



LGBT Hub News

January - March 2019

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Ageing Better in Birmingham aims to develop grass-roots community work and create opportunities for people of all ages to get involved with community-based activities.

The aim is to prevent people from becoming isolated as they get older and to encourage isolated people (aged 50+) to make contact and new friends, and enjoy activities again.

The LGBT Hub is the resource and support service for LGBT community groups to meet these aims. We can work with existing groups and help to set up new ones, encouraging people to use and develop their skills and knowledge, and increase their connections to other people, groups and agencies.

LGBT Hub News Roundup

Out in the Community

As part of our mission to reach out to the localities and new groups of people, the LGBT Hub has arranged some new events, and we're looking for the opportunity to arrange more.

In **January** we held a social in **Northfield** for the first time. The weather was very cold and threatening to snow, but this didn't put off our participants, who were very pleased to be able to meet somewhere local. They enjoyed the venue and each other's company, and will be meeting again in February and March on the fourth Tuesday at the same place: Allegro Lounge; same time: 7.30pm. The group is now called **Northfield Rainbows**.

In **February**, we are working with the **Quakers of the Central England** region to hold a meeting at the **Peace Hub**, which is in the city centre. We'll be exploring the acceptance of LGBT+ people within Quakers, and to find out how Ageing Better in Birmingham can support groups and activities to increase connections between people.

Following on from an event with **Royal British Legion** at their **Drop-in Centre in New Street**, we will be organising more informal coffee mornings for LGBT veterans and allies.

We now have a new meetup in Sutton Coldfield! The **Sutton Coldfield LGBT+ Social** met in March and will meet again in April.

We are talking to a group of volunteers in Castle Vale who have formed **Together in Pride North Birmingham**. They are looking to host a monthly workshop discussing issues with the LGBT community in the area and hosting an event in May for LGBT at their creative arts event.

If you're interested in an LGBT social event in your part of Birmingham, please get in touch. Contact me, **Maria Hughes** on 0121 643 0821 or mariahughes@blgbt.org.



Ageing Better Groups Updates

New Groups

Northfield Rainbows is a social group for LGBT people and allies living in or near Northfield, meeting on the last Tuesday of the month.

InteGreat Theatre is a Deaf & hearing Theatre Company, based in Birmingham. They have applied to the Ageing Better Fund for a new project and our fingers are crossed!

The **Pool & Karaoke** group meeting at The Fox has now joined the Ageing Better family and further activities are now being planned.

LGBT Line Dancing and **LGBT Table Tennis** have also joined the Ageing Better family and we look forward to promoting these fun, fitness activities to the 50+ community.

Group News

TranSpectrum is now meeting again, every third Thursday at the LGBT Centre. Louie, who organises TranSpectrum, has written about their experiences and why the group is so important, which you can read in the 'Focus On' section below.

For Transgender Day of Visibility, 31st March, Trans Central are collecting McDonald's full loyalty cards offering free hot drink, to give to the homeless. These complete loyalty cards will offer the chance of a homeless person claiming a hot drink and time with warmth and shelter whilst they drink their beverage (possibly in the middle of a freezing night). Trans Central members also aim to feed the homeless once more on our special day:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Transgender_Day_of_Visibility.

The Ageing Better LGBT Housing Group is taking part in the LGBT Housing Conference at the end of March. Housing and care providers, community groups, academics and the general public are invited to this event, to look at the housing-related needs of LGBT people, showcase good practice and network with each other. The keynote speakers will be Tina Wathern from Stonewall Housing and Andy King from the University of Surrey - and the Ageing Better LGBT Housing Group will also have a platform, to ask our audience: what should our Top 10 priorities be?

All of the details for these groups' events are in the COMMUNITY EVENTS Listings for March, which all of our subscribers will receive.

Focus on . . . TranSpectrum



My name is Louie. The doctors declared my sex as female at birth, but I came out at the age of 28 as TransMasculine and Non-Binary in July 2017.

I am Autistic and am also diagnosed with a mental health personality disorder - both of which have made discovering and understanding my own identity very, very difficult throughout my life. Realising my Transgender and Non-Binary identity and having that validated by friends and the Trans community in Birmingham has brought an end to lifelong instabilities and questions in my mind about who I am and why I am.

