

Report

September 1998 – September 2001

Gary Jefferson
Jase Foster



Gay Men's Health

WILTSHIRE AND SWINDON

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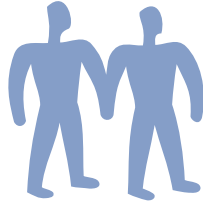
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Lee Corbin at LCDweb, Weymouth

... and the many gay and bisexual men who have supported the work of the Service across the county



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I. Overview

who we are and what we are about

I.1 Gay Men's Health Wiltshire and Swindon

This report captures the work of Gay Men's Health Wiltshire and Swindon during the contractual period September 1998 to September 2001.

At the beginning of this period, a decision was made by Wiltshire Health Authority to unify Gay Men's Health Provision across the whole of the county under one Service: Gay Men's Health Wiltshire and Swindon.

The percentage range of gay males in the population is thought to be around 4% (Kinsey, 1948; Sigma, 1994). Wiltshire County Council estimates the population of males in the county (including Swindon) aged between 16 - 64 at April 2000 to be 199,200.

The Service estimates that it serves a gay male population of approximately 8,000 from two bases in Salisbury and in Swindon.

The Service adopted a twin track approach during this period. The first track was to develop high level links with key health and social policy makers in the county in order to influence service provision decisions for local gay and bisexual men.

It has been necessary to work to create a more equitable climate in the county for the fair treatment of gay and bisexual men and issues relating to homosexuality and bisexuality.

The second track has been to raise awareness of our work among our client group, develop social spaces for gay and bisexual men across the county in order to provide safer sex resources and information to increasing numbers of clients and to act as a link (or 'advocate') between the gay and bisexual communities and statutory and voluntary agencies in the county.

We work directly with gay and bisexual men via the local 'scene', telephone, email and the website, in one-to-one casework and also indirectly through collaborations with key local agencies that gay and bisexual men may access in the county.

I.2 Background

A needs assessment carried out by Salisbury and District Gay Men's Health Project in 1993 identified a need for sexual health promotion work targeted at local gay and bisexual men and resulted in the ongoing funding of the Project by Wiltshire Health Authority. This project's needs assessment provided a model of good practice for many other Gay Men's Health Projects which emerged subsequently.

The Gay Men's Health Service for Wiltshire and Swindon has its roots in the first wave of needs assessment work carried out by the former Wessex Regional Health Authority in the early 90s.

Today, the Service employs two full time members of staff and a part time worker across two bases. The Swindon base is in Victoria Road and provides a drop-in space, training rooms and counselling facilities and storage space for resources and publicity materials. The Salisbury base is in Greencroft House, the Salisbury and District Council for Voluntary Service headquarters. This office space is used for one-to-one support work. The Swindon office has also recruited a number of volunteers to support its scene based work and some office activities.

The Service replaced the Swindon-based gay men's health project managed by SPACE in July 1998 and this resulted in a need to relaunch gay men's health

work in the Borough and provide a fresh start approach with local gay and bisexual men. We utilise a clear and easy to recognise logo, 'two blue men', and colour code (blue and orange) in all our materials, displays and resources.

1.3 Vital statistics

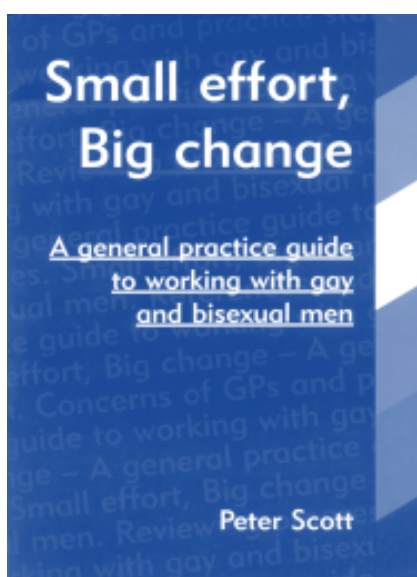
It is very difficult to be accurate about the population of gay and bisexual men in any given area and census studies which have attempted to calculate these figures have been ultra cautious when presenting their findings. However, in order to develop an evaluation framework that can begin to measure the impact and the demand of the work of the Service in Wiltshire and Swindon, it is necessary to extrapolate estimates from authoritative surveys. We have an estimated gay male population of 8,000.

The sero-prevalence (how many people in a population are HIV positive) for men in non-urban areas is believed to be between 2 and 5% (Cox Report, 1989). This means that there may be as many as 400 gay men infected with HIV in Wiltshire and Swindon.

Alcohol and drug use and smoking are significant health issues for the gay and lesbian community as a whole. The evidence suggests that alcohol and drug use among gay people is less to do with peer pressure than with self esteem and lack of confidence on the 'scene' (openly gay bars and clubs). 50% of young lesbian, gay and bisexual people in a recent Reading Study used drugs and 33% of young lesbian, gay and bisexual young people in Calderdale considered that they had 'a drink problem.'

1.4 Key outputs

Our 70 page website has received more than **55,000** hits since it was launched and was given a **five star rating** by The Good Web Guide 2000. Our email mailing list currently has **618 addresses**.



We produced a GP guide to working with gay and bisexual men, *Small Effort, Big Change* and distributed it to every GP surgery and Primary Care Team (PCT) in the county. This resource was the **first of its kind** in the UK to provide an action plan for GPs and Primary Care Teams which will result in health gains for their gay and bisexual patients. **500 copies** were distributed to GPs and other agencies across Wiltshire. To date, **274 copies** of this resource have also been sold throughout the UK for £3.95 each.

