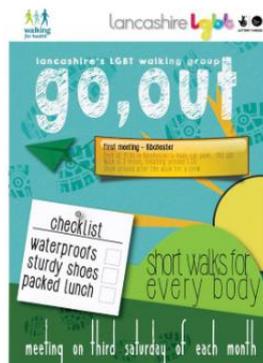
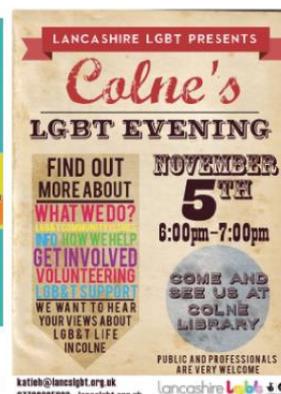
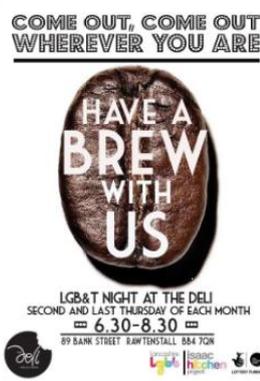
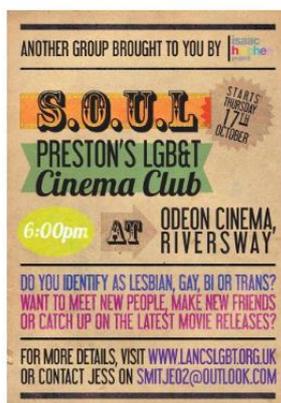


# Evaluation of Isaac Hitchen Project



Lancashire LGBT  
 Lewis Turner and John Miller  
 18.02.2016



# Evaluation Isaac Hitchen project

---

## Contents

Introduction .....	2
Progress on Activities end year 3 .....	3
Progress on Outcomes end of year 3 .....	4
Impact .....	5
Outreach sessions .....	5
Information and support: .....	5
Groups: .....	6
Volunteering:.....	7
Counselling:.....	10
Training:.....	11
Community Events.....	12
Learning from the project.....	17
Measuring progress on Outcome Indicators.....	17
Other unexpected learning .....	17
Partnership working .....	18
LGBT Forum .....	18
Wider impact of project .....	19
Conclusion .....	19
Table 1: Key learning.....	21
Table 2: What work still needs to be done .....	22

## Introduction

This project was based on research conducted for Lancashire LGBT, funded by the Community Foundation for Lancashire, exploring the views of the local LGB&T population for the provision of a LGB&T Centre in Lancashire. The research report was published in 2011 and concluded that a Centre was not deemed feasible because of the size and geography of the county – but the study raised significant issues regarding the needs of LGB&T people across Lancashire.

The research report concluded that LGB&T people in Lancashire were socially isolated and felt marginalised and ‘invisible’ within their communities. Many LGB&T people wanted to be actively involved but said they lacked opportunities, information, confidence, skills and knowledge. Issues were also raised about mainstream service provision as LGB&T people stated that there was a lack of awareness of LGB&T people’s needs.

The report concluded that:

- LGB&T people in Lancashire need local and accessible opportunities for social inclusion to address problems of isolation;
- LGB&T people in Lancashire need accessible information, support and opportunities to improve mental health and well-being;
- LGB&T people in Lancashire need local and accessible opportunities to be actively involved and influence what happens in their communities;
- LGB&T people need accessible and inclusive services and communities.

These findings informed the proposal for the Isaac Hitchen project – named after a man who was hanged at Lancaster Castle in 1806 with a group of other men, for the crime of sodomy.

The Big Lottery Reaching Communities fund awarded Lancashire LGBT three years funding for the project which began in December 2012.

The four specific aims of the Isaac Hitchen project were:

1. Increase the social inclusion of LGBT people in Lancashire;
2. Improve the mental health and well-being of LGBT people in Lancashire;
3. Increase LGBT people’s active involvement and influence in their local communities in Lancashire;
4. Improve the awareness and inclusiveness of service providers and the wider community of LGBT people and communities in Lancashire

The project employed a team of 4 people: Project Manager, 2 Project Co-ordinators and a Monitoring Officer. This was the first team employed by Lancashire LGBT.

This evaluation is of the project up to the second quarter of the final year (end of May 2015).

From the outset, it was agreed with the Big Lottery that some Indicators needed to change: some target figures were not realistic; some needed re-wording to make them easier to evidence. There were changes made to some Indicators at the beginning of the project as well as a minor change in quarter 1 year 2.

