

Double Jeopardy Project

A final report on the Trust for London funded Double Jeopardy Project

Report by Alasdair Stuart at MBARC

August 2013



MBARC
Acorn House
314-320 Gray's Inn Road
London WC1X 8DP
www.mbarc.co.uk



Praxis
COMMUNITY
PROJECTS




Trust for London
Tackling poverty and inequality

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	Executive Summary	4
1.1	Background	4
1.2	Key learning.....	4
1.3	Key recommendations	6
2	Introduction and background	9
2.1	Background	9
2.2	Original rationale for the project	10
3	Action taken	12
3.1	Phase One – Project development.....	12
3.2	Phase Two – Training, support and organisational development.....	16
3.3	Phase Three – Assessing progress of organisations	18
4	Learning from the project	20
4.1	Project learning	20
4.2	Organisational learning	23
4.3	Service delivery learning	26
5	Learning from the Community Researchers	30
5.1	Feedback from the Community Researchers	31
6	Where next – Call to Action and Recommendations	36
	Appendix 1 – Case studies.....	40
	Appendix 2 - Achievements of each pilot organisation	55
	Appendix 3 – Guide to service transformation	74

Acknowledgements

MBARC would like to thank the Trust for London for funding this project, as well as the following organisations for their guidance and support as part of the project Advisory Group:

- Metro Centre (as project partner)
- Praxis (as project partner)
- Barnet Refugee Service
- Charities Evaluation Services
- Galop
- Greenwich University
- LVSC (London Voluntary Service Council)
- REAP (Refugees in Effective & Active Partnership)
- Refugee Youth
- Southwark Refugee Communities Forum
- Stonewall Housing
- UKLGIG (UK Lesbian & Gay Immigration Group).

We would also like to acknowledge all of the pilot organisations that agreed to take part in the project, particularly for prioritising staff time on the project without any resource contribution:

- Camden LGBT Forum
- Evelyn Oldfield Unit
- Galop
- Hackney Refugee Forum
- IndoAmerican Refugee Migrant Community (IRMO) (Latin American Refugee Project)
- Metro Centre
- Praxis
- RAMFEL (Refugee and Migrant Forum of East London)
- Redbridge Rainbow Community
- Relate North West London
- Southwark Refugee Communities Forum
- Stonewall Housing
- West London Gay Men's Association.

The advice, experiences and learning from the Refugees in Effective and Active Partnership (REAP) 'Equality for All Refugees' project was highly valued as this project developed.

We would like to offer special thanks to all of the Community Researchers, who shared their own experiences generously, provided helpful criticism, guidance and support throughout, and brought tremendous energy and commitment to the project.

- Grace Chirambo
- Peter Bachev
- Tony Furlong
- Mamie Jallow
- Alp Ulgen
- Obinna Okolo
- Onyeka Igwe
- Tahiri Jones
- Norda Daley.

Finally we wish to acknowledge that this project built upon Over Not Out¹ and the Migration Foundation funding for that project.

¹ <http://www.metropolitan.org.uk/images/Over-Not-Out.pdf>

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 BACKGROUND

In the summer of 2011 the Trust for London provided a grant of £44,900 for an action research project, the Double Jeopardy Project, to be conducted by a Partnership between MBARC, the Metro Centre and Praxis, with MBARC acting as the delivery agent.

The project aimed to tackle the lack of strategic support from both Migrant and Refugee Community Organisations (MRCOs) and LGBTI organisations for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex (LGBTI) asylum seekers, refugees and migrants. This lack of support was first identified in *Over Not Out*², the first national study of issues affecting LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees in the UK.

To achieve this the project worked with a range of MRCOs and LGBTI organisations to help them improve their services for LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and migrants. The project tested guidance on how to do this, and informed the production of the guide; 'Making your organisation more welcoming and supportive to LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and migrants', which can now be used by other organisations seeking to undertake similar change.

1.2 KEY LEARNING

Chapter 4 of this report provides details of the full learning from the project, however key points included:

Service delivery learning

- Organisations need to ensure they are publically and visibly welcoming and supportive to LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and migrants.
- The initial contact that an LGBTI asylum seeker, refugee or migrant has with an organisation is vital in establishing trust, and organisations need to ensure this is handled appropriately.
- Organisations should try to engage with any LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees or migrants that contact their organisation, rather than just referring/signposting them elsewhere immediately, but they should be honest about the limits of their knowledge.
- Organisations that have a direct telephone enquiry number need to review their protocols for this service to ensure it is suitable for LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and migrants (see p. 27)
- Similarly organisations should review whether and how they provide face-to-face appointments (see p. 28).

² <http://www.metropolitan.org.uk/images/Over-Not-Out.pdf>

Organisational learning

- While pilot organisations used the same guidance as the basis for the changes they made, each took decisions on the particular priorities that were most important to them, and other organisations looking to transform their services should approach the work in the same way.
- It is vital for staff within organisations to improve their knowledge and information on LGBTI issues and refugee/asylum seeker issues, and recognise other issues that may be relevant.
- Similarly, organisations need to ensure that the attitudes and skills of staff who may deal with an enquiry from an LGBTI asylum seeker, refugee or migrant are appropriate, supportive and welcoming.
- It is important that organisations offer LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and migrants options and choice about how they would like to engage with the organisation and what assistance they would like.
- The pilot organisations involved in the project benefited greatly from the involvement of LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and migrants in the project, and other organisations undertaking similar work would benefit from involving this group in transforming their services.
- Some of the pilot organisations involved in the project had reservations about discussing LGBTI issues within their own organisations, with MRCOs and the communities they work with, however all found that starting to discuss and addressing these issues was a positive experience, and suggested others should not be afraid to conduct outreach on these issues.
- A number of pilot organisations found that the Equality Act 2010 was a useful tool to persuade other staff and service users to take LGBTI and asylum seeker/refugee issues more seriously.

Project learning

- Taking part in this project acted as a significant motivator for the pilot organisations involved to improve their services for LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and migrants.
- In general the draft guidance on transforming organisations worked well, was appropriate and helped organisations to implement change. Learning from the use of this guidance informed the final version of the guide included in Appendix 3 of this report.
- The creation of a number of Case Studies, written by LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees participating in the project, became a useful tool to help pilot organisations contextualise the work they were doing. These are contained in Appendix 2 of this report.

1.3 KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter 6 of this report provides a full list of recommendations for MRCOs and LGBTI organisations, second tier support organisations, the Double Jeopardy pilot organisations and programme and Trust for London and other funders and commissioners.

Key recommendations include:

Recommendations for MRCOs and LGBTI organisations

Call to Action

As an organisation supporting refugees, asylum seekers and migrants, or as an organisation supporting LGBTI people, you have a responsibility to provide welcoming and supportive services to LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and migrants.

- Use this report and accompanying guide as a basis for transforming your services to make them more welcoming and supportive to LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and migrants.
- Host and publicise this report and the guide on your website.

Knowledge and skills

- Develop the knowledge of your staff on LGBTI issues and/or asylum seeker, refugee and migration issues, particularly those issues affecting LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and migrants.
- Recognise that the first point of contact with your organisation is vital in establishing a positive relationship with an LGBTI asylum seeker, refugee or migrant, and ensure that staff have the appropriate attitude, knowledge and skills to achieve this.
- Develop a list of known and trusted organisations for referral and signposting, and make this list available to service users.

Organisational leadership

- Assign a key member/group of staff to drive the process, but involve as many people as possible within your organisation.
- Prioritise what your organisation needs and what is achievable.
- Do not be afraid to discuss LGBTI issues with MRCOs and the communities they work with. Recognise that these may be challenging issues for *some* people to discuss, but encourage these discussions nevertheless. Use the Equality Act 2010 as a tool to press the importance of these equalities issues and the legal requirement of organisations not to discriminate on the grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity, marriage and civil partnership status, race and religion or belief.

Engagement, inclusion and partnership

- Recognise the benefits of partnership working to help with the process, and look to partner with a local LGBTI organisation (if you are an MRCO) or a MRCO (if you are an LGBTI organisation).
- Look at involving LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and migrants in your organisation, particularly in the process of change to become more welcoming and supportive to this group.
- Ensure that your organisation is publicly welcoming to LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and migrants and that your service is supportive to them.

Recommendations to influential LGBTI and refugee organisations and second tier support organisations

- Recognise the issues affecting LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and migrants and your responsibility to address them, and use your influence to advocate for change both within your sector and within other sectors.
- Host the report and guide on your website and promote it using your websites, newsletter, blogs, social media etc.
- Encourage and create debate on these issues at a regional and national level (e.g., at conferences).

Second tier support organisations

- Recognise your role in raising awareness, delivering training and providing support to organisations (in particular small grassroots community groups) and use this report and guide as part of your capacity building and championing of equalities and diversity.

Recommendations to Trust for London and other funders and commissioners

As funders you have the power and influence to address these issues, and a responsibility to the sector to do so, particularly as part of an equalities agenda.

Influencing

- Use the findings of this report and the actions suggested in the guide to challenge organisations that you fund and commission on the extent to which their services offer equality to LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and migrants.
- Discuss these issues with other funders and influence them to promote action on these issues.

Funding

- Consider how the actions outlined in the guide could be adapted into funding requirements for LGBTI organisations and MRCOs in future.
- Consider funding co-production projects/services in which LGBTI organisations partner with MRCOs to tackle the lack of appropriate services for LGBTI asylum seekers,

refugees and migrants, encouraging organisations from these two sectors to work more closely with each other.

Grant making, monitoring and evaluation

- Ensure that equalities frameworks cover LGBTI issues specifically, and that organisations you provide grants to have a suitable Equality and Diversity policy which clearly welcomes LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and migrants.
- Ensure projects you fund gather monitoring data on the number of LGBTI and asylum seeker/refugee/migrant service users accessing their services, and ask them to show how they involve this client group in their organisation and services.

2 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

2.1 BACKGROUND

In the summer of 2011 the Trust for London provided a grant of £44,900 for an action research project, the Double Jeopardy Project, to be conducted by a Partnership between MBARC, the Metro Centre and Praxis, with MBARC acting as the delivery agent.

The project was funded for the period September 2011 to July 2013, and addressed two Trust for London priorities:

- Aim Two – promoting the inclusion of recent arrivals in the UK, focusing on those who have arrived in the UK because they are being persecuted for their sexuality (and gender identity); and
- Aim Three – promoting social justice – by tackling the double exclusion experienced by Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex (LGBTI) migrants arising from their sexuality and their immigration status.

It is important to note at this stage that this project will include the term intersex within our definition of LGBT(I).

“Intersex” describes a person whose biological sex is ambiguous - a person whose sex chromosomes, genitalia and/or sex characteristics are determined to be neither exclusively male nor female. A person who is intersex may have characteristics of both male and female sexes. There are many genetic, hormonal or anatomical variations which make a person's sex ambiguous (e.g. Klinefelter Syndrome, Adrenal Hyperplasia). Parents and medical professionals usually assign intersex infants a sex and perform surgical operations to conform the infant's body to that assignment. This practice has become increasingly controversial as intersex adults are speaking out against the practice, accusing doctors of Infant Genital Mutilation (IGM) ignoring the human rights of the child to decide gender identity.

Intersex migrants are similarly persecuted for their sexuality and gender identity as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans migrants.

The original application stated that the project would:

- Create a cohort of LGBTI refugees and migrants who can support and challenge Voluntary Community Organisations (VCOs) organisations to develop more responsive services;
- Develop “road-tested” guidance for community organisations (both Migrant and Refugee Community Organisations (MRCOs) and LGBTI VCOs) to ensure they provide responsive and welcoming services to LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and migrants; and

- Develop guidance for funders and commissioners of services to ensure that the services they fund can provide quality services that deal with the diversity within communities in relation to sexuality, gender identity, ethnicity and immigration status.

The key outcome indicators were identified as:

- Increased use of LGBTI and MRCO community services by LGBTI migrants;
- The numbers of LGBTI and MRCO community services adopting the “specification” for LGBTI migrant-friendly services;
- The numbers of funders in London using the tools developed by this project to ensure that the LGBTI and MRCO organisations that they fund are providing welcoming and accessible services to LGBTI migrants; and
- Accessible services for LGBTI migrants.

2.2 ORIGINAL RATIONAL FOR THE PROJECT

LGBTI individuals face more extreme social and financial exclusion and greater risk of exploitation than other groups of refugees and migrants. Whilst life is tough for all asylum seekers it can be doubly so for those who are LGBTI. For example, LGBTI asylum seekers can experience high levels of homophobia/biphobia and transphobia, including violence, when dispersed to UKBA accommodation and clustered with their ethnic community. This can lead to them giving up UKBA accommodation, resulting in a loss of all other government funded support.

There is no accurate data on the number of LGBTI refugees and migrants in the UK, as UKBA does not currently publish statistics on the numbers of LGBTI asylum seekers entering the UK, however it is estimated that the number of LGB asylum seekers arriving each month is around 150, plus 2-3 transgendered asylum seekers³. Estimates of the number of LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and newly arrived migrants in London are between 30,000 and 50,000.

This action research project aimed to tackle some of the issues identified in *Over Not Out*⁴ (MBCARC, 2009), the first comprehensive study of LGBTI asylum seekers in the UK. In particular the project aimed to tackle the “double jeopardy” or exclusion experienced by LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and migrants, with LGBTI organisations ill equipped to support asylum seekers and MRCOs unwilling to acknowledge the existence and needs of LGBTI people in their communities.

MBCARC’s subsequent *Over Not Out Refreshed*⁵ (2012) report examined progress against the original recommendations of *Over Not Out*, and found that there had yet to be a set of actions by the voluntary sector at a strategic level to address the shortfalls of support for LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and migrants. This action research project aimed to address that shortfall.

³ UK estimates now validated against Canadian Government statistics since the introduction of data collection in 2006, see <http://www.metropolitan.org.uk/images/Metropolitan-MF-LGBT-Over-Not-Out2012-final1.pdf>

⁴ <http://www.metropolitan.org.uk/images/Over-Not-Out.pdf>

⁵ <http://www.metropolitan.org.uk/images/Metropolitan-MF-LGBT-Over-Not-Out2012-final1.pdf>

Within the current financial climate it is worth noting that this project was not about creating new services, but making existing services and organisations more responsive and inclusive. We suggest that there are strong parallels with the position of women in MRCOs fifteen years ago, which was transformed through support and leadership, releasing the potential of female refugees to contribute to their own well-being and to wider society. This project seeks to do the same for and with LGBTI migrants.

3 ACTION TAKEN

The project involved the following key phases and activities.

3.1 PHASE ONE – PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

Set-Up of Advisory Group

An Advisory Group was convened in autumn of 2011, with the following members:

- Trust for London (as funder)
- MBARC (as project partner)
- Metro Centre (as project partner)
- Praxis (as project partner)
- Barnet Refugee Service
- Charities Evaluation Services
- Galop
- Greenwich University
- LVSC (London Voluntary Service Council)
- REAP (Refugees in Effective & Active Partnership)
- Refugee Youth
- Southwark Refugee Communities Forum
- Stonewall Housing
- UKLGIG (UK Lesbian & Gay Immigration Group).

The first meeting was held in November 2011, with subsequent meetings taking place at least quarterly, and more frequently where required.

Development of a draft 'Service Specification'

In consultation with the Advisory Group, MBARC drafted a 'Service Specification' with suggestions of how VCOs could transform their services to ensure accessibility to services for LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and migrants.

The document contained different sections for MRCOs and LGBTI VCOs, setting out practical and realistic steps they could take to improve services for LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and migrants in the short (6 months), medium (12 months) and longer (2-3 years) term.

Recruitment of pilot organisations

MBARC worked with Trust for London and the Advisory Group to devise a list of VCOs that could be approached to participate in the project. MBARC then contacted these organisations in spring 2012 to explain the purpose of the project and to invite them to participate.

A seminar was held in early June 2012 for interested organisations to find out more about the project and what they would be required to do if they became pilot organisations. MBARC also visited a number of other organisations that had been unable to attend the seminar to discuss the project in more detail.

In total six LGBTI organisations and six MRCOs were recruited, as follows:

Migrant, refugee and asylum seeker organisations

Evelyn Oldfield Unit - The Evelyn Oldfield Unit is an independent, membership-based, charitable organisation, aiming to provide, develop and coordinate specialist aid and support services for established Refugee and Migrant Organisations in order to increase their capacity and potential for meeting the needs of their communities.

<http://www.evelynoldfield.co.uk/>

IndoAmerican Refugee Migrant Community (IRMO) - Latin American Refugee Project - IRMO's mission is to promote any charitable purpose for the benefit of people of Indoamerican origin, primarily but not exclusively resident in Great Britain, by the advancement of education and culture, the protection of health and the relief of poverty, sickness and distress. It provides advice, information, training and education to promote and develop the general welfare and prosperity of people of Indoamerican origin (especially the sick, the unemployed, the elderly, women and children).

<http://www.irmo.org.uk/main/>

Hackney Refugee Forum - Hackney Refugee Forum is an umbrella organisation which was founded in April 2000 to support refugee organisations in the London Borough of Hackney. Hosted by Hackney CVS, it has 11 different refugee organisations on its Steering Group and works with 62 different refugee and asylum seeker community organisations. Its role is to strengthen refugee communities and represent their joint interests in the borough of Hackney.

