



THE LIFE HOUSE PROJECT

What is The Life House Project?

The Life House Project (TLHP), led by the University of Surrey, uses storytelling to highlight the experiences of older LGBTQ+ people and advocate for more inclusive housing and care. Ageing can be joyful but also challenging, and for many older LGBTQ+ adults, it brings added fears of invisibility, exclusion, and being forced back into the closet. By registering to access the animation using the QR code below, you can hear the stories of Ritu, Peter, and Rose, characters created with older LGBTQ+ people. The animation invites us to think about the key issues and challenges faced by older LGBTQ+ people and consider how we can help create safer and more inclusive spaces.



RITU

Ritu, a lesbian in her 70s, who has lost her partner and, after a dementia diagnosis, faces home care staff who make intrusive comments, question her identity, and dismiss her relationship as that of a “sister.”

Key Issues:

- Loss, grief, and fear of being misunderstood
- Heteronormative assumptions and dismissive attitudes
- Cultural and language barriers in care
- The invisibility of older same-sex relationships



PETER

Peter, an 80-year-old army veteran, moves into a care home where staff mock him after learning about his past male love, leaving him isolated and withdrawn.

Key Issues:

- Homophobia and judgment from care staff
- Loss of autonomy and personal space
- Lifelong stigma and internalised fear of rejection
- Social isolation and emotional withdrawal



ROSE

Rose, a trans woman in her late 60s, sought safety with her wife in sheltered housing but faces intrusive questions from staff, leaving her wanting to be seen as more than her gender identity.

Key Issues:

- Transphobia and inappropriate questioning
- Lack of understanding of trans healthcare and support needs
- Past and current trauma affecting trust and sense of safety
- Desire for authentic acceptance and belonging

Reflecting on Peter, Ritu, and Rose

As you watched their stories,

- What feelings came up for you?
- What do you think were the toughest moments or worries for each of them?
- If you could make a difference in their situations, what might help?
- Thinking about your work or volunteering, what might you do differently to really support people like Peter, Ritu, and Rose?

Ritu, Peter, and Rose remind us that no one should feel compelled to hide as they age. The Life House Project strives to ensure the safety, dignity, and pride of all older LGBTQ+ individuals.



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