Opportunities for All

LGBT volunteering and infrastructure engagement in Greater London

consortium
of lesbian, gay, bisexual & transgendered
voluntary and community organisations

Kim Donahue

for

The Consortium of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered Voluntary and Community Organisations

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Table of contents

Introduction	4
Project Aims	5
Background and Context	6-9
Methodology	10-11
Findings	12-25
LGBT volunteers	12-17
LGBT VIOs	17-22
Volunteer Centres	22-25
Summary	25-26
Recommendations and Conclusions	26-31
Increasing LGBT volunteer support and engagement	27
Increasing support for LGBT VIOs	27-28
Increasing capacity for volunteering infrastructure Support	29-30
Future research needs	31
Next steps	31
Acronyms and abbreviations	32
Appendix A: E—survey questions	33-37
Appendix B: Phone survey questions	38-39
Appendix C: Bibliography and references	40-41
Appendix D: Acknowledgements	42

Introduction

This report sets out to examine primary and secondary research related to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) volunteering issues and levels of engagement with volunteering infrastructure bodies.

It begins with a short introduction to the subject that includes the project aims, background information and the relevant context. A discussion of methodology is followed by the findings which detail quantitative and qualitative data related to LGBT volunteering, motivations and LGBT organisational issues and levels of engagement with Volunteer Centres across London. The report concludes with recommendations and next steps. Appendices include survey questions and references.

Project Aims

This report aims to explore volunteering issues within the LGBT community in Greater London. Specifically, this work builds on recent research which has mapped LGBT organisations in London and looked at a variety of infrastructure needs within this sub sector. The research highlights findings related to volunteering among and within the LGBT community and specifically explores the relationship between Volunteer Centres (VCs) and LGBT volunteer-involving organisations (VIOs). The findings from this work will inform further recommendations and guidance for volunteering infrastructure bodies (such as volunteer centres) related to engaging and supporting LGBT volunteers and LGBT VIOs.

Specific research questions explore the unique issues for LGBT communities around volunteering and how current infrastructure (specifically volunteer centres) can fully support the needs of LGBT volunteers and VIOs. The report also touches on issues related to visibility and homophobia, the complex dynamics related to multiple identities within the LGBT community and LGBT volunteering within both mainstream groups and LGBT groups. However, given the limits of time and resources, volunteering issues related to identity, visibility and homophobia have not been fully examined and warrant further consideration.

This project has been funded by the Volunteering Hub as part of a broader effort to engage with a diversity of stakeholders and to provide support and guidance to volunteering infrastructure bodies so as to support the engagement of minority groups with volunteering. The Volunteering Hub's goal is to develop volunteering infrastructure and to enable far more people to volunteer.

Background & Context

Volunteering

Volunteering has evolved and changed much over the last 50 years in the UK. Linked to these changes have been fundamental developments in the voluntary sector itself, shifts of government priorities and changing demographics within the UK. National policy recently has been keen to embrace volunteering, in fact, the government named 2005 the UK Year of the Volunteer. While the government has been encouraging volunteering and pledging to increase its support of volunteering, there are still low levels of resources and capacity for VIOs and volunteer management. As the sector moves toward commissioning and increased delivery of public services, there are inevitably consequences for volunteers and volunteer management, especially with respect to increased professionalisation of the sector and monitoring burdens (NCVO, 2006).

This work sits within a national context and is linked to the national, regional and sub-regional ChangeUp agenda and Compact agreements in place. A national hub of expertise has been established for volunteering. Volunteering England, the national volunteering umbrella group, is the accountable body for the activity of the Volunteering Hub. The Volunteering Hub works to achieve a high quality volunteering infrastructure, coupled with improved volunteer management throughout England.

Much of what we know about volunteering currently in the UK is from the 2005 Home Office Citizenship Survey. The Citizenship Survey is conducted every two years and shows that 44% of adults (16+) in England have done some type of formal volunteering in the last 12 months. The figure for informal volunteering is 68% (HOCS, 2005). The Institute for Volunteering Research (IVR) is currently conducting an extensive survey of volunteering in the UK which will serve to update the 1997 National Survey of Volunteering. Results from IVR were not available as of the publication date of this report.