TranSpectrum began as a group that myself and a friend founded in July 2017. Our vision was to bring people who identified across the whole spectrum of Trans and Non-Binary gender identities in Birmingham and the greater Midlands area together to support, learn from, journey with and empower each other as a community.

At this time Birmingham had multiple groups serving specific gender identities. These groups include the Non-Binary Social, Trans Masculine Birmingham and Trans Central (a group described as for people who identify as MtF, male to female, transgender). These groups all still exist and continue to do very important work for their members and for the Trans community as a whole.

However, TranSpectrum believed that it was important for a space to exist where the whole Trans community could come together. In 2017 the media had started to pay attention - mostly negative - to issues of gender and those of us who do not identify as the gender we were

assigned at birth. This trend has continued and increased and the negativity and hostility towards Transgender, Non-Binary, Gender Queer, Gender Non-Conforming and Fluid identifying people is now inescapable on a local, national and global level.

I am sad to say that TranSpectrum closed in August 2018. This was due to my own health issues, including mental health issues that attitudes towards my gender identity made worse, and lack of support from volunteers to help organise and facilitate the running of the group.

In January 2019 the need to bring the whole Trans community together is more important and necessary than ever. The hostility and abuse - both passive and direct - that we face from the government, institutions, society and the media cannot be ignored. The only way we as Trans people can survive and fight for our rights, respect, tolerance, acceptance and love in this world is to come together as a whole community and stand together with each other and for each other.

This is why in December 2018 I began the work of resurrecting TranSpectrum. I have a new group of volunteers behind me and a different approach that will ensure TranSpectrum will continue to exist even if myself or other volunteers need to take a break from organising and facilitating for any reason.

Our Facebook group (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/300985690622343/>) exists for Trans people locally, nationally and even globally with the unified goal of bringing the whole spectrum of Trans people together to stand in power and love of each other.

We will be meeting on the third Thursday of every month, starting Thursday 21st February, from 7pm until 9pm in the Café space at Birmingham LGBT Centre. Refreshments (tea, coffee, soft drinks, biscuits and savoury snacks) will be provided. TranSpectrum can be contacted for any enquiries or suggested as follows: phone 07518 152 064 (Louie Hope, group founder); email transpectrum@gmail.com.

Ageing with Pride

Campaign Update

Look out for Ageing with Pride adverts on busses, bus shelters and billboards. If you see an advert and you'd like to let us know - include a picture if you like!

The new Ageing with Pride film "Bridge The Gap" has now been released, and you can find it on the Ageing with Pride channel here: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCJbVCXnjQZF9IMsAoLUbL5A>.

We've finished the filming for our final, 20 minute film - watch this space for details of when we will be showcasing the film.

For more details about Ageing with Pride, contact Rico on 0121 643 0821 or ricojohnson@blgbt.org.



Funding & Support

Ageing Better Fund

Ageing Better in Birmingham continues to provide access to resources for volunteers who would like to set up a community group and/ or activities welcoming to people aged 50 and over, and for existing groups who want to try something new and attract new members.

Applications need to demonstrate how the activity or group will reach out to isolated members of the community aged 50+, how they will retain new members and how they aim to become sustainable in the future.

Groups don't need to be formally constituted, or have a bank account, as the Ageing Better team at BVSC will arrange all the purchasing. All you need is a great idea with people aged 50+ who will back it and you could be running activities over a six-month period costing up to the value of £2000.

For an informal chat, please contact **Maria Hughes** on **0121 643 0821** or **mariahughes@blgbt.org**. The deadline for the next round of applications is **13th March**.

LGBT+ Futures

The LGBT Consortium has been contracted by the government to deliver a grants and training programme for the LGBT community.

The Grants Programme will be offering LGBT+ organisations across England the opportunity to apply for funding to enable them to work with underrepresented communities and to develop their organisation to become more sustainable.

The Skills Development and Training Programme will, in partnership with several of our Members, offer a wide range of training, support, peer learning and networking in order to equip LGBT+ organisations with the tools and resources they need to deliver their valuable work in a more sustainable way.

The first round of Grants Applications is now closed. The second round will open to applications in early May. Any England based non-profit organisation whose primary focus is Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and/or Trans + (LGBT+) communities are welcome to apply. Organisations can include:

- Registered Charities
- Charitable Incorporated Organisations (CIOs)
- Community Interest Companies (CIC)
- Unincorporated Charitable Associations e.g. constituted community and voluntary Groups

For further information on the LGBT+ Futures Programme, visit <http://www.lgbtconsortium.org.uk/LGBTFutures>, or contact the team: admin@lgbtconsortium.org.uk.



