

## Lambeth LGBT Forum Meeting Tuesday 21 March

### Present

Min Rodriguez  
Billie Ferrie  
Rose Donovan  
Paula Williams  
Graham Alldus (Met. Police LGBT Liaison Officer)  
Amy Donovan (Lambeth LGBT Anti-Hate Crime Coordinator)  
Tim Chambers  
Simon O'Corra  
Jeffrey Doorn  
Robert Brown

### Apologies

Chris D'Souza  
Daniel Fitzgerald

### Discussion

## Lambeth Equality and Diversity Scrutiny Commission

This evening was to provide an opportunity to meet with representatives from the London Borough of Lambeth Equality and Diversity Commission. Over a period of eight months, the commission has been undertaking a series of meetings with staff, service users, members of Lambeth voluntary organisations' and members of the public. Their aim is to review the effectiveness of Lambeth's current equality and diversity policies and procedures and to make suggestions for ways that the council can improve the way that it provides for its diverse community and workforce.

### Actions

- The Scrutiny process was explained, cross-party working group established in Oct 2005 to provide recommendations to Council for improvements to staff & service provision.
- Expected to report at start of new Council (following May 4th elections) and will take issues forward thereafter.

### Key issues identified:

- Monitoring of LGBT for staff and service users accepted, provided it is used sensibly and purposefully. It was agreed that the rationale for both LGBT staff and users monitoring is the same for any type of equalities monitoring. It

is important to ensure that that staff – regardless of which equalities strand – have their identities celebrated and diverse needs met. Regarding service provision, evidence-based resource allocation is standard, however, without a true picture of need for LGBT people, resources will not be allocated to this group. Monitoring is vital to ensure that LGBT people receive adequate and equitable services.

- Training and awareness needs must also be met.
- Police reported that the borough has the highest levels of reported LGBT hate crime, but that the vast majority is believed to go unreported.
- It was raised that the majority of people modify their behaviour to appear 'less gay' and less of a target for LGBT hate crime.
- It was considered essential to challenge homophobic behaviour and attitudes, not just educate.
- A senior, visible champion for LGBT issues should be appointed - regardless of their own sexual identity, as existing senior LGBT staff shy away from being pigeon-holed.
- Zero tolerance needs to be all encompassing for equality and diversity issues. Should be no hierarchy of equality!
- Difficulty in setting up forum partly related to what could Council do for LGBT people. Need reassurance/commitment from senior officers and members. Need to provide a culture of inclusivity.
- Adequate service delivery from mainstream services is very important, differentiated service delivery should be heavily considered before initiating.
- Staff need to be trained on LGBT issues as there is little understanding and little pro-activity.
- Equalities Impact Assessments tend to neglect LGBT issues and only focus on equalities issues. EIAs should cover all equalities and diversity issues.
- 90-98% of hate crime goes unreported. Hate crime very often occurs as a result of another incident, where things escalate – aggravated crime.
- Anti-Social officers need to be publicised as people appear to be unaware of their existence and role.
- Need to link to education in order to eliminate discrimination.

- Zero tolerance approach must have teeth and sanctions incorporated for non-compliance.
- Need to consider moving perpetrator of hate crime. Very often it is the victim that has to move (particularly with the new goods and services legislation which will be inclusive of LGBT people).
- If mediation is used it needs to commence quickly otherwise it is pointless.
- Homophobic crime, as all hate crime, should be monitored.
- Perception that the Council are reluctant to engage voluntarily with LGBT forum.
- Lambeth has the highest incidents of homophobic crime in London. Need responsive policies from Council and partners, including businesses etc, ie CCTV in view of high LGBT community and venues in borough.
- LGBT issues should be promoted with commitment from senior officers. Equalities and SMB champion required and Executive lead.
- LGBT support and funding requires consideration through out the borough
- It was suggested that there should be a mainstreaming of understanding of the issues, and it was acknowledged that the policies exist, but they must be used for example - the 'Zero Tolerance' policy should not simply be a statement.

## **Meeting**

### **LGBT History Month update**

1. Welcome and apologies
2. Minutes from the last meeting (none)
3. LGBT Liaison Officers report
4. Planning the year ahead for the Forum
  - Potential topics
  - Funding application

#### *PC Graham Aldus reviewed recent homophobic attacks in Lambeth*

During the previous four months there has been a 75% reduction in reports, however there have been some serious assaults recently.

- Two gay men assaulted outside Two Brewers, Clapham, after being homophobicly verbally abused. One male still seriously ill in hospital. The witness appeals conducted and investigation is ongoing.

- Two women verbally abused and threatened in Clapham. Male arrested and charged for public order offence
- Gay male verbally abused in street. No suspect.
- Gay male assaulted in Clapham Common PSE. Witness appeal to be conducted this weekend
- One male arrested in a gay sauna following an allegation of rape. Charged and awaiting trial.

### **Next meeting**

Sigma Research will be attending the next LGBT forum meeting on *Wednesday 26 April* to report back on the initial findings from the LGBT Matters research. This piece of work included a needs assessment of the LGBT population as well as an internal overview of council policies in relation to LGBT equalities and LGBT staff.

This research provides us with evidence of the needs that the LGBT population have. Departments will now have statistics of gaps in service delivery and provision to LGBT people. This should provide impetus for the various departments to address these issues. The research will also provide the Forum with a lever to direct our planning, lobbying and work.

Paula Williams, the lead equalities officer for LGBT Matters, will also attend. This will be to provide the Forum with an overview of what will happen with the research findings to ensure that they are utilised by the Council.

**Please also see the May meeting agenda attached...**