

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

Wednesday, 13 July 2005

PRESENT:	Tom	Co-Chair
	M Sherill	Moulton College
	J Diederiks	Moulton College
	L Ambrose	Northampton Borough Council
	Sgt P Colhoun	Northamptonshire Police
	A Bewers	NLGBA
	Dennis	Individual
	M Felix	Race Equality Forum
	E Downes	Northampton Borough Council (For item 4)

1. APOLOGIES

There were none.

2. MINUTES

Subject to the inclusion of A Bewers in the list of attendees, the minutes of the meeting held on 1 June 2005 were agreed.

3. MATTERS ARISING NOT ALREADY ON THE AGENDA

UCN

L Ambrose advised that the LGB Group at UCN was becoming increasingly active so there may be an opportunity for more engagement. It was noted that a Diversity Day was being held on 28 September 2005 and a stand may be available for the use of the Forum. Also the Forum had been offered a share of a stand at the Freshers Fayre and there was the opportunity for them to become involved in other events such as the Holocaust Memorial Day.

J Diederiks advised that there would be an opportunity for the Forum to have a stand, and attend, the Freshers Evening at Moulton College.

4. MEDIGOLD UPDATE

A Bewers advised that as agreed he had raised the issue of the Medigold Pre-Employment Health Questionnaire at the Disabled Peoples Forum. He had raised concerns in relation to the HIV related questions and had suggested that there were other questions the DPF may wish to query that could potentially be discriminatory to people with disabilities. L Ambrose advised that the DPF had been surprised at the amount of details that was required and had questioned how the information was held and whether it was correlated with sickness absence data.

A Bewers commented that previously there had been no examples of good practice

available but he had now found an excellent model used by the London Borough of Camden Council. He then read out an extract from their HIV Policy. (Copy Attached)

He felt that this was the ideal approach as it focussed on whether a person was actually fit for work rather than their HIV status. He then referred to an article in Positive Nation where legal advice was being sought as to whether the individual could be dismissed for withholding information on the medical disclosure form. The advice given was that concealment could be interpreted as dishonest which was in theory gross misconduct. However it was questionable whether an Industrial Tribunal would consider this reasonable due to the sensitivities surrounding the issue.

E Downes referred to the concerns expected about confidentiality and advised that the medical forms were sent out with the application forms and were returned sealed. They were then forwarded, still sealed, to Medigold and therefore were not opened by any NBC employee. In relation to the detail of the questions, although he was sympathetic to the concerns expressed he was unsure what could be done through the consortium, to change them. Medigold were adamant that they required all of the information requested to make an assessment. However it was likely that the guidance noted that accompanied the form could be improved.

E Downes advised that there was currently a Working Group set up that was looking into the service provided by Medigold and he was happy to put the concerns raised on the agenda. He would also ask them to seek further examples of good practice. **This was agreed.**

A Bowers expressed particular concern at the language used by the Director of Medigold when discussing the issues and the comment that had been made in relation to there being a need for the appropriate first aider to be advised if a colleague in their area was HIV positive.

The Chair suggested that the questions being asked by Medigold might be contravening the NBC Equal Opportunities Policy and **E Downes agreed to ask the Working Group to consider this.**

The Chair suggested that legal advice be sought as to whether Medigold had a legal right to obtain the information they said was needed and **L Ambrose agreed to ask the NBC Equal Opportunities Officer to investigate this.**

5. BALLOON FESTIVAL - UPDATE

L Ambrose advised that the Planning Group had met and the theme would be "Northampton's Community Past and Present". The Black History Project had provided a lot of examples of people from different backgrounds and professions that could be used as part of the exhibition and the Pensioners Forum were looking to identify people who had made a significant contribution to the community. The Youth Forum had recently been on a residential weekend and photographs that had been taken would be included in the display.

She requested that this Forum identify events and individuals within the LGB

community that had made a significant contribution to the community. Traditionally it had always been difficult to find positive LGB images and the Forum discussed the types of images that should be used. A Bowers suggested that the images used for the Forgotten Fairy Tale may be appropriate however permission would have to be sought for the Forum to use the pictures.

In relation to publicity, L Ambrose circulated a draft poster and advised that the intention was to have a general poster, the text of which could be changed, that could be used for any future events as well as the Balloon Festival. She suggested that permission be sought to use the pictures that had recently appeared in Northampton Now.

M Felix referred to the need for education and ways to promote best practice. It was suggested that this could be progressed together with other forums, particularly the Youth Forum. **It was agreed that this be an item on the agenda for the next meeting.**

6. POLICE STATISTICS - UPDATE (HATE CRIME)

Sgt P Colhoun advised that for the year 2003/2004 there had been 69 homophobic incidents reported and so far there had been 18 reported in the current year. He then referred to an assault by three males that had taken place on Midsummer Meadow in mid June. Two suspects had been arrested and work was ongoing to arrest the third. A Bowers advised that some witness statements had come from users of the area which demonstrated the improvement in the relationship between the LGB community and the Police.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(A) 19th LONDON LESBIAN & GAY FILM FESTIVAL ON TOUR

A Bowers circulated the programme of films being shown at the Forum Cinema and drew particular attention to Digital Short, the first short film made by young people from the LGB community. (Copy Programme Attached)

(B) ENGAGEMENT WITH BME COMMUNITIES

M Felix referred to the particular problems experienced by gay people within BME communities and the Forum discussed the difficulties the NLGBA had in engaging them. A Bowers stressed that the Alliance advertised itself as widely as possible but there were always problems engaging communities, which by nature, were invisible. The NLGBA Executive was conscious that they were not representative in all areas. **The Chair suggested that an item be included on the agenda for the next meeting "Engagement Strategy re: BME Communities", particularly to consider engagement with BME communities. This was agreed.**

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting was on 14 September 2005 at 6.30pm.

