



The LGBT Health and Inclusion Project

Development Needs of the Local LGBT Third Sector



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Brighton and Hove NHS Clinical Commissioning Group (BH CCG) and Brighton and Hove City Council (BHCC) have commissioned the LGBT Health and Inclusion Project at Brighton and Hove LGBT Switchboard to conduct a series of consultation and engagement activities with local lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people (LGBT) people. The aim is to use the information gathered to feed into local service commissioning, planning and delivery.

Please note, the following report presents information about the consultation and engagement work conducted by LGBT HIP and should not be taken as a position statement of Brighton and Hove LGBT Switchboard or of any participating organisation.

Introduction

This report presents the results of two consultation and engagement activities conducted by LGBT HIP in collaboration with the Transforming Local Infrastructure (TLI) Project and the Communities, Equalities & Third Sector team at BHCC. The context that informed these activities is set out below.

Taken from the project's website, the TLI project can be described as follows.¹ In 2011, six local organisations received funding to explore ways to co-ordinate and deliver contemporary, relevant, accessible and responsive support for community and voluntary organisations more effectively, efficiently and sustainably. As part of this work, a number of consultation events were held to update the local Third Sector and to provide a forum to feed in views about the development of the initiative.² At the conclusion of the project, the Community and Voluntary Sector Forum, the Volunteer Centre, the Performance Development Service, and the Skills Exchange, merged to become a new organisation called Community Works. The development of the new organisation was based upon the learning from the TLI project. Its mission is:

- To create the support structure and networks that enable individuals, community and voluntary organisations and businesses to contribute their time and energy most effectively.

Its goals are:

- To develop and strengthen community and voluntary groups and organisations to survive and thrive.
- To build a strong, vibrant base for volunteering and voluntary activity.
- To improve equalities practice within the community and voluntary sector and throughout the city.
- To promote and support influential, effective partnerships within the community and voluntary sector, and between the community and voluntary sector, statutory sector and corporate sector.

¹ Transform BH. <http://transformbh.wordpress.com/2013/09/30/you-said-we-did/>. [Accessed 30th November 2013.]

² The term 'Third Sector' is commonly used to describe the community and voluntary sector to distinguish it from the public and commercial sectors. It encompasses voluntary and community groups and not-for-private-profit organisations, e.g. social enterprises and charities. These can also be referred to as civil society organisations or the not-for-profit sector.

- To develop the TLI organisation [now known as Community Works] as an effective, efficient and sustainable organisation.

In summary, it seeks to:

- Help individual community and voluntary organisations become as effective as possible.
- Enable people, organisations, businesses and the public sector to work better together.
- Make it easier for people to volunteer their time to the greatest effect.
- Speak up for the vulnerable and underrepresented in our society.
- Champion and offer a united voice to everyone in the community and voluntary sector.

Running in parallel with the conclusion of the TLI initiative, BHCC is developing a policy on the way in which it supports communities and the Third Sector in the city. This policy development, informed by a wide range of consultation activities and collation of evidence, will lead to the development of a new policy and the issuing of a funding prospectus. This seeks to rationalise, streamline and make more transparent the provision of financial support by BHCC for these activities in a climate of financial pressure. The policy is currently in draft form and may be subject to change but in summary it identifies five key aims:

1. Third Sector infrastructure – To enable the Third Sector to provide support for other Third Sector organisations (including equalities organisations) such as information, training, human resource functions, fundraising, information technology, skills to bid for public funds, networking etc.
2. Community engagement – To support the Third Sector to consult individuals (including service users) and communities to understand their needs and to feed into Council decision-making. Also to enable the Third Sector to gather the views and priorities of organisations and groups to ensure these views are heard and influence the delivery of services.
3. Community development - To support and enable communities to develop skills, abilities, confidence and funding to address local priorities.
4. Collaboration and co-production – To promote the Council, Third Sector and communities working together, designing policy, services and commissioning to better meet people's needs.
5. Role of BHCC Communities, Equalities & Third Sector team - To have a corporate department in the city Council that champions and builds support in the Council for the work of the Third Sector, and supports both the Third Sector and Council to have the skills and understanding to create better joint working relationships.

It was within this context of significant change in the arrangements for the support and development of the Third Sector in the city that LGBT HIP undertook two separate consultation events. This sought to ensure that the local LGBT Third Sector was informed and included in the discussions, debates and policy reviews taking place. These events took the form of two, separate, two-hour meetings for representatives of LGBT Third Sector organisations: one focussing on TLI (now Community Works) and the other on the BHCC Communities and Third Sector policy review. We have produced a combined report as the themes and findings that emerged are linked, and taken together provide important information about the needs and requirements of the local LGBT Third Sector.

