

Who and How? Getting started

The concept of a network for people who live with a disability and identify as LGBTIQ+ came from conversations with people engaged with Ability Links. They talked about feeling marginalised and living on the fringes of both communities. Having become aware of that need, and participating in formal work-based training which exposed them to resources and ways of thinking, Ability Linkers conducted some research of their own. They wanted to establish what services already existed which might answer the community's needs, and what further evidence might exist to provide some context around the issues raised.

Ability Linkers also worked to better identify and establish the level and nature of need via a process of consultation and genuine engagement with people who identify as being LGBTIQ+ and who live with a disability. That work involved identifying key organisations and groups, as well as individuals.

Ability Linkers engaged with the Council for Intellectual Disability, and the Rainbow Bridge Social Club, as well as individuals known to Ability Links. The response was positive and an expression of interest in forming a working party was issued.

Expressions of interest came back from individuals as well as people representing organisations the Council for Intellectual Disability and the Rainbow Bridge Social Club, in response to which Ability Links facilitated a meeting to discuss and explore the issues.



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Q: What are the issues in your area? Reach out to people in your local community and start a conversation.

Through discussions at the first meeting the concept of a peer group/network to support increased connection and belonging members was raised, and the bare bones of a working party, then named the Rainbow Working Party, was formed.

Members of the Rainbow Working Party included Ability Links staff from St Vincent de Paul Society and Settlement Services International (SSI), and community members.

Q: Starting a working party helps ensure diverse and expert voices are heard. Who else could you include in your working party?



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