainbow-call-companion/>



Support from Carers Wales

Carers Wales, part of Carers UK, is here to listen, to give you expert information and advice that's tailored to your situation, to champion your rights and support you in finding new ways to manage at home, at work, or wherever you are.

Every day, Carers Wales hears from people who need help with looking after a friend, family member or partner. They might be new to caring and struggling with navigating the maze of services or they may need extra support to cope with the pressures of caring. They may be wary of accessing service or not feel supported by the community in which they live. Having the right information at the right time can make a huge difference for the carer and the person they care for.

Our website is the first port of call if you're looking for information about any aspect of caring. Whether you're grappling with Carer's Allowance, trying to find practical help or exploring what technology is available to make caring easier, our advice pages and factsheets offer the help you need:

If you are new to caring and don't know where to turn first, using our free online tool, Upfront will point you in the right direction. Upfront is an online tool that gives you your own personalised guide to caring. As well as covering practical and financial support, it includes information to help with managing the impact of

caring on health and relationships: carersdigital.org/upfront/

Upfront



Our main guide to caring is called **Looking after someone**, and it contains a wealth of information and support for carers, including an overview of the support that may be available to carers in Wales: <https://www.carersuk.org/wales/looking-after-someone>. This guide is also available in Welsh.

Join Carers UK

However caring affects you, your partner or your family, we are here for you. By joining Carers UK, you can be part of a supportive community and a movement for change, working together for a society that respects, values and supports all carers.

carersuk.org/join

What the Welsh Government is doing

As a carer, you have equal rights under the Social Services and Wellbeing Act, and the Welsh government has a range of responsibilities to carers.

This incorporates your legal rights under the Human Rights Act, and support must consider your relationships with the person you care for and how it may affect relationships with others.

This means you have the opportunity to speak openly about your concerns with the confidence that those you are speaking to have a legal obligation to protect your identity, if and when you feel this is appropriate.

In their 2023 [LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales](#), the Welsh Government outlines several areas for improving the services and information that LGBTQ+ people can access.

In their LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales, the Welsh Government examines the experiences of people in Wales who identify as LGBTQ+ and finds that:

- 50% of LGBTQ+ cisgender people stated they had never shared their sexual orientation with healthcare staff. Moreover, 19.6% of Welsh trans respondents reported in the National LGBT Survey that their specific needs were disregarded when using or attempting to use healthcare services.

- Data from the National Survey for Wales between 2019 to 2020 indicated that LGBTQ+ people were twice as likely to report feeling lonely (30%) compared to their heterosexual counterparts (15%). According to the report “Is Wales Fairer?”, loneliness, isolation and a reduced sense of belonging are some of the most significant issues facing particular groups, including lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender people, and people from some ethnic minorities.
- It was found that, among those who took part in the survey, 78% of respondents have avoided being open about their sexual orientation or gender for fear of a negative reaction from others. Furthermore, 46% of LGBTQ+ people in Wales had experienced verbal harassment in the year prior to the survey.

It's clear that much more needs to be done to help support the health and wellbeing of carers who are LGBTQ+. If you have experienced any of the difficulties outlined above, it's important to know you're not alone and support is available.

Directory

There are a range of national organisations that can provide help. We've listed some of these below.

There may be local support groups and organisations that can also provide help. Visit carerswales.org/localsupport

Carers UK Helpline

We're here for you with information, guidance and practical support every step of the way. If you mention where you are based, we will aim to tailor our guidance for you.

E: advice@carersuk.org

Adferiad Recovery

They provide support for vulnerable people including individuals recovering from serious mental illness and their carers.

T: 02920 407 407

W: adferiad.org.uk

Age Cymru

Information and advice for the over 60s.

T: 0300 303 44 98

W: ageuk.org.uk/cymru

Alzheimer's Society

Information and advice for people with dementia and their carers.

T: 0333 150 3456

W: alzheimers.org.

Bi Cymru

An all-Wales network bringing together bisexual people and people who think they may be bi from across Wales, tackling social isolation and providing peer support.

E: BiCymru@yahoo.co.uk

W: bicymr.org.uk

Care Inspectorate Wales

The independent regulator of health and social care in Wales.

T: 0300 7900 126

W: careinspectorate.wales

Carers Trust Wales

A network of local centres provide advice and support to carers.

T: 029 2009 0087

W: carers.org/wales

Diverse Cymru

Diverse Cymru is a charity, which supports people facing inequality and discrimination because of a range of characteristics including, sexual orientation or gender reassignment.

