

**NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**LESBIAN, GAY AND BISEXUAL PEOPLE'S FORUM**

**Wednesday, 1 June 2005**

**PRESENT:**

T.Welsh (co chair)  
M.Sherrill Moulton College  
J.Diederiks Moulton College  
L.Ambrose NBC  
Sgt P.Colhoun Nptonshire Police

**1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Acock and Hill, S Silver, H Parkinson (UCN), P Crofts, J Glashen (UCN), J Sleet (NCC), G Sturgess (NCC) and J Sangster (UCN).

**2. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 20 APRIL 2005**

Minutes of the meeting held on 20 April 2005, copies of which had been circulated were agreed.

**3. MATTERS ARISING NOT ALREADY ON THE AGENDA**

L Ambrose advised that a meeting was being set up on 1 July to discuss the input of the forums at the Balloon Festival as it was intended that there would be a stand for the various Borough Council's Forums at the Festival.

With regard to the future of Lings Forum, L Amrbose advised that she had made more enquiries and that at present all options were remaining open and that she would keep the Forum updated on the situation.

It was noted that the Northampton Now Magazine was starting to raise awareness in terms of the various Forum.

The Community Portal now had a link to agendas and minutes with regard to this Forum.

**4. MEDIGOLD UPDATE**

A Bewers reiterated the background to this issue and a note received by email from the Borough Council's Personnel Section was circulated in response to the questions raised at the last meeting. Andrew asked whether this was the Borough Council's official response to the letter sent out by this Forum. L Ambrose advised that it was sent in the absence of any HR Managers being able to attend this meeting due to prior commitments but had indicated that they would be happy to

come along to a future meeting of the Forum to discuss the issue further. The email had been sent so that there was a response for this evening's meeting. It was noted that the matter had also been raised at the Disabled Peoples Forum and Andrew had been invited to attend their next meeting to speak on the issue. The email advised that the partners would be discussing the issue further at their next meeting in July. In the meantime the Human Resource Team did not wish to disadvantage any group under the DDA and would use the question as currently advised by Medigold. Medigold had been asked to outline the reasons why the question was included and it was understood that it was because it was a tried and tested (and industry wide) pre-employment screening question. Medigold's comments were as follows

(1) That the question should be looked at solely from a medical disability point of view.

(2) The clinical reasons behind the HIV and Hepatitis questions were two fold.

(A) A Health and Safety question in respect of certain risks of certain occupations that potential Council employees may undertake eg secure child care, secure mental health care, some forms of water works and refuse collection. There was also the issue of giving specific instructions to HIV positive employees and carriers for Hepatitis B and C in respect of First Aiders.

(B) The clinical risks of HIV sufferers going onto Aids and thus being unable to give regular and effective service through illness. The employer has a right to know this and judge those risks subject to occupational health advice in advance just like any other illness revealed in pre employment questionnaires such as MS, diabetes, recurrent mental illness, chronic pancreatic etc.

(C) There may be implications for insurance and pension entry in some schemes. Comment from the Borough Council's Personnel was that it was a clear view that HIV and Hepatitis questions should remain within the questionnaire but reassurance should be given to applicants who were concerned about this that the Council did not discriminate in any way (positively or negatively) to applicants who were HIV positive and that this information was kept strictly confidential by the medical staff at Medigold and not revealed without the individuals express consent in cases where it was necessary for clinical reasons. Furthermore HIV / Aids were accepted as potential disabilities with the Disability Discrimination Act 1998 and potential employees had equal protection under the law to sufferers of other disabilities under the Act.

In discussing the response the Forum expressed the view that the issue should now be raised with the Towns MP and also copied to the Terence Higgin Trust. It was also suggested that other authorities be approached to get more information on best practice and L Ambrose undertook to action this and approach other authorities including Manchester City Council, Brighton, Birmingham etc. It was also suggested that other contacts regarding this issue include the Insurance Ombudsman, the Borough's Welfare Officer, the Police Organisation SPECTRUM and any other organisations that would raise awareness of this issue.

## **5. HOMOPHOBIC BULLYING AND GAY AWARENESS IN NORTHAMPTON'S COLLEGES**

Mary Sherrill Counsellor and Johan Diederiks, Student Welfare Manager from Moulton College were present for this item.

Tom gave the background to this issue. Mary stated that the college did have representations and links with the NLGBA in terms of helping any students "coming out". Also Support and Counselling was always offered with any bullying. Also open days which had included the NLGBA had been held. In terms of the welfare department at the College drop in lunchtime leaflets had been issued and this year Students had come openly to the department to talk about sexuality issues and it was felt that this had happened because of the changes made. Andrew offered to assist with future open days etc and offered to supply some hate crime packs.

## **6. NORTHAMPTON NOW UPDATE**

The Magazine had now been produced and circulated and Tom's article on being Chair of this Forum had been included.

## **7. UCN EQUALITIES WEEK - HOW TO GET INVOLVED**

It was noted that P Crofts had got involved with this for the first time last year and L Ambrose advised that she would be meeting with P Crofts in June to discuss Forum involvement with the UCN including its Equalities week. It was also suggested that there could be some links in with the holocaust memorial day and S Silver would be involved with this.

## **8. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AT NEXT MEETING**

It was agreed that the following be discussed at the next meeting. Medigold update with a representative from the Borough Council's Personnel in attendance, Balloon Festival in relation to the Forums publicity. An update of statistics from the police in relation to Hate Crime. Also L Ambrose undertook to send Andrew information about Bradford regarding LGB community engagement and its LGB/LSP. Andrew expressed the wish to have further discussion about means of engagement with the LGB Community in Northampton and the various Forums.

## **9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was none.

## **10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was noted the next meeting was scheduled for the 13 July at 6.30 pm at the Guildhall.

The meeting concluded at 7.30 pm.

<TRAILER\_SECTION>

The meeting concluded at Time Not Specified

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