More than **32,000 condoms and 32,000 x 7.5ml lube sachets** have

been distributed from the Swindon and Salisbury bases since December 1998. We receive between **10 and 15 phone calls per week** from local gay and bisexual men requesting more information or resources from the Service.

There is no reason to believe that Wiltshire has fewer gay men than other counties in the UK.

In neighbouring North and Mid Hampshire, the sero-prevalence rate, according to the Gay Men's Health Project Needs Assessment, was 3% in 1994.

Data from the European School Survey project - covered in the Pink Paper 2/3/01; Reading Study: Mullein, 1999, Reaching Out: Action for LGB in Calderdale, September 2000.

<http://www.gmhp.demon.co.uk> and info@gmhp.demon.co.uk

Small Effort, Big Change was produced by the Service in association with Peter Scott and Lucas Sandberg Associates. Copies are available free of charge for Wiltshire-based agencies by telephoning 01793 695300.

1.5 Context

Originally, the county was served by three Gay Men's Health Projects: Bath and West Wiltshire, Salisbury and Swindon. Changes to Health Authority boundaries in 1998 provided an opportunity for a realignment of service provision and a renaming of the service to better reflect the distinction between the county and the local authority area of Swindon.

For copies of this framework document, contact Sigma Research on 020 7737 6223.

The Service, along with most other gay men's health projects in the UK, takes its lead in HIV prevention and safer sex health promotion from the work of a collaboration of national HIV agencies co-ordinated by the Terrence Higgins Trust and funded by the Department of Health. The collaboration, called CHAPS, has recently updated their Framework, 'Making It Count' in which they describe the key targets and aims for reducing HIV prevalence among homosexually active men in the UK.

AIDS 2000, December 1998 p.17

Gay and bisexual men continue to be disproportionately affected by HIV, accounting for approximately 60% of new transmissions of the virus. Each year since 1990, there have been 1500 cases of HIV infection where it is thought that infection was acquired during sex between men.

In recent years, the development and availability of anti-HIV therapy has extended the life of many people living with HIV, creating new challenges to maintain the momentum of promoting safer sex messages. Anti-HIV therapy is not a cure for HIV and its long term effects on viral load are still poorly understood.

2. Service Provision

*reaching and responding:
how we work and what we provide*

In this section we discuss the services we have provided gay and bisexual men during the contractual period. We also include below the key methods used to reach and respond to our client group's needs and the settings in which we carry out the work.

2.1 Settings

2.1.1 Bases

Our two bases enable us to meet our client group in a confidential, gay friendly and safe environment. The bases are located outside of statutory health campuses and buildings which helps us to promote our Service in a broader context than the NHS. We are also conveniently situated near the town centres in Swindon and Salisbury. Whilst our Salisbury base is also wheelchair accessible, our Swindon base cannot currently accommodate wheelchair users.

See inside back cover for addresses and maps for our two bases.

2.1.2 One-to-one

The Service provides one-to-one case-work with clients. A waiting list operates and we will take on a maximum of three clients at a time, for a series of sessions (usually six). 31 clients in the Swindon area have taken up this service to date and approximately 75 clients across rural Wiltshire. We also advise clients by telephone and carry out home visits, where appropriate.

The Police responded to a complaint from a gay member of the public who had experienced harassment in his home and neighbourhood due to his homosexuality. The Community Safety Officer turned to the Service for guidance and support. We visited the complainant and organised a joint meeting between all the key agencies (including housing and social services) to address this person's complaint and to resolve the problem.

2.1.3 Groups and 'scene' work

The Service has also set up and continues to support two drop-in facilities for local gay and bisexual men. The Swindon drop-in operates from our Swindon base and meets every Thursday evening. We are currently evaluating this facility in order to promote its existence further afield and to target the gay and bisexual men who might benefit most from it.

The Trowbridge drop-in meets twice a month (first and third Wednesday) in a building in the town centre. This facility was set up by the Service twelve months ago with a grant of £1000 from Wiltshire Social Services as a response to locally identified need. Since that time, there have been more than 400 calls requesting further information. The drop-in attracts between 10 and 12 people to each meeting. More than 70 clients have visited the drop-in since it started.

We believe it is important to address the social health needs of gay and bisexual men, particularly in areas where there is no 'scene' or where men do not have access to (public) transport. As well as providing isolated gay and bisexual men with valuable opportunities to create peer networks, these social groups also provide the Service with opportunities to meet gay and bisexual men and to provide one-to-one advice and information.

The drop-in facility gives us a valuable opportunity to discuss sexual health issues affecting harder-to-reach gay and bisexual men in rural Wiltshire.

Membership is steadily increasing and we aim to carry out an evaluation exercise shortly to determine the factors that contribute towards a successful, rurally based drop-in facility for gay men. We will then be able to use this data when considering the viability of setting up drop-ins in other areas of the county.

There are three 'scene' venues in the county: the **Duke of York** pub in Salisbury, **London Street Club** and the **Cricketer's** public house, both in Swindon. All are open seven days a week to gay clientele and provide the Service with an established means to access and meet up with its 'scene' client group. The Service maintains display boards and resources in these venues. We provide a regular presence at these venues and place a strong emphasis on maintaining good relations with staff and owners.