Community Offers

Lesbian, Bi & Trans Women's Health

We have asked Georgia Pattison from Birmingham LGBT to tell us more about the services for LBT women that are on offer.

So tell us a little bit more about your role at the LGBT Centre, Georgia.

My role at the Birmingham LGBT centre is as our Lesbian and Bisexual Women's Sexual Health Outreach Worker. My duties at the Birmingham LGBT centre involve assisting our service users with STI self-sampling kits and carrying out HIV rapid testing, as well as organising workshops/events for Lesbian and Bisexual Women. The outreach side of my job involves sexual health promotion and testing out in the community which may be in LGBT venues or universities where I am to engage with L&B Women. I also do some online outreach which involves contacting women using platforms such as our profiles on dating apps and sites which may be used by Adult Sex Workers. These online profiles are used to promote our service and as a gentle reminder to women that we are available 7 days a week for testing and 1-1 support.



What is the Well-Woman Clinic that you run?

On the first Wednesday of every month between from 4-7pm we run our Well Woman Sexual Health Clinic specifically for Lesbian and Bisexual Women, which is run in partnership with Umbrella Sexual Health Services. This service is free of charge and available on a walk-in or booked appointment basis. During the clinic our nurses offer STI and HIV testing and Cervical Cytology (Smear testing*). I am also available during the clinic for any 1-1 support sessions or general help and advice. We also have direct access and fast referral pathways to other services if these are needed such as sexual assault support services or counselling.

**This service can only be offered to women who are aged 25 years plus and who have a Birmingham or Solihull based GP.*

You can find more on our website: <https://blgbt.org/services/sexual-health/specialist-services/lesbian-bisexual-women/>.

I noticed that you offer STI and HIV testing, is this something that can affect Lesbian and Bisexual Women too?

Of course! Contrary to popular belief in the community, we are not immune from STI's and Lesbian and Bisexual Women should still get tested regularly at their local clinic. Another myth is that Lesbian Women do not have to have their smear tests if they are not having sex with any males. This is a misconception we need to leave behind. Regardless of sexual practice/partners, all women aged 25 and over should have their smear test done every 3 years unless stated otherwise by their GP or nurse.

Are there any new plans for 2019 which our readers should be excited about?

Definitely - We would like to offer more to lesbian and bi women. We're currently consulting with women to find out what people view's and wishes are locally. We will be running workshops in 2019 and I hope to set up a forum for L&B women for mutual and peer support on various issues that may be affecting us. I'd really like to encourage women to complete this survey and have a say in how this service can be developed to benefit us: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/VBWQCDW>.

Watch out for our promotional campaigns this year too which will feature new images and literature.

The Choir with No Name

The LGBT Hub has been contacted by Sally from The Choir with No Name, to offer groups a FREE singing workshop. The Choir with No Name is a choir for people whose lives have been affected by homelessness & others who find themselves on the margins of our society. They have funding to deliver outreach workshops to groups who may benefit from singing together. All they require is a suitable space and a willing group of participants. Groups can range in size from 10 to 100! It's a lot of fun with no pressure.

If you'd like to take up this offer, please call Sally Debiage (Birmingham Choir Manager) on 07794 100 938 or sally@choirwithnoname.org. You can see more about the choir here <https://www.choirwithnoname.org/choirs/birmingham-choir>. If you need help finding a venue, contact the LGBT Hub.

Bring Dementia Out

The Alzheimer's Society has developed the Bring Dementia Out innovation, which aims to ensure that LGBT+ people affected by dementia feel more comfortable in coming forward to access help, information and support around dementia.

Through helping LGBT+ organisations and communities to increase their awareness and understanding of dementia, and how the needs of LGBT+ people affected by dementia may sometimes differ, they'll be helping us to reach those affected by dementia.

The key elements of the innovation include: an awareness video, a concise booklet of steps on how people can help, a webpage encompassing information, support and resources, a poster to help spread the word, and events or sessions held locally in the communities to help raise awareness around dementia, and specifically around LGBT+ and dementia. The innovation is currently being tested in Brighton & Hove and Greater Manchester until the end of February, when it will be evaluated. If successful, Alzheimer's Society will be working with partner organisations to roll the programme out. The LGBT Hub will continue to update on this project.

