



Birmingham **LGBT**

News from the Ageing Better LGBT Hub  
March 2018



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**The last word . . .**

If you would like to receive these newsletters electronically, please get in touch and I will add you to the emailing list.

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**Ageing Better LGBT Hub is run by and from Birmingham LGBT.**

**The Ageing Better in Birmingham programme is managed by BVSC and funded by Big Lottery Fund**

# LGBT Hub News

## Doing It Better With Ageing Better

The LGBT Hub held a session of discussions in February – “Doing It Better With Ageing Better” – to enable group organisers to learn from each other and find out more about how the Hub can offer support.

We had a lot to discuss and ran out of time, but we did manage to cover the practicalities of running a group, how we can reach out to isolated people, how to work with different age groups and the benefits of being part of Ageing Better in Birmingham. We also looked at Ageing Better in its national context and how we are working to provide evidence of what works in reducing isolation, which the Big Lottery can take forward and use to influence public spending.

We looked at a draft ‘Top Tips’ for groups and organisers, which is a work-in-progress and could be very helpful for future Ageing Better groups. We also considered how organisers can stay motivated and not wear themselves out – because running a group can be hard but it still should be fun!

The LGBT Hub is considering organising additional workshops in the future, looking at using social media and other forms of publicity, dealing with conflict between group members and putting together a good Ageing Better Fund application.

If you run a group and you’re interested to see if Ageing Better will benefit you, or if you’d like to start a group or activity and need a bit of support – please get in touch. Contact **Maria** on **0121 643 0821** or [mariahughes@blgbt.org](mailto:mariahughes@blgbt.org) and check out the project webpage [www.birminghamlgbt.org.uk/ageing-better](http://www.birminghamlgbt.org.uk/ageing-better)

***Do you have an idea for a group or activity, but you’re not sure how to get it going?***

***Please get in touch with Maria on 0121 643 0821 or [mariahughes@blgbt.org](mailto:mariahughes@blgbt.org) for an informal, no obligations chat, or send your ideas to go in the newsletter.***

## Ageing Better Fund application: LGBT Polska

LGBT Polska have recently had their application to the Ageing Better Fund approved. The group of Polish LGBT people and their friends will now be able to reach out to more people by advertising in MidlandZone for six months, and having professionally-printed flyers to distribute.

This is the first application to the Ageing Better Fund asking for publicity costs alone, as opposed to funding activity costs. LGBT Polska members discussed and agreed this would be the best way forward for their group.

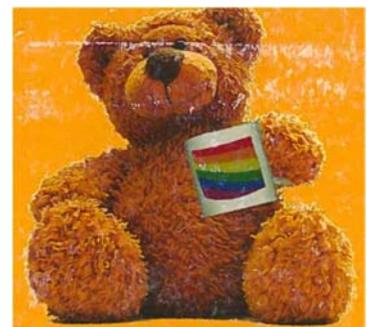
We hope this encourages other groups who don't feel they need the Fund to meet activity costs, to consider different ways the Fund could be used to reach out to members of the community who might not know about them.

## New Groups

The LGBT Hub is pleased to welcome these groups which have joined the Ageing Better programme:

### **BGLAD**

Birmingham Gays and Lesbians Against Depression is a friendly support and social group for those suffering from depression or other mental illness; all our members understand depression or other conditions like anxiety, OCD or stress. The group cannot offer counselling or individual support but can guide towards options, and is part of the MIND peer support network of groups across the country.



BGLAD meets on alternate Thursday evenings (the second and fourth Thursday each month) from 7.30 to 9pm at Birmingham LGBT Centre.

To contact BGLAD, phone **0121 301 1284**.

## Trans Central

Trans Central is a (MTF), or Male to Female transgendered community support group; that meets in the Birmingham LGBT Centre in the West Midlands on the first Monday of each month at 6.30pm.



The group aims to provide practical help and peer support to the local Trans community, and create opportunities for members to take part in community programmes and events, which will work towards helping improve confidence, increase knowledge, and empowering Trans women in a relaxed, comfortable, safe and friendly environment.