2.1.4 Outreach

Public sex environments include toilets, lay-bys and country lanes. Some are used by men for sex or for meeting other men.

The county has approximately 30 public sex environments (PSE) which are visited by men from within and outside the county on a regular basis. The location of these sites is often communicated within the networks of the men who frequent these places. The Service believes that closing these sites or obstructing access to them, is less useful than working with the responsible authorities to ensure that safer sex information and resources are available to the people who visit them, without impacting on the safety of the men who use the sites.

We have worked closely with Wiltshire Constabulary during the contractual period to develop sensitive policing approaches at these sites. Complaints about PSEs are handled in the first instance by the Police although the sites are managed by the local authority within which the site is located. We work with the Community Safety Officers and the Gay and Lesbian Liaison Officers in cases of assault and other crimes carried out on or by gay and bisexual men at these sites.

In the Swindon area, we collaborated with the Swindon Division of the Wiltshire Constabulary and the Borough Council to develop a managed approach to the perceived problem of public toilets being used for sexual activity. The solution was to use general safer sex information on A5 plasticised sheets and to secure them to the backs of every toilet door in the Borough. The Borough's contractors carried out the work within a very short timeframe. We shall promote this model of good practice in other areas of the county via the Crime and Disorder Partnerships.

2.1.5 Gay youth groups

Swindon's lesbian, gay and bisexual youth group, *Pride Youth*, is run by the Borough Council's education department and provides a weekly venue for young lesbians, gay men and bisexual people under 25. The Service has a good relationship with the youth group and recognises its valuable contribution to the health and well-being of young people in the town (and neighbouring areas) who are growing up gay. We provide safer sex resources and materials to the youth group and provide training sessions. The Service is also represented on the group's management committee.

Salisbury's gay youth group, *The OUT Zone*, which started in 1997 was disbanded two years ago. The Service recognises that this leaves a sizeable gap in the provision of gay-friendly social spaces to young people in the city

and surrounding areas and is currently investigating how it can restart this provision and attach staff time to this activity. Recently, a grant of £5,600 was awarded by the Salisbury Crime and Disorder Partnership to employ a sessional youth worker to develop the youth group again.

2.1.6 Other agencies within the county

The Service also provides training and support to Salisbury Gay Switchboard and local lesbian groups and has strong links through its membership of Salisbury and District CVS with NSPCC, Victim Support and the Wiltshire Rural Development Agency.

2.1.6.1 Armed Forces

The Service is receiving an increasing number of enquiries from military personnel in the county. There is also a significantly higher level of contact with officials within the armed forces, requesting information on gay and bisexual issues. We anticipate this area of work will require a greater amount of our time and resources in the future.

2.1.7 Outside the county

Many Wiltshire gay and bisexual men also travel outside the county to socialise at gay venues. Popular destinations include Bath, Bournemouth, Bristol, London and Southampton. The Service has worked with Healthworks, Dorset's Health Promotion Agency, to reach our client group who may be accessing services or visiting the gay scene whilst the county has been without a Gay Men's Health Project.

Dorset recruited a gay men's health worker in December 2000 and is developing a project for the county.

2.2 Methods

2.2.1 Website

The advent of the Internet and the world-wide web has meant that gay and bisexual men can access a whole range of information and services from their own homes. Our website was set up five years ago to help local gay men to access accurate and gay-friendly information about safer sex, HIV, Coming Out and other sexual health matters. The website service is particularly useful for isolated gay and bisexual men who may not have access to transport (including younger gay and bisexual men) and for men who are not comfortable about accessing local services in person or by telephone.



Since its launch in 1995, we have received more than 55,000 hits to the website. We have also been given a five star rating by the Good Web Guide 2000.

The website was recently relaunched and rebranded with our easy to recognise 'two blue men' logo. The website is maintained by Lee Corbin at LCDweb in Weymouth with input from Jase Foster and currently has more than 70 pages. Due to the significant number of gay men who access this

Gay Men's Health Wiltshire and Swindon was one of the first in the UK to develop a website to promote our services to isolated gay men in the county (and further afield). Visit our website at www.gmhp.demon.co.uk

website from outside the county, we also include information and links which have a wider relevance than just within the county.

2.2.2 Other media

The Service recognises the negative impact of the media's reporting on the lives of local gay and bisexual people and have provided responses to items and articles which the Service believed to be biased or one sided. In other cases, the Service has been able to obtain valuable publicity for World AIDS Day activities in the county alongside colleagues in the Youth Service and Health Promotion Units.

During the debate about allowing openly gay servicemen to serve in the armed forces, the Service responded to the negative comments made by a senior army officer based in Wilton in a national newspaper and on local radio. An internal review of military operational effectiveness after the ban was lifted has shown that there has been no adverse impact within the armed forces in recognising the rights of their servicemen and women who are gay.

2.2.3 Via third parties

Gay and bisexual men have access to the same range of health and other services available across the county as other constituencies in the county. However, the quality and equity of service they receive can vary depending on the attitudes of individual practitioners and, sometimes, on the culture of the service.

By 'homophobia', we mean the prejudices which people have that stem from irrational fears and beliefs about homosexuality.

Homophobia and discrimination are still an unwelcome part of gay people's daily lives, even in Wiltshire. The Service is working with local agencies at a high level across the county to train staff in sexuality issues and equal opportunities practices.

