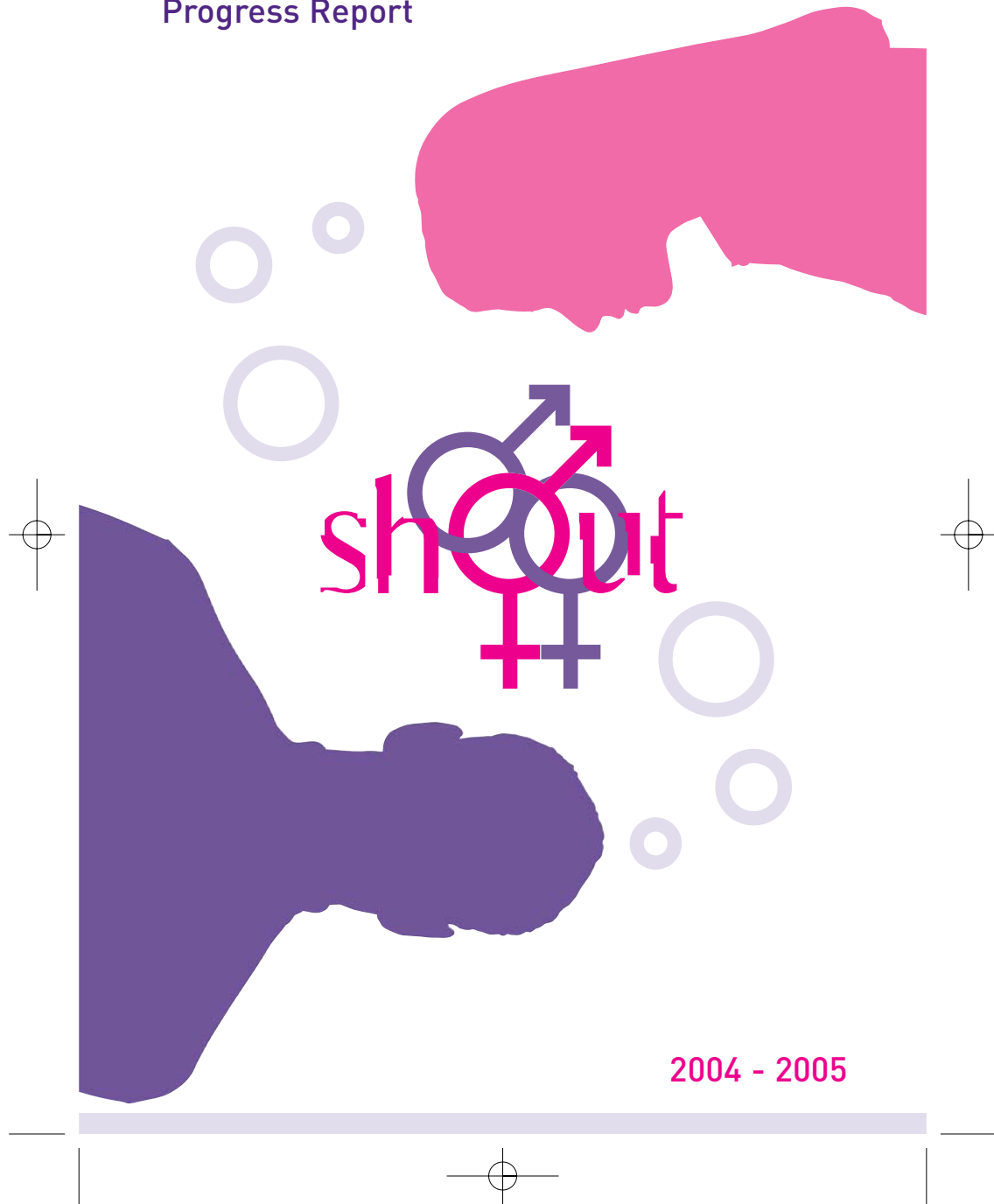


Progress Report



2004 - 2005

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INTRODUCTION

Background

In 2002 the Department of Education, as part of its statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act (1998), identified the requirement for research into the needs of young people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or transgender (LGBT) in Northern Ireland.

The Department commissioned YouthNet to act as the lead body in carrying out this research. At this time, YouthNet had established a number of interest groups within its membership and facilitated them to meet on issues of common concern. One of these groups was the lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or transgender grouping. This became the steering group for the research and comprised the following organisations:

- YouthAction NI;
- Foyle Friend;
- The Rainbow Project;
- and Young Citizens In Action.

"Knowing something is different in your life is hard to deal with at a young age. I had to deal with the "not getting married", the "not having kids" and just breaking your parent's hearts."

This was the first piece of research in Northern Ireland to look exclusively at young LGBT people's experience of the education and youth sectors and includes responses from 362 young LGBT people, 76 organisations working with young people and 48 public sector bodies.

The ShOut Report, which was launched by the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People, has some stark findings which highlight child protection issues for young people.

In launching the report the Commissioner commented that "all young people have a basic human right for the freedom to discover themselves without bullying and abuse. Young people should feel valued, involved and safe throughout our youth services".

Some of the key findings included:

- 65% of respondents had experienced verbal abuse
- 44% had been bullied in school because of their sexual orientation
- 29% had attempted suicide
- 26% had self harmed
- 16% had experienced homelessness
- 25% had truanted because of their sexual orientation
- 15% had dropped out of school because of their sexual orientation
- 79% of organisations working with young people would like training for staff/volunteers to engage more effectively with young LGBT people

Following publication, YouthNet made a proposal to the Department of Education (DE) to progress the recommendations in the report through a Consortium of membership organisations, including some of those involved in the research steering group. The Consortium is made up of:

- Challenge for Youth
- Gay & Lesbian Youth Northern Ireland
- The Rainbow Project
- Young Citizens In Action
- YouthAction NI
- YouthNet

A positive response to the proposal from DE secured resources to employ two development officers for a period of two years. The main aim was to develop a coordinated strategy to address the identified needs of young LGBT people in Northern Ireland through:

- policy and information development;
- support and training to address the needs of LGBT young people;
- extending the capacity of existing organisations working with LGBT young people to enhance services;
- developing existing website initiatives.

The Consortium considered placement of staff within the LGBT youth sector and, following several approaches, it became clear that LGBT youth organisations were severely limited in their capacity to respond to increased demands on their services, often had a purely volunteer base, and did not have the structures in place to support project staff.

YouthNet then took on the employer's role on behalf of the consortium with the responsibility for the development of the strategy and support activities directed by the consortium. To maintain its separate identity from YouthNet core work it was branded the ShOut Project, adopting the logos used in the research project.

The following is an evaluation report of progress made in the first year by the ShOut Project in addressing the key strategic aims of:

- **Partnerships**
- **Support & Development**
- **Section 75 Compliance & Policy**
- **Training & Information**
- **Resources & Research**

"I remember feeling so alone at school, I had no one to talk to that I could trust and I tried on several occasions to commit suicide."

