



LGBT Health and Wellbeing

Annual Report 2013-14

Chair's Foreword



Along with Maruska, I am delighted to present this year's Annual Report in what has been a hugely significant year for LGBT Health and Wellbeing. With the support of the Big Lottery Foundation, we have established a permanent base in Glasgow and are now delivering our services across a wider geographical span.

Both on the Board and in the staff team, we have been delighted to welcome a number of new faces to the organisation over the past year, who bring a variety of skills and perspectives that build upon our strengths as an organisation dedicated to working with individuals and communities to achieve equality for LGBT people on the ground.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I'd like to place on record my sincere thanks to the management team, the staff and the many volunteers who give up their time to support our work - their commitment, ability and good humour continues to be an inspiration to us.

Trevor Owen
Chair, Board of Directors

What people told us were their favourite things about our programme*

"It's an essential service, both for Edinburgh and Scotland as a whole - nothing else like it in the country."

"In a year where my anxiety and depression has returned the service has been the most important support. I am always welcome and valued. It has been a safe space for me to be me in difficult times. And I am getting support from people who understand me. I feel there is now somewhere to go for help."

"I think you have helped me beyond what I can say because I only came out this year and I've made friends through your events and am happier and more confident as a result."

"I loved seeing the community gather together at the summer fete, enjoyed the music. I am much more aware of how many other LGBT people there are, which is brilliant. I definitely feel happy inside when I see other LGBT being happy together."

"It's an excellent organisation and very much needed. It reduces loneliness and encourages non-discriminatory environment! Creates a community where people give and get back... Well done!"

*Quotes used throughout this report are taken from our November-December 2013 Service Evaluation and from other written feedback received over the course of 2013-14.

Director's Foreword



As this Annual Report illustrates, the last year has been an incredible journey, and the report provides a welcome opportunity to take stock and celebrate some of the organisation's many achievements. Thanks to the very hard work and commitment of our staff and volunteers the organisation has over the last year continued to support and make a difference to the lives of a great many LGBT people through its myriad of projects and programmes. We have also remained a strong voice and influencer to ensure that the health inequalities faced by LGBT people continue to be addressed.

This year the organisation held its 10th AGM, which is of course a milestone, but perhaps for us more so than for many, given that the organisation came very close to collapse at the end of its initial 5-year funding period. However I am proud to say that, even in this really tough financial climate, we have managed to make a very robust comeback. We are now a much larger organisation than ever before and are providing a wide range of programmes that aim to deliver better outcomes for LGBT individuals and communities, and we are gradually expanding our impact beyond Lothian, and across Scotland.

In 2012, the launch of the Transition Support Service marked the organisation for the first time delivering a national support service. This was followed in 2013 with our second national service, the LGBT Helpline Scotland. Now in 2014 the LGBT Age Scotland Project sees the establishment of our Glasgow office base, constituting another really significant step in our journey to becoming a Scotland-wide organisation.

Looking ahead, the organisation's financial position looks relatively healthy and, whilst challenges exist around the funding for some projects, we remain committed to trying to sustain successful programmes and initiatives, as well as continuing to identify and strive to address gaps in service provision. All our work will remain firmly rooted in the communities we serve and will continue to be informed by extensive and meaningful involvement and consultation with LGBT people.

Maruska Greenwood
Director

Introduction

LGBT Health and Wellbeing (LGBT Healthy Living Centre) was set up in 2003 to promote the health, wellbeing and equality of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people in Scotland. It provides support, services and information to improve health and wellbeing, reduce social isolation and stimulate community development and volunteering.

The organisation's key objectives are to:

- ★ Provide a programme of activities which tackle the life circumstances that contribute to the ill-health of LGBT people
- ★ Reduce levels of isolation and social exclusion experienced by LGBT people
- ★ Strengthen the capacity of the LGBT community to promote the health of individuals
- ★ Support individuals to adopt and sustain healthy lifestyles
- ★ Ensure that LGBT people have equity of access to mainstream health services and information which are responsive to their needs.

Some of the key organisational achievements and developments over this period are highlighted in this report, together with some of our plans to build on those successes.

Our Work with LGBT People

Over 2013-14 the organisation continued to engage with a large number of LGBT community members across its range of programmes:

- **1,778 individuals accessed our group activities** and programmes (social programme, drop-ins, mental health, trans and community groups)
- **904 individuals accessed 1:1 support** (helpline, mental health service, advocacy, befriending)
- **848 enquiries** from LGBT people responded to
- **97 individuals volunteered** their services
- **2,235 individuals** received regular up-to-date LGBT health, equality and community related information.

Beneficiary numbers have remained relatively steady across many of the established programmes, with an increase in engagement of LGBT people through the new national LGBT Helpline as well as of trans people across Scotland as part of the Transition Support Service. The expansion of the Counselling Service has also enabled us to provide more therapeutic one-to-one support. The organisation has in addition continued to see an increase in the uptake of volunteering, largely due to the extensive use of volunteers as part of some of the newer services such as the helpline.

Mental Health Project

"I have been able to express how I am feeling in a safe space. To spend time with people who respect me. To begin working on how to deal with my feelings and not ignore them which in turn positively affect my mental health."

"There are people going through the same problems/difficulties like me. I am not alone. It's good to have support and understanding from other people!"

Much of the organisation's mental health work has continued to be delivered through our Scottish Government-funded LGBT Mental Health Demonstration Project, which launched in October 2010.

The Mental Health Demonstration Project is delivered by a small staff team of four (a Project Manager, two Development Workers and a Project Assistant). At its core the Project involves the delivery of a local specialist service in Lothian, which is part-funded by NHS Lothian. This service supports individuals experiencing poor mental health and, through the evaluation of this work, consultation and research, works to build up knowledge of the mental health needs of LGBT people.

The delivery of a wide range of activities as part of this Project is often made possible through extensive partnership work and the generous provision of in-kind support from mainstream mental health practitioners and organisations.