### Progress on Activities end year 3

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>End of Yr3</b>
Three Lancashire LGBT community network events will have been held	Year One	Achieved
120 outreach/sessions will be delivered by the two LGBT outreach workers	Year One	Achieved
20 Volunteers will have received training to provide befriending and peer support groups	Year One	8 in Year One
20 LGBT community members will have received training to run local LGBT community groups	Year One	8 in Year One
96 LGBT peer support group sessions will have been provided	Year Two	Achieved
300 Counselling/therapy sessions will have been provided to 30 clients by sessional counsellors	Year Two	Achieved
10 LGBT community members will have been recruited and trained as Lancashire LGBT Community Champions	Year Two	6 in Year Two
120 professionals will have received training in LGBT awareness	Year Two	Achieved
100 one-to-one LGBT information and support sessions will have been provided by the two LGBT outreach workers	Year Three	Achieved
28 LGBT community members will have received training and support to participate in local and county forums and partnerships	Year Three	30
20 organisations will have been assessed for the Lancashire LGBT Navajo Chartermark Scheme	Year Three	7 completed and 13 ongoing
Three community events to raise local awareness of LGBT communities will have been held	Year Three	Achieved

### Progress on Outcomes end of year 3

Outcome	Indicator	End of project target	Achieved by end of Yr3
LGBT people involved in the project will be less isolated	LGBT people engaged in wider community activities	400	497
	LGBT people reporting increased social support and networks	400	347
	LGBT people state they feel less isolated	400	352
LGBT people involved in the project will have improved mental health and well-being	LGBT people participated in regular volunteering	100	106
	LGBT people reporting improved mental health and well-being	400	352
	LGBT people feel more in control of their lives	400	451
LGBT people involved in the project will have meaningful and active involvement in their local communities	LGBT people participated in regular volunteering	100	106
	LGBT people participating in local and county forums and partnerships	28	30
	LGBT people participating in local LGBT community groups	70	190
Service providers and wider communities will be more aware of and inclusive of LGBT people and communities	Professionals will have received training on LGBT awareness	380	803
	Service providers will adapt their services/information to include LGBT people	42	40 orgs trained + 7 Quality Mark assessments completed
	People will understand how to combat homophobia and transphobia	780	1228

## Impact

### Main activities of the project undertaken to achieve outcomes

#### Outreach sessions

Target 120 Year 1 – achieved

#### Information and support:

Target 100 Year 1 - achieved

#### Original plan

In year 1, we delivered local outreach sessions in different locations across the county by way of a service called 'Outpost'. The take up of these sessions by LGB&T people was very poor.

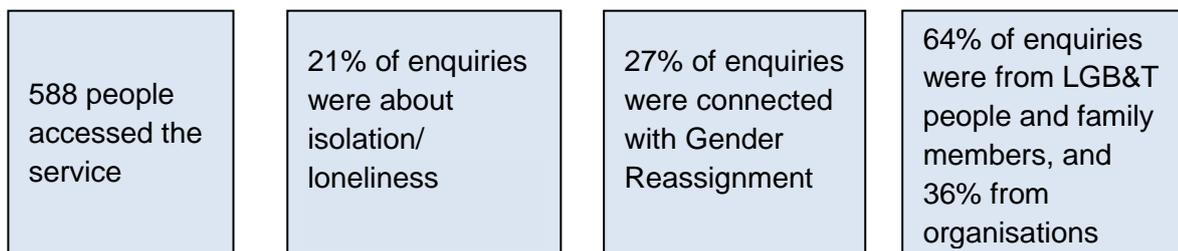
#### What we changed

In year 2, we launched a dedicated phone line for specified times in the week. We estimated it would be easier for LGB&T people to access information and support on the phone or by email rather than going to a local venue where they may be 'outed'. The majority of enquiries were regarding local information and services.

#### Feedback from the service:

*'Helped more than the NHS . . . My mental health improved greatly'* (Intersex person)

*'Helped me a lot . . . I'm really grateful for contact with Lancs LGBT because when you don't know a lot about something you're clutching at straws so any help is really useful'*.  
(Relative of a young man with gender identity issues and Asperger's)



#### Learning from information and support service

The phone line and email support service has proved a better way for people to access information and signposting. The majority of people who contacted us did so either via referrals from agencies or through internet search engines.

Since this project began, we have become the first point of contact in Lancashire for information related to anything regarding LGB&T people. There is a clear need for this

service for both LGB&T people and their family members as well as organisations working with LGB&T people who need our help. We have a wealth of knowledge available about local services and useful contacts which would not be found in any other centralised location.

#### Case study:

A local primary school contacted us for any information we could give them regarding supporting a child in the school who had gender identity issues – and if we knew about any other schools in the area that had successfully supported a trans child.

We offered to visit the school to meet with the head teacher and class tutor to discuss support for the child. We also put them in touch with another head teacher of a local primary school that is currently supporting a trans child who could act as mentor to them.

#### Groups:

##### Target 96 sessions Year 2 - achieved

##### Original plan

In year 1, we tried to set up local LGB&T peer-support groups across the county, with the original model being that we would work with volunteers to develop groups. We found that the majority of community members who came forward to volunteer to run a peer-support group were not suitable –and required peer-support themselves (see Volunteering section).