Vision and Values of the LGBT Consortium

The LGBT Consortium's vision of the future is of an inclusive society where all young people, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity, are valued and play a full role as active citizens.

The following values underpin all aspects of the work of the Consortium:

- All young people have the right to be accepted and treated equally, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.
- All children and young people have the right to feel safe and to be protected from abuse and violence.
- Young people have the right to participate both in decisions that affect them and in society as full citizens.
- Services and other opportunities for LGBT young people should be accessible to those who wish to make use of them.
- Young people should be at the heart of the Consortium.
- Collaborative work between all relevant agencies is more effective in achieving results than each agency working on its own.

Challenge for Youth

Challenge for Youth is an independent not-for-profit company, providing a range of personal development opportunities for young people from the Greater Belfast area. It has a diverse and creative skills base ranging from adventure learning to creative, visual and performance arts in its work with young people.

Gay & Lesbian Youth Northern Ireland (GLYNI)

GLYNI is a voluntary youth organisation for those who identify as "not heterosexual". Through peer-support, self-development and social activities GLYNI aims to provide members with a safe space to build their self-esteem, discuss issues, and gain experience of LGBT matters in order to provide peer support to other young people.

The Rainbow Project

The Rainbow Project is Northern Ireland's only gay and bisexual men's health organisation and houses the only gay male specific counselling and support service available in Northern Ireland. It aims to address the physical, mental and emotional health of gay and bisexual men living in, working in or visiting Northern Ireland.

Young Citizens In Action (YCIA)

Young Citizens In Action is the youth department within VSB (Voluntary Services Bureau). It encourages young people aged 16-30 to become active in their local community through volunteering. VSB is a local development agency providing the infrastructure to support, encourage and promote citizenship and participation through voluntary activity.

YouthAction NI

YouthAction Northern Ireland is a voluntary youth organisation that works to enable young people to achieve their full potential. They also seek to extend the understanding of youth work through the development of innovative models of practice. The organisation aims to support young people as active and equal citizens whose voices are heard, respected and valued.

YouthNet

YouthNet is the voluntary youth network for Northern Ireland that aims to provide an effective voice for the voluntary youth sector and support its members to develop best practice and quality standards.

Key Strategic Aims



Fig 1. Key strategic aims of ShOut Project

Partnerships

Links with LGBT Organisations and Initiatives

Since August 2004, the ShOut Project has made links with several outside organisations. This began with a study visit to Scotland, where the Development Officers met with staff from Inclusion Scotland / Beyond Barriers (Glasgow LGBT Centre) and LGBT Youth Scotland. Through the relationship built with staff in Glasgow, the Project was able to arrange a two-day transgender awareness training session for LGBT Consortium member organisations and associated LGBT youth groups in January 2005. Since this training, Inclusion Scotland created a link between the Project and staff at the Belfast City Hospital's Gender Identity Clinic. This has led to a partnership between the two in order to develop and facilitate a regular Transgender Peer Support Group.

One development officer has been able to make links with LGBT initiatives across the UK through the trade union UNISON LGBT Campaign as a member of the regional Unison LGBT Group. This has allowed the Project to be promoted in Northern Ireland and in Great Britain. The Unison LGBT members' conference will be held on 18-20 November 2005 in Belfast. This officer has proposed a motion which calls for support of LGBT organisations which are working to tackle bullying in schools on the basis of sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

The ShOut Project established a link with the Heritage Lottery Fund to discuss LGBT issues in Northern Ireland and how this might be considered in the funding of Young Roots. Young Roots planned a residential to take place in Manchester with UK LGBT groups to look at history of LGBT issues in a positive way. The residential took place from 18-20 February. Five young people aged 18-20 and two workers from three LGBT youth groups in Northern Ireland took part in this residential, where they were able to create further links with LGBT youth groups from across the UK. This link has been promoted in evaluations with the groups that took part, and the young people gained a valuable, positive experience of LGBT issues, history and culture with other young people from the UK.

International Links

One development officer has made use of an international link through her role as a preparation team member and facilitator for IGLYO¹. This work enabled one young person from Northern Ireland to take part in the 2nd Annual Women's Conference, which was held in Croatia in December 2004.

The Project has continued making valuable links with international LGBT youth initiatives by participating in an exchange programme under the Youth Work in Contested Spaces Project, in the Balkans in late August 2005, funded under Peace II, and by attending a SALTO-YOUTH training course for LGBT youth workers which took place in Romania in October 2005.

Young LGBT people benefit from International links because:

- LGBT young people throughout Europe experience similar barriers and have similar needs in terms of the emotional, physical, familial, social and cultural challenges they face due to marginalisation and discrimination in educational, religious institutions and youth services;
- Young people can benefit from wider social networks while going through the process of coming out – acknowledging, accepting and normalising one's sexual orientation and/or gender identity, and dealing with impact of coming out to families, wider social circles and mainstream society;
- International initiatives have the potential to introduce young LGBT to new learning opportunities, and different cultures and traditions.

The ShOut Project benefits from making International links because:

- International sources of information, resources, events and initiatives on human rights issues better informs the work of the Project;
- the LGBT Consortium can be promoted as an example of working in partnership;
- the ShOut research is a valuable resource for other countries to emulate;
- the ShOut Project is unique as a model for responding to the needs of LGBT young people;
- Networking opportunities allow the Project to tap into a rich body of expertise, specialism, and good practice.

¹ the International Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Youth and Students' Organisation

Support & Development

Ladz Project

Through the ShOut Project, the Ladz group has been working with GLYNI in an effort to get youth groups to organise more projects together. The Project was able to identify funding for the group through the WELB.

"I like being part of this group - I feel we are able to talk about our feelings and experiences without being judged which is normally what happens."

Girls Empowering Girls

The ShOut Project has developed a relationship with the leader who runs this project and information is regularly shared between organisations.

"The group gives us an opportunity to meet other young lesbians outside the usual nightclub scene. There should be more opportunities for other young lesbians."

LGBT Craigavon

The ShOut Project has enabled the leaders of LGBT Craigavon to participate in transgender awareness training. The group previously had the support of a part time youth worker and a worker from TASSK Healthy Living Centre, but due to lack of sustained funding the part time youth worker is now volunteering with the group. The Project has met with senior staff from the SELB to discuss both the suitability of premises and funding issues within the board area.

"The project is absolutely fabulous. The people are friendly and open and give you confidence and support. When I first came I started to feel alive. My ideas are respected and encouraged. This is so different to what I have been used to. It's a new beginning. I love it."