Addressing suicidal thought and self-harm

Suicidal behaviour and self-harm is much more prevalent among lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people when compared to the general population. Around 1 in 3 people who use our services indicate that this is an issue for them.

Our evaluation indicates that around **two thirds of beneficiaries reported feeling less likely to self harm and/or that their suicidal thoughts had lessened** as a result of receiving support through our Mental Health Project.

LGBT Headspace

The Lothian-based LGBT Headspace Programme is part of the Mental Health Demonstration Project, and provides culturally sensitive services to help redress the critical levels of poor mental health, including:

- **One-to-one support:** assessment appointments and ongoing individually tailored support.
- **Workshops:** information and taster sessions such as art therapy, confidence building, meditation, promoting better sleep and crisis planning.
- **Courses:** addressing specific mental health issues in more depth, including handling anxiety, yoga, tai chi and relaxation skills.
- **Groups:** time limited and ongoing groups such as art therapy weekends and a women's and men's wellbeing group.
- **Exhibitions and events:** one-off events aimed at increasing awareness and building community resilience.



"I just wanted to say thanks for taking the time to meet with me and for all your support and encouragement. It really helped having someone to talk to while I was having a hard time. I have employed all the dealing with anxiety techniques you taught me and they are definitely helping."

"This course has an enormous impact on me, I discovered the realisation of my suicidal thinking. I understood the process of my thoughts for the first time which has been enormously helpful."

"I am finding it so helpful to have this space to explore where I am in my life right now and what is and isn't working for me. Having the support of other group members is amazing. I feel better equipped in so many areas of my life because of this thinking time."

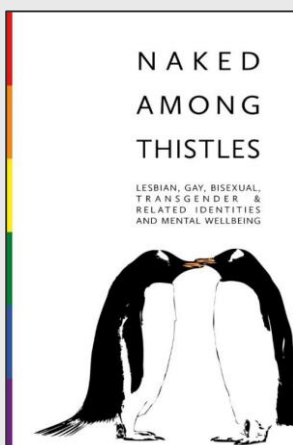
"I had no idea of the healing I would experience whilst looking at the exhibition. Particularly the label exhibition, where I remembered a word bullies would use towards me. To recall it and write it down was quite profound and to then be invited to write something positive on the label was powerful too. The honesty, vulnerability, power and strength displayed throughout the exhibition is a gift and inspiration."

Speak Out Creative Writing Project



This Project was possible thanks to some additional funding from See Me's local grants scheme. Speak Out consisted of a series of creative writing workshops and culminated in the production of a collaborative book and a performance-based spoken word book launch.

The workshops and events enabled LGBT people to share their experiences in relation to their mental health. Workshops were facilitated by established LGBT writers with the themes of short fiction, poetry, scriptwriting and performance and attended by 32 participants. All of the workshop leaders and many of the participants performed at the launch of the book 'Naked Among Thistles' at the Scottish Storytelling Centre; the launch was attended by over 100 people.



In order to capture the learning from the Project an Impact Report was produced and a more lasting legacy ensured through having the book available online.

"This was a wonderful event. I found the environment very supportive and encouraging. I was deeply moved by the stories that were shared and really appreciated being able to share in those moments in such a lovely, caring, environment."
(Book Launch Attendee)

"I am excited at the thought of sharing this book with friends and family who are struggling with their mental health and wellbeing. I hope that it will be a useful way to build support and a sense of solidarity."
(Book Launch Attendee)

"I can't tell you how much I enjoyed the book launch – a very moving, empowering and life affirming night. What an amazing piece of work."
(Book Launch Attendee)

"I feel more positive about myself. It was an immense help with my sense of identity as a gay woman and continuing my journey of coming out."
(Workshop Participant)

"It has allowed me to start writing again without feeling terrible about myself! I now feel I have another way to cope with poor mental health."
(Workshop Participant)

Information and Advocacy Service

As part of the Mental Health Project we also deliver a small-scale specialist Information and Advocacy Service which helps ensure that LGBT people have the relevant information and support to access health, social care and other services.

“The understanding, help and support I received from you was a ‘game changer’ for me and my family. For the first time important people listened to me and took me seriously. In the past people in my community never took me seriously in relation to LGBT issues, but they are now treating me with common respect and dignity. I feel valued, empowered and like a human being again and this has had a ‘butterfly effect’ on my gender identity as I feel safe enough to talk about my femininity and express my gender identity.”

“It’s nice to come to an organisation which is sympathetic to who I am. It’s assumed by using LGBT services that I’m of that persuasion. I certainly feel more at ease. The service has had a very positive effect. Very useful to get another point of view from someone who knows and understands my situation.”

Community Safety

Hate crime is recognised as being a key mental health risk factor. We therefore also provide a specific programme aimed at increasing community safety and improving the reporting of hate crime. This programme provides regular police surgeries, community safety events (e.g. safer cruising, online safety) and information, third party reporting facilities and one-to-one support to victims, as well as strategic involvement in key local and national fora addressing LGBT community safety issues.

“Thank you for explaining how the police might be able to help. I now feel able to contact them and make them aware of the difficulties I’ve been experiencing in my neighbourhood. If anything else happens with the neighbours I’ll know I have a contact.”

“It was great to have a chance to talk to the police about more general issues. I found the session helpful and it gave me great insight into police procedures.”

LGBT Helpline

Funding has been secured from the Scottish Government’s Equality Unit to expand our Lothian LGBT Helpline into a national service. A part-time Helpline Coordinator was appointed in early 2013, volunteers recruited and trained and the new national LGBT Helpline Scotland launched in May 2013.

Promotion of the new helpline, which operates two days per week (Tuesdays and Wednesdays 12 noon to 9pm) began in April 2013 and the big publicity drive saw 40,000 flyers distributed widely to relevant

locations across Scotland. Extensive online promotion was also undertaken, including targeting hundreds of relevant websites across Scotland and the UK such as mental health services, LGBT press, local authority service providers and the NHS, as well as online profiles on social networking sites such as Gaydar and ongoing social media promotion through Facebook and Twitter. A new helpline-specific website was also developed and launched.