##### What we changed

In year 2, we developed an LGB&T peer support group/service in partnership with agencies that had a specialism in mental health (see Partnership working for more detail).

We also set up groups centred around activities and/or themes – some in partnership with other organisations and these proved very popular.



##### Feedback from groups

*'The walking group has helped a lot. I am new to the area and don't have many friends. There's not a lot for gay people locally'. (Gay male)*

*'We would never have got the group off the ground without you and everyone else at Lancs LGBT. Thanks to you for putting us in touch, we have learnt from each other and gained the confidence we need to support our children'. (Parent of trans young person from Arms Out parents' group).*

There are 35 LGB&T Groups across Lancashire

7 groups directly supported by Lancashire LGBT. A further 18 are supported through our Practitioners' Network

Groups are attended by over 160 LGB&T people across Lancashire

12 groups are specifically for trans support

A Film group in partnership with Cinema for All and lesbian cycling group in partnership with Breeze are about to begin.

### **Learning from provision of groups**

We have learned that the needs of LGB and T people in Lancashire are different when it comes to the provision of groups. The majority of adult LGB people did not wish to engage with or necessarily need peer support groups. From the success of our new groups focused on activities or interests, it is clear that LGB people still seek opportunities to meet other LGB people away from the gay commercial scene.

For Trans people, peer support groups have a specific function: people undergoing gender reassignment use the groups to share information and tips on hormones and surgery as well as giving each other confidence in their acquired gender. The value of these groups is immeasurable to individual trans people undergoing gender reassignment – many of whom have no other source of support.

### **Volunteering:**

**Target 100 people participated in regular volunteering by end of project – achieved**

#### **Original plan**

Our original plan involved a standard model of volunteer management in which we recruited, trained and managed volunteers to deliver peer and social support opportunities across Lancashire. It was while we delivered in this way, that we found the following:

- People told us that they were not confident about being 'the face' of an LGB or T group because they would be 'outed' locally.
- High functioning involvement of LGB&T volunteers was a challenge in some parts of the county. Transport links and connection to and from rural areas presented issues with volunteer roles in the more remote parts of the county.
- Vulnerable people were accessing volunteering roles as a form of support.

## **What we changed.**

### **Year 2**

In year 2, we changed the way we recruited volunteers by working in partnership with other organisations. This way of working afforded LGB&T people an element of protection – developing roles with mainstream organisations meant that there was less of a ‘disclosure’ for an LGB and/or T person taking up a mainstream volunteer role.

By working in partnership with organisations to develop volunteer roles, we could also train and support agencies to better understand LGB&T people and to make adaptations so that LGB&T people would feel welcomed. This method of recruitment complimented our approach to group development and peer/social support opportunities after year two.

### **Year 3**

By year 3, we had recognised that we needed a diverse and flexible approach to enabling, involving and empowering volunteers. We had better established connections to LGB&T people in the area and saw that there were large numbers of LGB&T people volunteering their time but that these people did not see or count themselves as volunteers. We also saw that LGB&T activities were not connected to a wider network of community activities through CVS or VCFS organisations. This meant that the needs of LGB&T people who were involved in ‘community’ activities were not being recognised at a local level, further isolating LGB&T people.

Groups that were developed during the course of the third year of the project included:

1. The ‘Go Out’ walking group. This group came about through partnership work with the Walking for Health project in Blackburn. This well supported group has a monthly Saturday walk in the Lancashire countryside.
2. The ‘Arms Out’ group. This peer support group for parents of trans children and young people developed out of contacts that we made with various parents each of whom were facing the challenges of supporting a child who is trans. Arms Out has become a strong, independent group greatly valued by its members.
3. The ‘Admit All’ community cinema group. This group came about through partnership work with Cinema For All, and its members worked hard to put on a series of LGB&T-themed films in community venues around Lancashire.