Gay & Lesbian Youth Northern Ireland (GLYNI)

With support from the ShOut Project this group is in the process of creating links between all the LGBT youth groups in Northern Ireland. Through the ShOut Project the group has received transgender awareness training. The Project has also helped GLYNI to design and launch a new promotional flier called "What's in Your Closet?" and is supporting the volunteers in the process of creating a "Coming-Out" resource in conjunction with other LGBT youth groups. It is anticipated that this resource will be used in the LGBT and mainstream youth sectors. The Project is supporting GLYNI to update its website, which will enable the group to develop web-based resources for young LGBT people in Northern Ireland.

"Because I am a member of a gay youth group (GLYNI), I receive loads of support around my sexuality."

Out & About Young Lesbians Project

Through the ShOut Project members of this group had an opportunity to attend the LGBT History Month in Manchester. Two youth workers from YouthAction NI who are involved with the group attended the transgender awareness training as members of the Consortium, and the ShOut project facilitated three workshops on transgender awareness with the young women's group.

"I joined the Out & About Group so I could learn more about myself and my sexuality, eventually helping others to deal with issues relating to their sexuality. It is important to know who you are and through YouthAction Northern Ireland I am learning more about myself all the time."

Out in the City

The youth worker responsible for supporting Out in the City attended transgender awareness training provided through the ShOut Project. Following a request from the young people, The ShOut Project facilitated them during a residential to explore issues around dealing with homophobia in their own lives, and helped them to identify how this idea could be further developed in the form of a drama project.

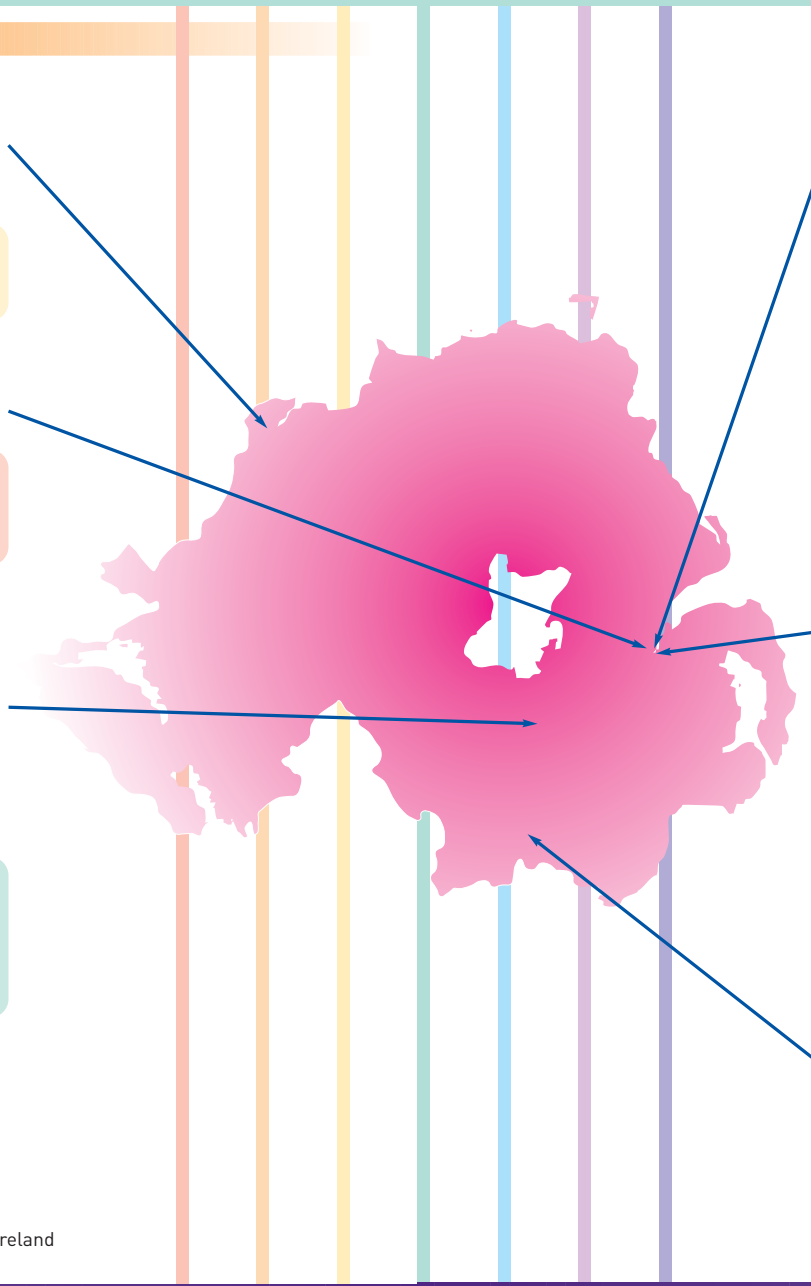


Fig 2. Current LGBT youth groups active in Northern Ireland

Supporting Existing LGBT Groups

Networking LGBT Youth Groups

The ShOut Project has helped GLYNI to facilitate three sessions for all the LGBT youth groups in Northern Ireland to come together to meet and share experiences. The first session took place in Crawfordsburn Country Park with the icebreakers being led by Challenge for Youth. Young people were given the opportunity to get to know each other through confidence building challenges and team building activities. At the second session, during Belfast Pride week, the young people had an opportunity to participate in three workshops: developing of a coming out resource; developing LGBT specific material for the niyouthinfo.org website (which was facilitated by WELB); and banner making and decorating for the Pride Parade. The final meeting of the young people involved was at the Pride Parade 2005 in Belfast.

Based on the success of these initial sessions, the ShOut Project hopes to encourage more opportunities for networking, sharing of information, practice, and resources among LGBT youth groups in Northern Ireland.

Development in the North West Region

ShOut Project staff members spent three days in the North West meeting with individuals previously involved with Foyle Friend, and with workers from the Bytes Project, the Nucleus Centre, Opportunity Youth, the Rainbow Project and WELB staff members involved with the niyouthinfo.org website. The individuals were identified because of their skills, expertise, and direct contact with LGBT young people.

These meetings highlighted that there are few LGBT-specific support services for young men in the Derry City area, and there are none for young women. However, the meetings were very positive with offers of support in terms of accommodation, advertising, and personal development programmes, particularly for young women. Youth Action NI has since expressed its intention to develop the Out and About Young Lesbian Project in the North West and the ShOut project has offered assistance, if required, in this process. It is hoped that activities in the North West will begin toward the end of 2005 and through 2006.

Transgender Peer Support Group

The ShOut Project made initial contact with the psychosexual team at Belfast City Hospital Gender Identity Clinic, when a worker from Inclusion Scotland recommended that the Project should help set up a group similar to one operating in Sandyford².

The development officers then met with the psychosexual team and two representative patients. It was agreed that the ShOut Project would facilitate six initial monthly meetings, after which time the group would be evaluated externally by facilitators from Scotland. The peer support group established its own ground rules and objectives, and a programme for six months including dealing with family issues, the law and rights, meeting with the police, and issues around surgery. The group is also seen as a social outlet for members who often experience extreme isolation.