Contact **Bobbi** for more details on **07908 319 439**.

## Events Coming Up

### LGBT Ageing Better Groups 'Takeover Day'

**Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> March, 1pm – 4pm**

**Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery Gas Hall, 2 Margaret St, Birmingham B3 3BS**

As part of the 'Coming Out' Exhibition at Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery, Ageing Better LGBT Hub has been offered a whole afternoon's entertainment, especially for our Ageing Better groups! This will include:

- Free artist drop-in session in the Forum – make art to take away
- Regular guided tours – 1pm, 2pm and 3pm where members can drop in to take part in any they choose
- Drop-in object handling session – real queer 1960s objects to handle, 1960s newsreel and music playing, tea and coffee to relax and share in the Gas Hall AV room.

We welcome interest from Ageing Better groups, but you are also welcome to come as an individual. Please register your interest with **Maria** on **0121 643 0821** or [mariahughes@blgbt.org](mailto:mariahughes@blgbt.org). (See also '**Postcards With A Purpose**' under '**Get Involved**')

## **‘Spring Forward’**

**Monday 26<sup>th</sup> March, 10am – 2pm**

**Austin Court, 80 Cambridge St, Birmingham B1 2NP**

**FREE for people of all ages**

You are invited to the Ageing Better ‘Spring Forward’ event, celebrating Ageing Better in Birmingham: a day of fun activities, with free lunch and refreshments. It’s a chance to meet participants from across the Ageing Better in Birmingham programme.

This year, we will be showcasing Ageing Better groups, with demonstrations and exhibits, as well as offering a gentle exercise class and workshops on cooking and managing finances.

Places are limited, so please contact **Maria** on **0121 643 0821** or [mariahughes@blgbt.org](mailto:mariahughes@blgbt.org) to book yours.

## **Brum Cohousing**

**Friday 13<sup>th</sup> April, 2pm - 4pm**

**Birmingham LGBT, 38-40 Holloway Circus, Birmingham B1 1EQ**

**FREE for LGBT people of all ages**

Brum Cohousing would like to invite LGBT people to find out more about their plans for community housing in Birmingham. Cohousing is where a group of people arrange for housing to be built in a community setting, with shared facilities such as communal gardens and meeting space, but everyone has their own front door.

If you are interested in finding out more about cohousing and what Brum Cohousing would like to achieve, you are welcome to attend their workshop at Birmingham LGBT, supported by Birmingham Older LGBT People's Housing Group. We need an idea of numbers attending, so please contact **Maria** on **0121 643 0821** or [mariahughes@blgbt.org](mailto:mariahughes@blgbt.org) if you are interested in attending.

## Community News & Events

### **NEW: LBT Women's Clinic**

On the first Wednesday of every month at Birmingham LGBT, we have our Well Woman clinic. Running from 4pm – 7pm, this clinic is a nurse led space that facilitates STI screening, HIV testing, cervical smears and contraception advice for lesbian, bisexual and queer identifying women.



Alongside all these free and confidential services, we also offer one-to-one support and advice regarding all aspects of LGBTQ+ women's sexual health and wellbeing.

For more information, don't hesitate to contact or come in to see our dedicated lesbian, bisexual and queer women's worker, **Lu Skerratt**. Contact **0121 643 0821** or [lucyskerratt@blgbt.org](mailto:lucyskerratt@blgbt.org).

### **National LBT+ Women's Health Week: 12<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> March**

As part of the continued effort to challenge the inequalities faced by LGBTQ+ women in healthcare on a wider scale, 12<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> March 2018 is National LBT+ Women's Health Week. The aim of this week is to raise awareness of the health inequalities for this diverse group of people alongside ways in which healthcare professionals and community members can empower and work with service users, recognising their specific needs and experiences.

At Birmingham LGBT, we are continuing to campaign for fair and equal healthcare for LGBTQ+ women, both during LBT+ Women's Health Week and beyond.