2.2.4 Training, presentations and conferences

The Service undertakes a number of talks and presentations throughout the county. For example, we participate in two half day training events per year for medical professionals, practice nurses, Family Planning nurses and GPs.

The Service was invited to talk to a group of midwives employed by Salisbury District Hospital for World AIDS Day 2000. More than 80 midwives from the hospital's catchment area (which includes parts of Hampshire and Dorset) attended the talk. This invitation provided an opportunity to discuss same sex parenting issues as well as the recent Government policy to anonymously test pregnant women for HIV antibodies.

Having a distinctive branding for the Service helps us to distinguish our locally relevant materials from nationally available ones that we also display.

2.3 Resources and materials

The Service has a long tradition of producing high quality, nationally recognised resources that address the health issues facing gay and bisexual men. We have spent time in the past three years consolidating these titles and ensuring that all resources from the Service are branded with our easy to recognise 'two blue men' logo and colour scheme (blue and orange).

2.3.1 Condoms, lube and other safer sex materials

More than 32,000 condoms have been issued in Condom Packs and a further 800 condoms via the Travel Packs (distributed as part of the 'Fun in the Sun' campaign - see 4.2 for further details). Condom Packs are available free of charge by post and via the 'scene' in the county. More than 32,000 lube sachets have been issued and a further 50 x 250ml lube dispenser bottles since December 1998.

2.3.2 Printed resources

In the past three years, we have produced the following resources:

- ◆ *Small Effort, Big Change* – a general practice guide to working with gay and bisexual men
- ◆ *'Straight' Talk* - a discussion sheet which tackles controversial or topical issues
- ◆ *Condom Pack* leaflet and *Travel Pack* leaflet
- ◆ Posters and display materials for the scene
- ◆ *Gay Men and the Femidom* – we are the only Project in the UK to address this form of protection for gay men.

In collaboration with the Wessex Gay Men's Health Forum, we have produced the following resources:

- ◆ *Gay Men's Guide to STIs* (sexually transmitted infections)
- ◆ Hepatitis Leaflet
- ◆ Using Viagra and Poppers.

In collaboration with Swindon Borough Council and Wiltshire Constabulary:

- ◆ Partnership rainbow poster – see *page 23*.

3. Involvement and Influence

who we work with and how we work with them

3.1 In Wiltshire

The Service is represented on many of the key inter-agency meetings held in the county. The Service recognises that the effectiveness of its HIV prevention work is adversely affected by prejudice and homophobia and must devote a significant amount of its time resources to addressing issues of inequality of service provision for gay and bisexual men and misinformation relating to homosexuality and bisexuality.

The Service is now reaping the benefits from the networks developed at a high level within the county which, in turn, is resulting in real and sustained gains for gay and bisexual men living and working in the county.

The Service was approached by an HIV positive client who was consuming a large amount of alcohol in combination with the drug therapy regime he was on. The client was too fearful to discuss this directly with his consultant. With the client's permission, we were able to discuss the issues that this raised directly with the consultant. The relationship between the patient and consultant has subsequently improved.

3.1.1 Voluntary sector

The Service's manager represents managers on the Salisbury and District Council for Voluntary Service's (CVS) Executive Committee. He also chairs the monthly CVS management meetings in Salisbury and has recently put forward a joint proposal for a Diversity Task Group for South Wiltshire in collaboration with the Race Equality Council (REC) and Victim Support.

3.1.2 Wiltshire Constabulary

The most significant gains from a high level networking approach adopted by the Service at the beginning of this contract period have been made in work with the Wiltshire Constabulary.

Today, Wiltshire Constabulary is ranked in the top 7 (out of 43) for its quality and level of training of its officers in equality and homophobia issues. Just five years ago, the Constabulary was ranked in the lowest three. This impressive turn around has been made possible through a willingness on both sides to listen, to problem solve and to come up with workable solutions that enable the Constabulary to respond sensitively to the problems facing local gay and bisexual men.

The Service has been able to use the networks developed between neighbouring forces and gay men's health projects to co-ordinate a joint approach to the policing of a PSE which straddles the Wiltshire / Gloucester border. Wiltshire Constabulary has an exemplary PSE policy in place which was developed in consultation with the Service.

As a result, the Service works with the Wiltshire Constabulary in the following ways:

- ◆ The Service chairs the Lesbian and Gay Policing Initiative for Wiltshire
- ◆ Involvement in Stage 5 of Probationary Training - provides half day training to probational officers as part of their equal opportunities training which is based on national police training standards.
- ◆ Involvement in the training of specialist Lesbian and Gay Liaison Officers - co facilitating a three day course, introducing local policies and codes. By March 2001, 36 officers will have gone through this training in the county.
- ◆ Represents Wiltshire at the National Advisory Group for Lesbian and Gay Policing - alongside representatives from local authorities, other gay organisations and police forces.
- ◆ Station visits - regular half day visits to the stations in the county are made to support the work of the local lesbian and gay liaison officer and to explain the role of the Service.
- ◆ Is a member of a sub group of the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) addressing issues affecting gay communities. The task is to develop a national standard of measure for the inspection of forces' levels of service to the gay community.
- ◆ Advises community safety officers at a Divisional level on individual cases.
- ◆ Was involved in the design of (and protocols for) the 'Action on Hate Crime' leaflet
- ◆ Is a member of the Tackling Teenage Prostitution task group which is a sub group of the Child Protection Team for Swindon.