Steps to Change

Steps to Change is a programme run by Aquarius, offering a range of activities for over 55s who are affected by alcohol, drugs and gambling. The service is also offered to family, friends and carers.

They provide an alternative to substance misuse, and the activities help to prevent isolation, increase physical activity, improve mental and physical health and support people to make social connections.

The programme lasts 12 weeks, and involves a range of half-hour exercise sessions including walking, cycling and swimming.

Participants can refer themselves or can be referred by other agencies. To find out more, call 0121 622 8181 or email stepstochange@aquarius.org.uk.

In The News

Ageing With Pride in Birmingham

Birmingham LGBT celebrates the older LGBTQI+ women who helped shape today's community.

<https://divamag.co.uk/2019/02/04/ageing-with-pride-for-lbt-women-over-the-age-of-50-in-birmingham/>.

Ageing With Pride campaign addresses challenges of growing older in the LGBT world

Ageing With Pride, a campaign by Birmingham LGBT, aims to promote the lives and lived experiences of older LGBT people from across the city, focusing on the positive contributions those over the age of 50 and who are lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender have made to the region both today and historically.

<http://queerforty.com/ageing-with-pride-campaign-addresses-challenges-of-growing-older-in-the-lgbt-world>

Pride in our planned LGBT extra care scheme

Manchester City Council has chosen a location for what is believed to be the UK's first LGBT extra care scheme. Joanne Roney explains more about the plans.

<https://www.insidehousing.co.uk/comment/comment/pride-in-our-planned-lgbt-extra-care-scheme-59621>

'I was refused service by two health professionals' - Ageing poses particular problems for LGBT people

From dealing with transphobia and social isolation to the difficulties in accessing vital medical care, Caomhán Keane gets the inside story.

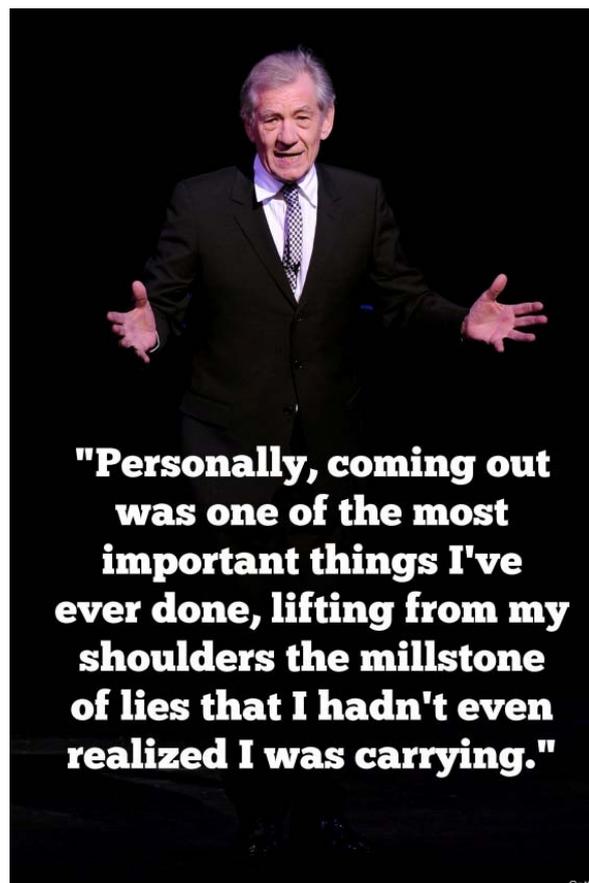
<https://www.independent.ie/life/health-wellbeing/i-was-refused-service-by-two-health-professionals-ageing-poses-particular-problems-for-lgbt-people-37604314.html>

'I decided not to hide it': LGBTQ people return to their home towns

Leaving a small community for the big city used to be central to the gay experience. But increasingly LGBTQ people are going back home for good

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/dec/29/not-hide-it-lgbtq-return-home-towns>

The Last Word



The Ageing Better LGBT Hub newsletter is produced by Maria Hughes.

If you would like to receive these newsletters electronically, please get in touch and I will add you to the emailing list: call 0121 643 0821 or email mariahughes@blgbt.org.



Birmingham LGBT

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

Ageing Better in Birmingham is managed by BVSC and funded by Big Lottery Community Fund.