

RAINBOW PARTNERSHIP

Building a Unified Voice
for the Lesbian, Gay,
Bisexual and
Trans
Sector



RAINBOW PARTNERSHIP

Sustaining the Partnership

From the 31 March 2008, the Rainbow Partnership pilot funding from Capacity Builders' 'Improving Reach' programme will cease...so what does this mean for the Rainbow Partnership?

Over the last year, the Rainbow Partnership has established a strong membership made up of individuals, organisations, businesses, voluntary and community groups and statutory bodies across the North West and this number is still growing. In addition, it has increased its profile across the region through

events, resources and working in partnership. It has brought together the LGBT community, developing new relationships and opportunities in the region.

The Lesbian & Gay Foundation and partners are currently looking at opportunities for sustaining the Rainbow Partnership and how the network can build on the success of the work that we have already achieved. We will be keeping the Rainbow Partnership network fully informed of any developments.

Work Sickness Absence in the North West

Sickness absence in the North West is amongst the highest in the country, and, on top of the personal health and well-being costs, the economic cost to the region is estimated at £2.91 billion. The North West Regional Workplace Health Strategy, which was launched in January 2007, doesn't include specific information for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people, however general North West figures show:

'It is estimated around 700,000 people of working age are claiming benefit. Of these, around 100,000 are actively seeking work, but over 400,000 are receiving Incapacity Benefit. Further to this approximately 250,000 people every year suffer from a work-related illness and an estimated 5.2 million working days are lost annually due to work place injury and work related health.'

With an estimated 612,000 LGBT people living in the North West, a large

proportion of the regions workforce is from our diverse community.

Whilst developments are being made to increase sexual orientation monitoring across the region, particularly by public sector organisations; how can we identify what the specific reasons are that LGBT people may be absent from work?

Issues faced such as homophobia and transphobia in the work place which can lead to depression, increasing rates of HIV infection in gay men and general sexual health are all precursors to employee absence for the LGBT community.

Certain issues must be addressed by employers to ensure that there are not underlying issues leading to LGBT work place absenteeism in the region. If you are aware of any research around LGBT sickness in the workplace, please contact rainbow@lgf.org.uk

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NORTH WEST LESBIANS, GAY MEN, BISEXUAL & TRANS PEOPLE



35,963

LGBT PEOPLE OF THE WORKING AGE POPULATION IN THE REGION ARE CLAIMING INCAPACITY BENEFIT.*

2.91 BILLION

THE ESTIMATED ECONOMIC COST TO THE REGION OF SICKNESS ABSENCE - AMONGST THE HIGHEST IN THE COUNTRY.

50% APPROX.

HALF OF SCHOOL LEAVERS AT 16 LACK A LEVEL 2 QUALIFICATION.

16% (120,000)

THE FIGURE THE NORTHWEST WOULD NEED TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WITH NO QUALIFICATIONS BY TO MATCH THE ENGLAND AVERAGE.

116,550

OLDER LGBTs IN THE NORTH WEST*

*Based on 9% of the North West Population. For sources for any of these statistics, email rainbow@lgf.org.uk



AROUND THE NETWORK

NORTH WEST

LGBT Youth North West

LGBT Youth North West is the regional organisation working towards the inclusion of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender young people in North West England.

We support LGBT young people and LGBT Youth organisations in the North West of England to achieve a quality and accessible service provision for all LGBT young people.

The organisation is made up of existing LGBT Youth providers across the region and aims to work with both the clients of existing youth agencies and young people who are not currently involved in any youth or group provision.

LGBT Youth North West provides a wide and diverse range of activities for young LGBT people and organisations to engage in.

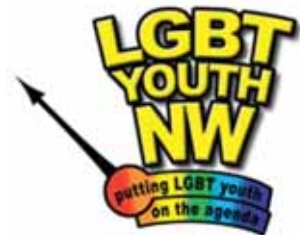
We do research; regional and national LGBT youth events; training and consultancy work (such as training youth and community workers in Universities, Youth Workers in Local Authorities and young people in schools).

One of our main activities is the training scheme which is currently being piloted open to all young people and youth workers. All training is Open College Network Accredited at various key skill levels and focuses on a range of issues relevant to the needs of the younger LGBT community including anti discriminatory practice, the process of coming out and challenging homophobia.

We are holding regional meetings in 2008 supported by Government Office North West and the North West Regional Youth Work Unit.

The first meeting will be 10am-2pm on Friday 29th February (venue tbc). The purpose is to review our work so far; to have a key note speaker to address the ten year Government Youth Strategy and Integrated Youth Support Services; and to use a participatory approach to set out priority areas for the next three years. This event is open to all LGBT Youth providers in the North West.

For more information contact Mary Kenny at the regional youth work unit or Sally Carr at lgbyouthnorthwest@yahoo.co.uk



NORTH WEST

Centre for Local Policy Studies

The Centre for Local Policy Studies is compiling research for a series of guidance documents (related to the Equality Standard) that are equality strand specific.

The documents will form a booklet aimed at managers who work within or alongside local authorities, who may feel they would like some extra support and understanding that is less generalised and more oriented to a particular strand.