The LGBT Voluntary and Community Sector

This report assumes that LGBT people are found in proportionate numbers across all communities in London, making up a minimum of 6-10% of the total population (DTI, 2003). We know this in part because there are LGBT voluntary and community organisations (VCOs) representing Black and minority ethnic (BME), disabled, older, younger, immigrant, asylum-seeking, and faith communities. Using 2001 census data, we could estimate the number of LGBT people in London to be between 448,200-

747,000 (estimates regarding London's LGBT population have not taken into account research that shows LGBT people are more likely to congregate in large urban areas such as London, therefore the true numbers are most likely higher).

While there is a growing body of research regarding the needs of LGBT people, very little is known about the needs of LGBT VCOs. Despite the development of extensive voluntary and community sector (VCS) infrastructure supporting an estimated 40,000 groups (LVSC 2006), there are approximately 100 -300 LGBT organisations based in or serving London, of which we have evidence of 64 organisations with any income and 38 groups with any paid staff in London. Groups representing bisexual or transgender communities are relatively new and still struggle to find acceptance within the LGBT VCS. Even less is known about the needs of these communities and awareness amongst funders and decision-makers is virtually non-existent. Because of the low resource base and less formal nature of many of these groups, there is most likely a stronger reliance on volunteers.

Mapping of the LGBT sector in London in 2006 has shown that almost half of the total groups surveyed are issue-based or have a particular specialism whereas generic organisations or projects make up less than 20% of the total. The generic organisations are an important group to note as they are often the entry point or 'one stop shop' for LGBT people who want to access services or who have had difficulty going through mainstream institutions. There are also networks or forums with an LGBT focus, mainly at the borough level, as well as support and affinity groups, which tend to be less formal and have a social aspect. Often the affinity and support groups are formed to serve a particular subset of the LGBT community (such as Black lesbians) or around shared interests or recreational activities. Organisations who participated in the mapping are a mix of LGBT 'user-led' organisations and projects as well as projects organised by the mainstream VCS or public sector. Mainstream efforts within the LGBT community tend to be specialist projects around a particular issue or target group, organised by a large institution such as Age Concern. The mapping of LGBT organisations also clearly demonstrated that these organisations are predominantly pan-London or national in scope. This means that most of the groups representing the LGBT community are not able to fully access the borough-level resources available, and this is especially true in relation to volunteer support.

There is some evidence showing that support of 'invisible groups' such as LGBT VCOs is hampered by the fear of erroneous attribution of group membership by the majority (Donahue, 2003). Unlike advocacy in favour of racial equality, the LGBT cause tends to be taken up by LGBT people themselves. Without this issue being publicized and engaged within the mainstream, there will likely continue to be

a lack of understanding, negatively impacting the effectiveness of infrastructure support to the LGBT VCS.

Policy Environment

The political and policy environment that VCOs operate within has a huge impact on the VCS, its progress and its sustainability. Influencing policy decisions is central to the role of infrastructure organisations. For the LGBT VCS, the introduction of Section 28 (repealed in 2003) has left significant gaps in the promotion, awareness and understanding of the issues across the LGBT VCS during a vast expansion phase. In spite of this, great strides have been made in recent years including many LGBT-friendly legislative changes such as the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations of 2003, the Civil Partnership Act of 2004, the Equality Bill 2006 (which outlaws discrimination based on sexual orientation in the provision of goods, facilities and services in education and in the execution of public functions) and the creation of the Commission for Equality & Human Rights (CEHR). The CEHR will create the first statutory body to protect Britain's lesbian, gay and bisexual population. While these developments mark a positive policy shift, the LGBT sector may find that decision-makers and funders too quickly assume that LGBT issues have been effectively addressed.

Additionally, the shrinking public sector funding environment is becoming increasingly dominated by the drive towards commissioning rather than an open bidding process for grants. Related to this is the localisation of funding which disproportionately impacts LGBT organisations because they tend to work across London rather than in a specific borough.

While the government has been monitoring statistics on equality strands such as ethnicity, gender, faith and disability, LGBT monitoring has been slow to catch. When it is discussed, it is often dismissed as a private matter not appropriate for monitoring and has not been a priority for policy-makers. Previous research has highlighted the importance of monitoring sexual orientation, especially for people who access services (Cant & Taket, 2004). However, unless there is a commitment to monitoring, there is a risk that the contributions made by the LGBT sector will remain absent from the processes and policies used to promote regeneration, economic development, active citizenship and volunteering. There is a growing consensus within the LGBT VCS that without the introduction of routine sexual orientation monitoring alongside other equalities strands, we will remain unable to provide the range of needs that are necessary and relevant to the LGBT community.