In September, the psychosexual team received the Belfast City Hospital Trust Service Improvement Award 2005, for its collaboration with the ShOut Project, "establishing the first support group for patients with gender identity disorder in Northern Ireland."

2 The Sandyford Initiative is part of NHS Glasgow, and supported by Glasgow City Council, providing sexual and reproductive health services for women, men and young people, as well as counselling, information and a range of specialist services.

LGBT Child Protection Working Group

In response to requests within the Consortium, the ShOut Project is currently facilitating representatives from Challenge for Youth, GLYNI, the Rainbow Project, and YouthAction NI to develop good practice guidance on working with LGBT young people. The group has established its own terms of reference and is currently reviewing child protection training and guidance to make it more pertinent to working with LGBT young people. The group hopes to consider issues around minimising the potential for bullying and isolation of young people on the basis of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity, as well as examining issues around gender segregated spaces, defining appropriate behaviour, confidentiality and parental consent, as well as other issues as they arise.

The LGBT Child Protection Working Group has also expressed concern regarding the absence of LGBT-specific content within the existing youth work curriculum and aims to address this over the following year.

Student Placement supported by the LGBT Consortium

The LGBT Consortium supported a student on placement from the Community Youth Work course at the University of Ulster, Jordanstown. Offline supervision for the student was arranged through YouthNet, and the placement lasted for twelve weeks.

"I had a wonderfully formative and insightful 12 week placement with the LGBT consortium. In the course of my placement I was struck by the lack of resources and service provision for LGBT young people. Thus the work of the consortium is essential and it was evident to me that the work of the ShOut Project in raising awareness and information on LGBT issues was something that professionals and organisations were crying out for. I would like to thank the consortium and in particular the ShOut Project staff for their support and expertise which assisted me greatly in my development of skills and understanding"

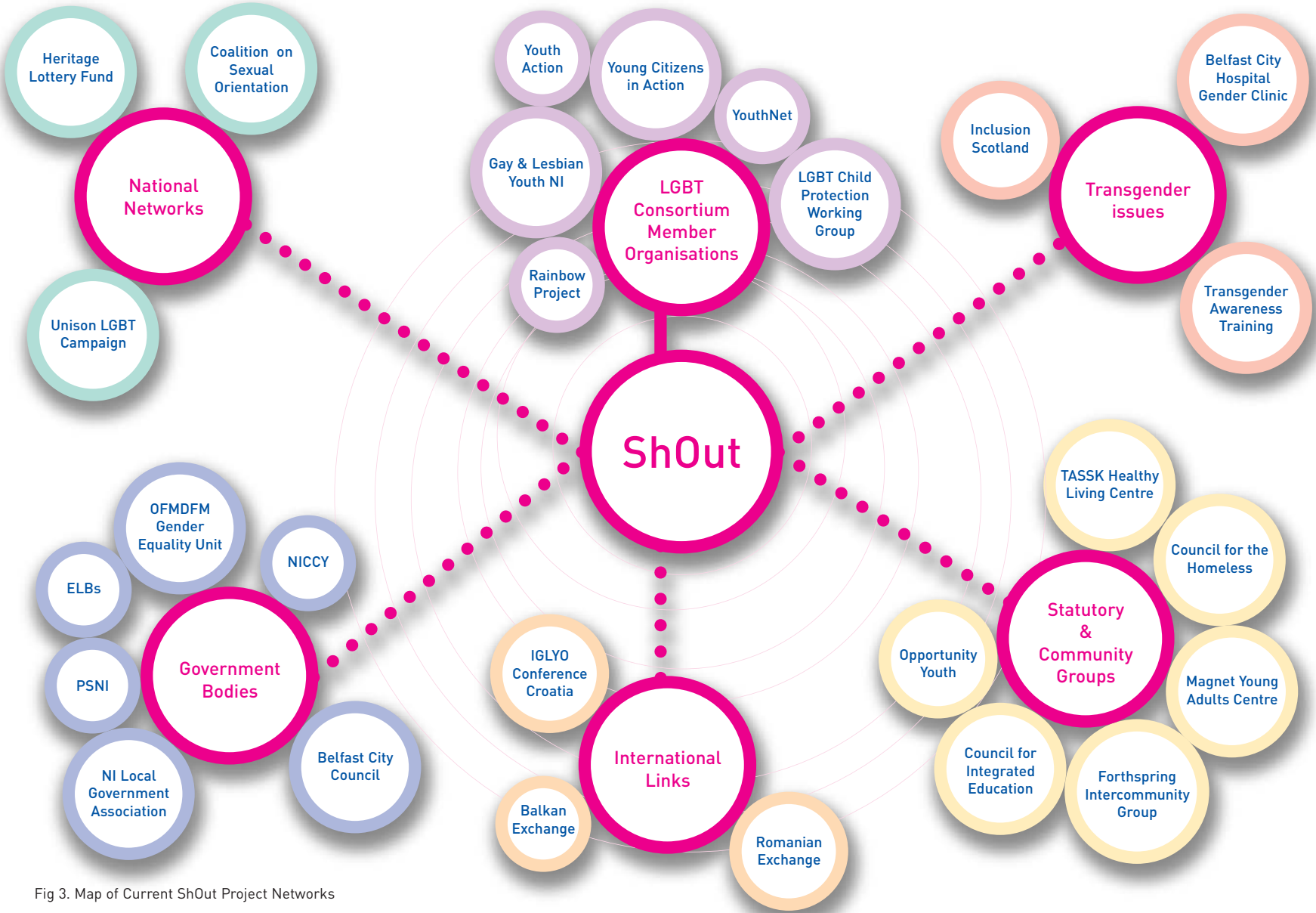
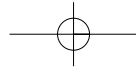
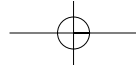


Fig 3. Map of Current ShOut Project Networks



Section 75 Compliance & Policy

Since the Northern Ireland Act was passed by the Northern Ireland Assembly in 1998 there has been a statutory duty placed on public authorities to have due regard to promote equality on the basis of gender and sexual orientation. As a result, public authorities have turned to the community/voluntary sector to provide expertise on minority issues to fulfil their duty to consult the public in impact assessments and policy development issues.

The ShOut Project was pleased to see that the Northern Ireland Draft Priorities and Budget 2005–2008 has highlighted young gay and lesbian people as one group at risk of social exclusion within the youth sector. The Project equally welcomed the research commissioned by the NI Commissioner for children and young people entitled “Children’s Rights in Northern Ireland” which addressed the experiences and needs of LGBT young people in Northern Ireland.

The ShOut Project has received many requests from public authorities to participate in consultation initiatives³. These requests place considerable demands on project resources, and have sometimes revealed inappropriate expectations being made about the Project’s capacity to “represent” young LGBT people, or to act as a conduit through which young LGBT people can be accessed.