Aim of the Consultations

In each case, the aim of the event was to enable LGBT Third Sector organisations to learn more about the initiatives being proposed and to contribute their views, experience and feedback. Our intention is that both BHCC and Community Works use this information to ensure that the needs of the LGBT Third Sector are incorporated into the development of their respective plans and activities going forward.

Method

LGBT HIP organised two, separate two-hour meetings to gather feedback from participating organisations about the TLI initiative and the BHCC Communities and Third Sector policy. At the former, a combination of presentations and small group activities was used to inform participants about the TLI initiative and elicit feedback. In the latter, informal presentations about the BHCC policy were given and a roundtable discussion followed. In each case, the facilitators and an LGBT HIP volunteer took notes.

We defined LGBT Third Sector organisations as follows: either those organisations run for the sole benefit of LGBT people, or those organisations that had a specific and designated LGBT service, or organisations where there was a significant LGBT clientele (this included for example, local HIV organisations where there is a large client-base of gay and bisexual men).

Organisations were identified via the database maintained by LGBT HIP and through professional contacts and asked to send representatives to the meetings. The meetings were also publicised through the LGBT HIP newsletter, website and social media and via the CVSF e-lists. A list of the attending organisations is available at Appendix 1.

Findings

The following findings are organised according to what we learned from these exercises in three key areas: 1) community development, 2) infrastructure support, and 3) consultation and engagement. However, it is important to highlight that there is crossover in these areas so that some items could be located in more than one domain. We have found it helpful to further organise as follows: factors that need to be taken into account or understood as part of any approach or strategy to support the local LGBT Third Sector, and specific and practical actions or initiatives that would be necessary or beneficial.

Community Development

Issues to be understood or taken account of:

- LGBT Community and Voluntary Sector (CVS) groups are a vital and valuable city asset, with respected specialist expertise and access to marginalised and excluded communities that need community development.
- There are (at least) four communities under the LGBT 'umbrella' – this means that there is connectedness but also occasions when the needs and concerns of those communities are distinct. The point similarly applies to people living with HIV and the organisations that serve their interests.
- Brighton and Hove has a unique history as a place of migration for LGBT people. It continues to draw people to live here as well as travel here to access services. This can pose challenges as well as opportunities.
- There is a culture of activism and organising within local LGBT communities that is an asset and community development should capitalise upon and strengthen this.
- LGBT communities incorporate intersectionality and are present in all areas of the city – this requires sophisticated approaches to community development. Facilitating better collaborative working between LGBT organisations and mainstream partners is required to facilitate more joined up approaches to meeting these diverse needs.

Practical actions and initiatives:

- Promote and celebrate the local LGBT Third Sector. Use forms of recognition and reward to highlight the contribution that this makes to the city, e.g. commensurate funding, awards, positive publicity, etc.
- Prioritise proactive approaches and strategies to enable, encourage and facilitate collaborative working – both within the LGBT CVS and with mainstream organisations.
- Set up an LGBT Alliance (to complement the recently formed Trans Alliance) to promote and sustain LGBT organisational networking and partnership. Enable mediation and

support for conflict resolution to facilitate and ease collaborative working between organisations.

- Provide a directory of all community and voluntary groups in the city to include an LGBT section. Use cross-referencing to highlight areas where both mainstream and LGBT CVS groups are operating (e.g. youth, older people, women and girls, men and boys etc.). This could aid sign-posting and avoid duplication.
- Use sophisticated, innovative and creative approaches to community development, for example, capitalising on the rich cultural and artistic resources of the local LGBT communities and the interest in new media and social networking.
- Facilitate activities that challenge stigma and discrimination in the wider community, as this is a primary issue facing all LGBT communities.
- Encourage initiatives that bridge the traditional community development divide between neighbourhood and communities of interest.

Infrastructure support

Issues to be understood or taken account of:

- The need for infrastructure support that understands and is embedded within LGBT communities – workers in this area require training, expertise and experience.
- Building sustainable organisations is not viable with short-term funding rounds; short-term funding seriously compromises the ability of LGBT CVS organisations to survive and thrive.
- It cannot be assumed that funders or mainstream partners operate free from discriminatory attitudes, biases and practices regarding LGBT people and communities. Recognition is needed that it may therefore be more challenging for LGBT CVS organisations to obtain funding and build partnerships relative to other parts of the Third Sector. There is therefore a need for more support to enable LGBT CVS organisations to compete in a restricted funding environment where discrimination and structural inequalities may present additional barriers. Brokering better access to the private sector as a source of funding and provision of benefits in kind (e.g. pro bono services) is also needed, including the LGBT commercial sector.
- There is a particular need for infrastructure support for those CVS groups that serve marginalised groups under the LGBT ‘umbrella’. CVS groups for bisexual people, trans communities, LGBT older people and lesbians tend to be small, largely unfunded, volunteer-led support groups, without paid staff, permanent premises or charitable status. Lack of capacity can make it difficult for these groups to articulate the needs of their communities to policy-makers and compete for the funds they need in order to develop. Infrastructure support (and community development) is needed to intervene in the cycle of: lack of resources = lack of capacity = lack of ability to compete for funds = lack of resources = lack of capacity.
- There is a need for financial transparency and value for money. In a climate of financial restraint, spending on infrastructure support must be justifiable and transparency is needed about costs and benefits. Flexibility around fees is also needed, especially for start-up groups and organisations and those in financial difficulty.
- Due to issues of intersectionality, LGBT people can have multifaceted needs that can sometimes best be met by mainstream organisations (or in partnership with LGBT CVS services) – infrastructure support for these mainstream organisations is also necessary to ensure that they are accessible to LGBT people.