We are currently looking at the sexual orientation strand, and would like to pass on our thanks to those of you who have contributed thus far.

We would be very interested in talking to local authorities, service providers, authority funded projects or partners who are undertaking innovative or promising practice around the area of sexual orientation equality, with a view to including some case studies in our publication.

We are putting out a call for short case studies (about 200 – 500 words) that illustrate,

For example:

- How your organisation has implemented policy around sexual orientation. An example showing good customer care or service delivery. Perhaps specific issues that have needed action. How difficulties have been overcome.
- How a situation may have arisen that a local authority or related partners was able to assist with. How authorities have consulted with service users or the community in an innovative way. How to ensure Equality Impact
- Assessments are meaningful for sexual orientation, and across all departments.
- Or any other similar case studies relating to sexual orientation.

You can either e-mail a short paragraph outlining the work/ project or policy you are undertaking to: mckenziej@edgehill.ac.uk, or you can call the Centre on **01695 584765** to speak to Jules Mackenzie.

Further details about the booklet will be available shortly.

MANCHESTER

Gay in the UK - LGBT Asylum Seekers and Refugees

'Gay in the UK' is a social group for LGBT Asylum seekers and Refugees. The main purpose of the group is to reduce the isolation experienced by many LGBT Asylum Seekers and Refugees who often feel unable to come out within refugee communities and also find it difficult to access the UK LGBT Community.

Due to the difficulties of making an asylum claim based on sexual orientation / gender identity the group enables its members to provide each other with much needed social and emotional support through this process.

We have recently been awarded a grant from the Manchester Pride Community Fund and plan to use this money to pay for trips and meals out for the group members.

The group meets on the 1st and 3rd Monday of the month at Refugee Action (address: 4th Floor, Dale House, 35 Dale Street, Manchester M1 2HF). It is advisable to ring us if attending for the first time as there will be occasions that the group will be held at different locations.

Please contact Liz on **0161 233 1204** for more information or to make a referral. Alternatively, e-mail the group at lgbtisocial@yahoo.co.uk



MERSEY BROOK

Work it Out

Brook is committed to providing positive and progressive services to all young people. Establishing a consistent and focused group for young people who are Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual or Unsure, named 'Work It Out?' places the needs of the LGBU young people at the centre of our work.

The group has a personal development focus as we realise the importance for young people to develop their personal skills as well as accessing accurate and relevant information.

Our educational focus is to encourage young people to raise their self awareness through exploring their attitudes and values and the skills needed to make informed choices.

Young people who are confident and have a sense of self worth are more likely to take greater responsibility for their sexual health and relationship choices and this is something we want for all young people.

The group is aimed at those who are 14-18 years old, the short age range allows us to focus on young people who are experiencing similar issues i.e. the complexities of school and homophobia, beginning new relationships, thinking about first sexual experiences, developing positive relationships with family members and peers.

The 'Work It Out?' group is a positive space. We want young people to know that they are valued and important and that they are welcome at Brook anytime.

For more information about the 'Work It Out?' group contact: Kai Wooder on **0151 670 0177**.



For more information on the Rainbow Partnership, please visit www.lgf.org.uk and click on the Rainbow Partnership link.

COMPACT

The Compact is the agreement between statutory partners and the voluntary and community sector to improve their relationship for mutual advantage and community gain.

99% of local areas in England are committed to better partnership working between local government, local public bodies and local voluntary and community organisations through Local Compacts.

Local Compacts are living documents that inform the whole range of joint working at a local level, from police working with the community sector to tackle anti-social behavior to social services improving their contracting with social care organisations

Key Compact Principles

- Voluntary action is an essential component of a democratic society.
- An independent and diverse voluntary and community sector is fundamental to the well-being of society.
- In the development and delivery of public policy and services, the Government and the voluntary and community sector have distinct but complementary roles.

- There is added value in working in partnership towards common aims and objectives. Meaningful consultation builds relationships, improves policy development and enhances the design and delivery of services and programmes.
- The Government and the VCS have different forms of accountability and are answerable to a different range of stakeholders, but common to both is the need for integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.
- VCS organisations are entitled to campaign within the law in order to advance their aims. The Government plays a significant role, among other things, as a funder of some VCS organisations. Funding is an important element of the relationship between the Government and the VCS.
- Both Government and VCS acknowledge the importance of promoting equality of opportunity for all people regardless of race, age, disability, gender, sexual orientation or religion and or belief.

For more information about Compact and your local Compact, check out www.thecompact.org.uk.

LOCAL AREA AGREEMENTS (LAAs)

Local Area Agreements are three year agreements that set out the priorities for a local area, agreed between central government and a local area (the local authority and Local Strategic Partnership) and other key partners at the local level.

LAAs simplify some central funding, help join up public services more effectively and allow greater flexibility for local solutions to local circumstances. The intention is that LAAs provide local authorities and partners with the flexibility and capacity to deliver the best solutions for their areas through a reformed relationship between central and local government.