Most LGBT groups in Northern Ireland consist of volunteers and have little or no funding. Even those organisations that are funded for specific areas of work rarely have the resources and/or the capacity to respond effectively to the demands being placed upon them by public authorities. This has placed a tremendous burden on a handful of dedicated LGBT people to act as representatives for the LGBT community in Northern Ireland. Relying on consultation with a LGBT community which lacks infrastructure as a whole particularly affects young LGBT people, as the vast majority of them have little or no access to LGBT-specific resources, services or information – especially outside the Belfast area.

Some individuals charged with the task of consultation have approached the ShOut Project, and other members of the LGBT Consortium, requesting to be put in touch with young LGBT people to participate in focus groups or to talk about their experiences as representatives of “Section 75 groups.” The fact that some public authorities have defined Section 75 categories as “groups,” rather than identities, by its nature reveals a failure to acknowledge that people have multiple, complex and diverse identities and experiences.

Furthermore, some young people from LGBT youth groups, who have been repeatedly called upon to participate in research and consultations, have complained that their experiences have been unrewarding. They say that they rarely get feedback from the people who come to ask questions, and that they can perceive no changes being made after the consultation. A lack of appropriate rewards for their participation combined with intangible outcomes has led to feelings of “consultation fatigue”.

There seems to be a general failure to appreciate the considerable barriers that marginalisation and discrimination against young LGBT people pose, of the emotional, physical, familial, social and cultural challenges young LGBT people face during the process of coming to terms with their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. To ask young people to reveal their identities publicly, one must address confidentiality and child protection issues as well as consider the time, motivation, confidence, personal skills and capacity that is required of individual young LGBT people in order to engage.

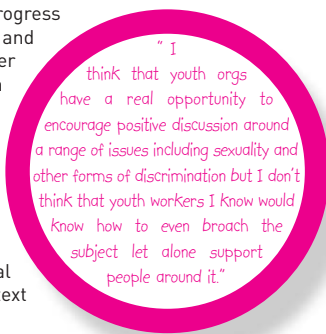
3 e.g. Belfast City Council, Gender Equality Unit of OFMDFM, Institute for Conflict Research on behalf of PSNI, NICCY, the NI Local Government Association, PSNI Community Safety Branch, and the Queen’s University Belfast on behalf of NICCY, etc.

There does not presently seem to be adequate commitment made by public bodies to explore effective models of engagement, particularly models embedded within good youth work practice, and not enough consideration is given to the material investment and logistics which are required to develop marginalised young people to the point where they have the skills and confidence to engage truly and effectively.

Training & Information

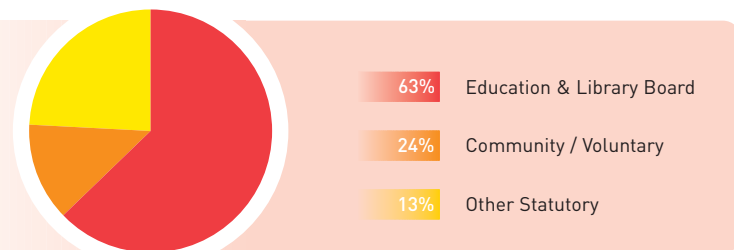
Over the last decade, Northern Ireland has made some progress in terms of mainstreaming equality through legislation and policy, which recognises that sexual orientation and gender identity issues are human rights issues on a par with racial and disability equality.

However, the needs and rights of LGBT young people have remained an obscure subject, and sexual orientation and gender identity are not included in present youth work training curriculum. While society has progressed on a legislative level, there remains a perception among some people that to speak about sexual orientation and gender identity openly within a youth context is at best controversial and at worst taboo.



Between August 2004 and August 2005 the ShOut Project has received numerous requests for training by organisations from both community/ voluntary and statutory sectors. Awareness raising training and presentations were requested from and carried out with three Education and Library Boards (North Eastern, Western and South Eastern), Forthspring Inter-Community Group, a training residential looking at Equity, Diversity and Interdependence, Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education, the Education and Training Inspectorate, Council for the Homeless Northern Ireland, and the Commissioner for Children and Young People’s Self Harm and Suicide Prevention Conference. To date, the project has provided LGBT awareness raising sessions to more than 200 individuals, ranging from young people to youth service executives. Workshops ranged from one hour to a full day and addressed audiences ranging in size from eight to fifty-eight people.

Fig 3. Percentage of total participants (n=222) by type of organisation



4 A Practical Guide to Policy Making in Northern Ireland OFMDFM p.44

Participant evaluations have provided invaluable base line data in terms of measuring the general attitudes and knowledge of young LGBT people's needs and experiences within the youth sector in Northern Ireland, as well as how future training can best be developed in order to promote understanding, inclusion, and equality of opportunity for LGBT young people in youth service provision.

Expectations

The first theme revealed by participant responses reflects the very limited understanding that many people have about LGBT people and the general issues they face. Many respondents stated that they did not know what to expect, or were unsure about what the workshop would entail, and some expressed nervousness or apprehension about being challenged by the subject matter.

"A bit anxious, I didn't know what to expect, I wasn't expecting it to be as good"

"Not sure - expected to have LGBT rights sort of forced on me"

The second theme also relates to the basic level of understanding held about LGBT issues. Many people stated that they had a desire to receive basic information and understanding of definitions, appropriate language, and what young LGBT people are actually experiencing and facing. This was confirmed in training sessions when it became evident that a number of respondents were approaching the subject for the first time.

"Gave me the opportunity to really think about things that previously I may not even considered, opened up my thinking"

"Having had no previous knowledge on the issue of LGBT I now feel more enlightened"

"I enjoyed the game very much it helped me to understand how LGBT must feel every day."

"Made more aware of my own prejudice and needs of LGBT"

"I am very stereotypical and didn't think my thoughts could be changed"

The next theme expressed was an expectation that the workshops would provide practical advice and guidance directly related to their own work in terms of how to promote equality and inclusion of LGBT young people, and how to challenge homophobic attitudes within youth work practice and education settings. Several people mentioned that they expected this to fall within the EDI framework and also stated that they wished to understand current legislation.

"This was interesting information, it allowed us as a group and individually to ask a lot of questions but a lot more time is required to spend on this subject in the near future"

"To gain information, address issues and continue the process of developing understanding of groups who face discrimination within the community"

"More training for youth programme staff, information posters and leaflets to enable to create a safe space for YP struggling with sexual ID, programme suggestions and ideas for use with YP"

Finally, participants wished to gain information on LGBT services and organisations in Northern Ireland to bring back to their jobs, particularly to signpost young people to appropriate information and resources.

"Posters with information numbers to put up in YC"

"Contact nos, leaflets, posters, longer sessions"

"Need more contact numbers and posters with helpline"

Training Needs Identified

90% of people who returned evaluations stated that their expectations had been met by the session they attended. However, when asked for more details of what specific information they had gained and what additional information and/or opportunities for further training would be helpful, a great number of suggestions and comments resulted. Of those participants who responded to a direct question whether they would be interested in attending further training, 79% answered positively.