Practical actions and initiatives:

- Produce an accessible and practical ‘how to start-up’ toolkit for new LGBT CVS groups that takes account of their specific needs, challenges faced and potential assets. Provide the information they ‘don’t know they need to know’.
- Set up simple and accessible ways to join, contribute to and benefit from Community Works. Use proactive and not passive approaches to disseminating useful information and engaging LGBT CVS groups. Set up a network for start-up groups to induct them into Community Works and facilitate their development. Offer tiered levels of access to accommodate the different circumstances of groups.

- Ensure that all websites and information resources are in plain English and not Third Sector jargon and 'policy-speak'. This needs to be accessible to start-up groups in one place – a one-stop shop.
- Provide an up-to-date and online directory of funders and calls for applications.
- Focus on those groups most in need, not only on those with most ability to pay.
- Provide standard forms of infrastructure support (e.g. information, training, mentoring, capacity building, peer support, policy templates, sign-posting, fund-raising, financial management and book-keeping etc.) but informed by the 'on-the-ground' experience of LGBT CVS groups. Support needed may be complex and strategic as well as simple and operational (how to open a bank account, set up internal governance or acquire insurance for example).
- Use approaches that build on strengths and assets – work from where organisations are 'at' and with their aspirations whether that be growth or maintenance.
- Match more established/experienced LGBT organisations for mentoring with those that are smaller/newly established – resource this.
- Respond to the difficulty expressed by medium sized LGBT CVS organisations that fall between the remit of funders who support large established organisations or small and developing CVS groups.
- Develop a focus on better support for volunteering and human resource issues, especially preventing burnout. Develop the Volunteer Coordinator's Forum to proactively seek involvement of LGBT CVS groups.
- Promote the expertise available within LGBT CVS groups to mainstream organisations that may wish to commission them to build their own capacity (e.g. LGBT awareness training, working with excluded communities etc.).

Consultation and Engagement

Issues to be understood or taken account of:

- LGBT representatives are needed within Community Works with a strong voice and real influence, accountable to the LGBT CVS as well as Community Works. The diversity within LGBT communities needs to be reflected by the representatives. Ensure also that the 'public face' of Community Works includes LGBT people.
- There is need for LGBT representation in the most senior and strategically important boards in the city as well as those at mid and community level.
- Community consultation and engagement with LGBT CVS groups has value in evidencing need and building community cohesion as well as giving a 'voice' - support and facilitate LGBT community consultation and engagement as a valuable activity in its own right.
- Damage is done in using LGBT communities as a 'political football' (for example, when it is stated that funding work in LGBT communities is "just political correctness" or a waste of money) – politicians and others with influence need to engage in a serious and sustained way with LGBT communities to understand the issues faced and challenges met by LGBT CVS groups.

Practical actions and initiatives:

- LGBT CVS groups can sometimes struggle to evidence needs and inequalities in the absence of official and comparative data (e.g. there is no 2011 census data on sexual orientation or trans status). Address the need for a replicable and systematic method for gathering data about the demography and needs of LGBT people in Brighton and Hove. This would provide good evidence to inform decisions about the allocation of resources, and over time, act as a potential source of information to benchmark community needs and the impact of initiatives.
- Ensure that Community Works has transparent and accountable governance and a strong equalities policy and practice throughout, that mandates LGBT inclusion and equality.
- Review the current structure of governance within the city to identify the extent to which LGBT CVS groups are represented. Use the Community Works democratic and representative processes to promote LGBT representation.
- Facilitate better networking between LGBT CVS groups to increase voice and influence.

- Facilitate exploration of ways to address the current democratic deficit from there being no coordinated 'voice' for the LGBT communities and their interests in the city – investigate ways that LGBT CVS groups and their representatives can be involved in holding public bodies to account for meeting their duties under the Equality Act 2010.
- Safeguard the provision of an independent mechanism for consultation and engagement with LGBT people in the city.
- Ensure that all consultation activities conducted in the city are properly planned and organised in a timely manner – LGBT CVS groups with limited human and other resources are often prevented from participating by inaccessible or rushed consultation exercises.
- Ensure that every consultation is responded to publicly with a 'you said - we did' exercise to demonstrate the impact of consultation.