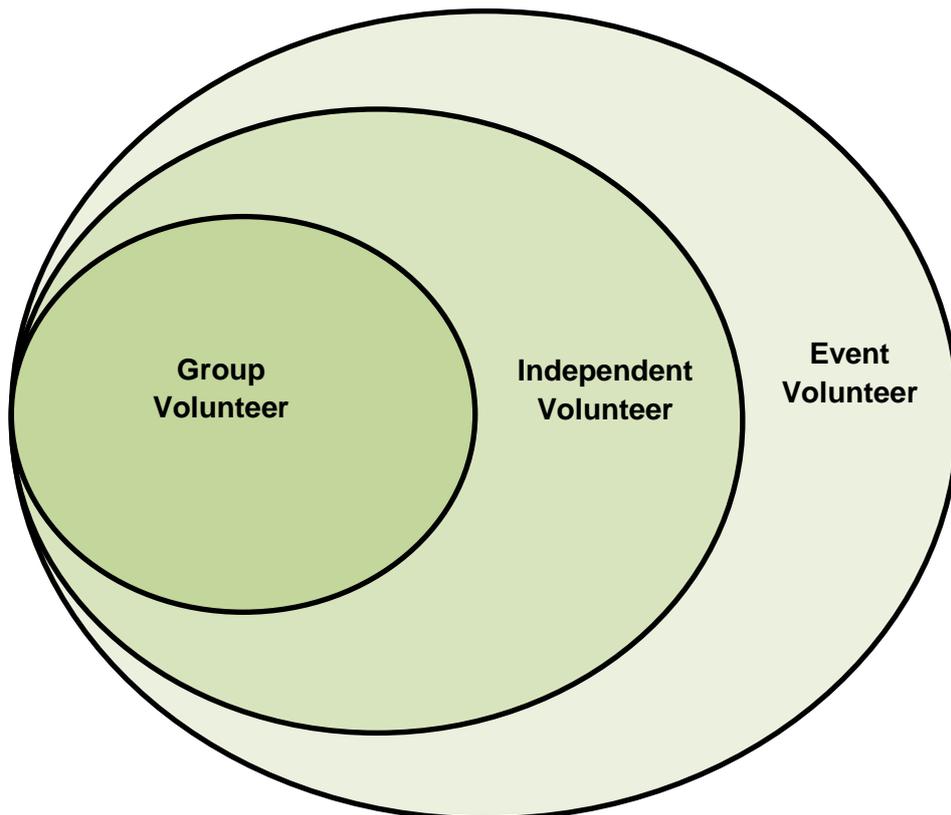
In response to the need to connect together people who were facilitating community groups of various kinds, we set up a network for people who were giving their time in the area to offer support, training and development opportunities (see Forum).

### **We approached volunteering in year 3 with spheres of support for LGB&T volunteers:**

**Group Volunteers** – These are volunteers who have been enabled to volunteer through one of our groups such as the walking group facilitator, SOUL or Bumps to Babies. We provide 1-2-1 support for these volunteers.

**Independent Volunteers** – These are people who have developed their own support or social groups. We recognise, involve and support these people through the volunteer network.

**Event Volunteers** – These are people who may only volunteer their time once a year at pride events or other LGBT events such as Transgender Day of Remembrance or LGBT history month.



### **Learning about volunteers**

This is our most creative and successful adaptation to date. This new approach has allowed us to view LGB&T volunteering in a way that meets the 'community' where it is in terms of development – recognising people who do not want to fit into a traditional 'volunteer' bracket, but who regularly give their time to support other people. We feel it is vital to recognise and support people who have been central to social activities in the area and to develop new methods of involvement that will connect people and strengthen an authentic, LGB&T social and peer support network for LGB&T people in Lancashire.

### **Training community members to participate in forums and act as community champions**

**Target: 10 community champions year 2 – achieved 20 Yr 3**

## Target: 28 people participating in forums year 3 – achieved 30

Community Champions were difficult to recruit and initially we provided access to a package of community agent training. The take up of this was small and some dropped out of the training. A small number of our volunteers did successfully complete the training.

The targets for Community Champions were ambitious and we did not achieve them due to the difficulties we encountered in community engagement in the first half of the project. Towards the end of year 2, we invited some of our volunteers as well as the high-contributing independent volunteers from around the county who we have built up a relationship with to engage in:

- mentoring from Lancashire LGBT coordinators and staff
- shadowing opportunities in group development
- 1-2-1 support to further enable the champions' personal and professional development

Although we have not reached the target, we have a small cohort of highly motivated and informed people being champions for the LGB&T community. They have since gone on to deliver training in workplaces, develop groups, support and social opportunities of their own and speak at events.

## Counselling:

### Target 300 sessions provided by end of Year 2 - achieved

We ran a tender process for the provision of counselling at a flat rate per session for 10 sessions per person, which included all the costs. The provider had to demonstrate experience of working with the LGB&T population and had to cover all of the Lancashire area. 4 providers successfully tendered for the contract. We delivered specialist training on trans issues to all providers.

We also decided that we would only accept referrals from agencies that would be more qualified in making a decision about whether counselling would be beneficial for a client.

## Feedback

*'Helped a lot . . . it probably saved my life'. (Trans female)*

*'The counselling sessions have made a massive difference to my mental health and definitely made me feel 99% more focused'. (Intersex female)*

*'The counselling I have been given through Lancs LGBT has been indispensable; without it I would have really struggled with my gender issues and would have deteriorated health wise. [The counsellor's] knowledge / experience has allowed me to go further than I have done in the past and to focus on my next steps to social transition'. (Trans woman)*

*'The sessions have really started to change my life for the better'. (Young lesbian)*

39% of referrals  
Included gender  
Identity issues

31% of referrals  
included anxiety

27% of referrals  
included  
relationship issues

24% of referrals  
included  
depression

## Learning from counselling service

We achieved the target of 300 sessions for 30 clients on time without the service being advertised. Many referrals were from Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust and we have concluded that this service should be funded by local Clinical Commissioning Groups. To date we have been unable to secure funding from any of Lancashire's Clinical Commissioning Groups.