The helpline provides information, support and referrals in relation to sexuality and coming out, gender identity, relationship, sexual health, community safety and emotional wellbeing issues. In its first year 610 calls were answered; 3 out of 4 of these calls involved emotional support.

"I found the service really generous, helpful and non-judgemental and I really appreciated having someone I could speak to in confidence."

"The information provided is really useful. I've been feeling lost over the last few months since coming out but now I know there's so much going on, I'm determined to make some connections and to get out there!"

"Thank you so much for the difference you made to my day. From your great listening and teasing my thoughts from me I learnt more about myself and, by allowing myself to fully accept my sexuality, it makes things easier."

Counselling and Self-Management

The organisation secured funding from the Alliance for a Counselling & Self-Management Initiative, which enabled us to employ a part-time Counselling Coordinator to significantly grow our small-scale counselling service and develop a programme of therapeutic group work to sit alongside this.

A total of 10 volunteer counsellors were able to provide nearly 100 individuals with one-to-one counselling. In addition, facilitated women's and a men's therapy groups were run, as well as therapeutic workshops around identity, loss and bereavement, self-awareness and self-management.

"Because of coming to counselling I am less anxious and feel I can start living, being me."

"I thought I hated myself because I am trans, now I realise it was other people's hatred I felt."

"I feel the workshop has helped me gain greater insight into how to deal with shame and shadow. It has also shown me ways that I have used are not working and to look in different directions."

Drug and Alcohol Project

We obtained funding from the Edinburgh & Lothian Health Foundation for a 10-month pilot LGBT Drug & Alcohol Project, which ran to July 2013. The Project aimed to better understand and address the high levels of addiction experienced by LGBT people by carrying out community research, delivering support to individuals and working with mainstream addiction services. The pilot Project has been evaluated and an Impact Report produced which provides a steer for future work in this area. Meanwhile we continue to facilitate a Forum for mainstream drug and alcohol agencies to promote LGBT inclusion.

“Excellent and accessible information session. I now understand the dangers of legal highs.”

“Incredible insight into my drug use and lots of information I didn’t know. I feel more aware of the effect and risk of drugs.”

LGBT Social Capital Programme

The organisation has continued to deliver its LGBT Social Capital Programme of social activities, events, volunteering and capacity building support to community groups; these are activities that help build social capital, promote community resilience and reduce health inequalities.

This programme is delivered by a Community Development Worker, supported by a team of volunteers and is sustained primarily through core funding from City of Edinburgh Council and NHS Lothian.

“I found contributing incredibly empowering. Events like this can be very important for someone like myself who has been 'hiding in plain view' to express myself and I will certainly be attending future Community Discussions.”

Social Programme

The organisation provides a year-round programme of social events that offer a vibrant alternative to the gay commercial scene. The regular drop-ins provide a welcoming and inclusive social space and a good gateway to the organisation’s many other programmes.

A volunteer Events Team supports staff in delivering a programme of wide-ranging and imaginative community social events, including regular yearly events such as our Pride Breakfast and Winter Concert, one-off events such as the popular LGBT Roller Disco, quarterly community discussions on a range of topics (e.g. straight allies, creativity, intergenerational evening) and Rainbow Family outings. This year also saw the return of our popular LGBT swimming sessions and monthly film nights.

“It was a great evening and safe space is important to everyone, I learned lots that evening and hope that I can pass this on. All the speakers were great and the event really made the LGBT community aware that there is help out there.”

“What an absolutely wonderful experience. I swam today in a public pool for the first time in nearly 15 years. This is huge for me. Thank you.”

“WOW! What a brilliant afternoon, and great event. So much talent [at the Winter Concert] and such a silly happy occasion. We came from Dundee and are happy we bothered!”

Rainbow Families



"Fantastic day. So nice to meet new people and find out there are more of us that we thought! So nice to be around friendly people. We all had a great time and are looking forward to the next one."

"I've only been to one so far, the picnic in Princes Street Gardens and I honestly couldn't fault it. I was very nervous but everyone made an effort to be welcoming and I felt very comfortable."

For the last few years we have been running a programme of quarterly events for LGBT parents and their children. These events provide an LGBT-affirmative, fun and relaxed social environment for young and old alike.

In late 2013 we conducted an online survey to evaluate these sessions and find out more from LGBT parents about the support they wanted for themselves and their families. The responses from 17 parents who attend Rainbow Families showed:

- All agree or strongly agree that staff and volunteers are friendly and that the environment is supportive, inclusive and welcoming
- 3 in 4 agree or strongly agree they feel less isolated
- 2 in 3 agree or strongly agree that they feel their family is more connected to their community.

When asked about why they attend events, the most popular responses were:

- they would like their children to meet other LGBT families
- they want to socialise with other LGBT parents
- they want to feel their family is more connected to their community.

Community Groups

The organisation has continued to host and support a wide range of identity, interest and support-based community groups which improve the social networks of LGBT people. As well as providing tailored ad hoc support, we have supported volunteer leaders through the Community Group Leaders' Forum, and a regular programme of training sessions.

This year we were particularly pleased to be able to support the formation of a new fortnightly Bisexual Group, which launched in October 2013 and is being hosted at our Edinburgh Centre.

"The basketball group is so much fun. It's hard to pinpoint exactly what it is that makes me feel safer, more accepted or more welcome at this group, as I think a number of things contribute to it. Taking part in sport requires confidence and my confidence gets stronger the moment I turn up to this group. Whilst my sexuality is barely mentioned, I get this buzz from being around other LGBT people, like a quiet recognition that we have something in common."

"Finally a bi group, so so important. Had a really good time tonight and looking forward to the next meeting."

Trans Community Support Group Leaders' Day

Part of the remit of the Transition Support Service has been to provide capacity building support to volunteer-led trans community groups across Scotland. In February 2014 we brought community group leaders together in Stirling for a day of discussion and networking. The day was attended by 17 group leaders representing 10 trans community groups from across Scotland.