<http://www.hackneycen.org.uk/index.php?category=14&sec=64&page=204>

Praxis - Praxis Community Projects works with vulnerable migrants, providing support, advice and a welcome meeting space for vulnerable migrants and refugees in London. It operates a walk in advice service and projects which seek to address the fundamental human rights of new migrants.

<http://www.praxis.org.uk/>

Southwark Refugee Community Forum (SRCF) - Southwark Refugee Communities Forum (SRCF) was established by Refugee Community Organisations (RCO) in 2003, with the aim of enabling the voices of refugees themselves to be heard and to develop mutual support between newly arrived and more established communities.

<http://www.southwarkrefugeecommunities.org.uk/srcf/index.html>

RAMFEL (Refugee and Migrant Forum of East London) - RAMFEL is the Refugee and Migrant Forum of East London. Originally established in 1992 as Redbridge Refugee Forum, in 2007 it changed its name to better reflect its work across London, and to develop new services for migrants. It is a not-for-profit organisation working towards eliminating discrimination and disadvantage.

<http://www.ramfel.org.uk/>

LGBTI Organisations

Camden LGBT Forum - Camden LGBT Forum is run by LGBT people for LGBT people and holds a monthly meeting open to all LGBT people in the London Borough of Camden and those with concerns about LGBT issues. The Forum ensures that the rights and interests of LGBT people are represented in Camden through a combination of casework and advocacy, schools/youth work, policy/advisory work, mapping and crime analysis, training, events and outreach and raising awareness of LGBT issues.

<http://camdenlgbtforum.org.uk/>

Galop - Galop is London's leading LGBT anti-violence charity. It gives advice and support to people who have experienced biphobia, homophobia, transphobia, sexual violence or domestic abuse. It also supports lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and queer people who have had problems with the police or have questions about the criminal justice system.

<http://www.galop.org.uk/>

The Metro Centre - The Metro Centre is a charity working in partnership with statutory and voluntary organisations to support people experiencing issues related to sexuality, identity, gender and diversity, working primarily across South East London, but increasingly across the whole of London, nationally and internationally.

<https://www.metrocentreonline.org/>

Redbridge Rainbow Community (now Redbridge Rainbow) - Redbridge Rainbow Community is a forum based group primarily for Lesbian and Bisexual Women, Gay and Bisexual Men, and Trans-gendered people, who live, work, study and/or socialise within the London Borough of Redbridge. People from organisations within Redbridge who are supportive of LGBT people and the issues they face are also welcome to the group. It discusses and tries to resolve the issues faced by the Community in Redbridge and has strong ties with the MET Police, Redbridge Borough Council, RAMFEL and other local voluntary groups.

<http://www.redbridgerainbowcommunity.org.uk/>

Stonewall Housing - Stonewall Housing is the specialist lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) housing advice and support provider in England. It provides housing support for LGBT people in their own homes, supported housing for young LGBT people, as well as free, confidential housing advice for LGBT people of all ages. It also researches and lobbies for LGBT housing rights, so that all LGBT people can feel safe and secure in their homes.

<http://www.stonewallhousing.org/>

West London Gay Men's Project (WLGMP) - WLGMP exists to offer services and support to a diverse community of men who have sex with men (MSM) and others. It seeks to empower individuals and communities to make positive, informed choices about their sexual health and overall wellbeing, and provides services directly to MSM, and other under-served groups in their area, and to other professionals working with gay and bisexual men and MSM.

<http://www.westlondongmp.org.uk/>

In addition Relate North West London was also recruited to the project, as while not strictly an LGBTI organisation or a MRCO, it works with both of these communities.

Relate North West London - Relate North West London is a member of the Relate Federation which has a national network of 75 centres and is affiliated to the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP). It offers relationship counselling, sex therapy, family counselling, family mediation, training and workshops in the five London Boroughs of Barnet, Brent, Ealing, Harrow and Hillingdon, as well as a location in Westminster.

While the organisation is neither an LGBTI or refugee organisation, it has worked with the LGBTI community and refugees and asylum seekers in the past, and was interested in improving its understanding of these issues, and the services it offers to these communities.

<http://www.relatelondonnw.org.uk/>

Recruitment of team of Community Researchers

In order to recruit a team of Community Researchers, themselves all LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees or migrants, an advert was circulated by project partners through various relevant networks.

Although the initial response was slow, by July 2012 MBARC was able to appoint a team of nine Community Researchers. Two of the team were UK nationals (rather than asylum seekers, refugees or migrants), but had extensive personal and professional experience of the asylum system, and three were current asylum seekers (working on a voluntary basis), two refugees and two migrants. All Community Researchers were themselves LGBTI.

Training of Community Researchers

Having appointed the Community Researcher team, a training session was held in August 2012, covering:

- Background to the project ;
- Information about the Double Jeopardy Project;
- Role of the Community Researchers;
- Training in performing an 'audit' role;
- Interviewing skills and practicalities; and
- Employment and volunteering agreements with MBARC.

3.2 PHASE TWO – TRAINING, SUPPORT AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Development day for VCOs

A development day was held on 15th August 2012 with pilot organisations, Community Researchers and members of the Advisory Group to further discuss the draft 'Service Specification' and its implementation with the pilot organisations, outline what support would be available from MBARC and the Community Researchers to assist with this process, agree mechanisms for allowing pilot projects to learn from each other, describe the role of the Community Researchers, and set out how organisations would be 'audited' by the Community Researchers at the beginning and end of the project to see what progress they had made against the draft 'Service Specification'.

Community Researcher Visits to Pilot Organisations

Each pilot organisation was paired with a Community Researcher, with the Community Researcher making an initial visit to the organisation in order to meet with staff there, find out more about the organisation and make an initial assessment against the draft 'Service Specification', to enable comparison again at the end of the project.

Project Meetings

MBARC facilitated a series of four project meetings during the project (August 2012 – May 2013), with the purpose of allowing pilot organisations, Community Researchers, Advisory Group members and MBARC staff to discuss progress and challenges, and share learning with each other.

Issues discussed in the project meetings included:

- Providing background information on the project and the issues it sought to address;

- Feedback on the draft 'Service Specification' and its use;
- Reports from pilot organisations on their progress to date (individually and in terms of partnership working);
- Linking pilot organisations so they could work more closely with each other, and allowing them time to discuss collaboration;
- Presenting and discussing a number of case studies developed by Community Researchers;
- A session on definitions of LGBTI, provided by UKLGIG;
- Discussion of 'mystery shopping' phone calls, and level of service that LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and migrant ought to be able to expect from organisations;
- Discussion of other action organisations could take to improve their services for LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and migrants;
- Staff challenge sessions (with staff from different organisations challenging each other on the progress made during the project); and
- Community Researcher feedback on their experiences of being involved in the project.

Online Support

MBARC created an online Facebook Page to promote the project and a Yahoo Group to allow projects to communicate online, however uptake of the Yahoo Group was minimal, and only some of the pilot organisations joined the Facebook Page, with little use of the page.

MBARC Support

In addition to facilitating project meetings and providing support materials to pilot organisations, MBARC was available to support organisations where they had specific questions on the project, or where additional training was required (e.g., to support new members of staff to carry on the activities of the project).

Development of Case Studies

MBARC worked with a number of the Community Researchers to support them to write case studies on their experiences of being LGBTI asylum seekers/refugees. These were shared with pilot organisations to use internally within their own organisations to help with the project (e.g., staff training), and they were also used to stimulate discussion among pilot projects during one of the project meetings.

The case studies can be found in Appendix 1.

Mystery Shopping Phone Calls

The team of Community Researchers made a number of 'mystery shopping' phone calls to the pilot organisations (two to each organisation) in order to test how each organisation would react to an LGBTI asylum seeker/refugee calling them for support, advice or help.

The purpose of the phone calls was to find out about:

- How easy it was to contact the organisation;
- Test the attitudes of staff to a caller stating they were an LGBTI asylum seeker/refugee;
- Assess whether the staff member seemed knowledgeable about LGBTI and asylum seeker/refugee issues;
- Assess whether the staff member was making any assumptions about a caller as an LGBTI asylum seeker/refugee;
- Find out whether the staff member was able to suggest any useful sources of information, or signpost to other organisations that may be able to help; and
- Assess whether they were able to reassure the caller about confidentiality.

After each phone call a report was given to the pilot organisation, in order for them to review and discuss internally, with the aim of helping organisations to review and improve their service.

Feedback on the 'mystery shopping' phone calls was also used to generate debate in one of the project meetings, with pilot organisations reflecting on the feedback, and discussing with Community Researchers how they could improve the service they offer when LGBTI asylum seekers/refugees phone their organisations.

3.3 PHASE THREE – ASSESSING PROGRESS OF ORGANISATIONS

Pilot organisations were responsible for implementing changes within their own organisation, with the project meetings, MBARC support, 'mystery shopping' phone calls and Community Researcher visits acting as an on-going assessment and incentive for organisations to continue to improve their service over the duration of the project.

At the end of the project each pilot organisation was assessed to examine what progress they had made over the duration of the project. This was done in a number of different ways, including the following:

Staff Challenge Sessions

At the final project meeting staff from each pilot organisation were put into pairs, and were asked to conduct a 'critical friend' exercise with each other, where they challenged each other on what changes their organisation had made during the project, how they were planning to continue the work in future, what challenges and difficulties there had been and whether/how these had been overcome.

Each staff member was asked to complete a report on the organisation they were interviewing, and these were returned to MBARC for analysis.

Self-assessment

For those organisations unable to attend the final project meeting, staff were asked to self-assess their own organisation, responding to the same questions as completed in the 'critical friend' exercise.

Final Community Researcher Visit to Organisations

In June 2013 the Community Researchers made a final visit to each pilot organisation to meet with staff again and examine what changes each organisation had managed to make during the project, using their initial visit assessment against the draft 'Service Specification' as a means for comparison.

In order to capture any additional changes and improvements that organisations had made, Community Researchers also asked staff at each organisation to tell them of alternative or additional improvements that they had made to their organisations and services, as well as to detail any challenges or difficulties they had faced.

Each Community Researcher completed a report that was submitted to MBARC.

MBARC interviews with pilot organisation staff

In addition to the information and feedback gathered through project meetings, the reports from the staff challenge sessions, and the final reports from the Community Researchers, MBARC also conducted a number of telephone interviews with pilot organisation staff in order to clarify or expand on particular points of detail.

4 LEARNING FROM THE PROJECT

In this section we set out the key learning from the project, under the following sections:

- Project learning;
- Organisational learning;
- Service delivery learning.

Details of the achievements of each pilot organisation can be found in Appendix 2.

4.1 PROJECT LEARNING

Usefulness of project meetings

Initially the project scope had only allowed for one joint meeting of all of the pilot organisations, however it became clear at the first meeting that gathering all of the pilot organisations together several times throughout the project would be beneficial.

Project meetings became important to the progress of the project, acting as both a means for checking the progress of each organisation (and a prompt to encourage them to make progress between meetings) and an opportunity for pilot organisations to learn from each other and discuss challenges and how to overcome these.

The project meetings were also attended by the group of Community Researchers, and this allowed substantial dialogue between them and the pilot organisations, with significant learning on issues for LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and migrants taking place in these meetings, as well as discussions on what changes pilot organisations should be trying to make.

The project meetings were designed to be informative, interactive, to have Community Researchers working with pilot organisations and to contain a mixture of discussion and group exercises tackling project issues. They included sessions on the background to the project and issues that LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and migrants face, as well as a session on definitions of LGBTI.

One learning point was that the training on definitions of LGBTI should have been delivered earlier in the project, when pilot organisations had the least knowledge around LGBTI terms. A glossary of terms has been included as part of the guide intended for use by other organisations.

Usefulness of case studies

During the project it became clear that pilot organisations would benefit from case studies of experiences of LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and migrants in order to help them contextualise the work that they were doing and to use as a resource to help with awareness raising and training within their own organisations and beyond.

As a result MBARC worked with a number of the Community Researchers to develop several case studies of their experiences as LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees. In drafting the case studies and sending them to various named organisations for comment and response, the project challenged a number of organisations to consider how they respond to LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and migrants.

While it would have been beneficial to have these at an earlier stage in the project, the case studies were appreciated by the pilot organisations when they were completed.

The case studies are included in Appendix 1.

Learning from Advisory Group

The Advisory Group for this project was extremely valuable, bringing a wide range of expertise to the project. A number of learning points from the involvement of the group were:

- While the initial membership of the Advisory Group had representation from 14 organisations, attendance at the group varied, and by the end of the project only half of the group was regularly attending meetings. This highlights the benefit of having a large number of people on the Advisory Group initially, as they are always likely to be people who are no longer able to attend (for a variety of reasons).
- Each of the organisations regularly attending the Advisory Group has given significant staff time to this project. Similar projects may wish to examine whether this could be resourced, particularly in the current economic climate, when staff resources are already stretched.
- While the advice of the Advisory Group has been vital to the success of the project, the project partners have welcomed the autonomy to make decisions on the project in discussion with the funder, and recommend an 'Advisory Group' role rather than a 'Steering Group' for similar projects.
- While there were several LGBTI VCOs and MRCOs represented on the Advisory Group, in hindsight it would have been appropriate to identify an LGBTI asylum seeker, refugee or migrant to join the Advisory group.

Project as a motivator

Several of the pilot organisations commented that volunteering to take part in the project had provided them with the motivation and focus to make changes to their organisation to make it more welcoming and supportive for LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees.

“It was helpful to have the project as a focus, it was a strong motivator” (Pilot organisation).

A number of pilot organisations used the project as a spur to look more generally at their Equality and Diversity policies, and several made changes to these as a result.

Suitability of draft 'Service Specification'

In general the steps outlined by the draft 'Service Specification' worked well and were appropriate, as they were achievable and helped organisations with the process of making their service more welcoming and supportive for LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees.

The main actions that were slightly problematic were Steps 1 and 2 under Goal 1, which asked organisations to:

- Find local information on equalities which includes LGBTI people/ refugees and asylum seekers and equality. Information may be found in your Local Council, your Local Voluntary Sector Council or your Local Police Community Safety Unit.
- Invite a local equalities expert who can speak about LGBTI equalities/ the needs and experiences of migrants and refugees at an organisational meeting. This person could be from your Local Authority, your Local Voluntary Sector Council or your Local Police Community Safety Unit. It could also be an independent person with expert knowledge.

Pilot organisations were not always able to identify a relevant person within their Local Authority, or to find someone suitable through the VSC or the Police, and were not in a position to pay for equalities training as part of the project. In order to take account of this the revised guide has removed the reference to local authorities, VSCs and Police Community Safety Units, instead suggesting that organisations read background information on issues affecting LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and migrants, and look for MRCOs and LGBTI organisations in their local area from which to gather information on equalities.

The revised guide has also adjusted the order of the steps slightly, in recognition of the more advanced steps in the draft 'Service Specification' which organisations found relatively easy to complete within the period of this project.

The revised 'Service Specification' is contained as a guide in Appendix 3, and can be accessed online at [xxxx](#).

Awareness of outside influences on projects, and need for flexibility

During the lifetime of the design and implementation of this project the landscape for MRCOs and LGBTI VCOs has changed significantly, with reduced funding, changes in national and local government, and accompanying policy changes (e.g., health reforms).

These factors have had various impacts on the organisations involved, from a lack of resources to redesign of organisational service delivery in response to changes in the commissioning landscape.

These have impacted on organisations ability to work on this project at various stages, and it has been important to recognise these outside influences and allow flexibility in expectations of organisations.

4.2 ORGANISATIONAL LEARNING

Prioritising what your organisation needs

Although all pilot organisations involved in the project were given the same draft 'Service Specification' to work with, none of the organisations took exactly the same steps, nor did they follow the draft 'Service Specification' exactly.

Each organisation took their own approach depending on the resources they had available, the particular skills they had internally, the priorities they felt were most important to them and the opportunities that were available to them.

This is useful learning for other organisations undertaking a similar process to make their organisation more welcoming to LGBTI asylum seekers, refugee and migrants. While the guide is there to support them, organisations should feel able to prioritise actions depending on the circumstances of their organisation, and take additional or alternative steps where these are suitable and useful.

Having knowledge and information on LGBTI issues and refugee/asylum seeker issues, and recognising other issues that may be relevant

The Community Researchers involved in the project stressed that wherever possible, organisations should try to make sure that all staff have a general knowledge and awareness of both LGBTI issues and issues around asylum seekers, refugees and migrants.

This was seen as important so that staff felt comfortable talking about these issues if an LGBTI asylum seeker, refugee or migrant contacted the organisation and they would respond in an appropriate, friendly and non-discriminatory way.

"We realise with cuts to services and less service staff it can be hard, but it's important for the organisations to get everyone clued up on the issues so they know what the situation is for LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees, so they are confident enough to advise and support them, rather than just referring to other services" (Community Researcher).

Several of the pilot organisations involved in the project have provided training and awareness raising sessions to staff and volunteers across their organisation so that a large number have more knowledge about LGBTI and asylum seeker, refugee and migration issues. This approach is preferable, so that organisations are not reliant on one staff member to handle any enquiries from an LGBTI asylum seeker, refugee or migrant.

