

Opening your organisation to lesbian, gay and bisexual people

Introduction

"National and local information points to many issues faced by lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) people around their sexuality. Research indicates that about 15% of LGB people suffer from serious homophobic incidents every year, LGB people are 3 to 7 times more likely to consider or attempt suicide and there is a high number of incidents of substance misuse and alcohol abuse. Furthermore that fear of homophobia and issues around confidentiality can lead to a distrust

of health practitioners, alienation from health systems and a lack of engagement with local political processes," says Derbyshire Friend.

So what can local voluntary and community groups do to ensure that we are open to LGB people who want to access our services, how can we ensure that as organisations we are 'gay friendly'?

Homophobia and Hetrosexism

Homophobia is an irrational dislike, hatred or state of being uncomfortable with Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual people, their behaviours and lifestyles. Homophobia can manifest in active exclusion of LGB people from social groups, services and resources, as well as more aggressive manifestations in verbal or physical abuse.

Heterosexism is the assumption and promotion of Heterosexual ideals. Heterosexism presumes that being heterosexual is better than being gay. Heterosexism can manifest itself in the lack of awareness of LGB people and their needs, resulting in a lack of suitable service provision and accessibility to and promotion of various services.

10 easy steps

1. Ensure your staff and volunteers have the skills to be able to challenge homophobia when they come across it. Training is available from many different organisations and individuals who can help you with this.
2. Look out for information about LGB issues and events in the press and through voluntary sector networks and publicise them through your mailings and information
3. Ensure that sexuality is part of your equal opportunities policy and that in any equal opportunities monitoring sexuality is part of it. In this way you can see if you are reaching LGB people in our communities.
4. Develop a statement, which the organisation signs up to that condemns homophobia and support LGB people to access services.
5. Advertise vacancies and services in gay press.
6. Have posters on the wall that show that you welcome LGB people.
7. Have information around your office and meeting space with helpline numbers for LGB people.
8. Identify appropriate resources that you can get to learn more about LGB issues and how LGB people are affected by homophobia.
9. Be clear in recruitment information and induction of staff, volunteers and trustees that as an organisation you welcome LGB people and others from minority communities.
10. Be an advocate for LGB issues to be addressed in meetings and partnerships with other groups and statutory partners.



Opening your organisation to lesbian, gay and bisexual people

Local LGBT groups

- **Pink Peaks**
Email pinkpeaks2005@aol.com
- **Choices youth group**
01332 206027
www.gayyouthderby.co.uk
- **Derbyshire Friend**
Details below

Other sources of information and support

- **Consortium of lesbian, gay & bisexual voluntary & community organisations**
www.lgbtconsortium.org.uk
Aims to strengthen, support and sustain the work of lesbian, gay and bisexual organisations
- **Gay and Lesbian Humanist Association**
<http://www.galha.freemove.co.uk/>
Promotes a rational humanist approach to homosexuality and to lesbian, gay and bisexual rights as human rights
- **International Lesbian and Gay Association**
<http://www.ilga.org/>
World-wide federation of national and local groups dedicated to achieving equal rights for lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and transgendered people everywhere
- **Lesbian Information Service**
<http://www.lesbianinformationservice.org/>
Independent organisation providing support to lesbians of all ages and backgrounds
- **Stonewall**
<http://www.stonewall.org.uk/stonewall/>
National civil rights group working for legal equality and social justice for lesbians, gay men and bisexuals
- **Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD)**
<http://www.glaad.org>
Dedicated to promoting and ensuring fair, accurate and inclusive representation of people and events in the media as a means of eliminating homophobia and discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation

Local Resources & information

- **Cash Project**
Community Action on Sexual Health, 4 Rose Hill, Chesterfield, S40 1LW, Tel 01246 559431
- **Derbyshire Friend**
<http://gayderbyshire.co.uk>
Information on local LGBT services, groups and events. 2/3 Friary St, Derby, DE1 1JF. Tel 01332 207704
Derbyshire Friend LGB Support Service, The Pavilion LGB Centre, 2/3 Friary St, Derby, DE1 1JF. Tel 01332 207704
www.gayderbyshire.co.uk

This fact sheet is one of a series of fact sheets produced by High Peak CVS. **They can all be downloaded from our website www.highpeakcvs.org.uk/how**

High Peak CVS works to ensure that local voluntary and community groups can access as much support, advice and information as possible. We help groups in many different areas, such as funding, charity registration,

practical services including printing, training and links to training and with legal issues. We have resources, including a meeting room, computers and OHP for use by groups.

To find out how we can help your group, please contact us on 01663 735 350 or email