The day provided an opportunity for group leaders to meet each other face-to-face, share skills and

experience, build connections and share their aspirations and vision for trans people in the future. Participants shared many common experiences and challenges, as well as pride in their positive achievements. The day focused on the individual strengths of each group leader and addressed their

concerns through discussion with peers and facilitators and the sharing of practical tips and advice.

"We are a diverse group of people and it is great to come together to celebrate our common cause and learn from each other."

It was a fantastic event, with inspiring testimonies and encouraging contributions from all who attended. Attendees reported that they left the event feeling focused, determined, inspired and rejuvenated.



Volunteer Programme

"I enjoy my experience as a volunteer and a service user and feel valued and nurtured. The organisation provides a base where I have received tremendous support. I find a personal sense of satisfaction in being able to give some meaningful time back to the organisation in return for the wonderful programme it provides. I feel an immense pride in my involvement with LGBT Health."

The organisation has a strong commitment to providing LGBT people, and those committed to equality and human rights, with opportunities to volunteer with an organisation that represents their interests and concerns. Volunteers are involved in the organisation's work in a myriad of ways, including the development and delivery of social events, befriending, drop-ins, counselling, helpline, LGBT Age champions, project support and publicity, as well as on the Board of Directors. We provide a regular rolling programme of quarterly induction and ongoing training for volunteers.

This year we carried out our second Volunteer Survey to explore the experience of volunteers and ensure we continue to develop and further strengthen the organisation's training, practice and procedures in relation to volunteering.

This year we also again sought to quantify the contribution volunteers have made to the organisation. This contribution from over 90 individuals amounted to nearly 4,000 hours. This often very specialist contribution equates to nearly 2.5 full-time members of staff or around £70,000 (based on salary and associated costs for a Development Worker) and thus clearly makes a very crucial contribution to increasing the organisation's capacity.

Volunteering with LGBT Health

Our second Volunteer Survey was carried out in early 2014. All those who had volunteered with the organisation throughout 2013 were invited to complete the online survey, which received 45 responses from across a wide range of volunteering roles.

Many volunteers identified working for an LGBT community organisation as really crucial in motivating them. When asked for their favourite thing about volunteering with our organisation responses include:

"Working for a purely LGBT focused organisation - a typically overlooked minority in terms of social support and understanding."

"The opportunity to have a role within an LGBT organisation, and make a difference for LGBT communities, with support and knowledge behind it, rather than struggling to make a point in the mainstream non-LGBT world!"

"I enjoy knowing that I'm giving back to my community and having a positive impact on people's lives by making them feel comfortable, happy and welcome."

The survey also helped us establish what some of the key challenges were for volunteers and what could further improve the volunteer experience. Whilst many of the suggestions made related to specific volunteering roles, one of the overarching themes was a desire for more training and social opportunities for volunteers,

"Knowing that I made a difference to someone else's day is great. Volunteering is not about me, it is about someone else, helping, supporting or encouraging them; being there for someone else is a refreshing break from the 'self' that is virtually inescapable."

Our Volunteers:

Age: the age range was between 19 and 67; the average age was 38.

Gender: 65% female, 30% male and 5% 'other'.

Transgender status: 14% identified as transgender.

Sexual orientation: 30% gay, 25% lesbian, 18% bisexual, 16% heterosexual and 11% 'other'.

Employment status: 47% employed full-time, 19% employed part-time, 9% students, 14% unemployed / unfit for work, 6% self-employed and 5% retired.

Ethnicity: the majority of volunteers identify as white British / Scottish, 5% as Polish, 2% Irish and 7% from other Western European origin.

Faith: 64% no religious belief, 10% Buddhist, 10% Christian, 7% Humanist and 2% Jewish.

Health status: 16% reported a health condition or disability which impacted on their daily activities a little.

Geographical location: the majority of volunteers are Edinburgh-based, but we also have volunteers from across the central belt.

Frequency of volunteering: 37% volunteer once a week, 54% once or twice a month and 9% less frequently.

which we hope to address over the coming year.

Many volunteers expressed tremendous approval of the organisation's work, pride in being involved with the organisation and appreciation of the training and support provided to them.

"I loved my time volunteering with LGBT Health and Wellbeing as a befriender, it was one of the most positive and enjoyable experiences I have ever had."

"Friendly, approachable staff. Excellent delivery of training. An organisation to be proud to associate with."

"I volunteered in many places, and it's rare to find the level of support and opportunity for growth that LGBT Health offers. I really value what the organisation does and I'm grateful to be a part of it."

"The organisation is a fantastic resource and very well run. The training and on-going support I've received had been very thorough and everyone in the organisation is always very welcoming, friendly and positive."

LGBT Age Project

The LGBT Age Befriending Project, which launched in 2010, offers a programme of social opportunities and one-to-one befriending for LGBT people over 50; it is delivered by a Befriending Coordinator and a team of volunteers.

The LGBT Age service has a positive impact on beneficiaries across a range of measures. Beneficiaries reported 'having more friends' (81%), being more 'able to say about things that affect me' (63%), feeling 'more connected to their community' (56%) and said their mental and emotional health had improved (50%).

Alongside the Befriending Project, since 2012 we have also delivered the LGBT Age Capacity Building Project which undertakes capacity building work, both at community and organisational level. This Project is delivered by a Development Worker, in collaboration with a team of volunteer Community Champions, and is guided by a Reference Group of older LGBT people.

As well as publicising the LGBT Age Project widely through all our usual channels, in August 2013 we also launched the monthly LGBT Age e-bulletin, which is sent out to around 100 recipients. It offers a platform for publicising social events, but also provides Project updates as well as wider external and community news of particular interest to LGBT people over 50.

"When my partner was alive we were so insular, we didn't need anyone else so when she died I was suddenly alone, completely isolated. Meeting with a befriender has been a lifeline. I met someone likeminded who cared and I could talk about my partner and being a lesbian and that was accepted."

