

Berkshire Older Lesbian and Gay Forum

Steering Committee Minutes

Thursday, April 10th, 2003
Rupert Street Information Centre

Action

1. Attendees

Derek Rogers,
Jenny Ward,
Maria Ottway,
Nigel Tooke,
Rebecca Ballard
Wyndham Clampett.

Also in attendance was Clare Stafford, from Reading Primary Care Trust.

2. Reading PCT Strategy Consultation

Claire Stafford explained that the Reading PCT is trying to reach out to as many community groups as possible to have their input to its new strategic direction. Each group is being given the opportunity to comment about issues of particular interest to them and also to raise general issues.

The PCT holds 75% of Health budget in the Reading area. In its strategic plan it is looking at ways of delivering more services outside of the hospital, into the community. Each area within Reading may have different needs so the facilities may need to be different. The PCT is wanting to make services sensitive to the needs of that area, possibly by having "resource centres". At moment many GP surgeries in Reading are small. Resource centres could be based on what people in that area have said they want and could be set up in partnership with other organisations like Social Services, Benefits Agency, and voluntary organisations. In some areas suitable buildings might already exist. Elsewhere they may not so it would be a developmental process. There would be a need for the PCT to bring the health workers with them.

In terms of funding, they are hoping to have money available in the next financial year and they hope there will be development money in following couple of years.

Staffing will be an issue and IT is already a big issue in terms of having duplicate patient records; appointment booking etc.

We were able to let Clare know that our Autumn conference aims is to raise awareness with services providers about the discrimination that may occur in the health social services. We are concerned that staff have training about issues that are of concern to lesbians and gay men. One area is the treating of same sex partner when it comes to health care, and the input they have on medication and visiting rights. In one example one couple set up a power of attorney to ensure that the couple had rights. This was quite traumatic. Clare said she would what the policy was, and what could be done to develop it.

We reminded Clare that use of language is important, without making assumptions, and some people not confident enough to "out" themselves. Older people may not even identify as "lesbian" or "gay". We told Clare that we had done training for Age Concern Berkshire's advocates in this area so could offer same training to Health professionals.

We noted that some gay and lesbian people may have preferences about the sex of the person treating them.

In response to the PCT strategy, we said that, from the point of view of older people, local services would be very welcome. It would be great to have facilities for lesbians and gays as

a community although it would not be possible to identify where lesbians and gays are as part of a geographical community.

We suggested that training for staff could be offered so that it would be easier for people to be out about their sexuality when it comes to getting health care. It could also make it easier, generally, to come out which would lead to better mental health too.

We were able to tell Clare know that, anecdotally, gay men have been refused enrolment in dental practices. Also some people have been diagnosed HIV+ but do not wish their GP know,. This means other health issues may not be addressed properly by that GP if he or she is not aware of this.

Citizens Advice Bureau offices have posters displaying their equal opportunities policies, deliverers of health services could too.

Derek described how, when he had been in hospital, the assumption had been made that he "had someone at home" who could bring things in for him, no matter how many times he said he hadn't. This is more likely to happen within the gay community than in the population as a whole.

We noted that it was difficult to mitigate against other patients being discriminatory. However staff would be aware if there was racial discrimination and would have strategies for dealing with it.

A Gay/Lesbian patient may not wish to hug/kiss their partner at visiting time "in public". We are all, however, at a particularly low ebb when we're poorly AT such vulnerable times we are needing to be able to have that kind of contact most.

The next step for the PCT is receiving feedback like ours. Everything will be pulled together for October when a draft strategy will be available, based on the outreach. Clare felt that our points about awareness training and policy will be passed on quickly. She will give us feedback directly and ensure that we get a copy of the October documents.

3. **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Jane Kightley and Pat Herriot.

4. **Notes of Last Meeting**

The Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, February 27th, 2003, were agreed as a true record with the following amendments:

Jill Harding had attended, not Gill Flannagan.

5. **Matters Arising from Last Meeting**

None brought forward apart from those dealt with elsewhere.

6. **Treasurer's Report**

The current account stands at £1,300 including money from Community Champions Grant.