3.1.2.1 Crime and Disorder Partnerships

The Service is currently an active member of three of the five Crime and Disorder Partnerships across the county. In Salisbury, we sit on the Fear of Crime, Youth Issues and Diversity sub groups. In Swindon, we sit on the Gay and Lesbian, Hate Crime and Homophobic Hate Crime forums. In Kennet, we sit on the Fear of Crime and Youth Issues task groups.

The Service has also participated in the annual crime audits for Salisbury and Swindon. We have indicated our interest in joining the partnerships in West Wiltshire and North Wiltshire.

Our membership of these partnerships ensures that lesbian and gay hate crime issues are addressed.

3.1.3 Mental Health Services

The Service has twice called on the Intervention Team to review two cases that were progressing through the courts involving gay men with mental health problems.

The Service has worked with Community Psychiatric Nurses (CPNs) in the county to support gay and bisexual clients with mental health and behavioural problems.

The Service was approached by a CPN who had a 20 year old client with learning difficulties living in a residential college in the county. We arranged for regular joint meetings to take place with his CPN and with a local sexual health clinic to address the needs of the young person.

The Intervention Team was initially piloted in Salisbury. It has now been launched nationally - Swindon also has an Intervention Team. The Team reviews cases where defendants may be suffering from mental health problems with a view to reviewing the appropriateness of the judicial process and the possible detrimental effects on their well-being.

3.1.4 Sexual Health Services

The Service is an active member of the following sexual health services in the county:

- ◆ **Wiltshire Alliance for Sexual Health (WASH)** - on the following sub groups: the Campaign group (which organises the county's response to

World AIDS Day, National Condom Week etc.), the Hard-to-Reach group (which includes addressing the needs of local people with HIV and providing effective sexual health support to people with learning difficulties) and the Equity of Support group (which recently carried out a mapping exercise to register gaps in sexual health service provision across the county).

- ◆ **Swindon District Sexual health Alliance Group** - fulfils the above role in the Swindon area
- ◆ **Condom Distribution Scheme** - works with Family Planning Services (FPS), the Health Promotion Units and Wiltshire Health Authority to introduce condoms into various settings such as primary care and homeless projects across the county. In time, it is hoped to involve the Youth Service in this scheme.
- ◆ **Teenage Pregnancy Group for Salisbury** - our involvement in this group is on hold pending the appointment of the Teenage Pregnancy Co-ordinator at the Health Authority.
- ◆ **Drugs Reference Groups** - on the three DRGs in the county prior to restructuring.

3.1.5 General Practice and Genito-Urinary Medicine (GUM) Clinics

All 93 practices across the county received copies of the resource produced by the Service in 1998, 'Small Effort, Big Change' and were offered a presentation on its contents. None of the practices requested our additional input to discuss the guide and how to apply its principles in general practice. We have also supported clients who have received inappropriate advice or information from their GP regarding their sexual orientation or HIV testing and counselling.

The Service works closely with the Health Advisers in the three Genito-Urinary Medicine (GUM) clinics in the county. The clinics also reciprocate by providing referrals to the Service.

3.1.6 Health Promotion Units

The Service works with the Health Promotion Units in Wiltshire and Swindon and supports sexual health and sexuality work being undertaken by these agencies.

A spin-off from the PSE collaboration work in Swindon Borough will be the future involvement of the Swindon Health Promotion Unit in the promotion of Hepatitis B vaccination and needle stick injury awareness training of Swindon cleansing contractors.

3.1.7 Schools and colleges

The Service has had limited success in addressing gay issues in Wiltshire's 56 schools. Only five schools have taken up the Service's offer to come into the classroom to explain our work or to provide training to staff on Section 28, bullying and tackling homophobia. We have, however, undertaken work with a Shaftesbury secondary school (where 40% of the intake are from Wiltshire) as part of their PSHE curriculum.

There are many myths about Section 28 (of the Local Government Act 1988). A DoE circular, 12/88, attempted to clarify the confusion: "Section 28 does not affect the activities of school governors, nor of teachers. It will not prevent the objective discussion of homosexuality in the classroom."

Wiltshire's schools also have access to sexuality awareness training through the work of the Health Promotion Units. We are permitted to join with the HPUs in delivering the work.

Incidences of homophobic bullying come to the attention of the Service via other agencies such as the NSPCC (see case study). We wrote about homophobic bullying in a School Governor's Newsletter in 1997. 5000 copies were distributed.

The Service was contacted by the NSPCC who were concerned about a 14 year old Wiltshire Secondary School pupil who had come out as gay to his best friend at school. Within a short time, the whole school found out. The pupil was worried about this information reaching his parents and his schoolwork started to suffer. The Service arranged to meet fortnightly with the young person at a drop-in provided by us in the west of the county.

We received two negative responses. Wiltshire County Council are on record as saying that they would unilaterally introduce a version of Section 28 if the Government votes to repeal it. Kent County Council are the only other council in England and Wales to promise to do the same.

The Service has had more success working with Salisbury College and Swindon College by attending Freshers Fayres at the beginning of the new academic year and promoting the existence of the Service and providing safer sex resources to students. We have also delivered training sessions to Heads of Departments in Swindon and to students at Salisbury on sexuality issues.

