



lfrs lgbt network



TRANSGENDER POLICY LAUNCH

We continuously strive to promote and embed equality and diversity across the Service and the communities we serve. Senior Management Team approved a new Service Policy on Transgender equality which will now be adopted Service-wide. To celebrate and acknowledge this, on Thursday 22 June, we officially launched the Transgender Policy. This policy ensures the Service has guidelines in place, providing transgender equality for all employees and is another step towards making our Service a fully inclusive workplace that treats all individuals equally, with respect.

The policy will be used in conjunction with the recently launched collaborative document "Trans Equality In The Workplace", which is a guide for managers (continued page 2)

Thursday 22 June at 12pm (midday)
in the Bistro, Service Headquarters

TRANSGENDER POLICY LAUNCH

Special Guest
Charlie Craggs



Welcome to this latest issue of the shOUT! Network Newsletter, which is a special edition, focussing on transgender issues.

Over the past months, not only have we launched our Service-wide Transgender Policy, but we have also worked collaboratively to produce a Transgender Equality Guidance document for all staff. The launch event was attended by our new friend and ally, Charlie Craggs, an international transgender-activist who also gave insight to middle and supervisory managers during her visit to LFRS. In April, Andy Parkin attended a conference in London organised by Stonewall with “acceptance without exception for Transgender people” as its subject. You can read about this conference elsewhere.

We are proud to introduce our Equalities Champion on the Combined Fire Authority and there is roundup of 2017 Pride events, as well as a timely report of how mental health impacts LGBT people disproportionately to the national population. There is plenty more in the pipeline too, as the network continues to support our LGBT+ workforce and communities, ensuring there is equality, acceptance and respect for all.

Steve Ballinger
Chair – shOUT! Network



(from page 1) and staff of public sector organisations in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.

The event was well attended with representatives from operational and support staff, as well as other partner organisations from across the region.

In addition to giving presentations to Middle Managers and Supervisory Managers on the day, we were delighted that Transgender advocate and campaigner, Charlie Craggs, also came to support our launch. Charlie and her site Nail Transphobia (www.nailtransphobia.com) have been featured across the world's media (internet, social media, TV, press and radio):

*“Craggs has emerged as an immensely popular and positive figure while breaking down stereotypes and creating allies.” **Fader Magazine***

*“Charlie Craggs is a radical social innovator working across the UK, making a real difference to society.” **The Guardian***



Charlie was a guest speaker and took time to explain her personal experiences and why there is a need for policies such as this. She said: “It was an honour to speak at the launch of Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service’s Transgender Policy. It’s such an important document that signifies how far the Service has come and how far we have come as a society. This was reiterated by how many people came up to speak with me after my talk and messaged me to say that I helped them understand transgender issues a bit better, and that they’d left with a different perspective. The fact that at least one person went away from the day as an ally means that the day was a total success for me.”

“I’ve always had so much respect for the fire and rescue services and the honourable work you brave men and women do for society, but I’ve got even more respect for you all now seeing how open you are to learning and changing.”

Rick Taylor, Assistant Chief Fire and Rescue Office and Lead on Equalities at Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service, said: “We are proud to have a supportive, inclusive working environment at Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service that makes everyone feel welcome.”

“Equality and diversity lie at the heart of all our work and we strive to improve on this every year. We hope that by launching our very own Transgender Policy, it enables us to improve the work we have been doing in partnership with Stonewall further.”

“We want a Service where everyone is able to be themselves in the workplace, which actually benefits the organisation.”

OUR CFA EQUALITIES CHAMPION

Councillor Betty Newton

I would like to introduce myself and share some thoughts around my new role as the Combined Fire Authority (CFA) Equalities Champion.

Public Service is important to me and serving the public is an opportunity that I have humbly embraced for many years. I have been a County Councillor representing Loughborough North since May 2005. I have also been a member of the CFA for seven years now and therefore I have a good understanding of the history of the Service and where we are going.