"I haven't been well recently and really didn't feel like leaving my house today but now that I'm here I've had a wonderful afternoon with friends, had a laugh and really enjoyed myself. I'm actually really glad I came."

"Befriending allayed my sense of insecurity and fears after coming out of prison. It's a neutral space where I'm not judged. I've overcome my sense of isolation."

LGBT Age Community Consultation

Between June and August 2013 LGBT Health carried out extensive community consultation to collect data on the social, information and support needs of LGBT people aged over 50 in Scotland's central belt. The Community Survey, made available online and distributed in paper form, received 182 responses (46% of respondents were from Edinburgh and Lothians; 29% from Glasgow and Greater Glasgow; 25% from other areas of Scotland). In addition 6 consultation events with LGBT people over 50 were run in Glasgow and Edinburgh, attended by 37 people.

The consultation highlighted significant concerns around ageing including:

- 45% expressed fears around loneliness (42% men, 46% women, 57% transgender)
- 40% around lack of opportunity to meet other LGBT people
- 27% identified they were concerned about the need to use social services (23% men, 28% women, 57% transgender).

This community consultation has enabled the organisation to have a better understanding of the needs of older LGBT people. The findings will be used to inform our practice in terms of our existing befriending and social activities programme. They also fed into a funding application aimed at further developing our work with this section of the LGBT community.

Key findings from the Community Survey and consultation events:

52% of respondents use housing and social services, 49% of those accessing support through voluntary services and **35% using health services are not 'out' or visible as LGBT** to service providers.

12% of respondents indicated they do not or **rarely have contact** with other LGBT people.

56% stated they use the commercial gay scene less now than they had when they were younger; 28% stated they had never used this as a means of socialising (13% of men, 37% of women and 60% of transgender people).

76% stated they would **welcome increased opportunities for contact with other LGBT people**. Of these 23% said they did not know how to meet other LGBT people, 21% said they were too shy to do this and 17% said they would like support to do this.

"I felt very isolated at Glasgow Pride, being so very different in terms of age...the only people around me are youngsters, I think 'am I going to be rejected?' I want to feel more confident to feel part of the wider LGBT community."

"I fear having to go back in the closet if I end up in a care home! Being surrounded by the continued assumptions from peers and staff that the world is heterosexual and that family and children is the only way of life. I've found it too hard to be out to go back in the closet later in life."

"Times have changed and it's easy for people to forget how hard it was for our generation. The big issue for me about coming out was my own internalised homophobia. People are just frightened of what they don't understand. I know I was."

LGBT Learning Disabilities Project

In 2012 we successfully launched and delivered the Social Circle, a pilot group for LGBT people with a learning disability or learning difficulty. The positive evaluation of this pilot led to us securing 2 ½ years' funding from the Scottish Government to further develop and expand this area of work. Our new LGBT Learning Disabilities Project launched in late 2013.

The Project provides support to LGBT people with a learning difficulty or learning disability through the Social Circle group and the activities that accompany this (e.g. discussion groups, games afternoons), one-to-one sessions, sports tasters and social outings.

As well as engaging directly with individuals, the Project also works to increase the capacity of learning disability organisations to meet the needs of LGBT people. Due to its unique nature, the Project has received enquiries from professionals across Scotland and beyond, both about its social programme, but more widely in relation to accessible LGBT information resources and guidance on how best to support service users.

We are keen to address the dearth of accessible information resources and have convened a working group to develop a resource on sexual health, relationships and gender issues aimed at people with a learning disabilities who are LGBT or questioning their sexual orientation or gender identity. We have also launched an LGBT learning disability e-bulletin aimed primarily at professionals and organisations. The e-bulletin, which already has around 100 subscribers, promotes a wide range of learning disability activities and resources particularly relevant to LGBT people. In addition we have also sought to promote the Project widely through fliers, our quarterly programme, the newsletters of partner organisations and through having a profile at learning disability events.

"I found the discussions around barriers and difficulties using scenarios particularly useful. Great to talk to other professionals and to hear about other organisation's policies and approaches to this issue."

"Social Circle has given me lots of ideas and has increased my self-confidence. In fact I was in Edinburgh yesterday afternoon and went to Nom de Plume, The Regent Bar, CC Blooms and Planet. I'm planning another similar afternoon to get to know the lesbian scene better."

"I think I liked it here today because we're on our own [new age curling] and nobody's going to bully us. It's also nice and quiet. It's nice to have things like this. It gives you something to do and feel good about. Something to look forward to."

"I'm so glad I came today. It was good meeting different people and people with the same experiences. I'm a bit fed-up going on the gay scene. It's not always a very nice place. That was a first for me today and I really enjoyed it."

In addition we have delivered LGBT training for professionals working with people with learning disabilities. Participants found the session interesting and reported they felt more able to support or respond to the needs of someone who is LGBT or exploring their sexual orientation.

Impact of LGBT Learning Disabilities Project

"I'm thrilled to see this group happening in Edinburgh, and very best of luck for it to go supremely well... I do know one woman who would benefit enormously - I'm assuming her psychologist and support worker will work on how to get her there. When I gave her a copy of Diva at the end of the interview, she refused to believe that all the women in it were lesbian. She was sure she must be the only one in Scotland, if not the world. Her isolation was immense, but her strength astounding. You are meeting a massive need."
(Researcher and co-author of 'Secret Loves, Hidden Lives?')

Although the Learning Disabilities Project is working with a relatively small number of individuals, it is clear from the evaluation of the Social Circle group that it is able to demonstrate significant impact across a range of measures around confidence, empowerment and wellbeing.

Group participants reported being **more 'able to say about things that affect me' (71%)** and feeling **'more in control of life' (57%)**, feeling **more 'able to cope' (43%)** and said their mental and emotional health had improved (57%). This indicates that this relatively new service is already managing to have a considerable impact on beneficiaries.

Transition Support Service



In April 2012 we re-launched the Transition Support Service, a Big Lottery Fund-funded project which had previously been delivered by the Equality Network. This Scotland-wide service provides wide-ranging support to transgender people who are seeking to undergo, currently undergoing or have recently undergone a process of gender reassignment or transition.