3.2 Outside Wiltshire

Gay men are a mobile population group that do not recognise health authority or administrative boundaries. There are also some gaps in service provision which have to be referred on to services outside the county. The biggest gap is in the provision of HIV support services. Whilst the county has a number of HIV testing facilities, there is only one service which supports HIV positive people directly in the county (Terrence Higgins Trust in Western Wiltshire). There is no support for HIV positive gay men in Swindon or Salisbury areas.

3.2.1 HIV Support Services

The Service has good links with Body Positive in Bournemouth and the Terrence Higgins Trust in Bath and Bristol. The Service estimates that it has referred four HIV positive clients to these agencies in the past three years.

An HIV positive man who was traumatised after a serious assault approached the Wiltshire Health Authority (WHA) for support. He was referred to the Service by the WHA who successfully negotiated funding for respite care in the form of a week's break.

3.3 Cross Boundary Groups

3.3.1 Wessex Gay Men's Health Forum

The Service has chaired and administered this Forum for the past three years. It comprises the following Gay Men's Health Projects: Avon, Dorset, Gloucestershire, Mid Hampshire, North Hampshire, Portsmouth and Somerset.

3.3.2 Regional HIV Network for Voluntary Organisations in the South West

The Service has recently been invited to join this network.

4. Now and Next

what we have done so far and plan to do next

4.1 Addressing employment inequalities

The Service was instrumental in securing a European Social Fund grant to the county to address employment inequality issues in December 2000. The Service joined with a consortium of agencies serving Swindon to develop a bid which will deliver education and awareness raising opportunities to the three employment sectors: voluntary, statutory and private. The Service will work with the consortium to ensure that HIV and gay men's issues are included. This work is expected to begin in Autumn 2001 and will employ one and a half WTE workers.

4.2 Campaigns

The Swindon team are developing a more pro-active approach to delivering gay men's health work in the area. Working in partnership with the two Health Promotion Units and with the Campaigns Group on WASH (see 3.1.4 above), we plan to focus on four key campaigns during the year. This will enable the Service to go into greater depth on key health issues and to tie them in to appropriate dates in the calendar.

Research has shown that gay men are as likely to holiday off season as during the summer months. The Service will therefore be making the Travel Packs available throughout the year.

This decision follows a review of the successful 'Fun in the Sun' campaign which ran during the Summer of 1999 and was repeated the following year. The Travel Pack was based on the Service's Condom Pack but contained 20 condoms and the choice of a bottle of lube or 20 sachets. A number of leaflets were included in the pack, including: 'If you worship the sun' (HEA); 'Shift to the Shade' (HEA); 'Sun Know How' (HEA); 'Drugs Abroad' (HEA); 'Some Like it Hot' (THT) and 'Go West or Off to Oz' (THT) and luggage labels. More than 40 Travel Packs were distributed across Swindon and Wiltshire in 2000.

The 'Fun in the Sun' campaign was launched in Swindon with a series of posters and flyers in the local gay venues and supported by stalls and displays. Local GUM Clinics were also provided with campaign materials and details on how to obtain the Travel Packs. The idea behind the campaign was to provide gay men travelling abroad with a pack containing strong condoms, lube and health information as they are not always available in other countries.

*info@gmhp.demon.co.uk and
www.gmhp.demon.co.uk*

Evaluation of the campaign in 2000 highlighted the need to launch the campaign earlier in the year and to make it available via mail order. The 2001 'Fun in the Sun' campaign was launched in May with a new logo, posters, flyers, stalls and displays in local GUM Clinics, Pride Youth and the twice-monthly Trowbridge drop-in and the scene. Travel Packs can also be requested by emailing the Service or visiting the website. We have also included an evaluation sheet in the Travel Pack to obtain feedback from users and to give us more information about our client group's needs.

World AIDS Day activities will remain one of the four campaigns undertaken by the Service. Other possible campaign themes under consideration include an Autumn campaign to tie in with the new academic year and address the needs of young people becoming sexually active and those who are new to the gay scene.

4.3 Surveys and assessments

The Service is planning to carry out a social mapping exercise in the area to find out the current social and sexual habits of local gay and bisexual men and to understand usage patterns of the PSEs in the county. There will also be an opportunity to look at how we are perceived by our local client group. This information will help to guide our work in the county (and beyond) and provide a justifiable basis for service provision decisions in the coming months.

4.4 Training

The Service plans to invite local gay and bisexual men to participate in assertiveness training courses in the new financial year. Swan training, a gay men's assertiveness training consortium, have developed a range of courses designed specifically for the challenges which face gay men in negotiating the sex they want. We believe that training a core group of local gay men in assertiveness skills will have a knock on effect on peers and sexual partners by developing a sexually confident and empowered local gay population. This, in turn, helps the work of the Service and enables us to target our work where it is most needed.

Assertiveness is a skill which can equip gay and bisexual men with the confidence to negotiate for the sex they want, safely

4.5 Volunteer development

The Service has launched a volunteer recruitment campaign in the Trowbridge area and will expand this to include other areas in the new financial year with the aim of helping to make the drop-in services more self-sufficient. We also want to create a core group of people who can assist us on the 'scene' and in activities which help to get key health promotion messages and resources through to more gay networks in the county.

4.6 Website and email facilities

We now have 618 email addresses on our mailing list. This method of communication will enable us to respond quickly to changes on the scene, updates or announcements (e.g. from the Government), requests for materials and urgent sexual health information or referrals to appropriate agencies.

Updating the website and including new monitoring systems (to measure most popular web pages, for example) will continue throughout 2001. This resource is one of the most popular services we provide and we will work to make sure that the information we provide is up-to-date and relevant to our target audience.