These responses not only repeat the themes that participants indicated as expectations before engaging in LGBT awareness raising, but go beyond the initial expectations in scope and detail.

The majority of requests were for further training that involved practical skills and guidance relevant to youth work practice. This included advice on how to challenge effectively prejudice and homophobia among young people, methods of engaging with and supporting young LGBT people, practical ideas for programmes, information on how working with LGBT young people differs from "mainstream" provision, pastoral care, inclusion, and confidentiality.

Another significant response was that many people felt that they needed more time in order to explore the issues, to reflect on personal attitudes and practice, to engage in discussions and to learn more about supporting young LGBT people. These comments show that participants recognise just how large a subject discrimination and inclusion on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity is. Many people expressed that more comprehensive training was necessary.

"...the subject of LGBT in its own right deserved more time than was allocated at this conference. A more interactive approach with sufficient time to explore issues such as knowledge and experience of LGBT and perhaps acknowledging "stereotyping" and "personal prejudices" could establish a better foundation for workers to engage with LGBT young people when and where appropriate to locale."

Finally, respondents reiterated a call for information and resources that could be used in their practice such as posters, helpline numbers, a list of LGBT services and contact numbers, leaflets and also information regarding support for parents and families of LGBT young people. Some also asked for more information on legislation.

Analysis

The information gathered from workshop evaluations has provided essential information that has helped to build a framework to meet the needs of people who wish to undertake further LGBT equality training. The resulting data has shown that introducing LGBT issues involves a process that requires far more time and breadth than has been given to the subject to date.

Training Model

The ShOut Project has developed a five-point framework for training design, on the basis of data collected through participant evaluations of LGBT awareness raising sessions received between August 2004 and August 2005.

1 Challenging

In order to engage successfully with the subject matter, people must first go through a period of challenging in a safe, non-judgemental environment. This gives participants an opportunity to explore their own perceptions, beliefs and stereotypes about LGBT people. It also gives people an opportunity to address any discomfort or apprehensions they may have about talking about sexual orientation and gender identity.

Challenging

Attitudes
Misconceptions
Stereotypes

Prejudice

1

2 Learning

Once a safe space has been created, participants can then work through the questions they have about sexual orientation and gender identity including terminology, LGBT people's lives and experiences, consider the negative messages perpetuated within our culture and have fundamental questions answered.

Learning

Statistics
Definitions
Appropriate

Terminology
LGBT Development &
Identity

2

3 Understanding

Now that the group understands the basics, its members can move towards reaching a more developed and critical understanding of what young people who identify as LGBT face throughout their lives and how homophobic messages, marginalisation, discrimination, bullying, and social isolation can impact on their emotional, physical, and sexual development and wellbeing.

Understanding

Discrimination
Impact on young
people

Legislation
Duty of Care

3

4 Practical Skills

Without practical and relevant advice and guidance, many practitioners may feel ineffective in terms of being able to address issues of sexual orientation and gender identity within their work. They therefore need time to go beyond concepts to a place where they feel equipped with skills that they can use with confidence in their work practice.

Practical Skills

Dealing with
disclosure, supporting
LGBT young people

and challenging
homophobia in Youth
Work settings

4

5 Signposting

No single training programme can fully address every issue that falls under the subject of sexual orientation and gender identity. It is therefore important to leave participants with avenues for further information – both in terms of giving them something tangible to bring back to their workplace, such as posters, flyers, information booklets and contact lists, and in terms of giving people information on what services, resources and organisations exist in Northern Ireland so that these can be referred to when the need arises in the future.

Signposting

Information &
resources for LGBT
young people, peers &
families

For Youth Workers
Further Training
Opportunities

5

Fig 4. Training Model – based on the needs of youth sector leaders and professionals to effectively deal with sexual orientation and gender identity issues.

Several Education and Library Boards, community/voluntary groups and other statutory organisations and agencies have taken a vital first step towards introducing sexual orientation and gender identity issues to the young people with whom they work, volunteers and staff. The ShOut Project has been able to provide initial awareness raising addressing the first two levels of learning within the framework, to a wide ranging group of people. Now that the will to learn about and address sexual orientation and gender identity issues

within the youth sector has been established, further time and resources should be invested to offer more comprehensive training. This should move beyond basic awareness raising, to opportunities where participants can build a deeper understanding of LGBT issues. Participants who work with young people need to develop practical skills that are embedded within the ethos of good youth work practice, and provide them with opportunities to build up confidence to address these issues. It is also essential that participants have access to good quality and appropriate resources and references that can be used in the future.

Transgender Awareness Training

The need for transgender training arose initially from the Consortium organisations and those providing direct services to LGBT young people. No training in transgender awareness previously existed in Northern Ireland. Following the study visit to Scotland a trainer was identified and a training session arranged. The trainer identified was Nick Laird who has facilitated a transgender support group and assisted in developing a Scotland wide network called the Scottish Transgender Alliance.

The Transgender Training Pack used for the training was written by Adrienne Hannah, Susan Douglas Scott and Nick Laird. The pack was developed in response to four participatory appraisal qualitative research workshops, which were undertaken to better understand the health needs and experiences of transgender people in Scotland.

The course lasted two days providing participants with the opportunity to gain a knowledge and understanding of issues affecting transgender people. The course also gave participants the opportunity to explore their own experiences of gender identity and expression. Those who went through the training received a copy of the training pack. The training can be rolled out by those who are suitably qualified and or experienced trainers. Thirteen people attended the initial training including young volunteers involved with LGBT organisations, youth workers, community development officers, youth work managers, and a member of the transgender community.

Resources & Research

The Project has supported GLYNI with the development of its new website which it hopes to endorse as one that will provide support for young LGBT people with limited or no access to local services. The website can also be used as a tool for the promotion of LGBT issues, both for young people and for professionals working with young people in youth groups and schools. The website has had input from all the local LGBT youth groups who took part in the Time Out Workshop sessions. It is intended that all LGBT youth groups in Northern Ireland will feel a degree of ownership over the website.

The ShOut Project has also supported GLYNI in the development of its new advertising flier (launched at Belfast Pride 2005) "What's in your Closet?", and in the development of its "Coming-Out" resource book. This resource is aimed not just at the LGBT sector but also at the wider youth sector. Contributions will be given by all LGBT youth projects in Northern Ireland interested in the project.

The Project has developed an email newsletter template which can be sent out monthly, initially giving information of interest for LGBT young people and youth sector.



The Way Forward

The Project has a long term strategy (as laid out in appendix 1) and has achieved many of its initial goals as this progress report demonstrates, but there have been challenges too, some of which are outlined below. As part of the overall strategy the Project has set the following priorities for the year ahead which will compliment the knowledge gained, relationships established and work achieved in the first year.

