

Navigating healthcare, legal planning, and social support systems can be challenging for anyone. For older LGBTQ+ individuals, these challenges often carry additional layers of complexity: trust issues with healthcare providers, [social groups lgbtq+ over 60 london](#) concerns about discrimination, the impact of late diagnosis or treatment, and unique family and social dynamics. Preparing an **'In Case of Emergency'** (ICE) folder can bring peace of mind, clarify your wishes, and protect your rights when it matters most.

In this guide, we'll explore what essential documents and information an older LGBTQ+ person should include in their ICE folder. We'll consider how to prioritise key legal papers like Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA) documents, wills, care plan preferences, and key contacts. Along the way, we'll reference useful resources such as Opening Doors (a vital organisation offering LGBTQ+ over 50s services), the NHS, and social tools like the Gay London Life Events Diary. Finally, we'll share simple ways to keep this information safe but accessible using digital tools including WhatsApp and Pinterest.

Why Have an 'In Case of Emergency' Folder?

Emergency situations—whether a sudden illness, hospitalisation, or an accident—can lead to rushed decisions by healthcare professionals and loved ones. For many LGBTQ+ elders, there's the added risk of discrimination or assumptions based on outdated stereotypes, mistrust, or misunderstanding. These risks may result in delayed or inappropriate treatment. Late presentation to healthcare services is unfortunately associated with worse health outcomes, so having clear, accessible information can be life-saving.

Additionally, many LGBTQ+ people may live alone or have chosen families instead of biological family networks. Legal recognition of these chosen family members can be complicated unless formal documents are in place. The ICE folder helps make your support network and your preferences crystal clear.

Key Components of Your ICE Folder

1. Personal Identification Documents

- Passport or driving licence
- Birth certificate
- National Health Service (NHS) number (found on your NHS card or correspondence)
- Proof of address (utility bills, council tax statements)
- Gender recognition certificates or documentation related to gender identity, if relevant

2. Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA) Documents and Storage Details

LPAs allow you to appoint someone (or more people) to make decisions on your behalf if you lose mental capacity. There are two main types:

1. **Property and Financial Affairs LPA** – controls money and property decisions
2. **Health and Welfare LPA** – relates to medical and care decisions

These documents are especially crucial for LGBTQ+ older adults who wish to appoint trusted chosen family or friends rather than biological relatives. Having these in your ICE folder ensures healthcare staff can find them quickly.

TIP: Store details of where originals are kept (e.g., with your solicitor, at the Office of the Public Guardian) and include registration numbers. This speeds up verification in emergencies.

3. Will and Key Contacts List

- A recent, legally valid will that confirms your wishes regarding estate and funeral arrangements
- Contact details of trusted people to be notified, such as chosen family, close friends, or advocates
- Information about your solicitor or executor

Given that many LGBTQ+ elders may face challenges or discrimination from biological family members, having a clear will and named contacts protects your wishes and prevents disputes.

4. Care Plan Preferences

Prepare a detailed care plan outlining your preferences about:

- Medical treatment options (including palliative or end-of-life care choices)
- Social and mental wellbeing support
- Preferred language, pronouns, and identity acknowledgement
- Names of people authorised to be involved in decisions
- Any cultural or religious observances

This care plan can be shared not only with emergency services but also incorporated into your NHS records. The NHS has avenues to add personalised care information to your summary record, but having a physical or digital copy improves visibility.



5. Medical Information

Information Type	Why It Matters
Current medications and dosages	Important to avoid harmful drug interactions or omissions
Known allergies	Prevents medical emergencies due to allergic reactions
Chronic conditions or diagnoses	Enables appropriate monitoring and treatment strategies
Details of your GP and specialists	Helps emergency teams obtain medical history promptly

6. Contact Details for Specialist LGBTQ+ Support Services

Having up-to-date contact info for organisations such as:

- Opening Doors — dedicated LGBTQ+ over 50s community support and services
- Local LGBTQ+ friendly healthcare providers or clinics
- Community groups linked on platforms like the Gay London Life Events Diary

These contacts can assist you or your carers when additional advocacy, advice, or companionship is needed.

7. Advance Statements or Directives

If you have made an advance statement—your preferences about future care—or a legally binding advance decision to refuse specific treatments, include these here. This ensures healthcare professionals respect your autonomy.

Addressing Trust, Discrimination, and Isolation Concerns

Healthcare discrimination remains a reality for many LGBTQ+ older adults, sometimes leading to late presentation of illnesses or underuse of preventive health services. One way to counter this is by clearly stating your identity and communication preferences in your care plan and making sure your healthcare providers know about your ICE folder.

Because many older LGBTQ+ people live alone or may be isolated, the ICE folder lets emergency responders and hospital staff quickly understand your support network—especially your 'chosen family' who are often not legally recognised without proper documentation.

Ask this question: *Have I clearly designated trusted chosen family members in my LPA and key contacts list?*

Storing and Sharing Your ICE Folder Safely

It's important your ICE folder is accessible but secure. Here are some ideas:

- **Physical folder:** Keep a labelled, waterproof physical folder in an easy-to-find location at home (like a kitchen drawer or by the front door). Inform trusted contacts where it is.
- **Digital copies:** Using scanned or photographed copies, you can store encrypted versions on your phone or cloud storage.
- **Sharing via WhatsApp:** Share critical parts, such as emergency contacts and allergies, with a trusted contact via WhatsApp. This app is widely used and allows easy sharing of photos and documents.
- **Use Pinterest for reminders:** Pinterest boards can be set to private and used as a creative and visual way to store links and reminders about your care plan, support groups, or events like those in the Gay London Life Events Diary.

How Resources Like Opening Doors and Gay London Life Can Help

Opening Doors is more than just a social space; they offer advice, advocacy, and assistance with navigating healthcare and social services tailored to the LGBTQ+ over 50s community. Their expertise can be invaluable when creating or organising your ICE folder.

The Gay London Life Events Diary provides listings of inclusive and welcoming social events, which can help tackle isolation—a common issue among older LGBTQ+ adults. Staying connected to community supports wellbeing and

emergency preparedness by widening your network.

Final Checklist: Essential Items for Your LGBTQ+ 'In Case of Emergency' Folder

Item Notes Personal ID (passport, driving licence) Includes NHS number and gender identity documents if relevant
Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA) documents Both Health & Welfare and Property & Financial Affairs LPAs, with registration details
Will Recent and valid, specifying chosen family or beneficiaries
Key contacts list Chosen family, solicitor, friends, LGBTQ+ support services
Care plan preferences Medical treatment wishes, pronouns, cultural considerations
Medical information Medication, allergies, diagnoses, GP details
Advance statements or directives
Legal statements on acceptable/refused treatments
Information on locating digital copies
Password hints, cloud storage details, WhatsApp recipient

Remember

Your 'In Case of Emergency' folder is a living document. Review it annually or after any major life changes such as moving, relationship changes, or new diagnoses. Communicate regularly with your selected contacts and healthcare providers about your wishes.

By taking these practical steps, older LGBTQ+ people can gain greater control over their care and wellbeing, reduce the risks of discrimination or misunderstanding, and ensure that their chosen family are respected and involved.

If you want tailored support to start organising your emergency folder or to learn more about LGBTQ+ health rights, contact Opening Doors or speak to your GP about NHS resources available locally.

