

# **Volunteer initiative leads the way to inclusive community**

## **Tenants co-produce resource to better understand older LGBT+ adults.**

Tenants from a leading housing and care provider are playing a vital role in creating a diverse and inclusive community.

Members of Bield's Equality Network have co-produced a 'guide to terms' resource to help educate others and ensure that services meet the needs of LGBT+ tenants.

The volunteer-led group focus on inclusivity and fostering a safe and social environment by bringing together like-minded tenants to create a social space where they are encouraged to share their experiences and ideas.

Zhan McIntyre, Head of Policy and Customer Standards at Bield, said: "The new resource has been given to all members of staff and is also available in all Bield developments across Scotland.

"The resource covers why improving our understanding of our LGBT+ tenants helps us demonstrate our values of equality and diversity, kindness and caring.

"As a group historically subjected to prejudice and discrimination, we need to take extra steps to ensure that Bield is a welcoming organisation for LGBT+ tenants in practice and perception and our developments are safe for them.

“The guide is available to help colleagues and tenants understand the different terms and provides an overview of gender pronouns. We hope it will remove any uncertainty around the appropriate language to use when interacting with members of the LGBT+ community.

“Our Equality Network has played a key role in developing this resource and have used their own personal experiences to ensure all information is up to date and reflective of real challenges.

“In addition to this resource, we also launched our Older Persons Rainbow Network this year to promote inclusion, celebrate diversity, support marginalised groups and ultimately break down stigmas surrounding these communities.”

The Older Persons Rainbow Network meet monthly to explore the experiences of older LGBT+ people living in social housing and discuss the practical steps which can be taken to help promote inclusion and celebrate diversity.

The group is open to all LGBT+ tenants in sheltered and retirement housing across Scotland, not just Bield tenants, as well as any allies who are interested in making a difference for LGBT+ tenants.

Anyone interested in attending the virtual group should contact [feedback@bield.co.uk](mailto:feedback@bield.co.uk) in order to receive a link to the meeting.

Bield is a registered charity dedicated to providing flexible housing solutions and support for older people. Bield Housing and Care has 180 developments across Scotland, providing independent living for those aged 55+.

<https://www.bield.co.uk/housing-and-other-services>