## Cost Benefit Analysis

There is a clear cost benefit analysis for the counselling service based on the referral issues:

Client costs for 10 sessions £630

Average cost of service provision for adults suffering from depression, per person per year - total fiscal cost to NHS and Local Authority	£2,964 per year <sup>1</sup>
Average cost of service provision for adults suffering from depression and/or anxiety disorders, per person per year - total fiscal cost to NHS and Local Authority	£956 per year <sup>2</sup>
We also factored in the following costings due to the exceptionally high rate of attempted suicide rate for trans people – around 45%:  Average cost of service involvement (Police, NHS Mental Health Foundation Trusts, Hospital Trusts and Social Services) for attempted suicide	estimated at £49,217 <sup>3</sup>

## Training:

**Target: 380 Professionals trained end of Year 3 –  
Achieved: 803**

### What we did

From the outset, we received requests from organisations for LGB&T awareness training as well as trans-specific training. A wide range of organisations were trained including Women's refuges, door supervisors, clinical psychologists, schools, children and young people's services and adult services at Lancashire County Council, counselling agencies, student police officers, drug and alcohol agencies, leisure service providers and local authority Public Health staff.



<sup>1</sup> Unit Cost Database v1.2 New Economy Manchester (2013/14 costs)

<sup>2</sup> ibid

<sup>3</sup> Assessing the Economic and Social Cost of Suicide and Attempted Suicide: North East Mental Health Development Unit. March 2011

## Feedback

*'The session has enhanced my knowledge around transgender awareness'.*

(Renaissance at Drugline Lancashire Ltd)

*'...Made me feel more confident to work with trans young people'.*

(Lancashire Care Foundation Trust – Children's Psychological Services)



803 people trained in LGB&T or trans awareness

40 different services trained

37% of sessions requested were for trans-specific training.

## Learning

There is clearly an on-going need for training for organisations on LGB&T awareness. We did not have to approach any of the organisations we trained, rather, they approached us. The training requested was on many different levels within organisations, from service delivery staff to senior managers and we tailored each session to the organisation and tier accordingly.

20 organisations have now been identified to undertake Chartermark assessments and these are ongoing towards the end of the project.

## Community Events

**Target 3 year 1 – achieved and 3 by year 3 - achieved**

**Trans residential 24-26<sup>th</sup> October 2014 Alston Hall**

This was by far the most successful community event we hosted. We consulted with members of the trans community about running a residential event and asking what workshops they would find helpful.

The event was held at Alston Hall, a gothic style country mansion owned by Lancashire County Council which is located in Longridge. The workshops were delivered by external trainers – the majority of whom were trans.

There was 100% attendance with 23 people including 2 volunteers for the weekend

## Feedback

*'I am not so isolated and alone. I am more confident and motivated. I will succeed'.*

(Anonymous)

*'This weekend has literally saved my life'*  
(Anonymous trans male)

*'This gave me the confidence and support to face the struggles head on'.*  
(Anonymous)



100% of attendees now know more about the process of Gender reassignment

88% said that their mental health had improved due to the event

89% felt more in control of their life after the event

### Cost Benefit Analysis

Cost £5109 – less £10 deposit for 20 people = £4909

Cost per person £213



Average cost of service provision for adults suffering from depression, per person per year - total fiscal cost to NHS and Local Authority	£2,964 per year <sup>4</sup>
Average cost of service provision for adults suffering from depression and/or anxiety disorders, per person per year - total fiscal cost to NHS and Local Authority	£956 per year <sup>5</sup>
We also factored in the following costings due to the exceptionally high rate of attempted suicide rate for trans people – around 45%:  Average cost of service involvement (Police, NHS Mental Health Foundation Trusts, Hospital Trusts and Social Services) for attempted suicide	estimated at £49,217 <sup>6</sup>

### Learning from event

This event was extremely popular and gave local trans people a unique opportunity to meet other trans people and make friends as well as gain knowledge and practical tips in a safe environment. It was also an opportunity for the project to pilot the ‘taster’ sessions for a proposed future transition support project which we have identified the need for.

<sup>4</sup> Unit Cost Database v1.2 New Economy Manchester (2013/14 costs)

<sup>5</sup> ibid

<sup>6</sup> Assessing the Economic and Social Cost of Suicide and Attempted Suicide: North East Mental Health Development Unit. March 2011

If we have the opportunity to run another residential it will be planned and led by trans volunteers as part of their learning in being 'Community Champions'.

### **'Living My Life' Exhibition, Lancaster Library, 31st October 2013**

To mark the month of Transgender remembrance we secured an exhibition of inspiring photographic images of Trans men and women and worked with library services to stage a launch event at Lancaster Library followed by the exhibition spending a week at each of four major libraries in different areas of the county.



Around 30 people attended the launch event and many more saw the exhibition during its subsequent tour around the county.

