

HOLDING all

Scoping the experiences and needs of carers (friends and family) of people living with suicidal thoughts and feelings in LGBTQ+ communities in England.

This study explores the experiences and needs of adults (18+) who care for loved ones who are struggling with suicidal thoughts and feelings in LGBTQ+ communities. These unpaid carers can be friends, family members, or partners. Our goal is to find ways to better help these carers through improved mental health social care. The National Institute for Health and Care Research is funding this study through the Research Programme for Social Care (Grant Reference Number: NIHR207639).

Who is the study about?

We want to understand what it's like in LGBTQ+ communities for adult friends, family and partners (unpaid carers) who support someone living with suicidal thoughts and feelings. This will include looking at the challenges that they face, how they cope, and what kind of help they need but might not be getting. In this study either the carer, the loved one living with suicidality, or both the carer and loved one could identify as LGBTQ+.

Why is this important?

People in LGBTQ+ communities are at high risk of having suicidal thoughts and feelings due to factors including discrimination and social isolation. Carers in LGBTQ+ communities often deal with additional stresses because of their caring responsibilities and may not get the support they need. However, not much is known about the experiences and needs of carers supporting loved ones living with suicidal thoughts and feeling in LGBTQ+ communities.

We want to know more about the experiences of these carers so that we can begin to understand the impact of their caring role on them, what helps them, and what makes their situations more difficult. We can then make suggestions for how to better support them.

Who is doing this research?

The study is jointly run by two researchers based in a university (London School of Economics), one researcher working in mental health social care, and three researchers with relevant lived experience. We'll be working with Derbyshire LGBTQ+ and will recruit a Research Advisory Group including professionals with expertise in suicide prevention, carers in LGBTQ+ communities, and voluntary, mental health and carers support organisations.

What will the research involve?

We'll interview 30-40 carers and ask 5-10 carers to keep diaries about their lives, their caring role, and the support that they personally receive or need. We'll also

interview 10-15 representatives of mental health social care, LGBTQ+ organisations and carers groups. We'll create 'personas' that describe the experiences of some 'fictionalised' carers supporting loved ones with suicidal thoughts and feelings in LGBTQ+ communities, and will hold workshops with carers, support organisations, and mental health professionals to check that these personas are accurate.

How will we share what we find out?

We'll share our personas with local government and national policy makers, the voluntary sector and the public to help shape future national and local suicide prevention policies with an emphasis on supporting carers involved in suicide prevention in LGBTQ+ communities.

Who can get involved in the research?

We'd like to find English or BSL-speaking adults (18+) with experience of caring for someone at risk of suicide, who have not recently been bereaved through suicide and are not themselves living with suicidal thoughts and feelings. They, the person they care for, or both they and the person they care for should identify as LGBTQ+.

How can I get involved?

We are currently looking for 5-10 people to keep diaries about their lives supporting a partner, relative or friend who is living with suicidal thoughts or feelings in LGBTQ+ communities. We would ask you to write, audio record or video your diary for up to 1 hour a week for 3 months. This can be done as and when suits you best and we expect some weeks you will have more to say than in others.

If you are interested, we would like to meet you for an hour to talk through the pros, cons and practicalities of keeping a diary. We will offer you £50 thank you payment for your time and if, at the end, you decide not to keep a diary we may ask you if you would be willing to be interviewed instead. We'll send you a consent form before you start keeping a diary which will detail your rights and our responsibilities in the study. We will offer you a £150 a month throughout the time you are keeping your diary in the form of a voucher or bank transfer to thank you for your help with the research.

What will keeping a diary be like?

We're a small research team and will check your diary every week. One of us will stay in touch with you every fortnight while you keep a diary to ask how you are doing, if it's going ok and if you need any additional support. You can request a male or female researcher and tell us how you'd like us to stay in touch. We'd also like to meet with you at the end of the 3 months to hear what you thought about the process, to make sure we've understood everything in your diary, and to share what we've learnt from you.

We're interested in knowing about you, your relationship with the person you support, your daily life, interests and thoughts, your experiences of caring, and your hopes and concerns (including emotional, in your personal and social life, in terms of employment and welfare, financially, and during any contact with services).