LGBT research is starting to shed some light on the sector. In recent research commissioned for the Greater London Authority, the authors describe a 'catch-22' situation related to evidence where decision-makers "display a lack of awareness about LGBT issues and because of that they fail to commission research to identify needs and levels of needs and because no research is being done they can continue to refuse to fund or support any action because of the lack of evidence" (Cant & Taket, 2004).

Recent research regarding the extent of volunteering in Tower Hamlets has shown that 5-18% of formal volunteers identify as LGBT (Donahue, 2007). Otherwise there is very little data detailing volunteering trends among the LGBT community.

National umbrella organisations within the voluntary sector have been fairly silent and inactive on issues relating to the LGBT voluntary sector. The National Association of Volunteer Bureaux (NAVB), which has since been subsumed into Volunteering England, had developed an LGBT special interest group set up to raise awareness regarding the needs of LGB volunteers and to encourage Volunteer Centres to reach out to LGBT organisations. After Volunteering England was formed, the LGBT group dissolved, perhaps due to a policy decision to integrate work with minority groups throughout the organisation rather than via targeted campaigns. Unfortunately, this has resulted in a lack of any clearly visible statements or goals that particularly target LGBT VIOs or volunteers from Volunteering England (as well as many other organisations).

Methodology

This report uses both primary and secondary data in addition to desk-based research to investigate the research questions. The research synthesises qualitative and quantitative data from a variety of sources. The secondary research is derived from the PIP Project (Change Up equalities sub-group, 2006) which used three distinct strands of field work in order to map the diversity of the many organisations within the LGBT VCS:

Mapping via e-survey

In-depth, semi-structured interviews

Focus groups

For the purpose of this report, volunteering is defined as *an activity that involves spending time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit the environment, individuals or groups other than (or in addition to) close relatives. It is freely undertaken and not for financial gain*. Formal volunteering is specifically defined as *giving unpaid help through groups, clubs or organisations to benefit other people or the environment*. Informal volunteering is defined as *giving unpaid help as an individual to people who are not relatives*. These definitions are widely accepted and come from the national Compact Code of Good Practice on Volunteering (2005) and are also used in the Citizenship Survey. Most of the data in this report refers specifically to formal volunteering; LGBT informal volunteering was not an area of focus for this work but may warrant future investigation.

The PIP research sample focused on LGBT VCOs based in or serving Greater London and did not include funding bodies, for-profit companies or government institutions. LGBT VCOs, for the purposes of this research, are defined as groups primarily led by and serving people from LGBT communities in Greater London. This includes both formal and informal groups. The intention of the project was to ensure that all research samples reflected the diversity that is Greater London and particularly encouraged participation from BME groups, disability organisations, faith groups, groups representing youth and older people, transgender organisations and bisexual groups. The sample also includes LGBT projects within mainstream organisations.

The e-survey captured 119 valid survey responses (questions can be found in Appendix A). Most (90%) staffed LGBT VCOs in London and perhaps 20-50% of a range of smaller and much less formal groups with no funding are thought to have been captured. A total of 25 interviews were also conducted with a variety of small, medium and large LGBT organisations as well as 3 focus groups. The focus groups were based on the audience with one for LGBT VCO staff, one with trustees and one with volunteers.

The primary research conducted included a brief phone survey of 25 Volunteer Centres in Greater London in order to ascertain their level of engagement with the LGBT community and to clarify any additional issues in relation to LGBT VIOs. Respondents from the phone survey were predominantly VC Managers or Directors, with a small number of officer level staff. Phone survey questions can be found in Appendix B. Additionally, an interview was conducted with a representative of Greater London Volunteering, a regional second-tier network of VCs.