Service delivery includes a regular T time drop-in delivered in Glasgow and Edinburgh, as well as T time on the road events across Scotland, and a programme of courses and workshops to provide practical support, information and increase confidence and social connections. The Service also provides capacity building support to volunteer-led trans community groups across Scotland and staff and volunteer peer supporters have offered one-to-one support to individuals. A monthly trans-specific e-bulletin, distributed to nearly 500 recipients, has also served to keep trans individuals, community support groups and professional contacts up to date with developments across Scotland.

The Transition Support Service is delivered by two members of staff (one full-time, one part-time) supported by volunteers. The project's development is informed by an Advisory Group of key community stakeholders from across Scotland.

"The Service has helped my self-confidence immensely, given me extra skills and knowledge which are practical and difficult to pick up if you are transitioning on your own."

Badaguish Residentials

In order to try to reach isolated trans people living outside the central belt area of Scotland, we ran two successful residential events at the Badaguish Outdoor Resource Centre in the Cairngorms. We rented two comfortable lodges within which we were able to create a safe, welcoming and inclusive space for transgender people from a range of identities and at different stages of their own journeys.

Reported outcomes of the residential:

- 94% have more information about options open to them
- 88% felt better about themselves
- 88% felt clearer about their next step
- 82% felt more connected to other trans people.



Supported by staff from the Scottish Transgender Alliance we ran a selection of optional workshops on themes such as identity and self-confidence, legal rights, treatment options, mental and emotional wellbeing and practical skills in use of make-up and appearance. With space to relax and be themselves, the residential offered individuals a chance to build self-confidence as well as new social connections. For many participants this allowed them their first opportunity to express themselves as they wanted to appear. Over these two residentials all 19 participants expressed a range of gains.

“More confidence, knowledge and better understanding of hormones, services, rights, make-up tips.”

“A realisation that I'm not alone, that many others have been through the same as myself successfully and that there is support there if I need it.”

“Beautiful, quiet place where you can be yourself and be with your thoughts and process them.”

“Confidence and acceptance of self. The feeling that I am better able to express needs and feelings and feeling better connected to other trans people.”

Capacity Building and Partnership Working

The organisation engaged not just with LGBT community members, but also with a wide range of professionals to promote the interests of LGBT people.

We are strongly committed to partnership work and work with an extensive range of individuals, groups and other LGBT, health and voluntary sector organisations to develop and deliver our many programmes and services.

The work of both the LGBT Mental Health Demonstration Project and the LGBT Age Project are informed by externally facilitated multi-agency Advisory Groups on which local and national statutory and voluntary sector partner organisations are represented. This ensures these projects are informed by wide-ranging expertise and have support and buy-in from key stakeholders in the mental health, older people and LGBT sector. The delivery of the Transition Support Service is supported by an Advisory Group of key community members drawn from across Scotland.

Capacity building and awareness raising work:

- **245 enquiries** from mainstream service providers responded to
- **483 participants** in our training and awareness raising sessions
- **13 focus groups** and consultations contributed to
- **LGBT, trans and learning disability bulletins** distributed to a wide-ranging audience.

“Gained more understanding of the importance of not just assuming. Having my own opinions but ensuring that does not affect the way I support someone. More aware that people are different.”

“The LGBT training went well, giving people a better understanding of the terminology and language and challenging assumptions people may have had.”

“This will certainly help us not to make assumptions about people and to think before making judgments. Very useful to be more aware of the issues LGBT people may face in terms of mental health and more widely.”

We also have close links with other initiatives working in the community development and health inequalities field, including through our involvement on the Executive of the Lothian Community Health Initiatives Forum. This has included working with NHS Lothian, City of Edinburgh Council and other Community Health Initiatives to develop shared indicators of impact in relation to addressing health inequalities.

The organisation directly contributes its expertise on LGBT issues to a wide range of individuals and organisations, including by participation in a number of steering and advisory groups coordinated by statutory agencies. We also regularly both coordinate focus groups and host and promote groups; these provide community members with the opportunity to contribute an LGBT perspective to local and national consultations on a wide range of health, wellbeing and equality related issues.

The organisation responds to many information and guidance requests from mainstream professionals and organisations. It provides bespoke training to voluntary and statutory sector organisations, ranging from more general awareness raising around LGBT issues to specialist sessions on mental health, transgender, learning disability or older people’s issues. This work is key to our relationship building with mainstream

organisations and to ensuring that LGBT people are increasingly provided with more culturally sensitive and appropriate services.

The organisation produces and distributed a number of monthly e-bulletins, some with a primary community focus, but others are aimed specifically at professionals:

- **Village Voices:** focused on LGBT issues and events in Lothian
- **LGBT Learning Disabilities:** Scottish e-bulletin aimed at those working in the learning disabilities field
- **T monthly:** Scotland-wide trans-specific e-bulletin
- **LGBT Age:** aimed at LGBT people over 50
- **Rainbow Families:** aimed at LGBT parents.

Our e-bulletins have a circulation list of over 2,500, mostly community members, but are also circulated to around 350 professionals. These e-bulletins constitute an increasingly key communication tool not just for promoting our services and sharing information about other key community events and developments, but also for the dissemination of involvement, participation and consultation opportunities.

LGBT Mental Health Demonstration Project

This is the final year of the Demonstration Project, which has a strong learning and awareness raising element. Over the course of its 3 ½ years this unique Project has enabled us to develop a growing evidence base around the most effective interventions to address the mental health inequalities experienced by lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. Awareness of these mental health inequalities is growing and the Project has generated considerable interest and recognition across Scotland and beyond.