5. Appendices

Gay Men's Health Policies

Sexual Misconduct in Public Places Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 This policy is part of the framework created by the Wiltshire Constabulary Homophobic Incidents Policy. Whilst recognising that Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual members of our community are often victims of homophobic crime, we must acknowledge that there are circumstances where they are offenders. This is particularly pertinent in the case of Public Sex Environments (PSEs).

1.2 This policy facilitates the investigation of alleged offences in PSEs, whilst protecting the Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual community from harassment and ensuring that Police actions are in keeping with multi-agency policies we have adopted.

1.3 This policy is relevant to all types of sexual misconduct in public places both heterosexual and homosexual. PSEs can be used for various sexual practices, some of which may be lawful, for example, people who use such locations as a meeting place to arrange activities elsewhere.

1.4 Men and women who use PSEs may be the victims of assault, blackmail, harassment etc. They may be unwilling to report these crimes because they perceive the Police to be part of that harassment, expecting to be treated as criminals themselves, rather than as a victim of crime, simply because of their sexual orientation. Traditional methods of policing such situations serve only to reinforce this view.

1.5 Policing of such activities/environments will be carried out in a sensitive but positive manner in order to prevent the policing itself from appearing homophobic and, at the same

time, answering the policing needs of all sections of the community.

2. Complaints

2.1 It is generally only where there has been a complaint from a member of the public or other agency that proactive action should be contemplated. The complaint will be fully documented and statements obtained from the complainant and any witnesses.

3. Action on Receipt of a Complaint

3.1 Following receipt of a complaint, the divisional Community Liaison Officer (CLO) and/or one of the trained Lesbian and Gay Liaison Officers (LGLOs) should be notified. Consultation with the relevant partner agencies and the reporting officer should then take place and an action plan developed along the following guidelines.

In locations such as public toilets the Local Authority may be able to take steps to dissuade unlawful sexual activity, such as the provision of attendants, controlled opening times, additional lighting etc. Crime Prevention officers can provide advice on physically altering the environment to reduce the problem.

The divisional CLO shall be consulted at each stage and a detailed log should be kept throughout. If further action is contemplated, it must be demonstrated that all preliminary steps have been taken unless the Divisional Commander agrees that in particular circumstances this is not appropriate. The authority of the Superintendent Operations must be obtained at each stage.

Stage 1 There should be an investigation to determine the extent of the problem, ensuring

consideration of the consequences of subsequent action and that the problem is dealt with in an appropriate and sensitive manner. Liaison with Gay Men's Health should be undertaken and the divisional CLO should be informed.

Stage 2 Information and warning notices should be displayed in the location informing the public of the problem and advising that overt Police action may ensue.

Stage 3 If initial steps are ineffective, high visibility patrols, both on foot and mobile, should take place to deter potential offenders. The officers involved shall be in uniform, using marked vehicles, and briefed to avoid conduct which could be construed as oppressive, harassing or contrary to the principles of this policy.

Stage 4 If there is evidence of the problem continuing and further action is necessary, authority to carry out plain clothes observations and any further investigations should be obtained from the Divisional Commander. In extreme cases, and where other methods have failed, deployment of covert surveillance equipment may only be considered subject to the authority of the Assistant Chief Constable via the Head of CID or Detective Superintendent (Ops.).

4. Media

4.1 It must be considered when dealing with these issues that media coverage may be generated. Care must be taken to ensure that

such coverage has a positive effect and does not damage our relationship with any section of the community because of injudicious reporting of the behaviour of an unrepresentative few. In all cases, advice and assistance should be sought from divisional CLO or Press Officer.

5. Terms of Reference

5.1 The Wiltshire Gay, Lesbian and Police Liaison Group is an informal body made up of representatives from the Police Service and the Lesbian and Gay Communities of Wiltshire. (Interested parties and related agencies may join the group or attend meetings by way of invitation from the group).

5.2 The group will meet at least once every three months with local representatives within the three Divisional areas of Swindon, Salisbury and Chippenham, meeting additionally as and when required.

5.3 The group recognises the need for and supports wholeheartedly Equal Opportunities in the area it addresses.

5.4 The group will have no allegiance to any Political Party or Organisation.

5.5 The aims, objectives and terms of reference of the group cannot be changed without the approval of all participating parties.

Diversity Remit: European Social Fund (ESF) Bid Extract 'CHALLENGING SOCIAL EXCLUSION IN THE WORKPLACE: RELATED TO SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND HIV'

1. Rationale

Supporting inclusion and education about the diverse community would allow us to improve the self esteem of gay men who feel discriminated against. Running parallel to the education project would be five residential weekend courses to improve the self esteem of individuals and one weekend training course for volunteers to enhance peer education skills.

The benefits of this work will start to challenge the need to use smoking, alcohol and drugs to relieve stress. Improving self esteem also reduces risk taking in relation to sexual health, particularly HIV. Information made available would also start to reduce the sense of social isolation. To support resources information would be available through a website and support would be offered to individuals through the internet.

2. Aims

2.1 To target the main employers in the three employment sectors – statutory, private and voluntary – to include sexual orientation and HIV within EO policies.

2.2 To develop resources such as posters for employers and leaflets for all individuals employed.

2.3 To promote the new civil rights regulation that is to be enshrined in British Law from 1st October 2000.

2.4 To provide resources in appropriate

languages for the growing population of people to whom English is a second language, particularly the new influx of refugees.