Findings

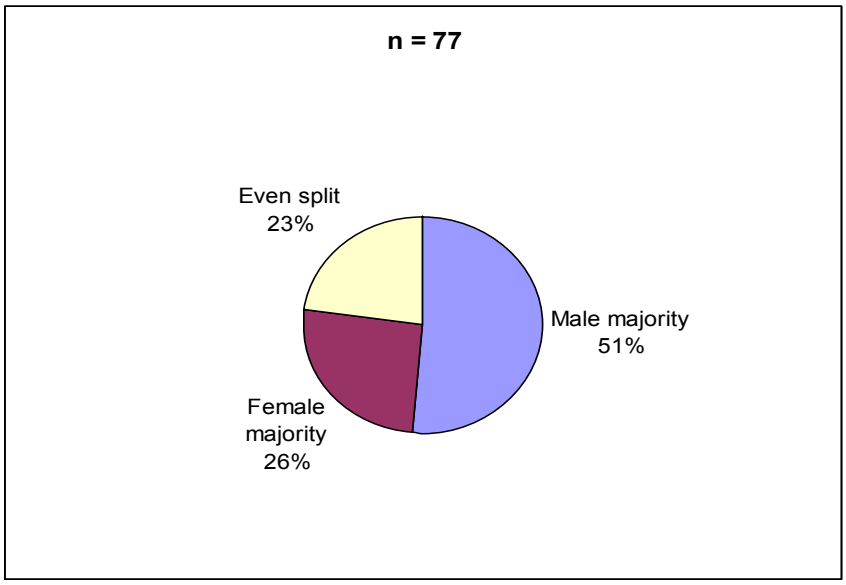
The findings from both secondary and primary research include volunteering within the LGBT community and LGBT VIOs as well as LGBT engagement with VCs across London. The first section focuses on volunteer activity and motivation while the second half looks at LGBT VIOs and infrastructure engagement.

LGBT Volunteers

LGBT volunteers include people who are doing formal volunteering with VIOs and this includes governing bodies of LGBT organisations. Data related to volunteering, while sparse, includes PIP results and more recent desk based research.

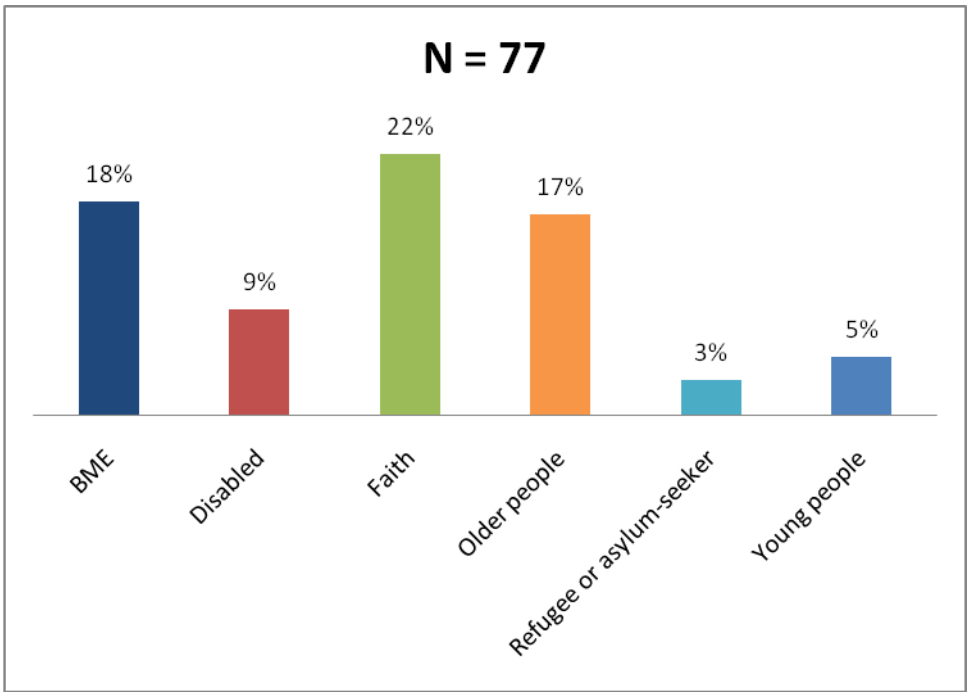
LGBT e-survey respondents were asked a number of questions specifically about the governing bodies of their organisations. Most respondents (81%) described their governing body as being majority LGBT, with 64% described as 100% LGBT. It is worth noting that a large number of the mainstream groups did not know anything about the sexual orientation of their governing body. While gay men were slightly more likely to be part of the governing body of respondents than lesbians (Fig. 1), bisexuals were in the minority (22%) and transgender people were not well represented (less than 10%). The governing bodies of groups were described as including heterosexual people by 16% of respondents.