Equality and inclusion is deeply important to me personally and in my role as an elected representative. I have seen many changes in the makeup of our communities with people living longer and the arrival of new communities settling in our area of service. Over the years, I have also seen huge changes in our attitudes and behaviours towards differences that define individuals and communities. People of different faiths are able to come together and celebrate the existence of multi-faiths in our communities. Attitudes towards lesbian, gay and bi-sexual communities have become increasingly positive. But, despite the positive trends, I also recognise that there is more to be done in order to achieve further improvements in promoting equality for all including areas such as Transgender equality.

I am aware that as the Equalities Champion I need to have a good understanding of issues that affect the different communities in our area of service. I also need to understand issues affecting employees within Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service. I will therefore work closely with Senior Managers and the Equalities Forum in engaging with communities and staff in order to inform the CFA and keep equalities on the agenda. That way we will keep on track in making things better for everyone in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.

I have asked that we encourage fire and rescue stations to host Equality Forum meetings so that everyone in the Service is given the opportunity to engage in equality related discussions that affect our staff and the communities we serve. This will go some way in raising the necessary awareness among staff. I have also asked that we increase our attendance at community events including events in local parishes and districts so that we talk to members of the public and learn more about what they would like from us as a fire and rescue service.

It is my sincere hope that everyone will support the drive to improve our equality for all.



EVERYBODY EQUAL?

Supporting LGBT People



How to support LGBT+ people to live well in Lincolnshire
Lincolnshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust – 9th February 2017

I attended the above LGBTHM17 event (as I did last year) because the event content is relevant to the Service. LFRS meet the same people that the NHS meet, but usually in different circumstances – home safety visits, community events or operational incidents, and we all need to learn about the difficulties, prejudices and challenges that Transgender people face.

The event is now in its third year, and the attendance has increased from approx. 35 delegates in 2015, 100 delegates in 2016, to 200 delegates in 2017. What a fantastic achievement for the three NHS Trusts that collaborate to put on the event and indeed their position on the Stonewall WEI reflects all of this effort. They are also mentoring other agencies (including Notts Fire and Rescue Service) on good practise and their Stonewall WEI submission.

One of the strong and constant messages from speakers (and Transgender people) at the event is that Transgender people are not always comfortable with telling other people that they are Transgender, and this fear often leads to late requests for help from the very services that are there to provide it. Poor mental health is also extremely prevalent amongst Transgender people as they struggle with their inner-turmoil, before, during and after transitioning, and the reaction of other people to their transition. Knowing about these fears will enable us to better understand (and deliver) the needs of Transgender individuals and community.

There is always so much to learn from attending these events, and the networking opportunities for building up invaluable contacts are fantastic. I was told by a couple of people from different NHS that came to talk to me (after the workshops) that LFRS do appear to be very proactive in learning about Transgender people and their needs, and indeed LGBT matters generally, and from what I can see, we are progressing well with our acquisition of knowledge around LGB and Transgender, but we still need to improve how we share that information with our personnel. After all, the more understanding that we have, the better we will understand the people (and their needs) that we are dealing with.

Andy Parkin



Oxford Pride 3 June 2017

I attended Oxford Pride following an invitation from Charlotte Stacey, who is the Emergency Planning Officer for Oxfordshire County Council, and marched with County Council group and Oxfordshire Fire Service (who are under the umbrella of the County Council). Charlotte is a Transgender woman who I met at London Pride last year, and she is setting up an LGBT+ Network in Oxfordshire. I invited Charlotte to visit us, and our LGBT+ Network (Police and County Council) peers in Leicestershire, to give her an opportunity to pick up 'best practice' and expand her network of LGBT+ contacts.

The weather was glorious for the parade (and the architecture spectacular – my first visit to Oxford), and I had the chance to speak to the CFO, and ACO, about the LGBT+ network that they wanted to set up, and the fact that it will not happen overnight. I assured them that, whilst it is a very long and slow process, it is well worth the effort to show the world that your organisation is inclusive.

The parade was very well supported by the residents of (and visitors to) Oxford and it finished in the Castle Quarter where the Pride Festival was taking place throughout the afternoon and evening. Pride is always an excellent opportunity to meet new people and expand our LGBT+ Network of contacts, and it is always an excellent learning opportunity if you take the time to listen to people about their experiences, particularly those that have transitioned, or are transitioning.