### **Preston Pride, 28<sup>th</sup> September 2013**

At the request of the organisers of Preston Pride we delivered a course of training to volunteers interested in helping out with the event. We received 32 enquiries about volunteering, which resulted in 20 application forms completed. 10 of these completed training and volunteered on the day. One of these volunteers went on to further volunteering.



On the day, volunteers were involved in various tasks such as stage management, technical support, liaison with stallholders and welcoming and handing out programmes to the public.

We also ran a stall at the event to publicise Lancashire LGBT itself.

### **LGBT History Month February 2013 and February 2014**

We supported LGBT History Month events in 2013 in both Lancaster (at the Library) Preston (at Lancashire Archives) and Burnley Library with a stall at each of these events, interacting with community members who were attending the event.



## LGBT Film Festival September – November 2015

We worked with Cinema For All to enable a group of ten volunteers to put on a series of five LGBT community film screenings in Preston (2), Blackburn, Lancaster and Rossendale over a period of two months. This group is likely to continue with similar events in the future.



### Learning from community events

On the whole, the community events aimed at LGB&T people were not well attended by a diverse group. In the future, we plan to run events where people are more likely to engage – for example, we currently have a large group of volunteers planning LGBT film events across the county – a partnership with ourselves and Cinema for All which should prove popular.

### Awareness raising event for organisations:

#### Link Up with Lancashire LGBT event at Preston North End FC, 26th September 2014

We organised this event to make contact with potential new partner organisations within the voluntary and community sector. This event was a ‘working day’ to provide VCF organisations and agencies with an opportunity to explore how their organisations understand and relate to LGB&T communities in Lancashire.

39 people attended the event, representing 32 different organisations.



### Feedback on the day

*‘Very informative session delivered with passion and clear knowledge’* (workshop attended: LGBT community engagement in Lancashire)

*‘Fantastic event, thank you very much for hosting, looking forward to getting involved with Lancs LGBT in the future’* (workshop attended: barriers to LGB&T volunteering)

100% of attendees said they would be interested in working with Lancashire LGBT in the future

97% stated that they now understood more about the needs of LGB&T people in the region

100% stated that they now knew where they could get support with LGB&T issues they encountered

## **Subsequent impact on organisations who attended**

*'We are now doing a targeted piece of work around greater inclusion of LGBT groups in our work in Chorley'. (Spice Time Credits)*

*'We are working to consult with LGBT services users and those who don't currently use our service. Now using more inclusive imagery on our publicity material'. (Lancashire Women's Centres)*

## **Learning from awareness raising event**

Organisations could see the benefit of attending the event to learn more about working with LGB&T communities. The event was an opportunity for us to share our knowledge about what we have learned about how to engage with LGB&T communities compared to routine community engagement with other communities. The event gave everyone the opportunity to network and share knowledge and ideas as well as potential future partnership working opportunities.

We hosted another event in **Accrington** in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of the final year which a range of organisations from the voluntary and public sector attended.

### **At the end of the Preston event:**

(97%) of attendees stated they now understand more about the needs of LGB&T people in the region.

(100%) would be interested in working with Lancashire LGBT in the future

### **At the end of the Accrington event:**

(95%) said that they knew more about LGB&T issues in Lancashire after the event

(86%) would be interested in working with Lancashire LGBT in the future.

## Learning from the project

### Measuring progress on Outcome Indicators

This project was not written or planned by anyone from the Isaac Hitchen staff team so it was difficult from the outset to gain an understanding about the thinking behind the activities, outcomes and indicators.

As the project progressed, it was found that the Indicators concerned with the Outcomes of decreasing isolation and improving mental health and well-being proved difficult to measure for example:

- people reporting increased social support and networks,
- people stating they are less isolated,
- people reporting improved mental health and well-being
- people feeling more in control of their lives

Measurement of change for the Indicators above was difficult for many of the project activities. It could be *reported* with those service users where there was on-going one-to-one engagement – for example someone having counselling or attending a support group for some time. However, asking such questions would have not been appropriate or even possible for many of the project activities - for example a walking group.

There will be many cases where engagement with the information and support service, or referral to an activity/social group, will have subsequently achieved positive changes for the service user that we were unable to measure.

However, we could assume that someone who was attending a group would feel less isolated, was engaged in wider community activities, had an increase in social support and networks and as a result, had improved mental health and well-being. Therefore, we are confident that a considerable number of mental health outcomes have been achieved which we have simply been unable to measure.

### Other unexpected learning

We did not anticipate the demand for help regarding children and young people who are trans - from parents and schools. We have worked with 11 primary and secondary schools with trans children attending or about to attend, aged from 5 – 17 years. The majority of schools asking for help have been primary schools.

In our work with schools we have found pockets of excellence with regard to working with trans children in unexpected places, such as rural primary schools in East Lancashire. Four out of six schools that we worked with were designated as 'Hard to Reach'.