The new arrangements are based on a stronger role for local authorities to lead their communities, shape their areas and with other local service providers to innovate and respond to local needs.

The agenda for the LAA is set out in the sustainable community strategy SCS. The SCS is a long-term vision for an area and its people. It aims to create a sustainable community by addressing economic, social and environmental needs.

For more information on Local Area Agreements, you can refer to the Government Office North West Website: www.gonw.gov.uk.

LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS (LSPs)

Communities and Local Government believes more gets done if people in an area work together. They could be community and faith groups, the council, police and fire & rescue services, charitable organisations, businesses, schools, health bodies and more. Pooling experience and expertise, they work in partnership to meet the needs of local people.

Effective and innovative partnership working at a local and neighbourhood level where the true value of the voluntary and community sector is recognised, is a key factor in delivering sustainable economic, social and physical regeneration.

A Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) is a single body that brings together at a local level the different parts of the public sector as well as the private, business, community and voluntary sectors so that different initiatives and services support each other and work together.

From 2007/08 all eligible NRF areas and their LSPs will operate in the context of Local Area Agreements (LAA). Those LSPs will need to continue to demonstrate through the LAA how they are narrowing the gap between the most deprived areas and the rest. For these areas, LAAs must include mandatory outcomes with a neighbourhood renewal focus. For further information relating to the LSP in your area, please contact your local authority.



INFRASTRUCTURE

Capacity
builders

■ VOLUNTARY SECTOR NORTH WEST

Measuring the impact of the voluntary and community sector in the regional economy – how do we know it is making a difference?

There is widespread recognition by Government of the importance of the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) to the delivery of public services and the role it plays in developing and working within local communities, be they geographic or communities of interest.

One of the major issues for the VCS is how to evidence this work in a way that can be measured. The sector's impact is often seen in terms of social values, such as creating a sense of well being, capacity building, etc.

It is very difficult for the sector to measure the impact it has unless it is in terms of, for instance numbers of people trained, or numbers of volunteers recruited - and even these measures sometimes do not fit into the way strategic documents want to measure performance.

Voluntary Sector North West recently commissioned research by Hoshin into the economic contribution of the VCS to the North West's economy.

One of the major hurdles for this research was identifying the size of the sector, since many VCS organisations are very small, do not employ any staff and do not necessarily have an email address or website and are therefore not readily accessible to researchers.

In addition, the impact these organisations have is not easily measured in hard economic terms.

Nevertheless, the resulting research has identified that in the North West the VCS makes a larger contribution to the economy than the Banking and Finance Sectors.

One of the ways in which the VCS makes this contribution and has an impact on regional economic policy is through its contribution to the Regional Economic Strategy (RES).

The current RES has two actions which relate to the VCS:

Action 108: Promote the role of the VCS, Social Enterprise, and Faith Communities in tackling social exclusion and community cohesion

Action 109: Undertake capacity building activity to enable delivery of high quality services, including through the development of local and regional compacts.

The North West Development Agency, who are responsible for the development of the Economic Strategy, are working in partnership with VSNW and a range of other VCS organisations and public sector agencies (supported by Capacitybuilders). The partnership is looking at the ways in which the VCS can measure how it is contributing.

In addition to the above two actions there is an awareness that the VCS also contributes to many other parts of the RES including Skills and Education, Employment, Community, Health, Culture.

To begin this process the partnership will identify the range of indicators linked to the VCS that are currently being used in documents such as Local Area Agreements; from this it is hoped to identify a set of key indicators that are common across VCS organisations delivering in their local areas.

This is just a starting point, since it is now beginning to be widely recognised that we need different ways of measuring the impact of VCS activity.

The New Economics Foundation have a recently published a guide to measuring social return on investment, using social and environmental accounting principles and this could perhaps provide a starting point for encouraging public agencies to move away from traditional methods of measuring economic return on investment.

VSNW has led on this approach to identifying the sector's economic value, and we will continue to work on it with the sector and to keep all members informed of progress. We are hoping that the next iteration of the RES will recognise the full range of our contribution to the economic development of the region.

Margaret McLeod Sector Development Officer Voluntary Sector North West
¹ New Economics Foundation, 2007, Measuring Real Value: A Guide to Social Return on Investment.

NORTH WEST

Learning and Skills

The skills base of the workforce is critical to the economic development of the North West Region. The Northwest has a skilled population and the number of people with Level 2* and Level 3** skills is comparable with the rest of England.

Whilst there is no specific evidence that the LGBT community in the region is either skilled or unskilled, with more innovative and encouraging projects around homophobia in education and educating young people around the issues faced by LGBT people since the repeal of Section 28, positive changes are being made in education establishments. This should mean that LGBT people should face less bullying and discrimination in schools, colleges and universities allowing them to achieve their full potential.

With the North West population growing older, it is essential that young people from all communities have access to the same level and standards of education across the North West.

If you are aware of any research around LGBT education and skills in the North West, please contact rainbow@lgf.org.uk

**(equivalent to 5 GCSE's Grades A-C)*

*** (Equivalent to 2 A Levels or Craft/Advanced Technician Skills).*

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