### **Swim with the Shoals**

The Moseley Shoals host relaxed, sociable swims for LGBT people at pools in Balsall Heath and Sparkhill three times a week, so you can drop by for a dip when it suits!



And it's not just about swimming: this friendly bunch arrange regular Balti Nights, Gish n Chip Suppers, Summer picnics, holidays and short breaks. Plus join them for brunch every Sunday after the swim. They are a welcoming group and would love you to come along.

Your first swim is free – after that you can pay as you go or join a monthly plan.

Times and locations occasionally change, but normally:

- **Sundays** 12.30pm – Moseley Road Pool, Moseley Road, Balsall Heath, Birmingham B12 9BX. Regular exclusive Sunday session followed by brunch afterwards in Moseley.
- **Mondays** 8:30pm – Sparkhill Pool & Fitness Centre, Stratford Road, Birmingham B11 4LX. (In the public session. Pay on entry at the pool (£6) for your swim and sauna and the Shoals will refund your first session after the swim).
- **Wednesdays** 8pm – Moseley Road Pool, Moseley Road, Balsall Heath, Birmingham B12 9BX. Drinks in Moseley afterwards.

Further details and session updates can be found at <http://www.moseleyshoals.org.uk> or [@moseley\\_shoals](https://www.instagram.com/moseley_shoals)

## **Birmingham Mental Health Mates Meetup**

**Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> April, 11am**

**Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery, Chamberlain Square, Birmingham B3 3DH**

This group is for anyone affected by Mental Health Issues who wants to meet up with like minded people in a comfortable, welcoming and non-judgmental environment.

We usually meet on the 1st Sunday of every month in the lovely Tea Rooms at the Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery. There is no specific structure to our meets, just a relaxed meetup with no pressure to talk or get involved. Look out for the long table with a couple of balloons on.

If you do feel anxious or worried about attending, but would like to come, please don't hesitate to contact me on [amyrose1980@gmail.com](mailto:amyrose1980@gmail.com). If there is anything I can do to make it easier for you to attend, please let me know. We are more than happy to arrange to meet before if you don't want to walk in on your own.

So we can gauge how many people will attend, please do grab a free ticket. You don't need this to attend, but it means we can reserve a table for the right number:

<http://brumhbm.eventbrite.co.uk>. I really hope you can join us.

<http://www.mentalhealthmates.co.uk>

# Birmingham Healthy Minds

## Are you feeling anxious, depressed or stressed?

Help is at hand. If you are 16 or over, we can support you to make lifestyle changes to live life to the full.

## Do you have the following thoughts or feelings?:

- Feeling low and unhappy for much of the time.
- Unable to control feelings of anxiety or panic.
- Feeling stressed in general and not sure how to cope.
- Worried about changes in your thoughts and behaviour.

If you can identify with the above, persistently over the last two weeks, our service may be able to help. Birmingham Healthy Minds is an NHS primary care service that works closely with Birmingham GPs, offering advice, information and brief talking therapies for people aged 16 and over.

## We are able to offer:

- Computerised cognitive behavioural programmes
- Wellbeing workshops
- Staying well at work group
- Talking therapies
- Therapy groups



## How do I access the service?

Call **0121 301 2525** or ask your GP to refer you; your GP can also let us know any requirements you may have to access the service, such as the need for an interpreter. We will be able to answer your call between 9.30am and 4.30pm, Monday to Friday. Please be patient as telephone lines can become very busy. For updated information please visit our website at <http://www.birminghamhealthyminds.org> or email [bhm@bsmhft.nhs.net](mailto:bhm@bsmhft.nhs.net)

If you run a group, and would like a visit from **Lucy Desborough** or **Gemma Parkes** to give you more information, please email [l.desborough@nhs.net](mailto:l.desborough@nhs.net) or call **0121 301 2525** (option 1).

# Get Involved

## Postcards With A Purpose

If you have visited the 'Coming Out' exhibition at Gas Hall, Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery, you may have seen an exhibit encouraging members of the public to ask questions and leave comments, based on their visit to the exhibition and thinking about how society has changed in its acceptance of lesbian, gay, bi and trans people.