E: info@diverse.cymru

W: diverse.cymru.org.uk

Citizens Advice Cymru

Local offices for advice/ representation on benefits, debt and housing.

W: citizensadvice.org.uk

Contact

Information and advice for families who care for children with a disability or special need.

T: 0808 808 3555

W: contact.org.uk

Directory

Dewis Cymru

The place for information about wellbeing in Wales. Information that can help you think about what matters to you, along with information about local organisations and services that can help.

W: dewis.wales

Disabled Living Foundation

Information and advice on equipment for independent living.

T: [0300 999 0004](tel:03009990004)

W: dlf.org.uk

DrugFAM

Provides support to families, friends and carers who are struggling to cope with someone's addiction to drugs or alcohol.

T: [0300 888 3853](tel:03008883853)

W: drugfam.co.uk

FFLAG

FFLAG is a national voluntary organisation dedicated to supporting parents and families to understand, accept and support their lesbian, gay and bisexual family members with love and pride.

Confidential helpline: [0845 652 0311](tel:08456520311)

W: fflag.org.uk

Independent Age

Information and advice for older people, their families and carers.

T: [0800 319 6789](tel:08003196789)

W: independentage.orgcymru

LGBT Cymru Helpline

Providing general information, advice and confidential support in many areas of life and around various issues that LGBTQ+ people, their family, and friends might experience. Helpline open Monday and Wednesday 7pm-9pm.

Free phone: [0800 840 2069](tel:08008402069)

W: lgbtcymruhelpline.org.uk

Mermaids

If you are a young person that feels at odds with their birth gender, or you are a parent with a child who feels this way, Mermaids can help.

W: mermaidsuk.org.uk

Pride Cymru

Welsh LGBT charity working through a programme of projects to support the LGBT community and promotion of the elimination of discrimination.

E: hello@pridecymru.com

W: pridecymru.co.uk

Rainbow Bridge

Rainbow Bridge is a Victim Support run service that specifically supports victims of domestic abuse who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender.

Free phone: [0300 3031 982](tel:03003031982)

E:

rainbowbridge@victimsupport.org.uk

Directory

Stonewall Cymru

Stonewall Cymru is a charity that campaigns for legal equality and social justice for lesbian, gay, bi and trans people in Wales.

You can contact Stonewall Cymru's Information Service with your questions on any issue affecting lesbian, gay, bi and trans people.

Free phone: 08000 50 20 20

E: cymru@stonewallcymru.org.uk

W: stonewallcymru.org.uk

Trans*form Cymru

Trans*Form Cymru is led by a Steering Group of young people who all identify on the trans spectrum. They work to raise awareness of trans issues among professionals and young people.

E: rachel@youthcymru.org.uk

W: youthcymru.org.uk/transform-cymru

Unity Group Wales

The Unity Group offers a wide range of services to help and support LGBTQ+ people and their family, partners and friends including The Unity Identity Centre, Wales' first centre for all those who identify as trans.

T: 01792 346299

E: info@unitygroup.wales

W: unitygroup.wales

Umbrella Cymru

Umbrella Cymru's aim is to advance gender and sexual diversity, equality and inclusion across Wales. They offer a range of specialist support services.

T: 0300 302 3670

W: umbrellacymru.co.uk

UNIQUE Transgender Network

UNIQUE Transgender Network is a voluntary group supporting trans people in North Wales.

T: 01745 337144

E: elen@uniquetg.org.uk

W: uniquetg.org.uk

Viva LGBT

Specialist services and direct support for LGBTQ+ young people (14-25 years old) and those questioning their sexual orientation or gender identity and their families/carers, based in Rhyl and covering all of North Wales.

T: 01745 357941

E: info@vivalgbt.co.uk

W: vivalgbt.co.uk





In Wales, in a typical week there are 311,000 people looking after family or friends who are older, disabled or seriously ill.

However caring affects you, we're here.

For information and tailored support, contact the Carers UK Helpline:

E: advice@carersuk.org

T: 0808 808 7777

This guide was proudly supported by



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Carers Wales

T 029 2081 1370

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W carerswales.org



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This guide is designed to provide helpful information and advice. While we work to ensure that our information is accurate and up to date, we would recommend contacting the Carers UK Helpline or visiting our website for more information.

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Registered office 20 Great Dover Street, London SE1 4LX

Publication code: ??????

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