We have worked with parents of children or young people who are trans to set up their own peer support group. This is the only local support group for parents run by parents in England and is supporting up to 11 families. We also worked with the families on putting pressure on the County Council to write much needed guidance for schools on trans issues.

## Partnership working

The project team recognised early on in the project that working collaboratively or in partnership was the best way to achieve the project aims rather than working in isolation. In some instances, there were calls to the information helpline which were about complex issues and needs, where we had neither the skills nor capacity to assist with all of the person's issues. Some cases involved straightforward signposting to relevant agencies who we knew were also knowledgeable about LGB&T issues - many of whom we had trained ourselves. Others required making contact with the agency and offering to work alongside them.

In other instances, we worked in partnership with other organisations, making use of the referral pathways and /or premises that they had, combined with our expertise and networks to run a group.

### Case study: Positive Futures

Positive Futures is a voluntary organisation that receives referrals from the public and voluntary sector to provide support to people with low-level mental health issues. They contacted us regarding trans people who were being referred to them as they felt they could not offer the support they needed. Following meetings, we set up a trans support group using a room provided by Positive Futures and recruited a volunteer to run the group under our supervision – some referrals now come directly from Positive Futures. We also provided LGB&T awareness training to their staff as well as worked with them on LGB&T related policy development.

Feedback on partnership working:

*'Working with Lancashire LGBT has completely changed the way that we approach LGBT support. Staff and volunteers took part in training from Lancashire LGBT which was really eye opening and meant that we could understand the needs of our LGBT clients and how to support people with sensitivity and dignity.... Without Lancashire LGBT we would not have been able to provide a Trans group or known how to support people in the right way'. Positive Futures*

Partnership working has benefited our project as well as benefitting other agencies and their LGB&T service users. It has helped widen the provision of support available for LGB&T people, integrated LGB&T awareness into service provision in some areas and raised the profile of LGB&T needs.

### LGBT Forum

During the project, we found that there were many people currently running support groups in the county – some in isolation voluntarily with no support or recognition. This meant that some functioning established groups were always in danger of falling apart due to the person leading the group experiencing 'burn out'. We decided to bring together all the people running groups by way of a forum to give people the opportunity to build links, share experiences, be more supported and less isolated.

The forum has proved very popular and has very high attendance.

#### **Feedback from forum members:**

*'The LGBT forum is great, it gave me a chance to be involved in the bigger picture of LGBT issues in the north west, meet people who are passionate about supporting young people as myself'. (LGBT youth worker)*

*'The forum has provided an on-going structure to exchange ideas and good practice and enabled me to keep up to speed with the latest developments across the whole of Lancashire'. (LGBT carers development worker)*

We hope to continue developing the forum and supporting people around the county who are assets to the LGB&T community and who are making a contribution to improving the well-being of many individual LGB&T people.

#### **Wider impact of project**

This project has also now begun to make a wider impact across Lancashire. We have found that many statutory organisations are beginning to see Lancashire LGBT as key stakeholders around the table in strategic decision making – for example some Clinical Commissioning Groups, some areas of Lancashire County Council and Lancashire Care Foundation Trust. This has led to some successes – for example our involvement in the Health Behaviours JSNA survey subsequently meant that LGB people were identified as one of the high risk groups for poor physical and mental health.

## **Conclusion**

#### **Learning as the project has progressed**

We have learned a lot about the needs of LGB&T people throughout this project. We had to adapt the delivery models of activities as the project progressed as some simply did not work. Engaging with the LGB&T community has proved difficult and has only improved in the second half of the project as our organisation has become better established, we have learned more about the needs of LGB&T people and we have changed the services and activities on offer.

#### **Access to information**

Since this project began, we have become the first point of contact in Lancashire for information related to anything regarding LGB&T people. There is a clear need for this service for both LGB&T people and their family members as well as organisations working with LGB&T people who need our help.

#### **LGB&T groups**

We have learned that the needs of LGB and T people in Lancashire are different when it comes to the provision of groups. From the success of our new groups focused on activities or interests, it is clear that LGB people still seek opportunities to meet other LGB people away from the gay commercial scene and traditional peer support group settings.

For Trans people, peer support groups have a specific function. The value of these groups is immeasurable to individual trans people undergoing gender reassignment – many of whom have no other source of support. Through evidence collected throughout the project we have identified the need for specific support for people undergoing gender reassignment

### **LGB&T volunteering**

We have tried 3 different models for engaging volunteers during the course of the project – the final model is working well. This new approach has allowed us to view LGB&T volunteering in a way that meets the ‘community’ in terms of where it is in development. Many people do not want to fit into a traditional ‘volunteer’ bracket, but regularly give their time to support other people and they need recognition and support.

### **Learning from community events**

On the whole, the community events aimed at LGB&T people are not well attended by a diverse group and more LGB&T people from around the county need to be involved in the development and delivery of community events. We currently have a large group of volunteers planning LGBT film events across the county – a partnership with ourselves and Cinema for All which should prove popular.