Visitors were encouraged to fill in postcards, and we have been sent the contents of these so that our readers and group participants can add their own comments and answer some of the questions. The full list (to date) of postcard entries is given below.

If you would like to comment or answer any questions, you can visit the exhibition (see 'Takeover Day' above) and fill in your own postcards. You can also send to **Maria** at [mariahughes@blgbt.org](mailto:mariahughes@blgbt.org) (your comments will be anonymised before being passed on to BMAG) or leave at Birmingham LGBT.

**Where did you go on first dates?**

**Do you think the LGBT community is making the most of the freedom it has now?**

**Did you have one night stands?**

**Why do some people change their views of you after you come out?**

**I have only recently come out as gender fluid after insisting that I was only a cis gendered woman – due to not feeling “trans” enough. What actually happened was that the trans and non binary crowd were very welcoming and that the idea of not being “enough” only came from perceptions outside the community.**

**What emotion do you associate queer childhood with?**

**I was bullied by homophobic people when I came out, even my friends bullied me so I had low self-confidence. Why do some people not accept others when they come out?**

**Its beyond belief that in our recent past we could not celebrate love openly.**

**When my darling sister came out 24 years ago I feel she was not expecting kindness and acceptance so distanced herself from me for years. It broke my heart. What was your expectation of coming out?**

**Many years ago, I used to go to a gay advice centre to help stuff condoms into packets for the night clubs. Although I am not gay, I have gay friends. I see everyone as just ordinary people.**

**It is crucial to remember that there are older people still with us whose lives were dominated by aversion treatment – this needs to be recorded now while we can.**

**A man married my daughter – they have a child. When the child was two they split up as the man decided he preferred other men. The child is now nine and loves both parents. His dad now has a male partner. Child stays with them. Should the child come to this exhibition?**

**I am more myself since I was able to articulate my sexuality with language I never got taught.**

**It is easy to forget, as a young LGBT person, what price was paid for the freedom I can now enjoy. Thank you for everything.**

**How do you maintain your own self-awareness in the face of ignorance, bigotry and discrimination during this “Trump” era?**

**Today I was asked “gender” on a form – it has a blank space. I took a deep breath and put “Non Binary”.**

**I’m bi and proud yet so scared.**

**Why do people change their views on you after you come out?**

**You are loved.**

**Is the last taboo that straight women find gay male sex very erotic?**

**Teenagers should be taught their sexuality is nothing to be ashamed of and love themselves for who they are!**

**I am a 54 year old bi sexual Asian woman but first and foremost I am a human being – let's all be human together.**

**I think about nationality, race and others divisions that are used to make people hate each other.**

**I am proud to part of a society where LGBT is becoming accepted! I can't imagine how life was before 67 and my heart breaks for the persecution you faced!**

**Will we always need to come out?**

**When will homosexuality be recognised as normal?**

**Where will the LGBT rights process take us?**

**For those who fought for decriminalisation, do you look back with pride of your achievements or regret that you had to fight for your rights?**

**Were you able to find others in the LGBTQ plus community at the time, or were you often alone or isolated?**

**I am Casper. I was always scared as a child about who I was. I never was accepted by many and myself couldn't accept who I was. But growing up I realised that I didn't need acceptance, I was just me. I am gender fluid and bisexual and I haven't cared I wasn't accepted for being me.**

**I would like to think the next step for all humans is to accept what is inside us. Being gay and trans is amazing!**

**I wish that you had the freedom my son has had to be himself and not be afraid of arrest just because you love men. I thank you for your courage.**

**I admire anyone who admits / takes pride in their sexuality. I admire your bravery! I'm proud of the world we live in where your strength is applauded.**

**This exhibit is very important to me. I struggle for a long time to find and figure out my sexuality. I am proud of how far we have come, but there is still work to be done.**