Conclusions

A historical legacy, and indeed current experiences of exclusion and discrimination, has led to a spirit of activism, independence and 'can-do' attitude, such that is meaningful to speak of an LGBT Third Sector in Brighton and Hove. This is undoubtedly an asset to the city, with award-winning LGBT voluntary organisations that draw in service users and members from within the city and beyond. However, there is a need for proactive measures to ensure that this sector can benefit from the opportunities presented by the exciting new development of Community Works and the emerging BHCC Communities and Third Sector policy and prospectus. It is also vital that this sector is reinvigorated and strengthened by collaboration and partnership with other parts of the local Third Sector in order to remain responsive and relevant.

We investigated with local LGBT CVS organisations the ways in which they needed these initiatives to be shaped to enable them to contribute and benefit. In many ways, we identified needs that were common to any group of Third Sector organisations: appropriate community development, relevant, responsive and effective infrastructure support as well as opportunities to meaningfully influence and participate in local policy initiatives and civil society. However, we also identified that this needs to be conducted with sensitivity to the specific needs and circumstances of LGBT CVS organisations. Attention to issues of discrimination and structural inequality, multisectionality, the specificities of LGBT cultures and the complex make-up of LGBT communities is vital, as well as understanding and addressing the impact of the HIV epidemic and its current implications. An informed understanding of the LGBT Third Sector as it is currently constituted is vital to the success of any measures to support and develop it. It cannot be assumed that approaches that 'work' elsewhere or with other parts of the Third Sector can be simplistically transferred. Effectively supporting the LGBT CVS will require informed, skilled, sophisticated and sensitive approaches to community development, infrastructure support and consultation and engagement, involving LGBT CVS groups as active participants. It is hoped that this report and its recommendations mark the beginning of that exciting process.

Recommendations

A wealth of constructive recommendations for action is presented in the findings section of this report. In addition, we focus here on a series of overarching recommendations to inform the development of initiatives to support and strengthen the LGBT Third Sector in Brighton and Hove.

For BHCC:

1. Ensure that the findings of this report are used to inform the development of the Communities and Third Sector policy and funding prospectus.
2. Retain an explicit focus on meeting the needs of LGBT communities and LGBT CVS groups for community development, infrastructure support and consultation and engagement within the Communities and Third Sector policy and funding prospectus.
3. As a condition of funding, ensure that all organisations funded by BHCC as part of the Communities and Third Sector prospectus identify how the needs of LGBT people and LGBT CVS organisations in the city have been taken into account and the proposals to meet those needs.

For Community Works:

1. Establish and resource a programme of LGBT Third Sector development responding to the issues identified in this report.
2. Develop the capacity of Community Works to deploy staff with expertise and experience in working with the LGBT Third Sector to coordinate activity and act as a point of liaison with LGBT CVS groups.
3. Establish a network for LGBT CVS groups to facilitate collaborative working, mentoring and skills sharing. Identify opportunities for this network to link with others in the city to facilitate partnerships between LGBT and mainstream CVS organisations.
4. Develop specific activity to promote and facilitate volunteering within the LGBT Third Sector – extend the Volunteer Coordinator's Forum to proactively invite participation from LGBT Third Sector groups.
5. Facilitate capacity building for mainstream organisations to develop their ability to equitably meet the needs of local LGBT people. The expertise of the local LGBT CVS groups might usefully be drawn upon as part of this work.
6. Identify ways in which the evolving processes of governance and representation within the new Community Works organisation can be developed to ensure a strong voice for the LGBT Third Sector, fully representing its diversity.
7. Review the participation of LGBT CVS groups in the governance boards of the city and use the democratic tools available to Community Works to promote greater participation by LGBT CVS groups.

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Appendix 1: Participating Organisations

TLI Roundtable, 2nd September 2013

- Allsorts
- Brighton Bothways
- Brighton and Hove LGBT Switchboard
- Changing Attitude Sussex
- Clare Project
- CRI
- FTM Brighton
- Lesbian Link Brighton
- Lunch Positive
- Peer Action
- Queer In Brighton
- RISE
- Sussex Beacon
- Terrence Higgins Trust
- Trans Pride

BHCC Communities and Third Sector Policy Meeting, 24th October 2013

- Brighton Bothways
- Brighton and Hove LGBT Switchboard
- Clare Project
- FTM Brighton
- Lesbian Link Brighton
- Lunch Positive
- Peer Action
- Queer In Brighton
- RISE
- Trans Alliance