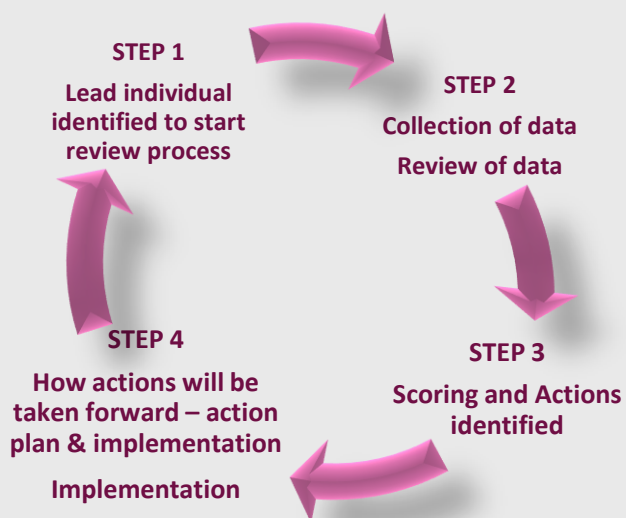
One of the key outputs in this final year has been the development of the LGBT Audit Tool, a very concrete and lasting practical means of supporting the development of LGBT-inclusive practice within mental health services. The development of the Audit Tool has been shaped by our research findings, and our own experience both of delivering specialist services for LGBT people and of our training and capacity building work with mainstream providers. The tool has been developed with input from a wide range of statutory and third sector representatives, including our Advisory Group members.

“Started a vital discussion that we will continue as a management team.”

“I’ll be more confident raising issues in the team and have a better awareness of where and when to signpost.”

“The Audit Tool is a clear and easy way for us to think about our LGBT inclusive practice and what we can do to promote good practice.”

LGBT Audit Tool



The Audit Tool is designed to be used by any individual or team that provides a direct service to people to guide their practice development. It is easy to use and helps service providers think about the needs of LGBT people, their overall experience of using their service and how this can be further enhanced. The tool is designed to help identify practical steps towards ensuring LGBT-inclusive practice and suggests a range of possible step changes, including around policies and procedures, monitoring and promotion and publicity. The tool also explores legal and strategic drivers around equal access to services, such as the Equality Act 2010 and the Scottish Government's Mental Health Strategy 2012-15.

The use of the Audit Tool is designed as a circular four step process, so once organisations have completed step 4 they will need to agree when and how they plan to start the review process anew.

The Audit Tool is available on our website, as well as being incorporated into the Scottish Recovery Indicator 2, a widely used service development tool for the development of recovery-focused services developed by the Scottish Recovery Network. The Scottish Government has funded a small scale Capacity Building Project to support organisations to use the LGBT Audit Tool. This pilot Project will launch in October 2014.

LGBT Age Capacity Building Project

Very good, first time I have seen LGBT issues on an agenda for older people in 15 years in the industry. Really liked the pub quiz idea – it introduced the legal side in a fun way whilst providing food for thought.”

(Training Participant)

The LGBT Age Capacity Building Project consists of two interlinked and complementary elements:

Capacity building work with older LGBT people

To increase the engagement of older LGBT people themselves with the LGBT Age Project and enable their experiences to feed into service design and delivery as well as the capacity building work with other agencies; to creatively use the experience of older LGBT people to raise awareness of key issues.

Capacity building work with mainstream organisations

To increase understanding and enable organisations to better meet the needs of older LGBT people and comply with the Equality Act's general equality duties. As part of the community capacity building work a

Reference Group of older LGBT people (over 65) met regularly and helped shape the work of the Project. The group also regularly contributed to consultations, with members able to discuss first-hand the care needs and issues faced by older LGBT people. The group also helped co-host a couple of very successful Intergenerational Events delivered in partnership with LGBT Youth, which enabled participants young and old to share their experiences.

“Really imaginative and helpful to consider scenarios. As a trainer I’ll now feel more confident about including LGBT issues. Thanks for your expertise!”

(Training Participant)

Alongside the capacity building work carried out by the Development Worker, Community Champions were key to the awareness raising and influencing work of the Project. They attended a range of conferences and events to represent the interests of older LGBT people and ran the LGBT Gold blog. The Development Worker also convened the Professionals’ Forum for organisations keen to promote the inclusion of older LGBT people.

LGBT Age Film Project and Dissemination Event

Part of the aims of the Project was to make a film about the experiences of older LGBT people that could be used as an educational tool. Community members were involved both as direct participants, but also in the development of the film content.

The ‘Are We Being Served?’ film featured 6 individuals from across the LGBT spectrum speaking about their experience of coming out, isolation and creating families of choice. The film also focuses on their experience, hopes and expectations of using care services and how those services can be made more accessible to them as older LGBT people.

The film was first shown at the LGBT Age Dissemination Event held at Edinburgh’s City Chambers in September 2013. The event showcased the work and learning of the Capacity Building Project and was attended by a wide range of statutory, voluntary and private sector providers. The day was chaired by one of the Community Champions, with presentations given by a range of speakers.

“Great event, very well organised, a great range of speakers. Film was great. Really gave me some thought-provoking ideas. Would be willing to spread these messages through my work and will contact to discuss getting copy of film.”

“Great Day! Great speeches and film! I will take away a lot of information I did not know anything about. Also found it very helpful for a lot of disparate strands and organisations to be brought together in this way.”

“It has been a really useful day- I am aware that as an organisation we need to do much more work to involve LGBT people and will take steps to improve our work.”

“The film was very useful and very powerful – it really highlights the discriminations faced by LGBT communities and individuals.”

Evaluation of Performance

Alongside working to achieve greater financial security to enable us to deliver a diverse range of programmes and services aimed at promoting health, wellbeing and equality, there has also been an ongoing focus on reviewing operational policies and practice guidelines to ensure high quality service delivery.

We are firmly committed to comprehensively evaluating the reach and impact of our services. Our rigorous annual Lothian Service Evaluation was carried out in November to December 2013. The evaluation questionnaire was made available in paper form and electronically and received 154 responses. The service user profile information again demonstrates good reach into the LGBT community and a wide range of individuals access the organisation's services:

The survey also asked about health conditions and disability and found that 3 in 5 respondents identified as having a long term health condition. The most common long term health condition, 1 in 3 of total respondents, was a mental health problem. 1 in 7 identified as having a learning disability or difficulty. In addition to this, 1 in 7 reported a physical disability, 1 in 7 a chronic illness (including HIV) and 1 in 17 reported a sensory impairment. This strongly demonstrates the organisation's ability to reach individuals who are potentially more marginalised or may have higher support needs.