We appreciate that this may involve discussing difficult experiences, decisions or emotions and could feel like an invasion of your privacy. We won't expect you to share anything that you don't want to talk about. We're interested in anything that you're willing to share about your experiences as a carer. We'll make sure that you can stop keeping a diary at any time or take a break. If keeping a diary is too difficult we'll talk to you about ending your involvement. You can also delete some of your diary or withdraw it from the study within two weeks of completing your last entry.

How will you use what I tell you in my diary?

If you keep an audio or video diary it will be transcribed by a confidential, professional service. The transcript or your original written diary will only be accessed by the 6-person research team. We will not share any personal information about you outside of the team unless you tell us that you or someone else is at risk of severe harm that you are unable to deal with yourself.

We will use what you tell us to create 6-8 personas of 'fictionalised' carers that will explain our findings to policy makers, the voluntary sector and the public. We will combine information from different interviews and diaries and take out anything that might identify you personally when creating these personas. We may also write academic articles and present our findings at conferences in which anything you have told us will be anonymised.

We will hold workshops with carers to check if these personas are accurate.

How will you keep my personal details and identifying information safe?

We will keep all your personal contact and identifying details in a password protected, digital file on the LSE's system. We will delete these within two years after the end of the study (November 2026) or you can tell us to do this as soon as you stop keeping a diary. We will keep your signed consent form for up to seven years for auditing purposes. If you agree, we will also arrange for the anonymised transcript of your diary to be stored in an archive for use in future research.

You can ask for your contact details to be changed or removed from our system and destroyed at any point by contacting Jessica (email below). You can read more about LSE's data protection procedures and research privacy policy

here: <https://info.lse.ac.uk/staff/divisions/Secretarys-Division/Assets/Documents/Information-Records-Management/Privacy-Notice-for-Research-v1.1.pdf>. To request a copy of the data held about you, you can contact: glpd.info.rights@lse.ac.uk

What if I have any questions or concerns about the study?

If you would like to know more about the study, have any questions about it, or want to leave the study, please contact Jessica Carlisle via J.Carlisle@lse.ac.uk

If you have any concerns about the research or wish to make a complaint, please contact LSE's Research Governance Manager, LSE Research and Innovation, Houghton Street, London WC2A 2AE. Email: research.ethics@lse.ac.uk. Telephone: 020 7852 3629.

Support organisations



We've listed organisations on this page that provide mental health advice and support to LGBTQ+ communities and to adult carers (family, friends and partners) who support people living with mental illness.

FFLAG

<https://www.fflag.org.uk/contact/>

Dedicated to supporting parents and families and their LGBT+ members, including a phone helpline and email support.

Telephone helpline: 0300 688 0368 – Weds & Thurs 10am-8pm, Fri-Sat 10am-6pm

Email: support@fflag.org.uk

Mental Health Matters

<https://www.mhm.org.uk/News/carers-week-10-16-june-2019>

Mental health support for individuals and communities, including local services accessible to mental health carers.

Mind

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/helping-someone-else/carers-friends-family-coping-support/>

National mental health charity offering support and advice with 100+ local support services open to mental health carers.

Mind Out

<https://mindout.org.uk>

Mental health service run by and for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and queer (LGBTQ) people to improve the mental health and wellbeing of all LGBTQ communities. In person services for people living in Sussex and a national online support service.

Rethink Mental Illness

<https://www.rethink.org/advice-and-information/carers-hub/>

Offers support for friends, family and partners of people living with mental illness including some local groups for mental health carers.

SANELINE

National out-of-hours mental health helpline offering specialist emotional support, guidance and information to anyone affected by mental illness, including family, friends and carers.

Telephone helpline: 0300 304 7000 – Daily 4pm-10pm

Switchboard

The national LGBTQIA+ support line. For anyone, anywhere in the country, at any point in their journey.

Telephone helpline: 0800 0119 100 – Daily 10am-10pm

Email: hello@switchboard.lgbt

Webchat: switchboard.lgbt

Young Minds

Offers free confidential online and telephone advice and emotional support to anyone worried about a child or young person up to the age of 25.

Telephone helpline: 0808 802 5544 – Mon- Fri 9.30am-4pm

Email: parents@youngminds.org.uk (Young Minds will respond within 3 working days)

NHS Trusts across England also run a variety of support groups and networks for mental health carers (including through Recovery Colleges and Carers Centres) that can be searched for using the online search ‘NHS mental health carers’.