**It breaks my heart the journey that was forced upon people being true to themselves.**

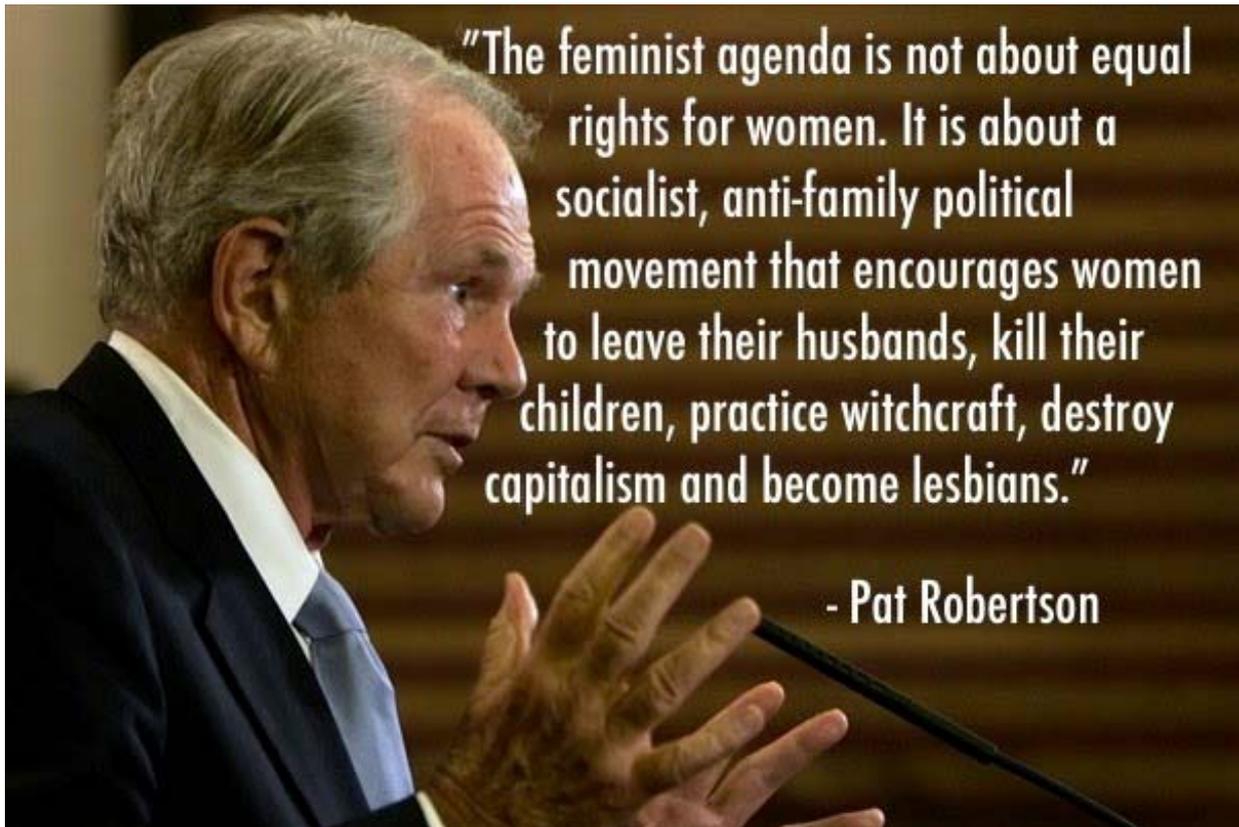
**You do not have to broadcast who you are. As a bisexual woman I was a first disheartened by venomous comment comments directed from within our community. I have learned this is a loud minority.**

**You shouldn't have had to be brave but you were. Be proud, be free, be yourself.**

## The last word . . .

***Why we still celebrate:***

**International Women's Day - 8<sup>th</sup> March**



**For what it's really all about, see:**

<https://www.internationalwomensday.com/>

<http://www.un.org/en/events/womensday/>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International\\_Women's\\_Day](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Women's_Day)

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-42824064>