Age: the average age of our respondents was 41 and the age range was from 21-70.

Gender: 3 in 6 identified as female, 2 in 6 as male and 1 in 6 as 'other'. This increase in 'other' gender reflects a high number of individuals identifying as non-binary.

Transgender status: nearly 1 in 3 said that they presently or have previously identified as transgender, indicating that proportionately a very high number of transgender people are accessing our services.

Sexual orientation: 1 in 6 identified as gay male; 2 in 6 as lesbian/gay female; 1 in 4 as bisexual; 1 in 12 as heterosexual; 1 in 6 as 'other'.

Annual Lothian Service Evaluation Key Findings:

- Over half of respondents stated they were more aware of and felt more a part of the LGBT community
- Nearly half felt better about themselves
- Nearly half reported feeling less lonely and having more friends
- 1 in 3 reported their mental and emotional health was better
- 1 in 4 felt more able to cope.

How beneficiaries evaluated our services

Service Evaluation respondents were asked to rate their experience of our services and provided the following ratings:

- **Staff and volunteers:** 93% rated these as 'excellent' or 'very good'; 6% as 'good'; 1% as 'fair'. With over 9 in 10 respondents rating the team as excellent or very good, this is the highest satisfaction rate received to date in relation to our staff and volunteers.
- **Quality of services:** 84% rated this as 'excellent' or 'very good'; 14% as 'good'; 2% as 'fair'.
- **Range of services:** 74% rated this as 'excellent' or 'very good'; 22% as 'good'; 4% as 'fair' or 'poor'.
- **Overall experience:** 82% rated this as 'excellent' or 'very good'; 16% as 'good'; 2% as 'fair'.

The evaluation responses contain lots of positive feedback about the work that we do, the friendliness, approachability and dedication of the staff and volunteer team and the value of engaging with the organisation. The findings strongly demonstrate the impact of our services on people's lives across a range of health and wellbeing outcomes.

When asked what they most enjoy and value, respondents told us:

- **Meeting people**
- **Sense of community**
- **Friendship and fun**
- **Safe and welcoming environment**
- **Wide range of activities**
- **Support and information.**

Our Lothian Service Evaluation also asked individuals where they accessed our services and found that whilst 4 in 5 accessed programmes and services at Edinburgh's LGBT Centre for Health and Wellbeing, 3 in 5 now accessed the programmes we delivered elsewhere. This continued increase reflects the fact that not only are we moving to more national service delivery but, in order to improve the physical accessibility of our services, we are in Lothian also increasingly moving to deliver services outside the Centre.

"Thank you for being there and for creating a safe environment for people to be themselves without fear of judgement or criticism."

All the staff and volunteers make me feel welcome, nurtured and valued and are an incredibly warm, caring, skilled and professional team. I am so glad I have been introduced to the service."

Financial Review

The organisation was started in 2003 as a Healthy Living Centre with 5-year funding from the Big Lottery Fund. 2008 saw the end of that period of secure funding but, after an initial significant contraction, the organisation has successfully made the transition to more diversified funding and the delivery of a much wider range of programmes and services both in Lothian and increasingly beyond.

The organisational growth experienced over the last few years has been possible thanks to its success in attracting funding, leveraging in substantial grants from national and local statutory funders, as well as from Trusts and Foundations. The Director's role has a strong focus on income generation and strategic relationship building with key statutory partners and funders.

Alongside securing funding to enable the organisation to continue its existing projects and programmes, we were in late 2013 successful in securing funding for a 3-year LGBT Age Scotland Project which will see us build on the success of the Lothian LGBT Age Project to delivering a befriending service and a programme of social opportunities and information sessions in both Edinburgh and Glasgow. The new Project, which started in April 2014, is being delivered from a new office base in Glasgow.

The organisation continues to critically examine all aspects of expenditure to identify useful savings. The charity, with the aid of sound financial management and the support of both its staff and volunteers, has generated a positive financial outcome for the period. The net incoming resources for the year amounted to £6,142 (2013: £76,843).

Finance Summary

Income and Expenditure April 2013-March 2014		
Income	£477,209	%
Scottish Government	163,580	34%
NHS Lothian	101,881	21%
CEC	45,647	10%
Other Grants	150,782	32%
Donations	5,400	1%
Other	9,919	2%
Expenditure	£471,067	
Staff Costs	344,216	73%
Office Costs	71,980	15%
Programme Costs	44,537	10%
Professional Fees	10,334	2%

The organisation's total net assets at 31 March 2014 were £286,609. This includes, alongside unrestricted reserves, £35,396 in restricted project funding in relation to underspends or early payments received for

particular projects or initiatives (LGBT Age, Transition Support Service and LGBT Helpline) which are expected to be fully spent in the coming financial year.

Our Funders and Supporters

We very much appreciate the support of the Scottish Government, NHS Lothian and City of Edinburgh Council who have provided the bulk of the funding for our core activities.

The support of Trusts and Foundations continues to also be crucial both in supporting the delivery of some of our more specialist services, such as the Transition Support Service, our Counselling Service and our LGBT Age Capacity Building Project. The key Trusts and Foundations who have supported our work this year have been the Big Lottery Fund, the Alliance and EVOC's Innovation Fund.

We also remain grateful to all our donors for their vital support and would like to thank all the individuals who attended our fundraising events, sent donations or took part in sponsored events.

Legal Status

The registered name of the organisation is the LGBT Healthy Living Centre, though it has historically operated as the LGBT Centre for Health and Wellbeing, and more recently as LGBT Health and Wellbeing.

The organisation is a company limited by guarantee, number SC246290, and is a registered Scottish charity, registration number SCO34216.