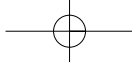
Celebrating Diversity

Context -

It is crucial while working toward best practice, that organisations have access to the information and support they need to ensure that EDI principles underpin all their work. This practice must be made a reality so that places where youth work takes place are inclusive, welcoming environments for all young people.

Next Steps -

- The Project will:
 - continue to work with organisations to address how inclusive spaces can be a reality for young people.
 - develop existing links with organisations working to embed the principles of Equity, Diversity and Interdependence to ensure that LGBT issues are core features in service delivery along with other aspects of equality and diversity.
 - work with organisations to generate cultural change within society as a whole so that the environment in which we nurture young people is accepting of diversity and difference and realises the multiple identities of individuals.



Developing Resources

Context -

There is no centralised information bank containing LGBT research and information for young people, or for those working with young people.

Collecting this information is very time consuming.

There is a need for easy to access, relevant local information for the youth sector and for LGBT young people.

Next Steps -

The Project will:

continue feeding into generic youth development initiatives such as the niyouthinfo.org website. This will raise the profile of LGBT issues within the youth sector and allow young people access to relevant and accurate information about LGBT issues through a mainstream route.

continue to support GLYNI in the development of its website so that it can act as a source of web-based resources specifically for LGBT young people. The site will also function as a information resource for youth workers and professionals working with young people who require knowledge of specific issues that impact on LGBT young people's lives.

build on links with the Curriculum Development Unit in order to produce resources which can be used in an LGBT and mainstream youth group setting in Northern Ireland.



Capacity Building and Development

Context -

There has been frequent reticence and resistance within some organisations and among some youth workers to engage LGBT youth. This may be because of lack of training and experience, fear of repercussions from parents, and/or fear of "perceived" homophobia within the sector.

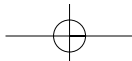
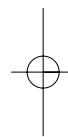
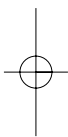
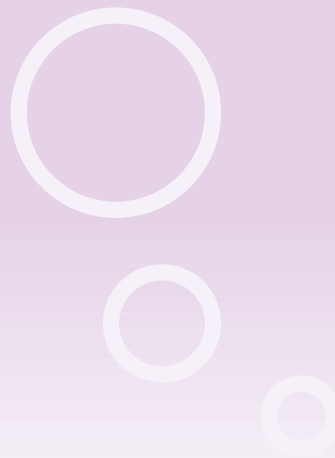
Next Steps -

The Project will:

ensure that LGBT Awareness Training is viewed as an element of fundamental training for quality youth work. The Project will make a half-hour presentation to the Youth Work Training Board regarding LGBT issues with particular emphasis on the EDI framework. The ShOut Project will be contacting the North/South Education and Training Standards Committee (ETS), through the Youth Work Training Board, to ensure that issues of inclusion are core criteria for professional endorsement, and that LGBT issues are considered in the content of all training.

make direct contact with the youth and community work department at the University of Ulster at Jordanstown, through the Courses Consultative Group, to highlight the importance of tackling this issue with youth workers in training. This would have the potential of reaching a huge number of future youth workers before they become frontline.

lobby to encourage Open College Network courses, NVQ levels II and III, Certificate in Community Youth Work and other structures to include LGBT issues as underlying principles of inclusion.



Training & Awareness Raising

Context -

There is a great demand for LGBT Awareness Training placed on the Project. Trainers in this area of work are few which could raise difficulties if the demand gets too great.

Requests for Awareness Raising come from groups at various stages of understanding, and awareness of legislation etc. There can be different starting points in terms of questions round morality and sensitivity (at times aggression and resistance) which means a standard training session is difficult to develop.

Requests for training from organisations that do not necessarily have a clear Youth Work remit or programme lead to questions around which of these might be turned away because the remit is "highlighting the needs of LGBT young people".

Next Steps -

The Project will:
 pilot training based on the five-point model. This training can then be evaluated and developed as a model of good practice and promoted through the Curriculum Development Unit.

use the results of the pilot to develop a "Training for Trainers" Model which can be rolled out in order to improve the number of trainers in Northern Ireland who are equipped to deal with LGBT issues.

develop a Peer Education Training Model in conjunction with LGBT youth groups that can be used to highlight LGBT issues in a positive way among young people, and develop young people as positive role-models and leaders.

create closer links with the JEDI programme and illustrate how LGBT issues sit succinctly within the JEDI Framework.

Policy and Research

Context -

As part of its strategic plan, the LGBT Consortium has set a target for the Project to identify appropriate, relevant and effective methods for further research into the experiences and needs of transgender young people in Northern Ireland.

Next Steps -

The Transgender Support Group, developed in partnership between the ShOut Project and the Belfast City Hospital, has laid a foundation for future work within the transgender community to identify issues of relevance for themselves.

Contact with transgender young people will enable them to provide a valuable input into the development of a research proposal.

Consultations

Context -

As a result of Section 75, the Project receives a lot of requests for young people to sit on equality committees/panels without adequate support or training to engage in these structures.

Public bodies trying to meet Section 75 responsibilities see the Project as panacea.

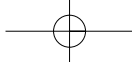
Researchers trying to access young people through the project can often make the mistaken assumption that the ShOut Project is the voice of LGBT young people and can fully represent them.

Next Steps -

The Project will:
 continue to build the capacity of LGBT youth groups and will support young volunteers to access training needed for the groups to develop.

continue to encourage public bodies and agencies to develop proper support frameworks when working with young people generally but also with marginalised young people experiencing specific support needs.

continue to lobby and raise awareness with governmental organisations and researchers of the importance of reaching individual young people and not simply box-ticking in terms of meeting Section 75 responsibilities. Young people have multiple identities and the project would highlight this as an issue of significance for those who seek to identify the opinions of marginalised young people.



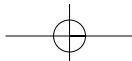
Final Word

As the only project of its kind in Northern Ireland the ShOut Project has demonstrated, over the past year, the need and demand in the youth sector for Awareness Raising on the needs and specific issues of LGBT young people. The project has without doubt filled a void in the youth work curriculum and service delivery and has allowed much needed discussion of this subject in a safe setting for those that work with young people. We recognise that this is just the start of the journey in meeting all the recommendations of the research. We need to build on this initial Awareness Raising to ensure that youth workers are equipped to meet the needs of the young people with whom they work, and the proposed Training Model will begin this process.

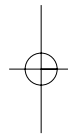
The Project's direct work with LGBT young people has shown them that there is a desire in the youth sector to be inclusive to all young people especially those who have previously been excluded or marginalised by society. This trust must be built upon and developed to ensure the participation of LGBT young people in youth activities.

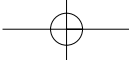
"This research is long overdue. I hope that the project will serve to raise awareness among youth organisations of the needs of young LGBT people."

"This is important work which simply must not be lost. This is a pioneering and innovative project with a vision of meeting all the recommendations of the research. It must continue to build on the momentum gathered at this stage."