The Community Researchers also noted that the immigration issues faced by many LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and migrants also give rise to a lot of other issues, such as housing, health and mental health issues. LGBTI organisations and MRCOs need to be aware of this, and should be prepared to offer support or be able to sign-post to other organisations that are able to offer support on these types of issues.

Input from Community Researchers and involving LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and migrants in organisations

Throughout the project it has been clear that the input of the Community Researchers has had a positive impact on the organisations they have been working with, and in many cases organisations and Community Researchers wished they had been able to spend more time working with each other. From their visits to each organisation, contributions at project meetings and development of case studies of their experiences as LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and migrants, they have helped to bring the reality of issues around LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and migrants to life.

Pilot organisations have benefitted significantly from being able to hear directly what it can be like trying to access support from organisations if you are an LGBTI asylum seeker, refugee or migrant, and from being able to discuss these issues openly with a group that has direct experience of the issues at hand.

While other organisations looking to use the guide developed from this project are not going to have a group of Community Researchers to call on in the same way, they should consider whether and how they could involve LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees or migrants in the process of making changes to their organisation, and in their organisation more generally.

A number of the pilot organisations involved in the project have started to involve LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees or migrants in their organisations more, for example, with a volunteering placement. These types of options are available to organisations not involved in the project as well.

Attitude and skills of staff

- Staff answering the phone are the first point of contact with the organisation, and must have a friendly, welcoming and non-judgemental attitude.
- There should be no sense of surprise, hostility or confusion when someone mentions they are either LGBTI or an asylum seeker, refugee or migrant.
- They should show empathy and understanding, listen carefully, be patient and give people time to explain their situation.
- Ideally any staff member who responds to phone calls should have some understanding of both LGBTI issues and asylum seeker, refugee and migration issues.

Providing options and choice

- Organisations should provide callers with options and choices about services available, be honest about what they can provide support with, and offer a face-to-face meeting if possible.
- They should be able to offer to signpost or refer to another service if it is more suitable, but not too quickly (e.g., solicitors, advocacy, advice).

- If possible LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and migrants should have the choice of speaking with the same person each time they call the organisation, to help them build up trust with the organisation.

Not being afraid to do outreach on LGBTI issues with MRCOs

A number of the MRCO pilot organisations were slightly nervous about starting to discuss LGBTI issues within their own organisations, with their service users and the communities they work with, and with other MRCO organisations that they work with, or that are membership organisations.

There was concern that LGBTI issues may be seen as ‘taboo’ by certain people and that discussing them may generate negative reactions, or that people may turn away from organisations that start to discuss these issues.

Despite these fears, all of the MRCO organisations involved in the project found that addressing issues around LGBTI equality was a positive experience. Although some came across a few negative attitudes or reluctance to talk about LGBTI issues, on the whole they found the process of starting to discuss these issues a positive one.

“We learned that we should not be hesitant about discussing these issues and involving other MRCOs” (MRCO pilot organisation).

“You should not be afraid to start outreach work on LGBTI issues with MRCOs and the communities they work with” (MRCO pilot organisation).

“If you remain silent no one knows. If you open up the subject people start to respond” (MRCO pilot organisation).

Pilot organisations noted that often the main challenge was getting others to make discussing LGBTI equality issues a priority, when they saw other issues as more important or pressing. On the whole they found others receptive to discussions around these issues where they were able to have them.

Where there is resistance from communities, pilot organisations have found that it is productive to talk to community leaders and senior staff in community organisations, who can be more sensitive to these issues, and who can start to exert some influence within their communities.

Some pilot organisations also suggested that interest in these issues from grass-roots organisations was low, but that second tier organisations can play an important role in influencing these grass roots organisations.

Use of the Equality Act 2010

A number of the pilot organisations taking part in the project found that the Equality Act 2010⁶ was a useful tool to persuade other staff and service users to take LGBTI and asylum seeker/refugee issues more seriously.

Being able to inform people and organisations that they have a legal requirement not to discriminate against people based on the protected characteristics of gender reassignment, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership status, race and religion or belief was felt to add weight to attempts to have people take LGBTI and asylum seeker/refugee issues seriously.

4.3 SERVICE DELIVERY LEARNING

Importance of visibility of welcome/support

One of the most important actions that organisations can take is to ensure that they are promoting themselves as welcoming and supportive to LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and migrants.

While it is important that organisations address internal issues, and they need to ensure that their organisation actually *is* welcoming to LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and migrants, it is vital that when this is the case they advertise this fact, making it visible on publications, promotional materials and on their websites.

“Often the most important thing is just to show publicly that they are open to working with LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees” (Community Researcher).

This not only lets LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and migrants know that it is a welcoming organisation, but it also helps to promote the issues more widely to other organisations and communities.

Importance of first contact

Organisations need to ensure that the first point of contact any LGBTI asylum seeker, refugee or migrant has with an organisation results in them feeling welcomed and supported. A number of the Community Researchers pointed out that it takes significant courage for a vulnerable LGBTI asylum seeker, refugee or migrant to contact an organisation.

“LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and migrants are mostly vulnerable people. It takes a lot of courage for them to open up and approach people or organisations, so they need to be treated delicately. If they experience judgement or hesitancy when seeking help then that’s it, they will close up again. It will take a lot of time for them to trust and ask for help again” (Community Researcher).

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/equality-act-2010-guidance>

Organisations need to ensure that any member of staff who may be the first contact point has a suitable attitude (welcoming, friendly and non-judgemental) and enough knowledge and skill to handle an enquiry from an LGBTI asylum seeker, refugee or migrant appropriately.

This does not mean that staff need to be able to answer all the questions that someone may have, or have all the answers they are looking for, but they should be able to make an LGBTI asylum seeker, refugee or migrant feel that they are welcomed by the organisation, that the organisation wants to help them and that they will not be discriminated against.

This applies to whatever form of contact is made, whether that be a phone call, an unannounced visit to the organisation, at a drop-in session or via email.

Importance of not just referring/signposting elsewhere immediately

Linked to the point above, another learning point from the project is the importance of organisations trying to engage properly with LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees or migrants who approach the organisation for support.

While organisations may lack the expertise to deal with certain enquiries, they should listen to each individual and see how they may be able to help, rather than immediately referring them elsewhere. This is important so that individuals feel welcomed by organisations and feel they can approach them for support.

Having suitable referral and sign-posting options, and being honest about limits of knowledge

Inevitably LGBTI organisations and MRCOs are not going to be able to support all LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and migrants with all of the issues and problems that they may be facing. When this is the case, organisations should be honest about their limitations, but offer to try to find a suitable organisation to signpost or refer to, and follow through with this action, rather than giving out incorrect information.

“It is ok to accept when you don’t know something, admit it and come back to the service user once you have found someone that can help, rather than giving out false information” (Community Researcher).

Many of the pilot organisations involved in the project conducted research to find out about other local services that support LGBTI people and/or asylum seekers, refugees and migrants. In several cases organisations used this research to generate a database of organisations that they could make referrals to and signpost people to if need be, and some made these publically available to service users.

Both of these steps should be encouraged, however organisations should also make efforts to contact local organisations they may wish to use for signposting and referrals in order to establish a relationship with those organisations, identify someone as a regular contact point, discuss referral routes, and also check that the organisations in question are themselves likely to offer a welcoming and supportive service for an LGBTI asylum seeker, refugee or migrant.

Organisations should also consider what other types of support may be relevant for LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and migrants and where this support may be available, for example, for those with mental health issues, housing or childcare needs.

Provision of telephone services

A number of the pilot organisations that took part in the project have direct telephone enquiry numbers listed on their websites, with potential service users able to contact the organisation in that way.

The ‘mystery shopping’ exercise conducted by the Community Researchers tested the response that an LGBTI asylum seeker, refugee or migrant may get when phoning these numbers, and identified a number of barriers to accessing suitable support, including:

- A lack of response to phone calls (either at the time or to messages left on answer machines)
- Organisations not offering to call a person back
- Staff responding to the phone call not being comfortable dealing with LGBTI issues or asylum seeker, refugee or migration issues
- Staff responding to the phone call not giving full details of who they are
- Staff responding to the phone call not explaining policies around confidentiality and privacy.

This exercise and subsequent discussion between the Community Researchers and staff from the pilot organisations highlighted a number of learning points on how organisations should run their telephone enquiry lines:

Phone line protocols

- If organisations have their phone number going to an answer machine, and someone leaves a message, it is important that they respond to the enquiry in reasonable time. All voice messages should be responded to.
- If staff from an organisation speak with a service user and agree some sort of follow-up action, this should also be done in reasonable time.
- The Community Researchers said that any organisational phone-lines should be free to call, as LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees or migrants will have very limited resources for making phone calls – where this is not possible organisations should immediately offer to call the person back.
- If an organisation calls a service user and they do not answer, they should try calling them back at least twice.
- Organisations must exercise caution around identifying someone as LGBTI, especially on call back.
- The person who answers the phone should give a proper introduction (who they are, what their role is).

- Organisations should clearly explain policies on confidentiality during the initial telephone conversation.
- Organisations should give a service user prior information if their case is going to be handled by someone else for any reason (e.g., normal member of staff only works part of the week) and introducing them to the member of staff who they will speak to/see next.
- Ideally organisations should offer help for those with language barriers, e.g., [LanguageLine](#).

Provision of face-to-face appointments

The Community Researchers involved in the project also discussed with pilot organisations what ought to be expected if they visit an organisation for a face-to-face meeting. The key points were:

- Treating the client with dignity and respect;
- A friendly approach and attitude;
- Confidentiality;
- Privacy;
- Prompt timing (arranging meeting and at meeting);
- Keeping the appointment;
- Having a suitable waiting area;
- Offering drinks/snacks;
- Providing information about travel expenses (whether organisation can cover these) prior to the meeting;
- Providing directions to the organisation/service; and
- Having the option of a drop-in appointment.

5 LEARNING FROM THE COMMUNITY RESEARCHERS

In the original project specification the main role of the Community Researchers had been envisaged as providing an 'audit' of the participating organisations, testing their service against the draft 'Service Specification', however as the project developed, the Advisory Group and project partners agreed that the Community Researchers should undertake the following tasks:

- Attend an initial training session;
- Attend an initial development day for the pilot organisations;
- Those community researchers who are asylum seekers will help to develop case study examples/sample quotes about their experiences, particularly around accessing support services;
- Each organisation will be assigned a community researcher who will:
 - arrange to visit it to find out more about what it does, who its services normally work with and to get a sense of where it is at initially;
 - revisit the organisation(s) to assess the progress it has made against the specification, and report back to MBARC;
- Attend a second development day for the pilot organisations; and
- Make two short 'mystery shopping' phone calls to a pilot organisation to test reaction of staff to someone asking for help as an LGBTI asylum seeker or refugee.

While the Community Researchers completed all of these tasks, they also attended two more project meetings than originally envisaged, and it became clear as the project progressed that the input of the Community Researchers to these project meetings was highly valued both by the pilot organisations and other project partners.

The Community Researchers were able to discuss their own experiences and opinions with the pilot organisations and this was a very powerful way of illustrating some of the issues, challenges and problems that LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees face when looking for support from MRCOs and LGBTI VCOs.

A number of the Community Researchers have suggested that they would have liked to have been more closely involved with their assigned pilot organisation(s), and similarly a number of the pilot organisations have said it would have been beneficial to have more contact with a Community Researcher throughout the project.

MBARC recognises that this would have been beneficial for everyone involved in the project and it was only a lack of resources that prevented us from encouraging this. It was made clear to all Community Researchers that if they wanted to become more involved with their pilot organisations (e.g., volunteering more of their time to help with the project) they would be supported to do so, but it was felt that it was not fair to expect this of them when we could not pay them to take a more active role. We asked pilot organisations not to make demands on Community Researcher time which we were unable to pay for.

While pilot organisations suggested they would have liked more contact with the Community Researchers, the feedback gathered from them about working with the Community Researchers was almost all positive. Feedback from pilot organisations included:

“The researcher was easy to work with, and had useful suggestions about people to contact”.

“The feedback from the Community Researcher was very useful. We also liked the feedback coming from the mystery shopping”.

“The Community Researcher’s report described our organisation in a very detailed way – it was very useful for us. We felt very comfortable talking to him, he had good listening skills and was serious about learning about our organisation and our issues. His attitude encouraged us to continue”.

“It was valuable support”.

“They were reflective and positively supportive”.

“The discussion with the Community Researcher helped us to think clearly about the needs of refugees from the LGBTI community and the barriers faced by them. It was a good start to re-evaluate our services.”

5.1 FEEDBACK FROM THE COMMUNITY RESEARCHERS

Experience of working with the pilot organisations

The Community Researchers also provided feedback on how they had found working with the pilot organisations. On the whole most had found the experience quite positive, with Community Researchers highlighting:

- The enthusiasm of staff from pilot organisations;
- Staff being proactive and having good ideas;
- Organisations wanting to increase understanding of LGBTI and asylum seeker/refugee issues;
- That it was easy to communicate with pilot organisations, that they were very accommodating and that staff were good with their time;
- That staff were open to questions and Community Researchers did not face any barriers in interacting with them.

“It was satisfying knowing that I was helping to implement change which would affect others similar to me in future”.

“It has been a learning curve for me, and very rewarding”.

“Both organisations were very responsive, enthusiastic and eager to take the initiative”.

While most Community Researchers had found working with the pilot organisations a positive experience, there were some who had found it less so. Reasons for this included:

- Finding it difficult to contact staff from the pilot organisation;
- Meeting with staff, but feeling that they were not prepared and had little to say;
- Staff promising further meetings but not following through with these;
- Finding the language barrier difficult to deal with;
- Feeling that a pilot organisation was not fully committed to the project.

“It has been tough working or trying to work with my organisation – I felt let down by them, me being an LGBTI asylum seeker myself”.

“There are still some organisations that are not really working towards the goal, and I saw that at first hand, and it was deflating”.

“I did not feel my organisation was fully committed. That was/is particularly painful for me as I am or I fit into the category that they are meant to be helping. Knowing what I know now about their commitment I would not approach them for help”.

Extent to which project has addressed issues faced by LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees

The Community Researchers were asked whether they felt the project has helped to address issues faced by LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees when accessing support from MRCOs and LGBTI VCOs. The group felt that it had by:

- Increasing awareness of issues faced by LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees, and revealing where there is a lack of knowledge;
- Issues put on the map, and identified as a priority;
- Improved training for staff and volunteers within pilot organisations;
- Making organisations prove they are LGBTI and asylum seeker/refugee friendly, and show this publically;
- Increasing partnership working between LGBTI organisations and asylum seeker/refugee organisations;
- Revealing where organisations have a lack of knowledge;
- Increasing active participation of LGBTI asylum seekers/refugees in organisations.

“The use of asylum seekers/ refugee/ community researchers has been paramount in raising and addressing these issues”.

A few of the Community Researchers were less sure about the impact of the project, particularly with certain organisations. Their concerns were that:

- While the project may have raised awareness of the problems faced by LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees, it had not fully addressed them.
- There is a need for institutional change within some organisations, and the length of the project means that this may not have been achieved.

- The project may not have had as positive an impact on some organisations as others.

Other action that could have been taken during the project

The Community Researchers were asked whether there was anything else that they thought should have been done within the timeframe and scope of the project that was not done. Their suggestions included:

- More frequent visits to the organisation to assess their progress;
- More active involvement with the organisations generally (e.g., volunteering with organisation to help implement changes, more fieldwork to assess and encourage progress);
- More formal semi-structured interviews that were recorded and transcribed;
- More tailored assessments of organisations depending on their level of progress;
- Allowing Community Researcher to talk to staff within organisations about their experiences of being LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees, as well as their experiences of working on the project;
- More chasing of organisations to remind them to work on the aims of the project;
- An increase in the number of meetings and discussions between organisations and Community Researchers;
- Lectures/seminars/workshop where informed/experienced guests could deliver talks to the pilot organisations;
- Having slightly more structured/firmer set of objectives.

Positive experiences of being involved in the project

The Community Researchers were asked whether they had found being involved in the project a positive experience, and most suggested that they had found the experience a positive one. Reasons for this included:

- Able to directly see the impact that the project could have;
- Seeing organisations working together that may not have before;
- Finding out that organisations are willing to try to address the issues;
- Feeling part of trying to change the situation for LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees;
- Feeling that their contribution is helping organisations and the project to achieve their/its aims and objectives;
- Meeting good people, and seeing that there are people and organisations that want to help LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees;
- Increased knowledge about LGBTI/refugee organisations and the work they do;
- Increasing contacts with other organisations and people, from different ethnicities, cultures, education, background, experience and status;
- Has boosted my work experience;
- Has challenged and improved my understanding and acceptance of some LGBTI issues;
- There has been a positive and pro-active attitude of everyone involved.

“Knowing that I am able to use my past experiences as well as involvement in this project to effect change in these organisations which would help others like myself in the future has been very positive”.

“I have been able to meet other LGBTI people from all over the world, and learn about things I didn’t know about, and it has given me something to look forward to”.