People were keen to learn about our Transgender Policy, the content of the policy, and the Transgender Guidance document that we developed in collaboration with the police, City and County Council LGBT+ Networks. It is always a pleasure to share information with other people to further their work, and it is always a pleasure to share their Pride... long may it continue.

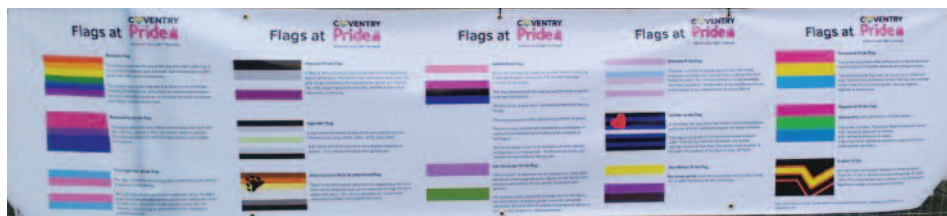
Coventry Pride 10 June 2017

Coventry Pride did not have a parade this year because the Food Fayre was taking over part of the normal Pride Parade route through the city centre, and it wasn't possible to safely have an alternative route around the food fayre. The desire for a parade was there, but safety concerns thwarted the reality of an alternative route.

There were Pride events across several venues in the city, but the main area was University Square at the side of the cathedrals (the old ruins and the new cathedral) which made a lovely backdrop for the main stage. I arranged meet up with Crew Manager Stephen Riddell (who is the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Service and FBU Region 7 LGBT+ Network lead) as we'd met a few times at LGBT events over the past year, and he is interested in the work we are currently doing around Transgender Policy and Transgender Guidance. I invited him to our Transgender Policy launch on the 22nd June to gain insight into what we are doing as a service, and as an opportunity to expand his LGBT+ network contacts within our networks.

The weather was kind, the sun came out briefly, and eventually so did the crowds to enjoy the entertainment on the main stage and surrounding areas. I didn't know that there are so many different flags to represent the various LGBT+ groups, so I have included a photo of the banner below for all to see (you'll need to enlarge the document to see it in detail).

If you still can't read the detail after enlarging, let me know and I will send you the photo if you are interested to learn more.



London Pride 8 July 2017

London Pride started with an early meeting in Leicester Square with our Stonewall Client Manager Maria Martins and her wife Morgan, we were 'marching' in different sections of the parade, but we arranged to say a quick hello before disappearing to our muster points. It was lovely to see them both again, however briefly.

I then moved onto Soho Fire Station for the pre-Pride brunch that they generously hosted, and to meet up with my 'Pride Buddies', Charlotte Stacey (Oxford) and Steve Riddell (West Mids). I was fortunate enough to meet Dany Cotton (who is a lovely lady, and a breath of fresh air) and I am VERY pleased to see senior roles in the fire service occupied by women (Dawn Whittaker - CFO of East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service is another breath of fresh air too! Alex Johnson – Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service... need I go on!). I commented to Dany how this pre-Pride brunch was 'a lot more colourful' than last year (with senior managers in rainbow ties or bowties, and rainbow epaulettes) and her response was "I wonder why" (with a wink). I think there is change afoot...

I also met Helen Bettles-Hill, a new LGBT Lead from Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service who wants to set up an LGBT Network, but isn't quite sure how to go about it. I introduced Helen to Charlotte (they are neighbouring services), and I extended the same offer of help to her as I did to Charlotte (when she started setting up her LGBT Network last year) namely, that she could come up to Leicestershire. I would host her for the day, and set up meetings with the leads of our peer networks (police and County Council) both of which are extraordinarily successful, as well as seeing what we are doing with our LGBT Network shout!

Because of LFB's position in the Parade, it was a very long time before we actually 'stepped off' (over two hours later than last year ☺) which meant that I had to leave before the parade ended to catch my train. All-in-all, it was another great Pride, I made some new friends, and I had a fantastic day, that's what life is about isn't it?