Minute Annex

Camden Council Corporate HIV Policy

Extract concerning employment

Employment

No current or prospective employee will be discriminated against as a result of being HIV antibody positive or having HIV related illness.

The Council will not ask any current or prospective employee to undertake an HIV antibody test or any other test to determine HIV related illness in respect of their employment.

The Council will endeavour to take reasonable measures to support people living with HIV infection or illness in employment matters.

Recruitment

Applicants for employment, both internal and external, are not required to disclose their HIV antibody status on either application forms or medical questionnaires, or at any other stage of the recruitment process.

Although applicants are not required to state whether or not any specific illnesses are HIV related, they are required to disclose details of any specific illnesses which have affected them in the past. This is to enable the Occupational Health Service to assess whether an individual is medically fit for appointment. Any disclosure relating to a person's HIV antibody status will remain totally confidential to the Occupational Health Service.

Employees who are HIV antibody positive or who have HIV related illness

As continued employment can make a significant contribution to the health, confidence, motivation and dignity of people living with HIV, the Council will take all reasonable steps, within the context of other procedures, to enable such employees to continue in employment. No employee is required to inform their manager or colleagues that they are either HIV antibody positive or have HIV related illness.

For the purposes of self-certification because of illness, employees are permitted to address the issue of confidentiality by referring to specific infection rather than to HIV status.

If an employee is required to produce a doctor's certificate, they should discuss the content of the certificate with the doctor concerned so that any reference to HIV status can be avoided. If an employee encounters any difficulty with their doctor in this matter, they should produce this policy statement as confirmation of the Council's position.

If management enquiries are made around patterns of sickness or absence, the employee is entitled to withhold information concerning their HIV antibody status and instead may wish to share details of sick leave and absence as they relate to specific infections.

Should an employee become too ill to carry out the duties of their current job, two options are available: relocation or retirement on grounds of ill health. Wherever possible the council will sympathetically consider the option of relocation.

19th London Lesbian & Gay Film Festival On Tour

Sun 28 Aug 2005 at 8.00pm

Mysterious Skin Cert 18

USA/Neth 2004 Dir: Gregg Araki 99 mins

With: Joseph Gordon-Levitt, Brady Corbet

Based on the acclaimed novel by Scott Heim in which a teenage hustler and a young man obsessed with alien abductions cross paths, together discovering a horrible, liberating truth.

Thu 15 Sept at 8.00pm

Wanted! Cert 12A + Short film

Ger 2004 Dir: Franziska Meletzky 88 mins subtitles

With: Dagmar Manzel, Grazyna Szapolowska, Jörg Schütttauf

A beautifully composed character-driven drama which tells a tale of friendship and growing love with cracking humour and good old-fashioned sensitivity. 40-something Dora has a cleaning fetish and only has time for her beloved cacti. When Polish refugee Jolanta, believing she has accidentally killed her boss, begs Dora to hide her in her apartment, Dora agrees and soon finds herself falling for Jolanta's sexy curves and feminine guile.

NLGRA's e-volution project presents Digital short

The NLGBA are proud to present the first short film made by young people from the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual community in Northamptonshire. This film promises to be as engaging as it is challenging. It is independent, community filmmaking at its best. With an experimental sound track and creative image making this digital short is an opportunity to showcase the work of Northampton's young creative talent.

A bfi Touring
Programme



Thu 22 Sept at 8.00pm

Summer Storm Cert 15

Ger 2004 Dir: Marco Kreuzpaintner 98 mins subtitles

With: Robert Stadlober, Kostja Ullmann, Alicja Bachleda-Carus

Tobi and Achim are best buddies and also cox and oarsman on a rowing team. Summer comes and along with the rest of the team, they set off to the countryside to take part in a national competition. As Achim gets increasingly friendly with his girlfriend, Tobi begins to realise that his feelings run deeper for his friend than even he was aware...

Thu 29 Sept at 8.00pm

Prey For Rock & Roll Cert 15

USA 2003 Dir: Alex Steyermark 104 mins

With: Gina Gershon, Lori Petty, Drea de Matteo

'All my life, all I've ever wanted to be is a rock star', drawls Jacki (Gina Gershon). Based on the autobiographical musical by LA singer/songwriter and tattoo artist Chen Lovedog, *Prey for Rock & Roll* tackles the rise and fall of becoming almost famous in Clamdandy, her band of 20 years.

Thu 6 Oct at 8.00pm

Andrew and Jeremy Get Married Cert 15

UK 2004 Dir: Don Boyd 75 mins Documentary

An odd couple are getting hitched. Andrew is an ex-bus driver from Croydon and Jeremy is a literary lion who lives in Chelsea. There is an enduring frankness and refreshing clarity to their accounts of their very different lives. Beneath the surface there are tensions about contrasts in outlook and interests, but ultimately this is a true love story.