Learning points from the project

Although most of the feedback from the Community Researchers was positive, there were a number of learning points about being involved in the project. Those mentioned were:

- Finding the mystery shopping quite daunting;
- Being disappointed to find an organisation wasn’t very welcoming to refugees/asylum seekers having made first ‘mystery shopping’ phone call;
- That the pilot organisations and Community Researchers did not really work with each other outside of the meetings – the Yahoo Group that was formed was rarely used, despite the fact it was agreed that it would be a good idea to for this to be updated by organisations;
- It was disappointing when some organisations missed project meetings, especially concurrently, as it meant you lost contact with what they were doing;
- Some Community Researchers said they had devoted more time to visiting and interacting with organisations than had originally been stipulated/allotted;
- More training as regards understanding LGBTI issues would have been useful;
- Participation and involvement amongst the advisory group and pilot organisations could have been improved;
- The financial support for the Community Researchers could be improved on:
 - the promised remuneration took a while;
 - It would have been better to have financial assistance beforehand (e.g., travel expenses) as finding money as an asylum seeker is difficult, so it was difficult to go and visit organisations.

Training and support from MBARC

Generally the Community Researchers were very positive about the training they received from MBARC, although a couple of Community Researchers felt there could have been more information on:

- the legal side of immigration;
- understanding LGBTI and refugee/asylum seeker issues.

“The training was superb”.

“The training given by MBARC was helpful in that we were able to better our research skills – such as interviewing, recording information and providing feedback”.

“I think MBARC were very supportive, answered any queries I had and directed the research work we were doing. No complaints!”

“The support from MBARC was great. Assignments were clear and concise, follow up was consistent and feedback was available as well”.

Some improvements that were suggested included:

- A project evaluation survey for all Community Researchers at the end of the project, and gathering formal feedback on involvement in the project.
- Give the Community Researchers more involvement with the organisations themselves.
- Talk to organisations that are or were lacking commitment.

Involving asylum seekers in projects such as this

It should be recognised that there are particular challenges and risks in involving asylum seekers (who do not have the right to work in the UK) in projects such as this.

Where participation is enabled there are still potential risks such as asylum seekers being detained (as happened to one of the Community Researchers during this project) or dispersed to somewhere else in the country.

The group of asylum seekers, refugees and migrants involved in this project were a significant asset to the project as they had tremendous commitment to the issues, were all largely settled in London and could all speak good English. This may not always be the case with similar groups.

6 WHERE NEXT – CALL TO ACTION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

[Link to Guide online](#)

Recommendations for MRCOs and LGBTI organisations

Call to action

As an organisation supporting refugees, asylum seekers and migrants, or as an organisation supporting LGBTI people, you have a responsibility to provide welcoming and supportive services to LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and migrants.

1. Use this report and accompanying guide as a basis for transforming your services to make them more welcoming and supportive to LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and migrants.
2. Host and publicise this report and the guide on your website.

Knowledge and skills

3. Develop the knowledge of your staff on LGBTI issues and/or asylum seeker, refugee and migration issues, particularly those issues affecting LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and migrants.
4. Recognise that the first point of contact with your organisation is vital in establishing a positive relationship with an LGBTI asylum seeker, refugee or migrant, and ensure that staff have the appropriate attitude, knowledge and skills to achieve this.
5. Develop a list of known and trusted organisations for referral and signposting, and make this list available to service users.

Organisational leadership

6. Assign a key member/group of staff to drive the process, but involve as many people as possible within your organisation.
7. Prioritise what your organisation needs and what is achievable.
8. Do not be afraid to discuss LGBTI issues with MRCOs and the communities they work with. Recognise that these may be challenging issues for *some* people to discuss, but encourage these discussions nevertheless. Use the Equality Act 2010 as a tool to press the importance of these equalities issues and the legal requirement of organisations not to discriminate on the grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity, marriage and civil partnership status, race and religion or belief.

Engagement, inclusion and partnership

9. Recognise the benefits of partnership working to help with the process, and look to partner with a local LGBTI organisation (if you are a MRCO) or MRCO (if you are an LGBTI organisation).
10. Look at involving LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and migrants in your organisation, particularly in the process of change to become more welcoming and supportive to this group.
11. Ensure that your organisation is publicly welcoming to LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and migrants and that your service is supportive to them.
12. Be honest about what you can help with and the limits of your knowledge, but try to engage with an LGBTI asylum seeker, refugee or migrant rather than immediately referring or signposting them elsewhere.

Service delivery

13. Review any telephone service you offer service users in line with the learning from this project (see pgs. 35-37).
14. Review any face-to-face appointment service you offer service users, in line with the learning from this project (see p. 37).

Recommendations to influential LGBTI and refugee organisations and second tier support organisations

15. Recognise the issues affecting LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and migrants and your responsibility to address them, and use your influence to advocate for change both within your sector and within other sectors.
16. Host the report and guide on your website and promote it using your websites, newsletter, blogs, social media etc.
17. Encourage and create debate on these issues at a regional and national level (e.g., at conferences).

Second tier support organisations

18. Recognise your role in raising awareness, delivering training and providing support to organisations (in particular small grassroots community groups) to use this report and guide, as part of your capacity building and championing of equalities and diversity.

Recommendations for the Double Jeopardy pilot organisations and programme

Pilot organisations

19. Examine how you can sustain the work of this project in future.
20. Use the guide as a basis for continuing this process.
21. Regularly review the steps you have achieved to date to ensure they remain in place (suggest annually).
22. Look at (continue to) involving LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and migrants in your organisation and service delivery.
23. Wherever possible encourage other organisations to consider similar action to make their service more welcoming and supportive to LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and migrants.
24. Where possible support and advise other organisations on making similar changes.
25. Include information on the project and changes you have made in reports to funders and your Board of Trustees.
26. Host and publicise this report on your website.

Double Jeopardy programme

27. Examine the most effective ways to encourage use of the guide nationally (including promotion of the guide, support to organisations for implementation and evaluation of impact).
28. Establish and support a Community of Interest including organisations using the guide, LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and migrants and other interested stakeholders.
29. Promote the work of the project and Double Jeopardy programme internationally.

Recommendations to Trust for London and other funders and commissioners

As funders you have the power and influence to address these issues, and a responsibility to the sector to do so, particularly as part of an equalities agenda.

Influencing

30. Use the findings of this report and the actions suggested in the guide to challenge organisations that you fund and commission on the extent to which their services offer equality to LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and migrants.
31. Discuss these issues with other funders and influence them to promote action on these issues.

Funding

32. Consider how the actions outlined in the guide could be adapted into funding requirements for LGBTI organisations and MRCOs in future.
33. Consider funding co-production projects/services in which LGBTI organisations partner with MRCOs to tackle the lack of appropriate services for LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and migrants, encouraging organisations from these two sectors to work more closely with each other.

Grant making, monitoring and evaluation

34. Ensure that equalities frameworks cover LGBTI issues specifically, and that organisations you provide grants to have a suitable Equality and Diversity policy which clearly welcomes LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and migrants.
35. Ensure projects you fund gather monitoring data on the number of LGBTI and asylum seeker/refugee/migrant service users accessing their services, and ask them to show how they involve this client group in their organisation and services.

APPENDIX 1 – CASE STUDIES

Double Jeopardy Project

Case Studies

January 2013



Trust for London

Tackling poverty and inequality

Introduction

In the summer of 2011 the Trust for London provided a grant for an action research project - the Double Jeopardy Project - aimed at providing more responsive and welcoming support services for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex (LGBTI) asylum seekers and refugees from Voluntary Community Organisations (VCOs), specifically those working in the LGBTI sector and refugee/migrant community organisations.

The project is being conducted by a partnership between the Metro Centre, Praxis and MBARC, and involves supporting five LGBTI organisations and seven refugee and migrant organisations to transform and improve their services to meet the needs of LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and migrants.

As part of the project, MBARC supported a number of LGBTI asylum seekers/refugees to develop case studies detailing their experiences of being an LGBTI asylum seeker or refugee in the UK.

The individuals providing case studies were asked to provide information around the following areas:

- Background information on why they fled their country of origin to seek asylum in the UK
- Experiences as an LGBTI asylum seeker in the UK
- Experiences of accessing support services from LGBTI organisations, and what this was like as an LGBTI asylum seeker/refugee
- Experiences of accessing support services from asylum seeker/refugee organisations, and what this was like as an LGBTI asylum seeker/refugee
- Experiences of accessing support from more general services, in particular experiences of facing discrimination/lack of support as an LGBTI asylum seeker/refugee
- The impact this lack of support/understanding had/continues to have
- What they would like to see from services
- What difference it would make to have services that were welcoming to LGBTI asylum seekers/refugees.

We hope that these case studies will be a useful resource both for the organisations participating in the project and for other organisations interested in improving their services for LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and migrants.

Case Study One

Why did you have to flee from your country to seek asylum in the UK?

My problems really started when my father passed away. His brothers and sisters came to take me to marry me off to a man that was three times my age. I was locked up all the time, and raped repeatedly.

Prior to this I had realised that I was different to all the other girls, who were busy with boys and so on. I was not. This all confused me.

I did a bit of research on why I had feelings for women that I was supposed to feel for a man, then I came across the word lesbian, which explained a lot to me, and finally I understood that I was not alone. But still I could not talk to anyone about it as in my country it was not allowed by the law or cultures to have same sex relationships.

Anyway long story short, my mother helped me escape to the UK. I came to the UK to be free and be who I am without fear.

Some thoughts on your experience as an LGBTI asylum seeker in the UK

Even though I have been told several times that I am safe here as a lesbian, it is still hard for me to grasp at times, because all that is in my head, all that I have ever known, is that being LGBTI is just plain wrong, it's evil. I still find it hard to disclose being lesbian to people, and I think I always will.

It is harder to be an LGBTI asylum seeker in the UK. The UKBA do not have a specific department or personnel to deal with us, which makes it difficult as we have to disclose that fact to them, and some are clearly against it and actually show that.

It was very hard for me to seek asylum as a lesbian, all I knew was to hide the fact that I was lesbian, and coming out to someone was really hard, even more so to a UKBA officer, someone whom I knew would be judging me and did not believe me at all.

Until we know the outcome of our case we have to be very guarded as to what we say.

Experiences of accessing support in detention

There was no support for me as an LGBTI asylum seeker, especially when I was detained. It would have been good to have posters or people I could talk to in detention in confidence, someone I felt safe with.

It also would have been good to have other detainees who were lesbians so I could have

identified with them and felt normal.

Experiences of accessing support services from LGBT organisations, and what this was like as an LGBTI asylum seeker/refugee

I tried to contact an LGBTI organisation for help but was told to come to London, which I could not do as I had no money to travel to London. It made it all very hard for me to understand and know what to do next.

I was hoping that when I came to the UK I would find someone or some organisations that could explain a lot of things to me. That did not happen.

What impact do you think this lack of support has?

Confusion continues which makes LGBTI asylum seekers more stressed and depressed than they already are.

There are so many questions, but no answers. We have no sense of belonging.

As an LGBTI asylum seeker/refugee, what would you like to see from services?

More knowledge about other organisations in the whole of the UK, so if someone calls from another part of the UK, they can tell them where to go in their local area.

If you have used a service that has been welcoming for LGBTI asylum seekers/refugees, how did this make you feel and what difference has it made for you?

The best thing for me was when I joined UKLGIG (UK Lesbian and Gay Immigration Group7), wow that spelt freedom and understanding for me. It was the best thing that has ever happened to me.

I discovered that there were more people like me, that I was not alone. The questions that I had were all answered, I felt free and liberated. Finally I knew I was not mad, crazy or that I did not have the devil in me.

UKLGIG helped me discover myself, helped me find myself. They helped me see that I was normal, that there were more people like me, lots more.

7

www.uklgig.org.uk

Tel: 020 7922 7811

Services:

Monthly asylum legal meetings for general advice from lawyers, referral to solicitors, support preparing for asylum claim, support to socialise and interact with other LGBTI asylum seekers.

I know that now, and that makes life easier for me and helps me accept myself for who I am.

All the confusion is gone, and now I feel that I do belong somewhere.

It was easy to get to UKLGIG, my lawyer told me about them, but it took me months to finally have enough courage to go. I have not looked back since.

Other comments

As simple as it sounds, having someone who listens and understands is the best thing any LGBTI asylum seeker can have.

This would make the whole asylum process a whole lot less stressful, which for an LGBTI asylum seeker would make a whole world of difference in a positive way.

A simple thing like having someone who believes you, understands you, and is nice to you would have a positive impact on LGBTI asylum seekers.

Case Study Two

Why did you have to flee from your country to seek asylum in the UK?

I am different. I am effeminate and relate better to girls than boys. I am gay. This was viewed as an aberration and distortion by most individuals and the community in general in my country. My family demanded I adopt a heterosexual lifestyle and take a wife and live like a “normal man”. This was rather too difficult for me.

As a result I faced discrimination, harassment and bullying in my community. It is not possible to live openly gay in my country not only because it is culturally and religiously not acceptable but also a criminal offence. Any individual caught in the act of homosexuality is not only ostracized, but runs the risk of being mobbed and is liable to being imprisoned.

I was called derogatory names, assaulted almost on a daily basis on the streets, at work, and all other public places by fellow students, colleagues, and members of the community. I was scared to be myself. I was sexually abused. I could not speak to anybody about this because it was a taboo and could not get any protection from the state because of the laws on homosexuality.

I was very isolated. I was an extrovert but had to adopt an introverted lifestyle because of my sexuality, which had a significant negative impact on my personality. I am interested in being in a long-term relationship rather than having casual encounters, but I have been set up by “supposed friends” and was being blackmailed. I lost over twelve thousand pounds within my last two years in the country. The abusive and exploitative relationships I had impacted on my ability to trust people. I was living in fear and hopelessness not knowing what may become of me.

I was physically and mentally broken. I was terrified at living life. I had so many psychological melt downs. I was on the verge of committing suicide and knew I needed some help or someone I could talk to. I consulted a psychotherapist unknown to anyone. One of the options suggested by my psychologist to get out of the situation was to leave the country. I was vulnerable to more abuse if I had remained in my country.

What was the asylum process and detention like?

My first screening interview lasted the whole day. I was shouted down at by the staff of the UKBA. It was hard enough that I was being interrogated on very personal matters, but at the same time I was in an open hall with over 50 people all listening and staring at what is happening.

I was told at the interview that I will be detained. I was transferred from the interview site to the detention centre. Irrespective that I had a long day during the interview, the transportation and checking in process lasted from 22:00 that unfaithful day to 5:00am the following morning. I was devastated. It would have been better if I was a criminal.

Despite the fact that I had fled my country to avoid persecution from my country men, I was being exposed to the same people and other more homophobic individuals in detention. I was so scared and kept to my cell so much so that I avoided meals at the common dining area and my bath in the common bathroom. I only ventured out when it was very necessary like when I had friends or legal visit.

I was still gay bashed and bullied even though I was always accompanied by a detention officer. I was so afraid and did not know who to talk to or what punishment I would get if I did make a complaint. I was re-living all the terrible experiences I had been through in my country and would have committed suicide in that brief period if I had the means and the strength to do that.

I was requesting a room change looking for a more favourable cell. On one occasion I was threatened by a cell mate. After calling me all manner of derogatory names, in his words 'I will rape and fuck you to death and make sure I kill you if they ever allow you to stay a night in my cell'. It all happened in front of a prison official.

I was afraid of hurting myself. I knew what I was going through and made a request to see a doctor on the second day of my detention, but I did not see one throughout my 12 days stay. I was told I was not the only one needing medical services and hence there will be a queue until it gets to my turn. I made some other requests which were never put through at all.

My main interview came on the 10th day. The interview started at 9:30 and ended at 18:30 with a 30minute break in between. I was truly even more depressed and exhausted at the end of it all.

Some thoughts on your experience as an LGBTI asylum seeker in the UK

I started dating a Black Caribbean man online for over a year, and he convinced me he would take care of me if only I move over to the UK. Soon after I arrived I found out he had lied about himself which I found very shocking and deeply disappointing. I was exploited and abused yet again because I was in a strange and unfamiliar country and I thought it will be best to co-operate as this guy has promised to support me with accommodation. I was very upset and hurt and I felt quite betrayed by this.

However I summoned the courage to leave within the third week, even with the risks of running out of funds and exposing myself to homelessness and poverty.

Then there was this overwhelming feeling of loneliness. I missed my family every minute of the day and always wished that things were different. It was extremely difficult being alone in a new place without having someone to talk to or support me.

The laws here were so strict that it is very difficult to live a normal life. I rented a room for myself however I did not have proper documentation. I later suspected my landlord was illegally renting out the apartment. I lacked a proper tenancy agreement, documentation of bills, council tax etc. It took me more than 12 weeks to open a bank account. So it was with every other thing like registration with a GP, finding another suitable apartment, finding a job etc.

I felt like a cheap criminal. I was being judged without any cause by people who do not know me. It was very humiliating. I felt like I have just jumped out of the frying pan but into the fire.

I thought I would be free from discrimination and harassment. I was shocked at the reality. Most of the rejection had some racial undertone even among the gay community. I have been bashed a number of times on the streets by unknown individuals. I have a great phobia for blacks especially from the African community because of the experiences I have been through in my country, and it does not make life easier in any way.