Stonewall Conference

QEII Conference Centre, April 7th 2017



I attended the Stonewall Conference to launch Stonewall's five-year plan for Transgender Equality - 'A Vision For Change - Acceptance Without Exception for Transgender People', and I have attached a hyperlink to that plan in this document. Please take the time to read it, as it is very informative: <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/vision-change-0>

The conference was extremely well organised and attended by over 800 delegates, and the workshops were really interesting and informative. I attended three workshops entitled 'First Steps to Transgender Inclusion', 'Supporting Your Transgender Staff' and 'Stepping Up As An Ally To Transgender People'.



Whilst we do not have anyone in LFRS who has declared that they are Transgender, it does not mean that we do not have anyone who identifies as Transgender in our organisation, and we must ensure that we are a 'Transgender friendly' environment, as we have done with LGB. We have come on so much organisationally over the last few years and recognised that we must evolve, as society has done, to enable people to be themselves at work. People who are being 'guarded' all of the time, and are not comfortable to be themselves at work, will not perform to their full potential, and will not be as happy as they could be.

I was pleasantly surprised by how many people I actually knew at the conference, and it made me realise that my network of LGBT+ contacts inside and outside of the Fire Service is steadily growing. I made some new contacts during the day, and I had the chance to talk to Transgender individuals as they happily shared their experiences, and the more that I learn, the more that I can pass on. Indeed, I found myself having two separate conversations at work around Transgender issues with people in the days following the conference, and as most people don't have much, if any, contact with Transgender people I am able to pass on what I know.

People are generally very interested once we start talking, and even though I have only scratched the surface regarding the issues that Transgender people face, I still have quite a lot of knowledge to share. The week before the conference, I was discussing LGBT+ issues with one of our suppliers (who had very little knowledge in that area due to infrequent 'known' exposure to the LGBT+ communities) and at the end of the conversation, he said that he had enjoyed it very much and had learnt a lot. Comments like that make it all worthwhile, because if I tell someone something that they didn't know before, and they pass it on to someone else, that is how we will educate the masses. It is a slow process, but the tide is turning.

Pride season is almost upon us and I will be 'out and about' once again, I'll keep you all posted in case you would like to join me. I am, as always, happy to discuss this further with anyone should you wish to know more... you know where I am.

Andy Parkin

LGBT MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS



Building LGBT Mental Health Resilience De Montfort University - 28th February 2017

This event was the third Annual Conference to be held at De Montfort University during LGBT+ History Month, and uniquely brought together academic researchers in mental health, alongside provider organisations, in addition to the perspectives of people who are users of mental health services.

The conference addressed mental health among homeless LGBT people, Transgender people's wellbeing, and mental health amongst young people through a cutting-edge programme of speakers and workshops, which addressed mental health and well-being across the broad range of LGBTQ communities, including Transgender and non-binary people.

This was, without doubt, one of the best LGBTQ conferences that I have attended, with a very high calibre of 'published' speakers who have provided a massive amount of research behind their findings.

The speakers ranged from the very distinguished Baroness Liz Barker (Why we need to talk about mental health in LGBTQ Communities), a member of the House of Lords and a tirelessly dedicated LGBT campaigner, through Dr Ruth McNair (Homelessness and Mental Health in LGBTQ Communities) Dr Zowie Davy (Social movements in Trans Mental Health) Dr Liz McDermott (Queer Futures: Preventing LGBTQ youth suicide and self-harm) to Adrian Hyrrlainen-Trett (Mind over matter: 'Missing the education gap': Leading to a 'Life Cycle' of Complications for LGBTQ People.

There was a part-screening (all that time allowed) of a film by Kings College London on Identity, Stigma and Micro-aggressions. This was an excellent film which totally absorbed the audience because it was made by real people, with real people.

Following lunch, the workshops were run by Zaqia Rehman and Marvina Eseoghene Newton – 'Mental Health among LGB people from BME Communities', Sam Hope – 'Challenging the binary: Non-binary struggles and opportunities in mental health', and Michelle Grimwood – 'the Youth Chances project'.