7. **Chair's Report**

a. **Meal out at Bens Restaurant**

This was attended by eight diners, including some new people interested in the Forum and we had a very pleasant evening. Many thanks to Derek for organising it.

b. **Training Session at Age Concern Berkshire**

Margaret and Rebecca led the training session for Age Concern's advocates on March 13th, entitled "Hidden Histories". It went very well and we hope it was the first of many.

c. Autumn Conference

The conference has been arranged for October 29th, at the Town Hall. So far Penny Henrion (Director Princess Royal Carers Trust and Chair of Reading Primary Care Trust) has agreed to chair the day; Roger Newman from the Alzheimer's Society Gay and Lesbian Carers Group has agreed to speak and Dr Brian Heaphy from Nottingham Trent University (who has recently completed research into the needs of older lesbians and gay men in Great Britain) will also speak. We are waiting to hear from Gordon Lishman, Director General of Age Concern England, if he is able to attend. Jenny is also trying to contact Sandi Toksvig or Angela Mason as a "name" speaker. All members of the Steering Group (and anyone others who are interested) are requested to come if they are able to.

Although we were not awarded funding from Community Champions for the conference (see below), Reading Borough Council have offered £1500, and Reading Primary Care Trust have also indicated they will make a contribution. Jenny has written to ask how much. Age Concern's Fundraiser will be trying to find further funding as we estimate we need about £4,000 to make it a free event.

d. Community Champions Grant

Nigel and Jenny went along to the presentation ceremony on Wednesday 26th March and collected the cheque for £1000. The money is to be spent on training for the Steering Group and travel expenses to network with other groups undertaking similar work.

We noted that funding will be needed for publicity materials including static displays.

e. 107 FM Broadcast

Nigel and Jenny recorded a broadcast for 107FM on 3rd April, about the Forum, which will be broadcast in the next couple of weeks. They had scripted for 2 ½ minutes but had to cut it to 2 minutes at the last moment. The playback sounded good. It is to be broadcast a number of times but we don't know exactly when.

Many thanks to Jenny and to Nigel for coming out on the radio and at previous week coming out at the community champions grant presentation too!

f. Age Concern Strategic Workshop

Jenny attended the workshop, representing the Forum. This was the first meeting where Age Concern Berkshire are aiming to bring together all the groups involved in providing services for older people in Reading. Everyone said a bit about their organisations and at the end several people came up to talk to Jenny about the Forum. As a result she has made an appointment with a representative of the (Government) Pensions Service, who was very keen to establish contact.

8. Logo, Posters and Leaflets

We agreed the "G2" logo and house style. We also agreed a format for posters and leaflets. Many thanks to Wyndham and Jenny who had spent a lot of time on this.

All members are asked to look at the first leaflet and pass comments to Jenny or Wyndham. We plan further leaflets in the future on specific topics.

Rebecca will check out possibility of g2 URL.

Rebecca

9. Events planning: Tea Dance May 11th

a. Tea Dance May 11th

Jenny has printed tickets and they are now available and need selling!!!!.

The dance teacher, Di, has agreed to come again and we may also have a male teacher too.

Volunteers are need to set things up and tidy up afterwards.

10. Community Champions Grant:

a. **Training**

The Community Champions grant include £750 for training for the group. Margaret Collins has quoted for 4 sessions:

- Vision For The Road Ahead
- Communication Skills
- Presentation Skills
- Sharing Our Skills

The price includes room hire, refreshments and materials.

The proposal was agreed and Jenny will contact Margaret to arrange some possible dates. We would want to aim for over the summer/early Autumn. The session on the "road ahead" was especially important.

b. **Networking**

£250 of the grant was for networking with other groups. Jenny proposed that we set up a session to network with people from Gloucester, Thanet and Brighton. We supported the principal of such a session, maybe linking it with a social angle, perhaps to include partners of those involved. We are geographically well-placed to host such a session. Jenny will contact them to see if they would be interested and if so what would they would get out of it.

Jenny

11. Constitution

Derek and Nigel will work on the constitution.

12. Any Other Business

a. **Amazon Associate**

Rebecca suggested that we become associates of Amazon, via the web site. This would mean we could make recommendations for books, music etc (even kitchen gadgets via their new Cookshop) with direct links to those items on the Amazon website. If visitors buy via that link (whatever they buy) the Forum would get a percentage of the cost.

We will need to agree this, but if we do then we will need recommendations to link to.

Anybody with thoughts on the matter should contact Rebecca.

13. Dates of Future Meetings

The next meeting is to be held on **Tuesday 13th May**, 2003, at Rupert Street Information Centre. The meeting will start at 8.00pm. Further meetings were agreed as:

Tuesday, 24th June

Wednesday 30th July.