I withdrew from the on-line gay community as this is synonymous with cheap casual sexual encounters, and not what I wanted. Neither could I afford the luxury of the gay bars. I could not pay for my transportation and the drinks. I detested night life. I was tired and ashamed of always bringing up my private life or asylum circumstance when I met people. It was inevitable. I am not surprised by the rejection I get from people. What more ingredients does one need in creating a ticking time bomb than being a black African, being gay and being a poor wretched asylum seeker?

It was very traumatic going through the asylum process, to find the right solicitor I could trust and be comfortable with discussing issues from my past. Digging up past experiences was unduly stressful and caused severe pain and anxiety. It is like re-living the trauma all over again.

Reporting to UKBA, having my valid student visa cancelled instantly, being taken into detention and going through the various forms of interview was also very difficult. At last I was granted refugee status on the 12th day but that marked the beginning of yet another struggle and journey.

Experiences of accessing support services from LGBT organisations, and what this was like as an LGBTI asylum seeker/refugee

There is a lack of information. Information on these organisations is underground and not easily accessible or available. Some of the websites only have email addresses and no telephone contact. In my opinion and experience I will rather say that some of the websites are for decoration rather than for service delivery. It usually takes ages to get a response back using the email and in some cases no response at all. The phone lines always ring out going into voice messaging more than 95% of the time. Even when I did leave messages on the voicemail I never got any response back.

When you do speak to someone the person at the other end is rather impatient at listening to your problems. They already have a compartmentalised service, and if one does not fit into these categories they often cannot provide any help. They are always eager to dismiss the client on slightest provocation in terms of sex, location, or the type of services provided.

A few of the organisations I got involved with only met once a month, and in cases where I tried to book an appointment, it took more than one month to get an appointment just to have someone to talk to on my experiences and concerns.

Most of the coordinators of these services/groups have the attitudes of demi gods. They put up rather unapproachable strict mannerisms. In fact I never really talked to one of them until over 7 months of being with the group. I would not have had the patience and tolerance if I was not desperate to get help.

While these coordinators/staff have already sacrificed a lot by providing these services to asylum seekers, unfortunately these services are rather superficial.

I realise in reality there are only a few staff with so many clients and so much work to be done. I respect them a lot for the work they do. But is it enough to give legal counsel on the route to asylum, and provide the service of legal aid which may take months to help when there are real life issues (abuse, homelessness, insecurity, fear, joblessness, poverty, depression and anxiety disorders) threatening me on a daily basis which are never explored?

Experiences of facing discrimination/lack of support as an LGBTI asylum seeker/refugee

The most important was in my experience of getting a job. I always fill in my sexuality as gay and my status as a refugee after I was granted refugee status. This predominantly dominated the discussions on my interviews and it is always not a surprise when the result comes back negative especially when I am convinced I have done well.

I was once told by a friend from my country that in order to help me get a job in his firm I needed to stop braiding my hair and present myself in a more masculine manner. I raised the issue with one of the coordinators of an LGBT organisation who barely listened to what was causing me this great anxiety. I was cut short and told to forget about it that the guy simply does not want to help me, which was what I did.

What impact do you think this lack of support has?

Many gay asylum seekers feel a lot of shame about their sexual orientation. These feelings make it very hard for some asylum seekers to tell anyone about the kind of problems they are facing in their home country.

It is generally difficult to trust anyone especially with all the difficult experiences and unfriendly/strict attitude by individuals, and there are increased cases of psychological problems and mental illnesses, and increased vulnerability to abuse and molestation.

There is a lack of information on available help and how to access that, and increasing numbers of gay asylum seekers are sent back to their country of origin with all the attendant consequences.

There is a loss of equality and encouragement of the discrimination against this minority group.

As an LGBTI asylum seeker/refugee, what would you like to see from services?

I would like to see the following things:

- Friendly and welcoming to LGBTI asylum seekers/refugees
- Increased availability and accessibility
- Active at problem solving rather than avoiding these situations
- Improved publicity and awareness
- All inclusive services avoiding any limitations to the barest minimum
- More practical in problem solving and providing extensive support to their clients
- Have a proper referral system in place in case they cannot attend to all the challenges
- Follow up cases

What difference do you think it would make to have services that were welcoming to LGBTI asylum seekers/refugees?

If services were more welcoming to LGBTI asylum seekers/refugees it would reduce the burden and stress being faced by LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees, improve the quality of life, improve their acceptance and recognition in the society and encourage individuals to speak out and bring up human rights issues as it concerns them.

If you have used a service that has been welcoming for LGBTI asylum seekers/refugees, how did this make you feel, what difference has it made for you?

UKLGIG have provided me with support. Going there gave me a feeling of being accepted and enablement of being very comfortable with my sexuality, after years of soul-searching where I have discussed my sexuality with priests and a psychotherapist. It helps to promote equality and dignity for LGBTI. I had lost all my dignity before but I was encouraged to start building it back.

I was greatly informed of the asylum process and the challenges that lie ahead even after the status has been granted. I was better informed and prepared myself for any eventuality.

The meetings are attended by 40 – 80 LGBTI asylum seekers/refugees and it is comforting to know that one is not alone and that many other individual are going through similar experience. It also afforded me the opportunity to mix and learn new things from different parts of the world (some good and some bad).

In the men's therapeutic discussion group asylum seekers and refugees share their experiences on issues such as coming out, HIV awareness, combating isolation and responding to homophobia and hate crime. It was a safe place to talk.

There are also social meetings and events, and skill development workshops where I have learnt so many skills and also boosted my confidence.

Case Study Three

Why did you have to flee from your country to seek asylum in the UK?

I fled from my home country, Jamaica, after facing years of homophobic discrimination throughout my teenage years. Being a gay man in Jamaica is very difficult to deal with, especially as a teenager. Suspicions of my sexuality were continuously fuelled by prank calls, email hacking and rumours by some members of my high school. This discrimination culminated in 2011 when I became victim of threats and violence by other youths in my community (including ex-students from my high school).

Prior to this, I had been a student at university in London from 2008. While in London I was not only accepted by others, but also learned to accept myself and come out as a gay man. Making visits back to Jamaica every year for the summer proved very difficult as I had to revert to pretending to be someone I was not. As a result, I became very withdrawn and also diagnosed clinically depressed.

Photos and interactions on Facebook with other LGBTI friends in London reached Jamaica, and on my last visit in December 2011 I was threatened, chased and attacked by a group of about 7 men in my community. When I returned to the UK in January 2012 I sought refuge.

Seeking asylum in the UK

Seeking asylum in the UK was very scary. While I was in fear of my life in my home country, I was also afraid of the fact that I may be placed in detention as an asylum seeker, or that I may be detained then have to return to Jamaica.

I understood these risks, but the greater risk was that my life would be in danger back in Jamaica. I confided in my best friend, who was very supportive. I made the call to UKBA and began the asylum process. After making the application over the phone, I was given contact information for the Asylum Seekers/Refugee Council.

Experiences of accessing support from LGBT organisations, and what this was like as an LGBTI asylum seeker/refugee

My first point of contact was an LGBTI organisation. I made a phone call to them seeking advice on the asylum process. Having dealt with the LGBTI organisation in the past in regards to other issues, I thought that it was a good idea to contact them first. Being an LGBTI organisation I felt comfortable talking with them about my asylum claim, and I knew they had a special section dealing with immigration issues.

But to be honest, the phone call was short and less helpful than I had expected. The advisor

searched for immigration centres in close proximity to where I live and then gave me details for the Islington Law Centre which was closest to me. I was disappointed with the lack of support as I had hoped that I would be able to deal with the LGBTI organisation directly as they are an LGBTI organisation and would be more knowledgeable and sensitive to the issue.

Experiences of accessing support services from asylum seeker/refugee organisations, and what this was like as an LGBTI asylum seeker/refugee

I visited the Islington Law Centre as soon as I was referred by the LGBTI organisation, but I was then told that I would not be able to access their services as my postcode was registered in the Borough of Haringey rather than Islington. I found this very annoying because not only do I live 10 minutes' walk away, but to be turned away with such a pressing issue seemed wrong.

The advisor then gave me details for the Citizens Advice Bureau (Haringey) and the Hackney Migrant Centre which runs a drop-in session for persons from any borough. I first visited the Haringey Citizens Advice Bureau. There I was asked to give my details and told them that I needed advice on seeking asylum. I was handed various resources including pamphlets on asylum, and told I would be contacted by an assigned caseworker over the phone within a week. This seemed a positive outlook. I was contacted by the caseworker and I explained why I was seeking asylum in the UK. After a long conversation, the caseworker provided me with details of an immigration lawyer and, ironically, gave me details for the LGBTI organisation saying that they provide support for LGBTI persons. I found this very frustrating and unhelpful.

I visited the Hackney Migrant Centre the following week. As a first time visitor, I was greeted at the door by the staff who took my details and asked what kind of advice I required. They explained that it is a drop-in session run on a first-come-first-served basis and I may be waiting for a while. I found the customer service very helpful. When I was finally seen by an advisor I was very apprehensive about telling them the issue. I first asked if everything I say would be treated as confidential and they said yes. I was immediately put through to an immigration solicitor there and he was able to handle my case in confidence. The solicitor took charge of my case immediately scheduling meetings at his office and guided me through the entire asylum process. Overall, I found the experience at Hackney Migrant Centre extremely helpful and non-discriminatory and have them to thank for a positive decision in my case.

Experiences of accessing support from more general services, in particular experiences of facing discrimination/lack of support as an LGBTI asylum seeker/refugee

Throughout the asylum process I was faced with many different problems. I had stopped receiving financial support from my parents in Jamaica after I had returned to the UK in 2011. For this reason, my accommodation was in jeopardy.

I again sought advice from the Hackney Migrant Centre who then pointed me to the Haringey Council. I was apprehensive about revealing my sexuality to the council, knowing that it is not an LGBT organisation. Nevertheless, they were helpful in giving me advice on accommodation and how to access housing benefits as an asylum seeker/refugee.

I also visited various banks and building societies in an attempt to open a bank account, but I was refused by most banks as they said that the form of ID I had was not valid, even though this ID (Biometric Residence Permit) is a valid ID from UKBA which proves my immigration status.

What impact do you think a lack of support/understanding for LGBTI asylum seekers had/continues to have?

The irony of the situation is that LGBTI asylum seekers are seeking refuge in the UK, but many are not welcomed by these organisations.

I believe that this lack of understanding continues to have major effects on LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees. Misinformation and/or being referred to other organisations are not encouraging for someone who is facing difficulties with pressing issues.

People end up losing confidence in local organisations that are supposed to be there to help them, and may turn to other sources for info/advice that may not be correct. Also, in most cases issues faced by LGBTI asylum seekers/refugees are not only limited to immigration, but also housing, finance, health and even education.

As an LGBTI asylum seeker/refugee, what would you like to see from services?

As an LGBTI refugee, I would like to see these organisations being more inclusive in the services and advice they give. Knowledge and understanding of LGBTI AND asylum issues together is key, as well as those issues which are attached to LGBTI persons seeking asylum (such as housing, healthcare, etc.)

They should be more welcome to LGBTI asylum seekers and ensure that these persons feel secure in making the decision to seek refuge in the UK.

More services should be available across the board for LGBTI asylum seekers where correct information is readily available at first contact, rather than having to be referred to other organisations. This is vital at a time where information, advice and support is needed

quickly.

If you have used a service that has been welcoming for LGBTI asylum seekers/refugees, how did this make you feel, what difference has it made for you?

The Hackney Migrant Centre⁸ is very welcoming to LGBTI asylum seekers/refugees, even though they are not an 'LGBTI organisation'. This made me feel extremely hopeful and confident in my decision to seek asylum.

They provide advice/support in a wide range of issues, with different advisors and professionals dealing with immigration, housing, education, health, family and other legal issues. The system they run is very organised, free and available to everyone. Added to that, they provide a free lunch and help with small food items to take home for those who may be struggling.

The Hackney Migrant Centre has made a big difference in my case by providing me with legal advice which resulted in a positive decision.

⁸ Hackney Migrant Centre
Tel: 07504332706
<http://www.hackneymigrantcentre.org.uk/>

APPENDIX 2 - ACHIEVEMENTS OF EACH PILOT ORGANISATION

In this section we set out the achievements of each pilot organisation, highlight what impact the project has had on their organisation, list some of the challenges organisations faced and provide detail of how organisations intend to continue the work of the project in future.

Migrant, refugee and asylum seeker organisations

Evelyn Oldfield Unit

Key actions taken:

- The organisation publicised the Double Jeopardy project internally and to membership organisations, raising awareness of LGBTI issues among numerous refugee organisations;
- They produced a regular bulletin on the project that went out to all membership organisations;
- They reviewed their own equalities monitoring to include examination of LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees, changing their question on gender identity, and shared this as a tool with other membership organisations;
- They met with Stonewall Housing, Relate North West London and the West London Gay Men's Project to discuss the project, share learning and form a working partnership group;
- Evelyn Oldfield Unit compared their Equality and Diversity Policies with this partnership group, identifying gaps in their policies and updating them appropriately;
- Evelyn Oldfield Unit and Stonewall Housing staff held joint training sessions with each other, looking at equalities issues;
- Stonewall Housing attended the Evelyn Oldfield AGM, and West London Gay Men's Project had a stall at the event, raising awareness of LGBTI issues among membership organisations;
- An intern created a display about the Double Jeopardy project, which was also displayed at the AGM; and
- A training event was held, in partnership with Stonewall Housing, for membership organisations on raising sensitive topics in group discussion, and LGBTI issues were included in this.

Impact:

- Evelyn Oldfield Unit staff and volunteers have significantly increased their awareness of LGBTI issues, and now feel much more comfortable working on these issues. They are also more aware of other organisations they can refer LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees to for support;
- They have promoted awareness of these issues to other asylum seeker and refugee organisations that they work with, together with the fact that it is alright to discuss them;

- The organisation has created strong partnership links with three of the other pilot organisations, which are likely to continue beyond the life of the project; and
- The organisation has refreshed its Equality and Diversity Policy, in consultation with LGBTI organisations involved in the project, and is now collecting better monitoring data on LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees.

Challenges:

- The Evelyn Oldfield Unit Management Committee has been supportive of the project, though has not engaged with it actively. It is felt that extra effort is required to activate some of the Management Committee members, who have had limited time and availability to become involved with the project/issue (as with other projects/issues they work on);
- The lack of any budget for the work of the project has been challenging, as they have had no resources for publicity, venue hire or training, or the staff time allocated to the project; and
- They have also felt that there was a limited demand from the grassroots organisations that they work with for the project.

Continuation of project work:

- Evelyn Oldfield Unit plans to continue working closely with Stonewall Housing and hopes to organise more joint training and meetings between staff from both organisations. They also hope to continue to work with Relate North West London and the West London Gay Men's Project;
- Their community development work will continue to advise groups about LGBTI issues accordingly; and
- Evelyn Oldfield Unit expressed a desire to continue working with all of the groups involved in the project, if suitable opportunities can be found and resources are available.

Hackney Refugee Forum (HRF)

Key actions taken:

- HRF set up a Health and Scrutiny Steering Group which has been examining LGBTI issues;
- The organisation arranged a conference on the Equality Act 2010 and Hackney Council's policy towards LGBTI people on the 16th January 2013. At this conference the issue was discussed with 26 local refugee organisations and Hackney Council, and all were urged to re-examine their Equalities Policies to ensure they take account of LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees;
- It has influenced Hackney CVS (Community Voluntary Service) to become more active on LGBTI issues and to review its Equalities Policy;

- It has brought the issue of LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees to the attention of the various organisations in the Hackney Refugee Forum, and now these organisations are more aware of these issues and some have improved their services. For example, the Hackney Migrant Centre is now more sensitive to helping LGBTI people;
- HRF has also emphasised the importance of confidentiality to organisations when they are working with LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees;
- The organisation has had contact with various other pilot organisations through project meetings and it had an email exchange with Galop which sent them its Equalities Policy to help with recommendations on LGBTI issues;
- HRF reviewed its Equalities Policy and updated it and then sent this document to its member organisations; and
- HRF is now more aware of LGBTI organisations in Hackney and elsewhere.

Impact:

- HRF has begun discussions on LGBTI issues which is a delicate topic for some of its member organisations and these organisations have now been encouraged to consider the issues;
- HRF has learned more about LGBTI issues and the Equalities Act as a means of supporting disadvantaged groups;
- The organisation has become more aware of other LGBTI organisations;
- It feels more able to deal with issues for LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees, and is more confident about where else to refer or signpost them; and
- HRF is aware of the support for LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees other organisations offer and what kind of legal support is available.

Challenges:

- HRF has found that some organisations on its steering group have been reluctant to work on this topic. These organisations have been concerned that if they are seen to be addressing these issues they may lose members of their organisations, as LGBTI issues are seen as taboo in some communities;
- HRF has found that the best way to combat this is to contact leaders or communities and organisations, as they can be more flexible, sensitive and can influence organisations to change their attitudes;
- In a climate of economic cuts, HRF have found that various organisations and staff have other priorities which they have seen as more important than issues about LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees; and
- The lack of resources for the project was challenging, as the staff member at HRF had very little time to work on the project.

Future:

- HRF has been looking for a grant to help them continue this work but has not had any success; and
- It will continue to raise issues at HRF Steering Group meetings.