2.5 To provide education and support through training for personnel and welfare staff around issues of diversity including sexual orientation and HIV.

2.6 To provide resources which would educate staff about the importance of Equal Opportunities for gay and lesbian staff and encouraging access for those who feel excluded and discriminated against.

Gay Men's Health Mission Statement

1. Mission Statement

Gay Men's Health Wiltshire and Swindon (the Service) exists to 'promote better sexual health amongst gay and bisexual men and Men Who Have Sex With Men (MWHWSM) within Wiltshire and Swindon (our area of work).

2. Aims and Objectives

- ◆ To reduce the incidence of HIV infection amongst gay and bisexual men and MWHWSM within our area of work.
- ◆ To increase awareness of the Service within the commercial gay scene.
- ◆ To increase awareness of HIV, AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) amongst our client group.
- ◆ To promote awareness of issues facing gay and bisexual men and MWHWSM with other public and voluntary services (i.e. Wiltshire Constabulary, District and Borough Councils, Wiltshire Health Authority, Health Promotion etc.).
- ◆ To target young men within the education system and gay youth groups with safer sex messages.
- ◆ To reach isolated and hard to reach men from our client group.
- ◆ To provide support for all those who fall within our client group as well as men unsure of their sexuality.
- ◆ To evaluate the work of our Service.

3. Strategy

- ◆ To provide free of charge, appropriate condoms and lubricant throughout our area of work and to promote their availability.
- ◆ To promote our Service within the commercial gay scene.
- ◆ To undertake and evaluate work with men who use public sex environments for the purpose of having sex with other men (whether on site or elsewhere).
- ◆ To provide training around issues affecting our client group to other service providers and service users.
- ◆ To undertake awareness raising within schools as part of sex and relationships education.
- ◆ To provide support for young gay men via the lesbian, gay and bisexual youth groups.
- ◆ To establish support groups around specific topics (e.g. Married Men's Group).
- ◆ To work closely with sexual health and health promotion teams throughout our area of work.
- ◆ To offer one-to-one support around any issues which might affect a gay, bisexual or MWHWSM client's ability to make informed choices about safer sex (i.e. drugs, alcohol, mental health).
- ◆ To keep records for evaluation purposes.

Lesbians, bisexuals
and gay men are...

daughters
mothers sons
sisters fathers
brothers
cousins
grandparents
uncles aunts
in-laws
foster parents
adoptive parents
carers
cared for
workmates friends



Lesbians and gay men are entitled to the same rights as any other Wiltshire resident.

This poster has been produced with the help of the Swindon Borough Council, Wiltshire Constabulary and Gay Men's Health, Wiltshire, and the number 01793 695300.

www.gaymen.org.uk

This poster (A4 sized and in full colour) was produced in collaboration with Swindon Borough Council and Wiltshire Constabulary. You should have received a copy with this report: further copies are available free of charge by telephoning Gay Men's Health on **01793 695300**.

Resources Order Form

To ensure that gay and bisexual men have easy access to free condoms, Femidoms, lubricant, safer sex information and other information, we are now offering them by mail order. This service is offered free and is funded by the NHS as part of the HIV prevention strategy for the UK. All items are sent in plain packaging.

We have a lot more information available than we can put on this form. To find out more, call during office hours. Note that this service is only available within Wiltshire. Please do not fill in this form if you do not live in this area, as orders from outside Wiltshire cannot be fulfilled.

If you represent a representative of a local service and require multiple copies of any of our resources, please give us a call on **01793 695300**.

- Strong condoms How many? Max. 20 per order
- TLC lubricant sachets How many?
- I-D lubricant sachets How many? } Max. 20 lube sachets per order
- Liquid Silk lubricant pump
- I-D lubricant pump } Only one of these can be ordered
- Femidom Intro Pack (contains 5 Femidoms and an information leaflet for gay men)
- Femidoms How many? Max. 20 per order
- Safer sex information pack
- Gay men's guide to Hepatitis
- Gay men's guide to sexually transmitted infections
- Information for gay men in relationships who don't use, or don't want to use, condoms
- Coming Out and Staying Out booklet
- Gay Men's Health information
- Salisbury Sexual Health Clinic information
- Holiday guides

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____



This form should be returned to: **Gay Men's Health, 139 Victoria Road, Swindon. Wiltshire. SN1 3BU.**
Please allow 28 days for your order to be delivered to you.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:



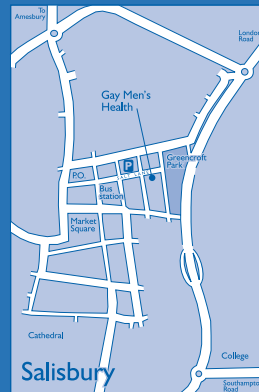
Gay Men's Health

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ABOUT GAY MEN'S HEALTH WILTSHIRE AND SWINDON

Gay Men's Health has been funded by Wiltshire Health Authority to develop services which inform about HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections and to encourage safer sex practices for gay and bisexual men.

Gay Men's Health works in two main ways. Firstly, we offer information directly to you; to help you feel more confident about making safer sex a natural part of your life and relationships. Secondly, we work with people such as doctors, other health service professionals and the media to create a climate in which gay men's health needs are acknowledged and met.

For further copies of this report please telephone 01793 695300.

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