I attended the workshop run by Sam Hope (an accredited trauma therapist, equality trainer and writer who is also a non-binary Transgender person), and it covered the impact on non-binary Transgender people caused by social stigma and marginalisation, and the complexity of gender and gendered experiences. Something as simple as taking the time learning, and using, the correct pro-nouns for a non-binary person, will help to alleviate their feelings of exclusion, and minimise the impact on their mental health because it demonstrates that you have taken the time to learn something about 'non-binary' people.

I met up with more LGBTQ and hetro-friends at that event than I anticipated seeing there, and I made a new non-binary Transgender friend in the form of Sam, a 6'3" PhD Student studying at Oxford. Sam was standing alone at registration looking slightly apprehensive, and as I was on my own at that point, I approached Sam and said "I'm Andy from Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service, what's your name"? Not very original I know, but neither of us were alone any longer after that contact, and a conversation ensued there-after, and when we were seated in the auditorium I asked Sam 'How do you identify in LGBT?' Sam answered "I am 'non-binary' and prefer not to have the pronouns 'she or her' used in relation to me, but thank you for asking".

It was not a big deal for me to ask Sam that question, and I felt comfortable doing so, it is easy to 'assume' something about someone from how they appear, but looks can be so deceptive.

Andy Parkin





NOT THE ONLY GAY IN THE VILLAGE!

The estimated combined population of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland in 2011 was 1,017,697 people. Government estimates suggest that between 5% and 7% of the UK population are either lesbian or gay. This would mean that there are between 50,885 and 71,239 lesbians and gay men in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. Recent research suggests that 1% of the population self-define as bisexual, which would equate to around 10,177 bisexual people in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. Press for Change (Transgender campaigning group) suggest that 1 in 200 people are cross-dressers, of which half will transition, suggesting 2,544 Transgender residents of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.

Using the social model definition of disability, it is estimated that some 20% of the adult population would be defined as being disabled. This would mean that the lesbian and gay disabled population in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland is between 10,177 and 14,248 people. In addition, the bisexual disabled population would number approximately 2,035 people. The higher rates of Transgender people would suggest 1,018 disabled cross-dressers and 509 disabled Transgender people in transition in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland and the lower rates would indicate 17 disabled Transgender women and 7 disabled transgender men.

One of the key points from research on LGBT population estimates is that LGBT communities are not homogenous, and this will be especially true for LGBT communities in an area as diverse as Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.

The community profile is largely silent about Leicestershire's minority populations. Data on sexual orientation and gender identity specifically was not captured by the census, primarily as a result of personal privacy concerns.

However, based upon the generally agreed national assumption that some six percent of the population identify as either LGB or T, Leicestershire possesses an LGBT population of in excess of 36,000 people.

Josep Sanz at Leicester LGBT Centre

PRIDE EVENTS 2017

As a Service, we are hoping to be represented at most of the Pride events taking place around the country this year (see list below):

3 June: Oxford Pride
10 June: Coventry Pride
8 July: London Pride
22 July: Hull Pride
29 July: Nottingham Pride
5 August: Brighton Pride
19 August: Warwick Pride
26 August: High Wycombe Pride
2 September: Leicester Pride
23 September: Lincoln Pride

Andy Parkin has been our representative at many of these events (we apologise to Mrs Parkin who generally becomes a "Pride Widow" during this time of year!). You can find Andy's reports from some of these Pride's elsewhere in this issue.

As usual, we will have a presence at Leicester Pride this year and are working very closely with the police once again. This year we are taking the "celebrating diversity together" approach but rather than theming this year's event, we are concentrating on how we can engage with the community on the day. With this in mind, the day for us will have a more fun aspect and be set up more like a community station open day with stalls, games and engagement activities.

Anyone and everyone is welcome to join us at Leicester Pride (and any of the other Pride events). Weather allowing, they are always a relaxing, fun day out for all the family.

If you are interested in joining us at any of the above events, please email the network at ShoutLGBT@LFRS.org.



If you identify as LGBT, would like to make contact with or support members of LGBT staff in Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service or you would like advice on LGBT matters, you can email the shout! network (anonymously if you wish): ShoutLGBT@LFRS.org



@LFRS_shOUT

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