IndoAmerican Refugee Migrant Community (IRMO) - Latin American Refugee Project

Key actions taken:

- A specific staff member was assigned to work on the Double Jeopardy project;
- IRMO conducted research to find out about the LGBTI community in Brixton;
- IRMO has formed links with the NAZ Latina project, Gay Men's Initiative (GMI) Partnership and Brook in order to improve its knowledge of LGBTI issues, form partnerships with LGBTI organisations and create referral routes;
- The organisation has arranged for GMI to provide equalities training to staff (to be completed shortly) and it is planning to visit GMI in the near future;
- IRMO created a statement on LGBTI equality and published this online and in its volunteer manual;
- IRMO also reviewed its Equalities and Diversity policies and made some adjustments to make them more applicable to LGBTI issues. All job descriptions were altered to make reference to adhering to its Equalities Policy;
- A workshop was held to discuss inclusivity for LGBTI people with both service users and staff members took part;
- IRMO organised the 'Together as One' festival, in partnership with GMI and Brook, which was held on 19th and 20th of July 2013. The key aim was to involve young people who are refugees, asylum seekers and others IRMO works with in a workshop about diversity, sexuality and sexual health:
 - The workshop brought together volunteers, young refugees and asylum seekers and sexual health organisations (GMI and Brook) to work together on these issues and how they affect the communities they work with.
 - The event was very successful, promoting lots of discussion from young people who seemed to enjoy the opportunity to talk openly about something they often do not have the chance to discuss.
 - Both Brook and GMI were present at the festival, providing contraception, leaflets and sexual health information and raising LGBTI issues.
 - The event also included graffiti, music and dance on the theme of sexual diversity.
- The project has been discussed in team meetings and with trustees.

Impact:

- IMRO staff, volunteers and Management Committee have increased their understanding of LGBTI issues, and now realise their duty to protect the rights of LGBTI people and the legal protections that exist for them;
- Staff are now more able to deal with LGBTI issues;

- It is hoped that this increased understanding will have a positive impact on service delivery;
- The IMRO Board has been engaged with the project from the beginning and helped to rewrite the Equality and Diversity policy;
- The organisation learned that LGBTI issues are an issue for many of their clients;
- It has improved its Equality and Diversity policies and made the organisation more publicly welcoming to LGBTI people;
- This has helped it to challenge inappropriate views on LGBTI issues;
- It has started to make links with LGBTI organisations and has made arrangements to have equalities training from GMI; and
- The organisation has engaged its local community in discussion around LGBTI issues through the 'Together as One' festival.

Challenges:

- Many of the service users, volunteers and some staff at IMRO do not have English as their first language (and in some cases do not speak any English). This can make it difficult to form partnerships with LGBTI organisations or to refer people to these organisations, as there are very few Spanish speakers in LGBTI organisations;
- The lack of time/resources available to work on the project was challenging; and
- The organisation felt that some of the steps in the draft 'Service Specification' were more suitable for larger organisations.

Future:

- IRMO has developed an Equality Action plan for the next six months and one of the trustees has responsibility for monitoring this; and
- It is planning to create a media pack which aims to challenge stigma against LGBTI people.

Praxis

Key actions taken:

- Praxis made a list of local LGBTI organisations in order to improve its networking and referral options;
- It developed a new partnership with Stonewall Housing and Stonewall Housing held a training session for all Praxis staff on LGBTI issues;
- The organisation is reviewing the training given to volunteers and staff with the intention of including more training on LGBTI issues;
- Praxis has also made links with a number of the other Double Jeopardy pilot organisations;
- It has reviewed its Equal Opportunities Policy and is in the process of updating it slightly;

- After a number of internal staff changes, a Project Lead was assigned to the Double Jeopardy project and they have worked with the advice team to improve the inclusivity of its service for LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees;
- The organisation consulted with staff and service users to discuss how it could improve its services for LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and migrants, and is in the process of making relevant changes;
- The organisation now provides information about the support that is available to LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and migrants in the organisation; and
- Praxis has made efforts to contact Tower Hamlets Council to discuss LGBTI equalities issues, although to date has not had any response.

Impact of the project:

- The Praxis Senior Management Team (SMT) has been very supportive of the project.
- Praxis staff have become more aware of LGBTI issues, and have considered how they can make their advice service more welcoming for LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees;
- The project has prompted more dialogue internally about LGBTI issues, and has shown the organisation the importance of being more sensitive to the LGBTI community;
- Praxis is now more aware of issues around gender identity and sexuality in case work, and provides a better service for LGBTI people;
- It has formed links with the Step Forward Young LGBTQ group;
- The organisation is now able to signpost people to LGBTI organisations where required; and
- Staff now receive better training on LGBTI issues.

Challenges:

- There were a number of staff changes during the lifetime of the project, meaning there was not a consistent member of staff leading on activity; and
- Staff time and availability to work on the project was limited.

Continuation of project work:

- Praxis plan to continue training all staff on LGBTI issues in their induction training, so that everyone working in the organisation has a better understanding of LGBTI issues; and
- The staff member leading on the Double Jeopardy project hopes to continue with this work beyond the lifetime of the project.

Southwark Refugee Community Forum (SRCF)

Key actions taken:

- The organisation has raised awareness among its staff, volunteers and membership organisations about the needs of asylum seekers and refugees from the LGBTI community;
- SRCF has undertaken a Governance review, including examination of their Equal Opportunities Policy, to ensure that it covers LGBTI issues;
- The organisation has identified and made contact with local LGBTI organisations to which they can signpost service users for support;
- In February 2013 they developed a partnership with the Day Centre for Asylum Seekers to organise an LGBTI awareness raising event during LGBT History Month on issues faced by LGBTI refugees. The event was aimed at members of the refugee community and agencies who come into contact with refugees in Southwark. It included presentations from MBARC on the Double Jeopardy project, as well as the Metro Centre on partnership work with African organisations, Say It Loud Club (an LGBT support community group) and Councillor Claire Hickson, Southwark Council Cabinet Member for Community Engagement, on their approach to supporting refugees and asylum seekers from the LGBT community. Based on feedback from participants SRCF feels that it encouraged the refugee community and refugee organisations to discuss and think about their service provision in relation to the needs of refugees from the LGBTI community;
- SRCF recently took on an LGBTI volunteer as a way of demonstrating to its membership organisations and service users that it promotes equality of access and a welcoming environment to all;
- SRCF has been looking at using member organisations' existing equalities policies to challenge them to see whether they are doing enough on LGBTI issues; and
- SRCFs board of directors has been very supportive of the work of the project, which has allowed staff to take the time to attend meetings and organise the awareness raising event.

Impact:

- The organisation found the visits of its Community Researcher very helpful for encouraging them to think about LGBTI issues, and where there have been/are gaps in its service provision;
- SRCF's service provision has become more inclusive as a result of the project, with client registration records showing that some of their service users have identified themselves as LGBTI during the Double Jeopardy project;
- The organisation learnt that some refugee community organisations are less welcoming to LGBTI refugees due to cultural/religious barriers, but that engaging with refugee organisations can start a dialogue on these issues;
- SRCF feel that asylum seekers and refugees from the LGBTI community may feel more included than before, though they recognise that this is a process that needs much more work, and is in the early stages;
- SRCF staff are now more prepared for dealing with the needs of LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees; and

- Staff are more informed about how and where to signpost service users into relevant LGBTI agencies.

Challenges:

- The main challenge SRCF has faced is the lack of resources and staff time to devote to the project;
- SRCF has found that it can be difficult to talk to some of their members and membership organisations about LGBTI issues, due to various cultural and religious barriers. Thought is required about the best way to bring up these issues, as different organisations and members have different attitudes; and
- The organisation has also found that there are a lack of links between refugee community organisations and organisations from the LGBTI sector. Although SRCF has been looking to address these, there is more work needed to link up its membership organisations to local LGBTI organisations.

Continuation of project work:

- SRCF recognises that equal opportunity and equal access are the first steps into encouraging organisations and boards of trustees to engage in positive discussion around LGBTI issues; and
- SRCF is currently reviewing general governance and hopes this review will result in a well governed organisation that is able to sustain equal access to everyone, including refugees from the LGBTI community.

RAMFEL (Refugee and Migrant Forum of East London)

Key actions taken:

- Worked to support a number of LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees that came to its organisation; and
- The organisation works closely in partnership with Redbridge Rainbow Community in order to deliver services suitable for LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and migrants, and it is currently supporting a number of LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees with their immigration issues.

Impact:

- Because of the joint working between RAMFEL and Redbridge Rainbow Community, it became easy for referrals to be seen jointly by both organisations, rather than issues being separated into 'immigration matters' and 'sexual matters'. Both organisations were able to speak freely and openly about the clients issues as a whole;
- RAMFEL's knowledge of LGBTI issues was greatly enhanced through Redbridge Rainbow Community; and

- RAMFEL and Redbridge Rainbow Community confronted the police jointly over Operation Nexus (formerly known as Operation Terminus). Both organisations toured the police station and custody suite. Redbridge Rainbow Community was given assurances that anyone who was brought in for questioning who had escaped persecution from their home country because of their actual or perceived sexuality would not be sent back to their country of origin.

Challenges:

- Lack of staff capacity to attend project meetings.

LGBTI Organisations

Camden LGBT Forum

Key actions taken

- All Camden LGBT Forum staff were trained on issues around LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees, to ensure that all staff were taking the project and issues seriously;
- The organisation examined its Equality and Diversity Policies to ensure they were suitable for asylum seekers and refugees, and updated them accordingly;
- The organisation established relationships with a South Asian Woman's Group, Somali Groups and the Bangladeshi Law Centre, and has set up protocols for referring service users to each other where necessary;
- The organisation also met with the IndoAmerican Refugee Migrant Community organisation;
- Training was conducted with staff on responding to LGBTI asylum seekers/refugees when they phone the organisation looking for support;
- There are plans to update the website and include a section on the experiences of asylum seekers and refugees in a blog hosted on the website;
- It is also planning a short film on LGBTI Somalians;
- During LGBT History Month the organisation arranged three events which shared the experiences of asylum seekers and refugees;
- A poetry night run by Camden LGBT Forum has been used to share asylum seeker/refugee issues;
- The organisation has recruited a number of multi-lingual volunteer translators so their services are more easily available to asylum seekers, refugees and migrants;
- It has translated its hate crime reporting information into different languages, and will continue to translate to more non-English languages in future;
- The organisation has produced new leaflets which highlight asylum seeker and refugee issues and experiences;
- The organisation has been doing work about LGBTI issues with pupils in schools, a significant number of whom come from refugee families;

- It is hoped that the project and issues around LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees will be addressed at a trustee meeting in the near future;
- It is working towards creating a Camden LGBT Refugee Ambassador position; and
- The Director of Camden LGBT Forum currently sits of the Camden Policing Group, and has advised the group to recruit an asylum seeker or refugee. He is also on the Scotland Yard LGBT Advisory Group, and has been discussing how that group could do work around these issues.

Impact:

- Staff were challenged to think differently;
- Noticed that the organisation was starting to recruit and serve more refugees from Camden;
- The organisation realised that many lay members or clients of the forum were not as understanding of refugee and asylum issues as one may have presumed;
- This led to a very effective Stage 2;
- Staff and lead volunteers worked hard to get the organisation's schemes and services into more diverse places;
- Camden LGBT Forum has documented where many refugees and asylum seekers access other services through intelligence and have gone to these places accordingly;
- The organisation now has refugee speakers for its Q-Lab, volunteers who may only be there for a short period of time to help integrate into Camden life;
- The organisation's policies have been updated to take into account its wish to explicitly mention refugees and asylum seekers in its promotional work;
- It has significantly increased its network across London and has shared experiences and guest speakers on more than one occasion;
- The organisation's links with Camden's Somali groups are now seen as an example to other LGBT groups across the country;
- As a result of adding refugee and asylum seeker issues to its training the organisation has had many Camden groups and organisations approach it to speak to their members or staff purely about issues affecting refugees and asylum seekers; and
- The project has had a good impact on the organisation's school work as so many children in Camden are refugees.

Challenges:

- The organisation found that to find LGBTI refugees and asylum seekers it had to go to many places that the organisation was not accustomed to working with, and this was very time consuming;
- While work with the partner organisation was great the immediate impact will be felt within Camden groups; and
- The organisation saw a significant increase in the number of asylum seekers with no link to Camden coming through its doors having heard we support asylum seeker

applications, perhaps through some miscommunication somewhere along the line, though this reduced over time.

Future:

- The organisation has recently trained a new volunteer Champion who is a Camden LGBTI refugee and she is in the process of starting some specific outreach programmes for refugees and asylum seekers in Camden;
- The organisation would like to seek some future funds to have a refugee LGBTI worker for perhaps one day a week, and intend to put this in its new business plan;
- The organisation's website is being revamped with a dedicated section for LGBTI refugees in Camden; and
- The organisation is concluding a mapping project and wishes to include stats on refugee and asylum seeker LGBTI hate crime in the second instalment.

Galop

Key actions taken:

- Galop researched information about asylum seeker and refugee issues and local MRCOs in their area and used the opportunity to create a database of these organisations and support services which it now uses for reference and to help with referrals if needed. It has also been made available to service users;
- It has conducted a number of 'learn and share' sessions with other organisations and community groups, to improve its understanding of asylum seeker and refugee issues, including UKLGIG and a Saudi Men's Group;
- The organisation also had training from Advice UK on certain immigration issues, to increase its awareness and skills in that area;
- It reviewed its Equality and Diversity Policy and its Equality Objectives to include immigration status, which was discussed and agreed by the trustees, and this is clearly displayed for service users across the organisation;
- It is planning to make their Equality and Diversity Policy available online;
- It also reviewed its monitoring and evaluation data;
- Galop is looking at whether it could partner with an MRCO organisation to do some work around hate crime and abuse of asylum seekers in detention centres; and
- It is also looking at expanding its training services to create awareness of LGBTI hate crime and abuse in MRCOs and detention centres, and to give further training on these issues.

Impact:

- Staff and volunteers within the organisation have become much more aware of issues for LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees, and the barriers they can face;
- They now feel more equipped to deal with asylum seeker, refugee and migrant issues.

- Galop now has a better understanding of other organisations working in this area, and is now able to refer people to these organisations if need be;
- It is hopeful that it will see a rise in the number of asylum seekers, refugees and migrants using its service;
- The Management Committee has been very keen and supportive, and a training session with them on these issues is planned in the near future; and
- The project has helped Galop to consider what aspects it should improve as an organisation overall.

Challenges:

- Limited resources to work on the project; and
- Galop did not find it easy to work with the refugee organisation that it was paired with, as the organisation was unable to devote time to meeting with Galop.

Continuation for future:

- Galop has a Quality Action Plan set out for the rest of the year, which will continue work in this area.

The Metro Centre

Key actions taken:

- The Metro Centre (Greenwich Office) has made links with the Greenwich Inclusion Project (GrIP). This is a service funded by Greenwich Council which deals with race equality, inclusion and hate crimes. More specifically, Metro has been part of forums with this project dealing with homophobic bullying;
- The organisation has regular meetings with the police in Greenwich, and it provides a link between victims of LGBTI hate crime and the police. The organisation also has strong links with Lambeth Council, as it has an associate volunteer, Steve Reed, who was previously MP for Croydon North and former Leader of Lambeth Council;
- A statement about LGBTI migrants and refugees was drafted and fully accepted by the Board of Trustees in February 2013;
- The Metro Centre website provides access to all meeting minutes, reports, strategic action plans and latest news, and mention of their work with LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees has been made in the news section;
- All staff are updated with news on the project via the weekly internal Metro Newsround;
- The organisation appointed a key member of staff to work on the project, who was also a member of the Advisory Group. He has been working strategically to ensure that the Metro Centre is more inclusive and provides services for LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and migrants;

- Staff have been trained to refer any calls from LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees or migrants to this key staff member, or to be able to refer to suitable organisations that offer support to LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and migrants;
- The organisation has held defined and structured discussions and meetings on progress against the draft 'Service Specification' at every level: with the Board of Trustees, the Senior Management Team and the Management Team;
- The Board of Trustees gave its unanimous and strong support for the Double Jeopardy project, and a process of roll-out across the Metro Centre, and it has been examining how to fit this work in alongside its Strategic Action Plan which spans a period from 2009-2014 (<https://www.metrocentreonline.org/pdfs/REPORT-FINAL-5yearSTRATPLAN.pdf>); and
- The organisation has been supporting an LGBTI service user with a complex immigration and personal situation, and has been working on that as an organisation.

Impact:

- Although Metro has worked with asylum seeker, refugee and migrant community members since its formation in 1984, the Double Jeopardy project has allowed it to focus on this area of the community. Metro Centre has considered how it relates to them, how its services are perceived by the community and how Metro, as an organisation across all levels is geared to respond to the needs of the asylum seeker, refugee and migrant community; and
- Staff have been open to the project and have accepted the introduction of new processes to support LGBTI refugees/asylum seekers.

Challenges:

- The challenges faced by the Metro Centre were focused on the availability of resources, mainly staff time, which could be devoted to the project in an environment which includes the new Health and Social Care Bill and uncertainty about funding for key projects; and
- Metro also relocated to new offices in the early part of 2013, and this diverted some staff resources from the project.