### **Training on LGB&T awareness**

There is clearly an on-going need for training for organisations on LGB&T awareness and in particular trans awareness.

### **Further developments for LGB&T people**

There is now a small cohort of highly motivated and informed people acting as champions for the LGB&T community. They will play an important role in speaking up on behalf of LGB&T people and influencing decision making. More work needs to be done to continue to develop a larger cohort of people to make a long lasting impact.

The LGB&T community in Lancashire has been undervalued and is underdeveloped in the absence of long-term community development work. More work needs to be done to sustain the further development of a more empowered, engaged, healthy, resilient and valued LGB&T population in Lancashire. See Table 2.

**Table 1: Key learning**

<b>A significant majority of LGB&amp;T people are isolated from other LGB&amp;T people</b>	Through consultation we found that over half do not feel part of an LGB&T community, the majority do not go to gay bars or meet up with other LGB&T people.
<b>The needs of trans people and LGB people are different</b>	LGB people are reluctant to attend peer support groups but are more interested in groups based on a shared interest or activity. Trans men and women are more likely to access peer support groups than LGB people
<b>There is a growing number of people identifying as trans and non-binary gender who have specific needs</b>	There has been a huge demand for support for trans people of all ages as well as for those supporting trans people. Gender identity issues were the most frequently recurring theme in counselling referrals. Family members also need support
<b>Many organisations and institutions are not LGB aware and in particular, trans aware</b>	We were surprised at the low level of understanding that many agencies and institutions have of LGB people and in particular trans people's needs. Many LGB&T people will assume that an organisation/institution/service is not LGB&T-friendly unless this is explicitly stated. Demonstrations of LGB&T-friendliness are often not reflected in the communication methods of many organisations.
<b>Attracting LGB&amp;T volunteers can be a challenge</b>	It is difficult to attract and retain LGB&T people to volunteer within the LGB&T community.
<b>Engaging with LGB&amp;T people is a challenge</b>	Regular localised information and support drop-in sessions as well as having stalls at events are mostly a waste of time as many people do not want to be open about their identities in mainstream environments.
<b>Trans groups play a key role in supporting individuals</b>	The largest number of support groups for LGB&T people in Lancashire are trans groups. Their role is a crucial source of information and affirmation for people undergoing gender reassignment and probably saves lives. The trans people who run these groups also need support.
<b>Barriers accessing healthcare</b>	Through consultation with local LGB&T community we have found that there are significant barriers to accessing healthcare and social care.
<b>There are independent LGB&amp;T volunteers who need support</b>	We found that there were many people independently running groups across the county. These groups provide vital support but are potentially precarious because they are reliant on the energy and commitment of one individual
<b>LGB&amp;T staff, service users and volunteers are 'invisible' in organisations</b>	The majority of organisations do not monitor sexual orientation and/or gender identity and therefore do not know how many of their staff, service users or volunteers are LGB and/or T. This is important because LGB&T people will not be included in the targeting, provision or evaluation of services and LGB&T staff and volunteers may not feel acknowledged or encouraged to be open about their identity.

**Table 2: What work still needs to be done**

<b>What is needed</b>	<b>Impact that would make</b>
Targeted support for people undergoing gender reassignment	Improvement of mental health including reduced risk of attempted suicide. Better informed and supported trans people who are less isolated. Trans people more confident in gender role and have continued support networks and befriending.
Support for families of people undergoing gender reassignment	Family members better supported and thus trans people supported and understood by their families. Reduction in family breakdown or rejection by family members.
Support for existing LGB&T people who are essential 'community assets' by offering support to LGB&T people through groups	Groups are more sustainable as LGB&T people running groups have more recognition and support. They are more resilient to 'burn out' as well as being supported in planning succession if they wish to leave.
Community Ambassadors programme	A group of people speaking up on behalf of LGB&T people across the county at forums across the county who can influence decision making.
More opportunities for LGB&T people to meet others in environments which do not compromise health and well-being	A larger network of LGB&T people involved in social activities with each other which benefit them as well as the wider community. Less social isolation and improved well-being.
Continued development of a LGBT 'quality mark' which organisations can aspire to	Services adapted to the needs of LGB&T people. More LGB&T people accessing services with the 'quality mark' and feeling more confident about being open about their identity. Thus reducing barriers to accessing services as well as reducing barriers between organisations and their service users.
Continued LGB&T awareness training	Awareness training for organisations will remove barriers to accessing services and ultimately reduce health inequalities experienced by LGB&T people
Inclusion of LGB&T people in local strategic decision making	Service providers will be more able to reduce health inequalities by taking into account the needs of LGB&T people in decision making. LGB&T people will have a louder 'community voice' and be more encouraged to take an active role in consultations on issues which affect them.
An 'information hub' for and about LGB&T people	People can easily get access to services, networks and groups as well as get information not readily available from the internet. Organisations have access to accurate information and support.