## Description

# The INCLUSIVE Project: Improving Knowledge, Skills, Attitude and Behaviours for LGBTQ+ Maternity Care

**Claire Singh (she/her)**

**NIHR Senior Doctoral Fellow, King's College London**

## Introduction



Claire Singh

Having been a midwife for many years, in clinical practice and clinical research delivery, I didn't think that undertaking a PhD was within my skillset or indeed my life goals! However, after co-writing a booking chapter on health promotion considerations for LGBTQ+ people starting a family, I realised that from both a personal and professional place I had a spark of an idea that I might want to do my PhD in! Fast forward a few years, and with the support of family and colleagues and having been awarded an NIHR doctoral fellowship, I began my PhD at King's College London in October 2025, with INCLUSIVE.

INCLUSIVE aims to improve maternity care experiences for LGBTQ+ birthing people by supporting midwives to develop the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours they need to provide inclusive, equitable care.

**Improving Maternity Care for LGBTQ+ Birthing People**

As we know, for many women and birthing people, pregnancy and birth are deeply significant life experiences. Feeling safe, respected and supported during maternity care can have a lasting impact on both physical and emotional wellbeing. However, research shows that LGBTQ+ people often face discrimination, exclusion or negative experiences when accessing maternity care.[1,2]

Maternity care is still built around assumptions that all service users are heterosexual, cisgender women embarking on pregnancy in traditional female/male family structures. For LGBTQ+ birthing people, these assumptions can make care feel unwelcoming, invalidating or even unsafe. Experiences such as being misgendered, having identities overlooked, not having the presence of their partner recognised, or needing to repeatedly explain family structures can add unnecessary stress during their maternity care encounters.[3]




Although awareness of LGBTQ+ healthcare inequalities is growing, there is still limited research focused specifically on the maternity experiences of LGBTQ+ birthing people. Understanding these experiences is essential for improving care and ensuring maternity services are equitable and inclusive to meet the needs of everyone.

Midwives play a central role in shaping people's experiences of pregnancy and birth. Therefore, by better understanding the challenges LGBTQ+ birthing people may face, midwives can help create environments where all women and birthing people feel respected, seen and supported.

**The INCLUSIVE Project will take place in two stages.**

**Stage One: Understanding experiences**

The first stage will analyse data from the Birth Experience Study UK (BESt-UK), which collected the birth experiences of women and birthing people. INCLUSIVE will explore the specific experiences of LGBTQ+ birthing people and their interactions with midwives throughout their maternity care.

Alongside this, INCLUSIVE will ask midwives to complete a short ten-minute survey so that we can understand what training needs midwives see as necessary in helping them feel more confident and competent in caring for LGBTQ+ birthing people.

**Stage Two: Co-designing a training package for midwives**

The second stage of the project will bring together LGBTQ+ birthing people that have used maternity services along with midwives to work together to co-design an online training package specifically for midwives.

Using an approach like co-design to develop the online training package, means it will be shaped by the voices and experiences of the people it is intended to support-both birthing people and midwives. The aim is to create practical, evidence-based training that helps midwives feel competent and confident in providing inclusive maternity care for LGBTQ+ birthing people.

Would you like to take part in the survey and have your voice heard about LGBTQ+ maternity care?

If you are a registered midwife practicing in the NHS, NHS Scotland or Health & Social Care Northern Ireland and would like to complete the survey please scan the QR code. Or click on the link below.

https://qualtrics.kcl.ac.uk/jfe/form/SV_0rD3bey5oTGrdci

The survey is anonymous and will take only ten minutes to complete.

**The survey is open until July 31, 2026.**

If you would like to find out more about the INCLUSIVE project or if you would like to discuss being involved in the co-design of the online training package, please email me at cl**********@****ac.uk

**References**


1. Soinio J, Paavilainen E, Kylma J. Lesbian and bisexual women's experiences of health care: "Do not say, 'husband', say, 'spouse'". J Clin Nurs. 2020;29(1-2):94-106. doi.org/10.1111/jocn.15062
2. Greenfield M. We Aren't Over The Rainbow Yet: A Research Review Examining LGBTQ+ Families' Experiences In Perinatal Care Services. TSM. 2022;5:6-9 doi.org/10.55975/ALBN9488.
3. Abelsohn KA, Epstein R, Ross LE. Celebrating the "other" parent: Mental health and wellness of expecting lesbian, bisexual, and queer non-birth parents. J Gay Lesbian Mental Health. 2013;17(4):387-405. doi.org/10.1080/19359705.2013.771808.


**Category**

1. All4Maternity Blog
2. News & Views

**Tags**

1. 2026
2. LGBTQIA+
3. maternity care

**Date Created**
1st June 2026