Continuation of project work:

- The legacy of the Double Jeopardy project will be shown in the incorporation of the needs of asylum seekers, refugees and migrants in Metro's service development plans and in the work to develop its next strategic plan. The organisation will be using the guide as a reference for service development and as a benchmark of progress across the next two years.

Redbridge Rainbow Community (now Redbridge Rainbow)

Key actions taken:

- Worked to support a number of LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees that came to its organisation;
- Recently received a grant from Heritage Lottery Fund to do work around civil partnerships;
- The organisation works closely in partnership with RAMFEL in order to deliver services suitable for LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and migrants, and it is currently supporting a number of LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees with their immigration issues.
- Cases have also been referred to Redbridge Rainbow Community from Positive East;
- The organisation has good links with the Asian LGBTI community in Redbridge. The new staff lead is also a Muslim and has a good understanding of relating to individuals within this religious group;
- The organisation continues to work with the MET police in combating homophobia and hate crime;
- Redbridge Rainbow will be providing training for The Foyer in Redbridge around "acceptable" language and also supporting LGBT staff and residents in The Foyer; and
- The organisation is planning to make its group meetings more interactive and supportive, inviting diverse groups and individuals from the local community.

Impact:

- Because of the joint working between RAMFEL and Redbridge Rainbow Community, it became easy for referrals to be seen jointly by both organisations, rather than issues being separated into 'immigration matters' and 'sexual matters'. Both organisations were able to speak freely and openly about the clients issues as a whole;
- Clients who used Redbridge Rainbow Community services were shown a community that was inclusive of all;
- Redbridge Rainbow's knowledge of immigration issues, especially for LGBTI clients, was greatly enhanced through both RAMFEL and MBARC; and
- RAMFEL and Redbridge Rainbow Community confronted the police jointly over Operation Nexus (formerly known as Operation Terminus). Both organisations toured the police station and custody suite. Redbridge Rainbow Community was given assurances that anyone who was bought in for questioning who had escaped persecution from their home country because of their actual or perceived sexuality would not be sent back to their country of origin.

Challenges:

- Lack of staff capacity to attend project meetings; and
- Lead staff member left the project in April 2013.

Stonewall Housing

Key actions taken:

- Stonewall Housing now regularly discuss issues about LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees in team meetings and Management Committee meetings;
- It has also setup a sub-group of staff and volunteers to look at refugee and asylum seeker issues (lead by the Chief Executive and Office Manager);
- The organisation has been part of the Double Jeopardy Advisory Group throughout the project, and attended and devised a workshop at the Double Jeopardy 2012 conference;
- It has conducted training on asylum seeker and refugee issues with both staff and trustees, and Praxis conducted further training with staff at a meeting in June 2013;
- The organisation signed up to a volunteer programme with refugees and asylum seekers, and a refugee volunteer began working with the organisation in June 2013;
- Its LGBT Domestic Abuse service publically states support for LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees. This statement is also included in a 'Plan of Action' leaflet;
- There is an 'Information for Asylum Seekers and Refugees' leaflet on their website, which includes signposting to suitable support organisations (http://www.stonewallhousing.org/files/FS_RefugeeInfo.pdf);
- The organisation plans to discuss progress against the draft 'Service Specification' at a trustee meeting in the near future;
- There are plans to survey both staff and service users in future about how the service can become more supportive for LGBTI asylum seeker, refugees and migrants;
- Stonewall Housing formed close partnerships with both Praxis and the Evelyn Oldfield Unit, forming a working group together and meeting regularly to discuss the project and how they could collaborate;
- Stonewall Housing has provided training on LGBTI issues to various Double Jeopardy pilot organisations;
- Stonewall Housing and other pilot organisations examined each other's equality and diversity policies to see where they could be enhanced, improved referral mechanisms between the organisations, and Stonewall Housing attended the Evelyn Oldfield AGM;
- Stonewall Housing held a Domestic Abuse Forum Event, which was attended by some of the Double Jeopardy pilot organisations and promoted information about the project;
- The organisation is planning events which will highlight and promote issues around LGBTI asylum seeker and refugees;
- Stonewall Housing already monitors the numbers of asylum seekers and refugees that it sees, and this information is reported every six months to all staff, the Management Committee and on its website;
- Asylum seekers and refugees are already identified as a key target group in future service delivery planning, and are mentioned regularly in organisational literature and on the website; and
- Stonewall Housing held a training event for refugee and migrant organisations, in partnership with the Evelyn Oldfield Unit, on raising sensitive topics in group discussion, and LGBTI issues were included in this.

Impact:

- Staff have benefited greatly from getting to know MRCOs more closely through the Double Jeopardy project;
- New partnerships were developed with MRCOs to improve referral pathways for clients and improve services or consider new projects for LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and migrants;
- The Double Jeopardy project has increased staff awareness of refugees and migrants, ensuring they are better equipped to support a refugee volunteer who was recruited through another partnership project; and
- Stonewall Housing's Strategic Plan now includes reference to meeting the housing needs of LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and migrants.

Challenges:

- The Management Committee has been restricted in the amount of time it has been able to devote to the project, as its focus has been on fundraising. As a result changes have been more staff and service user focussed; and
- Staff capacity has proved challenging – Stonewall Housing had wanted to appoint a refugee volunteer in December 2012, but did not have staff capacity to support them, so this appointment was not made until the end of the Double Jeopardy project in June 2013.

Continuation of project work:

- Stonewall Housing is in the process of planning how it can continue the work of the project;
- It intends to maintain its links with partners from the project, and meet regularly with them; and
- Stonewall Housing's new case management system will monitor the needs and effectiveness of services for LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and migrants.

West London Gay Men's Project (WLGMP)

Key actions taken:

- The organisation developed a statement of support for LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees;
- WLGMP examined its protocols for phonecalls from asylum seekers/refugees;
- It spoke with its local Community Voluntary Service (CVS) to gather information about local asylum seeker/refugee organisations, and developed a referral database of these organisations;
- It used this database to make contact with a large number of MRCOs, publicising their service and welcoming more communication with local MRCOs;

- The organisation invited Justice for Gay Africans to provide training to its staff on issues related to the project;
- It also had training on trans issues for all staff;
- It has had discussions with REAP (Refugees in Effective and Active Partnership) about local organisations it could partner with, and how both organisations could work together more closely;
- WLGMP also developed new partnerships with Ealing Advice Forum, Act of Change, Rethink – AFRICARE and Learnt;
- The organisation included an article in its magazine about LGBTI asylum seekers/refugees, which was sent out to over 800 MRCOs and 8,000 service users;
- The organisation met with Relate North West London, held joint training sessions, and promoted each other's organisations;
- It also attended the Evelyn Oldfield Unit AGM; and
- Staff within the organisation discussed issues around LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees, and how their own roles can have an impact on these. It plans to develop action plans on this shortly.

Impact:

- The project stimulated debate about these issues within the organisation, and it has examined how it can improve its services for LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees;
- WLGMP staff are now more sensitive and aware of issues that LGBTI asylum seekers/refugees may be facing;
- It has improved how it handles enquires from asylum seekers, refugees and migrants;
- The organisation has better links to local MRCOs, and is aware of more referral options to these organisations;
- The project has improved its partnership working; and
- The project has generated support from the Senior Management Team at the organisation.

Challenges:

- Staff working on the project had some initial challenges getting others to see the relevance of LGBTI asylum seeker/refugee issues; and
- The organisation found the lack of staff capacity and time to work on the project a challenge.

Continuation of project work:

- The organisation is not sure exactly how it will take the project forward, but there is determination to continue to take steps to improve services for LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees, and it will look to plan for this in the near future.

Other organisation

Relate North West London

Key actions taken:

- Relate North West London hosted a “Learn and Share” Working Together session looking at the Double Jeopardy project on 9th August 2012;
- The organisation reviewed its monitoring protocols and made changes so that it now gathers information on whether clients are LGBTI;
- Relate North West London met with the West London Gay Men’s Project, held training exchanges, and promoted the West London Gay Men’s Group via the Relate North West London website;
- It has also promoted the services of Galop on its website, particularly the ‘Do What You Both Want’ campaign;
- Relate North West London publicised LGBT History Month with displays and publications;
- It held an event on the 8th of March 2013 to showcase the work of the Relate Working Together Initiative in promoting equality, access and inclusion to services for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic background or Refugee groups (BAMER) groups and to discuss ideas for future working. The event attracted refugees and refugee community groups, and included information about LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees. Guest speakers included the Race Equality Foundation and women from Harrow Women’s Centre and West London Refugee Women’s Forum;
- Relate North West London regularly updated its blog with information about the Double Jeopardy project, and steps they were taking to address issues around LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees - <http://www.relatelondonnw.org.uk/category/relate-news>;
- The organisation collected information on local LGBTI organisations to improve its sign-posting;
- It set up a notice board in its training area with information about the project, in order to publicise the issues to others;
- The organisation has now started to recruit counsellors through LGBTI organisations; and
- It has also placed an LGBT newsletter in its waiting area to raise awareness among its service users.

Impact of the project:

- The project raised awareness among staff, service users and other organisations about LGBTI and asylum seeker/refugee issues, and Relate North West London staff are taking more interest in these issues;
- It is now more proactive about advertising its services to LGBTI organisations and refugee/asylum seeker groups/organisations;
- Staff learned how to work on sensitive issues like gender identity and sexuality;

- The development in staff knowledge about LGBTI and asylum seeker/refugee issues has significantly improved their counselling and training services;
- It now has better monitoring data;
- It has improved referral options to LGBTI and asylum seeker/refugee organisations; and
- The organisation has developed strong links with several of the Double Jeopardy pilot organisations.

Challenges:

- While its board was supportive, Relate North West London was not able to give priority to LGBTI issues as it had other commitments; and
- The lack of resources to devote to the project was a challenge.

Continuation of project work:

- The organisation is considering developing a project about LGBTI issues and refugee issues;
- It will continue to advertise its services to LGBTI and refugee organisations.

APPENDIX 3 – GUIDE TO SERVICE TRANSFORMATION

Add in finalised Guide

Making your organisation more welcoming and supportive to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex (LGBTI) asylum seekers, refugees and migrants

This guide has been designed to help:

- Community organisations that offer support to asylum seekers, refugees and migrants (MRCOs)
- Community organisations that offer support to LGBTI people (LGBTI VCOs)

It offers some helpful tips to ensure that your service is welcoming and inclusive for LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and migrants so they know they will be treated fairly within your organisation.

Below are six key steps to begin this process.

Stage 1 – Making a commitment to being inclusive (suggested timescale of 6 months)	
1	Find out about the issues that affect LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and migrants by reading the background section of this document and the Over Not Out Refreshed (2012) report⁹, in particular Chapter 11 on support networks (see footnotes).
2	Discuss these issues within a team meeting, and consider how your organisation may be able to become more welcoming to LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and migrants.
3	Assign someone (or a small group of people) within your organisation to take ownership of these issues, and begin working on improving the inclusivity of your organisation.
4	Find out what local LGBTI organisations or MRCOs there are in your local area (LGBTI organisations should look for MRCOs, and MRCOs should look for LGBTI organisations), and make this information available to your service users.
5	Make contact with some of these organisations to introduce your own organisation and discuss how you could share information and resources and develop partnership working.
6	Produce a statement about how your organisation welcomes and supports LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and migrants. Make this statement available across your organisation, to service users and online (on your website, Facebook Page etc.).

Further more comprehensive steps are outlined in the rest of this document, along with background information and a glossary of terms. We would advise completing Stage 1 before proceeding to Stage 2 and 3. Below we set out the next stages of making your organisation more inclusive, as well as suggested timescales for these steps:

⁹ Over Not Out Refreshed - <http://www.metropolitan.org.uk/images/Metropolitan-MF-LGBT-Over-Not-Out2012-final1.pdf>

- Stage 2: Developing inclusive services (6-12 months)
- Stage 3: Becoming fully inclusive (1-2 years).

Making your organisation more welcoming and supportive to LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and migrants

Stage 2: Developing inclusive services (6-12 months)

Stage 2 – Developing inclusive services	
1	Review your Equality and Diversity Policy to ensure that it is inclusive of LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and migrants, consult with an MRCO or LGBTI VCO to ensure it is inclusive for both groups, and have any changes agreed by your Board of Trustees.
2	Ask your staff and service users how they think your organisation can change to be more welcoming to LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and migrants. Make a note of what they say and identify three easy changes that can be made to your organisation.
3	Make these three changes to your organisation, and let your service users know about what changes you have made.
4	Visit one of the local MRCOs or LGBTI organisations you have identified to introduce your service, find out about their service and discuss the possibility of conducting a ‘training exchange’, with LGBTI organisations visiting MRCOs to give training on LGBTI issues/equality, and MRCOs visiting LGBTI organisations to give training on asylum seeker, refugee and migration issues/equality.
5	Conduct a ‘training exchange’ with this local organisation, so that your staff and volunteers receive equalities training on LGBTI issues or asylum seeker, refugee and migration issues.
6	Organise an activity or event to raise awareness about the rights of LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and migrants. Where possible invite other MRCOs/LGBTI organisations to attend and participate in the event. For example this could be an open day, a training event, a visual display in your organisation, an article in your newsletter, or a community event.
7	Discuss progress against Stage 2 in a team meeting and in a Trustees meeting.

Making your organisation more welcoming and supportive to LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and migrants

Stage 3: Becoming fully inclusive (1-2 years)

Stage 3 – Becoming fully inclusive	
1	All volunteers, staff and managers are given training to help them know more about offering an equal service to LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and migrants who need the support of your organisation.
2	LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and migrants are mentioned in your organisation’s literature, including your annual report, web site (if available) and leaflets that promote your services.
3	Consider appointing a Volunteer or staff member to your organisation who is an LGBTI asylum seeker, refugee or migrant.
4	Examine your monitoring and evaluation activity to ensure you gather information on the numbers of LGBTI asylum seeker, refugee and migrant service users. Share this information with management committee and funders.
5	Include LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and migrants as a key target group in future service planning activities.
6	Discuss progress against Stage 3 in a team meeting and in Trustees meeting, and ensure sustainability of changes you have made.

Background Information to this Guide

Every migrant, refugee and asylum seeker in the UK has the right to be treated fairly. Under the terms of the Equality Act 2010¹⁰ this applies to everyone, no matter what their sex, race, religion or belief, age, disability, marital status, pregnancy and maternity status, sexual orientation or gender identity.

Organisations have a responsibility to ensure that their services are welcoming and accessible to everyone. Unfortunately, research¹¹ has shown that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) asylum seekers, refugees and migrants can often face particular discrimination and lack of support from both LGBTI organisations and Migrant and Refugee Community Organisations (MRCOs).

This guide has been developed following a Trust for London funded project, called 'Double Jeopardy', which worked with a range of MRCOs and LGBTI organisations to help them improve their services for LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees and migrants.

The project used a draft guide which outlined suggested steps that organisations should take to improve services. This guide has been developed using the learning from that process, taking account of what worked well and what worked less well.

A full report on this project can be found at [xxxxx](#).

For further information please contact Alasdair Stuart, Lead Researcher at MBARC (www.mbarc.co.uk).

Key drivers

There were a number of key drivers which generated this work and should inform LGBTI community organisations and MRCO's of why this work is important:

- LGBTI people are still stigmatised in the UK even though there are laws to protect them.
- People who identify as LGBTI as well as people who have sex with people of the same gender come from every culture and country across the globe.
- Homosexuality is still illegal in 80 countries worldwide and in 7 it is punishable by death, which forces many LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees into forced migration.

¹⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/equality-act-2010-guidance>

¹¹ <http://www.metropolitan.org.uk/images/Over-Not-Out.pdf> and <http://www.metropolitan.org.uk/images/Metropolitan-MF-LGBT-Over-Not-Out2012-final1.pdf>

- An overwhelming majority, if not all, LGBTI people will have experienced homophobia, biphobia or transphobia, either overtly or covertly, and quite often will have experienced violence.
- Most LGBTI people will have attempted to hide their sexuality or gender under duress to avoid discrimination at some point in their lives. Hiding one's identity creates internal pressures and conflict adding to stress and diminishing self-regard.
- Although many people believe that all organised religions reject LGBTI people, this is not true. Within each organised religion there exists a wealth of various views and opinions including some with positive views of LGBTI people and communities.
- In the UK, discrimination on the basis of a person's sexual orientation or gender is illegal. This applies to all people in the UK regardless of their own religious or cultural values. Prosecutions have and will continue to be served on those who discriminate against LGBTI people.
- Equal rights granted to LGBTI people in the UK are relatively recent and have been vigorously fought for through lobbying and activism, therefore a wealth of knowledge and experience exists to support MRCO's to improve their services for LGBTI people.
- Refugees and asylum seekers exist on the very margins of UK society and face discrimination and prejudice often compounded by misleading portrayals in the media and extreme political views within fringe factions.

