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Thinking about care before you actually need it isn't always easy—but it's one of the kindest things you can do for your future self. Early care planning helps you stay in control of your preferences, build trust with care providers, and avoid late presentations that can lead to more serious and costly health problems. This is especially important for LGBTQ+ people over 50, who often face discrimination and loneliness in healthcare settings.



In this post, I'll walk you through practical steps for planning your care, highlight important questions to ask when visiting care providers, and explore how chosen family and legal standing impact your future support. Plus, I'll mention some invaluable community resources like Opening Doors, the Gay London Life Events Diary, and the NHS (National Health Service) in England.

## Why Plan Your Care Early?

"Planning your care early" isn't just a slogan—it's a public health concern. Experts agree that late presentation to healthcare or social care services significantly worsens outcomes and limits your options. The NHS and social care services work best when they have the time and information to tailor support to you.

## Trust and Discrimination in Healthcare

For older LGBTQ+ adults, navigating care can be extra challenging because of a history of discrimination, fears of mistreatment, or negative experiences. This mistrust sometimes leads people to delay seeking help, which worsens health. Planning ahead means you can research and build relationships with care providers who respect your identity and preferences—making the experience less stressful and more affirming.

## Isolation and Living Alone

Many older adults in the LGBTQ+ community live alone and may feel isolated. A well-thought-out care plan can include measures to reduce isolation through volunteer visits (such as those coordinated by Opening Doors), community activities, and establishing chosen family connections.

## Step 1: Record Your Preferences in a Care Plan

One of the most important things you can do is document your preferences in a written care plan. This plan should be a clear, accessible record describing your health needs, lifestyle choices, and the kind of support you want—covering [Click here!](#) everything from daily personal care to advanced planning for medical decisions.

### What to Include in Your Care Plan

- Your preferred care environment (at home, residential care, supported living).
- Any mobility, dietary, or medical needs you have.
- Important routines or cultural practices you want respected.
- Your choices about who can visit or make decisions for you (such as friends or partners).
- Contact details for your chosen family, legal representatives, and healthcare providers.

If you haven't already, consider appointing a **Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA)** to give someone you trust legal authority to make decisions on your behalf if you lose capacity. This is especially vital if your family isn't supportive or you rely on chosen family instead of biological relatives.

## Step 2: Know Your Questions When Visiting Care Providers

Whether you're arranging a care provider for the first time or reviewing existing services, asking the right questions helps ensure you get respectful, effective care aligned with your preferences. Take notes—many people find keeping a checklist in their phone notes app useful, so you don't forget key points.



### What to Ask Care Providers

1. **Experience with LGBTQ+ people:** Do staff receive equality and diversity training? Is the environment inclusive?
2. **Care provider credentials:** Are they registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC)? What is their latest inspection rating?
3. **Personalised care options:** How do they tailor care plans for individual preferences and routines?
4. **Visiting and communication policies:** How do they handle visits from chosen family or friends?

5. **Safeguarding policies:** What protections are in place to prevent discrimination or abuse?

6. **Access to healthcare:** How do they coordinate with the NHS and other health services?

Asking these may feel daunting, but remember: good providers want you to ask. Their answers reveal a lot about how they respect and support their clients.

## Step 3: Build Your Chosen Family and Legal Network

You may not have traditional family nearby, and that's OK. Many LGBTQ+ people rely on "chosen family" — close friends or community members who provide emotional support and practical help. It's crucial to formalise your relationship with these people legally to ensure they can advocate for you if needed.

Consider these actions:

- Appoint chosen family members as health and welfare attorneys under a Lasting Power of Attorney.
- Discuss your care preferences openly with them so they understand and can support your wishes.
- Register emergency contacts with your GP and social care teams.

## Practical Resources for LGBTQ+ Over-50s in London

London has great services designed with LGBTQ+ older adults in mind.

- **Opening Doors:** Offers social activities, peer support, and information on care and wellbeing tailored for LGBTQ+ people over 50.
- **Gay London Life Events Diary:** Stay connected and combat isolation by joining community events, many of which focus on wellbeing and older adults.
- **NHS services:** Your local NHS team is crucial for medical care and may provide social care referrals. Use the NHS website to access guidance and register for local support.

## Sharing Your Care Plan and Preferences

Once you've recorded your preferences and questions, share your care plan with trusted contacts and healthcare providers. Digital sharing tools like WhatsApp make it easy to share your plan with chosen family or case managers quickly and securely. Alternatively, create a private board on Pinterest to visually organise your care preferences, important contacts, and resources.

## Checklist: Planning Your Care Early

Task Why It Matters Have You Done It? Recorded your care preferences in writing Ensures your choices are clear and accessible to care providers ☐ Appointed Lasting Power of Attorney Gives someone you trust legal decision-making power ☐ Prepared questions for visiting care providers Helps you find respectful, personalised care ☐ Identified and informed chosen family Builds your support network and legal advocates ☐ Shared your care plan with trusted contacts Supports clear communication in emergencies ☐ Connected with local LGBTQ+ support groups Reduces isolation and offers community resources ☐

## Final Thoughts

Planning your care early puts you in the driver's seat—defining how you want to be supported in later life and giving peace of mind today. For LGBTQ+ older adults, these steps go beyond paperwork; they protect your

dignity, identity, and chosen family bonds.

If you're unsure where to start, organisations like Opening Doors provide welcoming spaces and expert advice tailored to your experience. Meanwhile, stay connected through events listed on the Gay London Life Events Diary and work closely with NHS teams to coordinate your care journey.

Remember: you deserve care that respects who you are, not just what your health needs might be. Start today. Record your preferences, ask the right questions, and build a supportive network that honours your life.

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