Appendices





APPENDIX I - LGBT CONSORTIUM STRATEGY

MISSION

To promote the development of young LGBT people by

- Identifying and engaging with LGBT young people
- Building the capacity of LGBT youth organisations
- Promoting good practice in the youth service and other organisations working with young people
- Influencing public policy

VISION

The Consortium's vision of the future is of an inclusive society where all young people, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity, are valued and play a full role as active citizens.

VALUES

The following values will underpin all aspects of the work of the Consortium:

- All young people have the right to be accepted and treated equally, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.
- All children and young people have the right to feel safe and be protected from abuse and violence.
- Young people have the right to participate in decisions that affect them and in society as full citizens.
- Services and other opportunities for LGBT young people should be accessible to those who want to make use of them.
- Young people should be at the heart of the Consortium.
- Collaborative work between all relevant agencies is more effective in achieving results than each agency working on its own.

AIMS & PRIORITIES

SERVICES

Aim: That young people develop their understanding of LGBT issues and are involved in the development of, and have access to, services and programmes which meet the needs of LGBT young people.

FORMAL EDUCATION

Aim: That young people at school develop an understanding of their own and other sexualities.

CAPACITY BUILDING

Aim: That LGBT organisations and other organisations working with young people have the skills and resources they require to be effective and other organisations working with young people have developed their ability to work with LGBT young people.

INFORMATION

Aim: That young people and those who work with them have access to appropriate information on LGBT issues.

POLICY

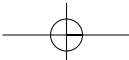
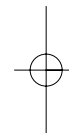
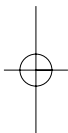
Aim: That the law and statutory policies and practices reflect the rights needs and aspirations of LGBT young people.

FUNDING

Aim: That LGBT groups and youth organisations working with LGBT young people are adequately resourced.

CONSORTIUM

Aim: That the Consortium develops to become an effective mechanism for taking forward the aims and objectives of this strategy.



APPENDIX II - CURRENT YOUTH PROJECTS

Name:
LGBT
Craigavon

Support Organisation:
TASSK Healthy Living Centre

Description: the group is for 18 – 25 year olds who identify as LGBT.

Main Activities: the group regularly holds workshops and team building / social events. The group has participated in two residential and now is looking to secure longer term funding to continue providing support for LGBT young people in the Banbridge/Craigavon area.

Name:
Gay & Lesbian
Youth Northern
Ireland (GLYNI)

Support Organisation: Cara-Friend

Description: GLYNI is a volunteer self-led youth group which was created to provide support and information to young people who identify as "other than heterosexual".

Main Activities: GLYNI runs a web site, and youth leaders within the organisation provide a weekly youth club for young people between 16 and 25. GLYNI is a member of the LGBT Consortium.

Name:
Ladz Project

Support Organisation: Rainbow Project

Description: open to young Gay and Bisexual men from the ages 17-25. The aims of the group is to provide a safe and comfortable environment for service users in the above age group, to provide education on sexual health and health matters such as STI's and drug/alcohol abuse, and to provide a one to one support group.

Main Activities: the group has worked in conjunction with Wheelworks to produce a CD-ROM containing their views on coming out. They have produced a T-shirt exhibition which was launched this year at Belfast Pride. Members of the group sit on the Derry City Shadow Council which has been a great success. The group also has condom pack packing parties, video nights, game nights, and has recently started a literary club.

Name:
Out in the City

Support Organisation:
Magnet Young Adults Centre

Description: Out in the City are an LGBT youth group based in Newry.

Main Activities: The young people meet weekly in a room designated within a local youth centre for their group. This allows them to collect and display up-to-date information and posters etc. that are relevant to LGBT young people.

Name:
Girls
Empowering Girls (GEG)

Support Organisation: Opportunity Youth

Description: GEG provides a safe environment where young women who identify themselves as non-heterosexual aged 16-25 can come and get advice, support and guidance on a weekly basis.

Main Activities: The objectives of the programme are to create an open forum to build confidence levels, to promote rights, to provide a safe environment where these young women can socialise, to provide factual information on services available, to promote awareness around sexuality issues, to promote Gay Pride, and to provide accredited and non accredited training.

Name:
Out & About
Young Lesbian Project

Support Organisation: YouthAction NI

Description: the Out and About Young Lesbian Project is a weekly initiative that is open to young women aged 16-25 who identify as other than heterosexual.

Main Activities: The group developed a work of art and CD-ROM in conjunction with young women from LGBT Craigavon. The programme, delivered by Wheelworks under the title Multiple Realities, provided space to be creative, discuss identity and barriers faced in society, while meeting other young women. The work was shown at the aLAF in Dublin 2005. The group staged a mock lesbian wedding outside St. Ann's Cathedral in order to raise the issues of diversity and tradition as part of a project with Belfast Exposed. Photographs of the occasion were widely distributed and are part of a training pack published by Disability Action. The group is working towards a Youth Achievement Award which will provide them with accreditation for all their work over the past year.

APPENDIX III - GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS

aLAF	a Lesbian Arts Festival
DE	Department of Education for Northern Ireland
EDI	Equity, Diversity and Interdependence
ELBs	Education and Library Boards
ETS	North/South Education and Training Standards Committee
GEG	Girls Empowering Girls
GLYNI	Gay & Lesbian Youth Northern Ireland
ID	identity
IGLYO	International Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Youth and Students' Organisation (formally known as International Gay & Lesbian Youth Organisation)
JEDI	Joined in Equity, Diversity and Interdependence, JEDI is an initiative, which brings together the various parts of the Northern Ireland Youth Sector, in a creative partnership to promote change and development. The joint aims of JEDI are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop a coherent strategy for community relations youth work and education for citizenship within the Northern Ireland youth sector. • To imbed the inter-related principles of equity, diversity and interdependence into the ethos policies and programmes of the organisations which make up the youth sector.
LGBT	Lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or transgender
NEELB	North Eastern Education and Library Board
NHS	National Health Service
NI	Northern Ireland
NICCY	Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
OFMDFM	Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister
PSNI	Police Service for Northern Ireland

Section 75 Section 75 appears in Part VII under the heading: Human Rights and Equal Opportunities, in the Northern Ireland Act (1998) as follows:
75. - (1) *A public authority shall in carrying out its functions relating to Northern Ireland have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity- (a) between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation; (b) between men and women generally; (c) between persons with a disability and persons without; and (d) between persons with dependants and persons without.*

SELB	Southern Education and Library Board
SEELB	South Eastern Education and Library Board
STIs	Sexually Transmitted Infections
TASSK	Targeting Access to Service Skills and Knowledge, this project covers the Craigavon and Banbridge areas.
UK	United Kingdom
WELB	Western Education and Library Board
YC	Youth club
YCIA	Young Citizens In Action
YP	Young people
VSB	Voluntary Service Bureau



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