Challenges that LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees face

Some of the challenges faced by LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees include:

- LGBTI asylum seekers feeling excluded from MRCO's due to fear or actual experience of discrimination and harassment from their own ethnic and national communities.
- MRCO's often perpetuate negative attitudes from their home countries to LGBTI asylum seekers.
- Faith based organisations perpetuate negative attitudes and prejudices.
- MRCO's assume LGBTI issues are marginal due to the lack of data or visibility of LGBTI service users.
- Families and kinship networks, which counter the isolation of dispersal, can be hostile toward LGBTI related issues, further compounding isolation felt by LGBTI asylum seekers.
- The LGBTI community and support organisations are ignorant to the needs of LGBTI asylum seekers.
- The LGBTI commercial sector is prohibitively expensive and, therefore, inaccessible for LGBTI asylum seekers.
- Like the rest of the UK population, some members of the LGBTI community display prejudiced attitudes towards LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees.

- Specific support services for LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees which are available are significantly underfunded and often based in London making access very difficult for people dispersed across the UK.
- Exclusion and isolation inevitably increases the vulnerability of LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees, with many dependent on the kindness of strangers and casual acquaintances.
- Young LGBTI men appear to be particularly vulnerable to sexual exploitation from casual partners, with some engaging in sex work as a means of survival.

Numbers of LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees

The original 'Over Not Out' research identified that:

- In 2008, 25,670 people made asylum claims in the UK, of which approximately 1800 were lesbian, gay, or bisexual asylum seekers. This was likely to be a very conservative estimate.
- It was estimated that the numbers of trans people arriving each month was 2-3, or about 20 to 30 per year.
- LGBTI asylum seekers constitute the third largest grouping of asylum seekers entering the UK every year.
- >30,000 LGBTI asylum seekers have arrived in the UK over the past 10 years.
- Since Over Not Out was published, Canadian research has shown that these estimates are broadly consistent¹².
- With such a large group of LGBTI asylum seekers and refugees in the UK it is hard to argue that this is a 'marginal' issue.

For further details please see <http://www.metropolitan.org.uk/images/Over-Not-Out.pdf>, page 11.

The Equality Act (2010)

While we hope that organisations will see the benefit of changing their services to make them more welcoming and suitable for LGBTI asylum seekers, refugees, and migrants, this is also now a legal requirement, particularly for organisations receiving charitable/public funding.

The Equality Act (2010) is the law which bans unfair treatment and helps achieve equal opportunities in the workplace and in wider society. The act replaced previous anti-discrimination laws with a single act to make the law simpler and to remove inconsistencies. This makes the law easier for people to understand and comply with. The act also strengthened protection in some situations.

The act covers nine protected characteristics, including gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership and sexual orientation, which cannot be used as a reason to treat people unfairly.

¹² See <http://www.metropolitan.org.uk/images/Metropolitan-MF-LGBT-Over-Not-Out2012-final1.pdf>

For more information see - <https://www.gov.uk/equality-act-2010-guidance>.

Useful websites:

ILGA: <http://ilga.org/>

ILGA Europe: <http://www.ilga-europe.org/>

LGBT Asylum News: <http://madikazemi.blogspot.co.uk/>

ORAM (Organization for Refuge, Asylum and Migration): <http://www.oraminternational.org/>

UK Lesbian and Gay Immigration Group: <http://www.uklgig.org.uk/>, particularly overview of Asylum Process for claim based on sexual orientation: <http://www.uklgig.org.uk/asylum.htm>

Gender Identity Research and Education Society (GIRES) e-learning resource on transgender issues: <http://www.gires.org.uk/elearning/new/player.html>

Useful Reports:

[Over Not Out](#), MBARC (2009)

[Over Not Out Refreshed](#), MBARC (2012)

[Opening Doors – A Global Survey of NGO Attitudes Towards LGBTI Refugees & Asylum Seekers](#), ORAM (2012)

[Rainbow Bridges – A Community Guide to Rebuilding the Lives of LGBTI Refugees and Asylum Seekers](#), ORAM (2012)

[Safety and Solidarity – LGBTI Asylum Seekers and Refugees in Scotland](#), Equality Network, BEMIS and GRAMNet (2011)

[UNHCR Guidance Note on Refugee Claims Relating to Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity](#), UNHCR (2008)

[Discriminatory laws and practices and acts of violence against individuals based on their sexual orientation and gender identity](#), Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, (2011)

[Identifying the difficulties experienced by Muslim lesbian, bisexual and transgender women in accessing social and legal services](#), SAFRA Project (2003)

Case Studies

A number of case studies were developed as part of the Double Jeopardy project, and can be found as an Appendix to the report that accompanies this guide.

[Link to report](#)

Film:

‘Getting Out’ - a sixty minute documentary shot in Uganda, South Africa, Geneva and London, with supporting footage from Malawi and Zimbabwe, which explores the stories of 5 LGBTI individuals seeking asylum from African countries where "coming out" is not an option.

Film produced by the [Refugee Law Project](#) in collaboration with the [Ugandan Civil Society Coalition on Human Rights & Constitutional Law](#).

<http://vimeo.com/21796473> (part 1)

<http://vimeo.com/22227702> (part 2)

Glossary of Terms

Migration, Asylum and Refugee Terminology

An **asylum seeker** is someone who has lodged an application for protection on the basis of the Refugee Convention or Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). (*Refugee Council*).

A **refugee** is a person who ‘owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country...’ (*Definition quoted from the 1951 Refugee Convention UNHCR*).

Refugee status is awarded to someone the UKBA recognises as a refugee as described in the Refugee Convention (*Refugee Council*).

Refugees have to move if they are to save their lives or preserve their freedom. They have no protection from their own state - indeed it is often their own government that is threatening to persecute them. If other countries do not let them in, and do not help them once they are in, then they may be condemning them to death - or to an intolerable life in the shadows, without sustenance and without rights (*UNHCR*).

Refugee convention means the United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees 1951 and the 1967 Protocol (*Refugee Council*).

Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) states that ‘No one shall be subjected to torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment’. A person can make a claim for protection based directly on Article 3 of ECHR as states are prohibited from returning a person to a country where she/he may suffer a violation of his/her rights under Article 3 (*Refugee Council*).

Migrants, especially economic migrants, choose to move in order to improve the future prospects of themselves and their families. *(UNHCR)*

Sexual Identity and Gender Identity Terminology

Asexual

A sexual identity describing individuals who do not experience sexual attraction.

Celibacy

People who have a sexual attraction but practice sexual abstinence.

Pansexual

People who are attracted to people regardless of gender identity or biological sex. Alternative to skip the binaries of 'Bi'.

Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Terminology

Biphobia

Fear of bisexuals, often based on inaccurate stereotypes, including associations with infidelity, promiscuity and transmission of sexually transmitted diseases.

Bisexual or Bi

A person who has significant physical, romantic, emotional and/or spiritual attractions to men and women or who identifies as a member of the bisexual community. Bisexual people need not have had equal sexual experience with both men and women; in fact, they need not have had any sexual experience at all to identify as bisexual. Contrary to popular myths, bisexual people do not necessarily date women and men at the same time, often choosing to be with one partner in a monogamous relationship while maintaining a 'bisexual identity'.

In relation to those claiming asylum based on their sexual identity, generally one will focus on the same sex identity/behaviour aspect of people who identify as bisexual, as this is the element of their identity that could attract persecution. However, bisexuality could be an aggravating factor in some cases. In any case, many lesbians and gay men will have engaged in - either voluntarily, under pressure, or by force or violence - opposite sex relations or marriage at a time in their life.

Civil Partnership

Legal recognition of committed same-sex relationships.

Closeted

Describes a person who is not open about his or her sexual identity.

Coming Out

A lifelong process of self-acceptance. People forge a lesbian, gay, bisexual trans or intersex identity first to themselves and then may reveal it to others. Publicly identifying one's sexual identity may or may not be part of coming out. Coming out (of the closet) can refer to when a person discloses their sexual identity to others or themselves. This is sometimes meant as the first time in a person's life when they realise that they are gay, lesbian or bisexual and initially tell their family and friends. It is also meant as a lifelong process for LGBTI people, as 'coming out' is a decision that must be made throughout the course of everyday life for most people. While some people 'come out' when they are very young, others may not 'come out' until they are much older. Being 'out' for LGBTI people refers to a person who has shared their identity with friends or family.

Domestic Partnership

Civil or legal recognition of a relationship between two people (domestic partners) that sometimes extends limited protections to them.

Gay

The adjective used to describe people whose enduring physical, romantic, emotional and/or spiritual attractions are to people of the same sex or who identifies as a member of the gay community (e.g. gay man, gay people). Lesbians and bisexual people often do not feel included by this term. In contemporary contexts, lesbian (n.) is often a preferred term for women. Avoid identifying gay people as "homosexuals", see glossary.

Heterosexual Man/Woman

A person whose enduring physical, romantic, emotional and/or spiritual attraction is to people of the opposite sex or who identify as a member of the 'straight' community. Also known as 'straight'.

Heterosexism

Prejudice or discrimination by heterosexual people (or institutions) against lesbian, gay or bisexual people based on the attitude that heterosexuality is the only valid sexual identity. Often takes the form of ignoring lesbians, gay men and bisexuals. For example; a feature on numerous Valentine's Day couples that omit same-sex couples.

Homosexual

Outdated clinical term considered derogatory and offensive by many gay people. Gay and/or lesbian accurately describe people who are attracted to members of the same sex.

Homophobia

The fear of, aversion to or discrimination against people who are LGBTI or who are perceived to be LGBTI. Homophobia in its most violent form has resulted in hate crimes against people who do not necessarily fit mainstream roles. Prejudice is usually a more accurate description of hatred or antipathy toward LGBTI people.

Lesbian

A woman whose enduring physical, romantic, emotional and/or spiritual attraction is to other women or who identifies as a member of the lesbian community. Avoid identifying lesbians as "homosexuals," a derogatory term, see glossary.

LGBTI

Acronym for "lesbian, gay, bisexual trans and intersex." LGBTI is often used because it is more inclusive of the diversity of the community. LGBTI relates to the diversity of sexuality and gender identity-based cultures. Sexual or gender identity, includes sexual behaviour, but encompasses much more than that, such as the ability to socialise with others that identify as LGBTI; freedom of expression; be politically active and campaign for LGBTI rights or equality; have access to suitable (mental) healthcare, etc.

Lifestyle

Inaccurate term often used by anti-gay extremists to denigrate lesbian, gay, bisexual trans and intersex lives. Avoid using because, as there is no one heterosexual or straight lifestyle, there is no one lesbian, gay, bisexual trans or intersex lifestyle.

MSM

Men who have sex with men but who do not identify as gay.

Openly Gay

Describes people who self-identify as lesbian or gay in their public and/or professional lives. Also openly lesbian, openly bisexual, openly trans, openly intersex.

Outing

The act of publicly declaring (sometimes based on rumour and/or speculation) or revealing another person's sexual identity without his or her consent. Considered inappropriate by a large portion of the LGBTI community.

Queer

Traditionally a pejorative term, queer has been appropriated by some LGBTI people to describe themselves. Some value the term for its defiance and because it can be inclusive of the entire LGBTI community. Nevertheless, it is not universally accepted even within the LGBTI community and should be avoided unless quoting someone who self-identifies that way.

Sexual behaviour

Relates to a range of activities such as strategies to find or attract partners, physical or emotional intimacy, and sexual contact. Sexual behaviour may or may not be in line with a person's sexual identity. For example, a person may be mainly or exclusively have a heterosexual identity, but still have sexual contact with a person of the same sex for whatever

reason (e.g. lack of access to people of the opposite sex; occasional preference; an incidental occasion, or an exertion of power).

Sodomy Laws

Historically used to selectively persecute gay men, lesbians and bisexuals. "Sodomy" should never be used to describe gay, lesbian or bisexual relationships, sex or sexuality.

WSW

Women who have sex with women but do not identify as lesbian

Trans and Intersex Terminology

Gender Expression

External manifestation of one's gender identity, usually expressed through "masculine", "feminine" or gender variant behaviour, clothing, haircut, voice or body characteristics. Typically, trans people seek to make their gender expression match their gender identity, rather than their birth-assigned sex.

Gender Identity

One's internal, personal sense of being a man or a woman (or a boy or girl). For trans people, their birth-assigned sex and their own internal sense of gender identity do not match.

Gender Variant

People who identify as both or neither male or female and do not believe in binary gender definitions (also called genderqueer).

Intersex

Intersex describes a person whose biological sex is ambiguous - a person whose sex chromosomes, genitalia and/or sex characteristics are determined to be neither exclusively male nor female. A person who is intersex may have characteristics of both male and female sexes. There are many genetic, hormonal or anatomical variations which make a person's sex ambiguous (e.g. Klinefelter Syndrome, Adrenal Hyperplasia). Parents and medical professionals usually assign intersex infants a sex and perform surgical operations to conform the infant's body to that assignment. This practice has become increasingly controversial as intersex adults are speaking out against the practice, accusing doctors of Infant Genital Mutilation (IGM) ignoring the human rights of the child to decide gender identity.

Sex

The classification of people as male or female. At birth, infants are assigned a sex based on a combination of bodily characteristics including chromosomes, hormones, internal reproductive organs and genitals.

Sexual Identity

Describes an individual's enduring physical, romantic, emotional and/or spiritual attraction to another person. Gender identity and sexual identity are not the same. Trans people may be heterosexual, lesbian, gay, or bisexual. For example, a man who becomes a woman and is attracted to other women would be identified as a lesbian.

Trans-Specific Terminology

Trans

An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from the sex they were assigned at birth. The term may include but is not limited to: transsexuals, cross-dressers, and other gender-variant people. Trans people may identify as female-to-male (FTM) or male-to-female (MTF). Use the descriptive term (trans, transgender, transsexual, cross-dresser, FTM or MTF) preferred by the individual. Trans people may or may not choose to alter their bodies hormonally and/or surgically.

Gender Identity refers to an individual's self-conception as being male, or female (or otherwise), as distinguished from actual biological sex. Although gender is commonly used interchangeably with sex, it often refers to specifically social differences known as gender roles. Gender roles are usually assigned as either male or female based on physical/genetic sex. Trans can include a variety of divergence from the normative binary gender roles.

However, trans is a much wider concept and can include, for example, a person who identifies as both male and female; alternating between male and female; neither male or female; 'third gender', etc. The term may apply to physical or other appearance, social behaviour or a combination. Some trans people have or wish to have certain features, but not always all, of the 'opposite sex/gender' to the one they were allocated.

Most trans people do not choose to alter or modify their bodies hormonally and/or surgically.

Gender Identity and Sexual Identity

Although distinct, there is an overlap and sometimes conflation of the two, in the sense that they can each relate - in some way - to gender as well as sexually non-conforming behaviours, appearances or identities. For example, a 'heterosexual' transsexual may still be perceived to be 'homosexual' even after gender realignment treatment if their 'new' sex/gender is not acknowledged. Another example is that a (perceived to be) 'effeminate' gay man may experience violence where an otherwise 'gender role conforming' gay man is not.

Cross-Dressing

To occasionally wear clothes traditionally associated with people of the other sex. Cross-dressers are usually comfortable with the sex they were assigned at birth and do not wish to change it. "Cross-dresser" should not be used to describe someone who has transitioned to live full-time as the other sex, or who intends to do so in the future. Cross-dressing is a form of gender expression and is not necessarily tied to erotic activity. Cross-dressing is not indicative of sexual identity.

FTM (female to male)

Trans man (call themselves lesbian men in S. Africa)

Gender Identity Disorder

A controversial DSM-IV diagnosis given to trans and other gender-variant people. Because it labels people as "disordered", Gender Identity Disorder is often considered offensive. The diagnosis is frequently given to children who do not conform to expected gender norms in terms of dress, play or behaviour. Such children are often subjected to intense psychotherapy, behaviour modification and/or institutionalisation. Replaces the outdated term "gender dysphoria". Intersex and trans people do not find it helpful to be labeled as having a gender identity disorder, gender dysphoria or an illness.

In UK Gender Recognition Act (2004) the requirement to change a birth certificate states that a person must live permanently in the opposite gender role to their birth gender (with or without hormones or surgery) and be diagnosed by a medical professional as suffering from gender dysphoria.

MTF (male to female)

Trans woman

Sex Reassignment Surgery (SRS)

Refers to surgical alteration and is only one small part of transition (see Transition). Preferred term to "sex change operation". Not all trans people choose to or can afford to have surgery.

Sex Reassignment Therapy

Many trans people have a wish to alter their bodies. These physical changes are known as sex reassignment therapy and often include hormone replacement therapy and sex reassignment surgery.

Transgender

People who feel that the gender they were assigned (usually at birth) is a false or incomplete description of themselves. Nowadays trans people often prefer trans to transgender.

Transition

Altering one's birth sex is not a one-step procedure; it is a complex process that occurs over a long period of time. Transition includes some or all of the following cultural, legal and medical adjustments: telling one's family, friends, and/or co-workers; changing one's name and/or sex on legal documents; hormone therapy; and possibly (though not always) some form of surgical alteration.

Transsexual

An older term which originated in the medical and psychological communities. Many trans people prefer the term "trans" to "transsexual". Some transsexual people still prefer to use the term "transsexual" to describe themselves. However, unlike trans, transsexual is not an umbrella term, and many trans people do not identify as transsexual. It is best to ask which term an individual prefers. "Transsexual" was used to refer to trans people who go through sex reassignment surgery (SRS) or hormone therapy.

Note: most trans people do not choose to alter or modify their bodies hormonally and/or surgically.

Transvestite

Derogatory - see Cross-Dressing.