Figure 1: LGBT Governing Body Composition by Gender



A further question looked at minority representation on LGBT governing bodies, with a breakdown of the number of organisations that have a majority of the governing body from specific equalities strands (Fig. 2). This data shows the diversity of leadership within the LGBT community and the complexity of identity within the subsector. The findings also make it clear that most LGBT VIOs are predominantly using LGBT volunteers within their organisations and that mainstream VIOs are not monitoring the sexual orientation of their volunteers and governing body. In comparing the descriptions of governing bodies with user groups, it could be inferred that bisexuals, transgender people, disabled people, young people, refugees and asylum-seekers are under-represented on boards and management committees within the LGBT VCS. Additionally, it is clear that there are a low number of heterosexuals who volunteers with LGBT VIOs, although there is not enough data to get a reliable estimate.

Figure 2: LGBT Organisations by Governing Body Representation

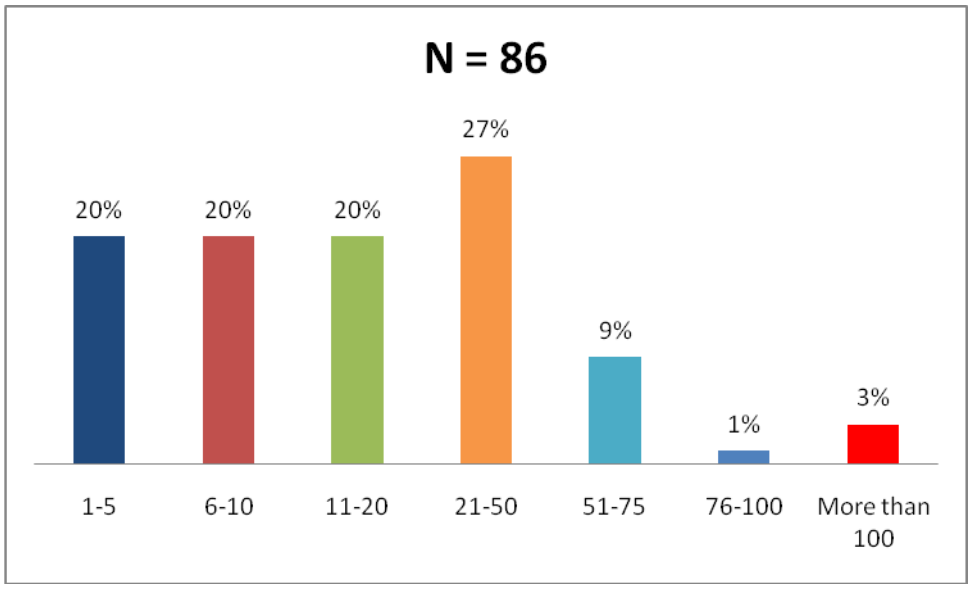


NOTE: The above chart tracks organisations with a majority of their governing body in the equality strands listed.

Volunteers are obviously key stakeholders in the voluntary sector and this is even more so for LGBT groups. Excluding involvement in the governing body, 83% of respondent organisations involve volunteers in the organisation. Almost half of the groups (48%) describe themselves as being 100% volunteer-run. Numbers of volunteers involved in organisations vary, from a few to more than 100 (Fig.

3). Most organisations in the voluntary sector are small (NCVO, 2006) and small LGBT organisations often find themselves below the radar of many mainstream infrastructure organisations that are designed to provide support to emerging groups.

Figure 3: Total Number of Volunteers Working in LGBT Organisations



Frequency of Volunteering

E-survey respondents reported that their volunteers contributed five hours per week to organisations on average, with responses ranging from nil to more than 20 hours per week. This is slightly higher than the national average of three hours per week (HOCS, 2005). Using e-survey responses as a basis for further estimations and using the average of 25 volunteers per organisation would translate into 125 volunteer hours per week, per organisation, which is the equivalent of more than three full time staff for each group. Based on the average London hourly wage, this represents an economic value to each group of £85,215 per year. Of course this does not take into account any costs associated with volunteering.

Activities & Training

Respondent organisations detailed types of training received by staff, volunteers and governing bodies (Fig. 4). Although staff received the bulk of the training, volunteers received their training in areas of

planning and fundraising, while governing boards received more training in governance and finance. The types of volunteering activities undertaken by LGBT organisations (Fig. 5) generally follow national trends however, it should be noted that the most common category (leadership and decision-making) includes volunteering for governing bodies. It is also remarkable that there is volunteering in the area of 'social support', which includes the many LGBT support networks that exist to help people with issues such as coming out or dealing with homophobic family members or co-workers.

Figure 4: Training undertaken by Volunteers & Staff of LGBT Organisations

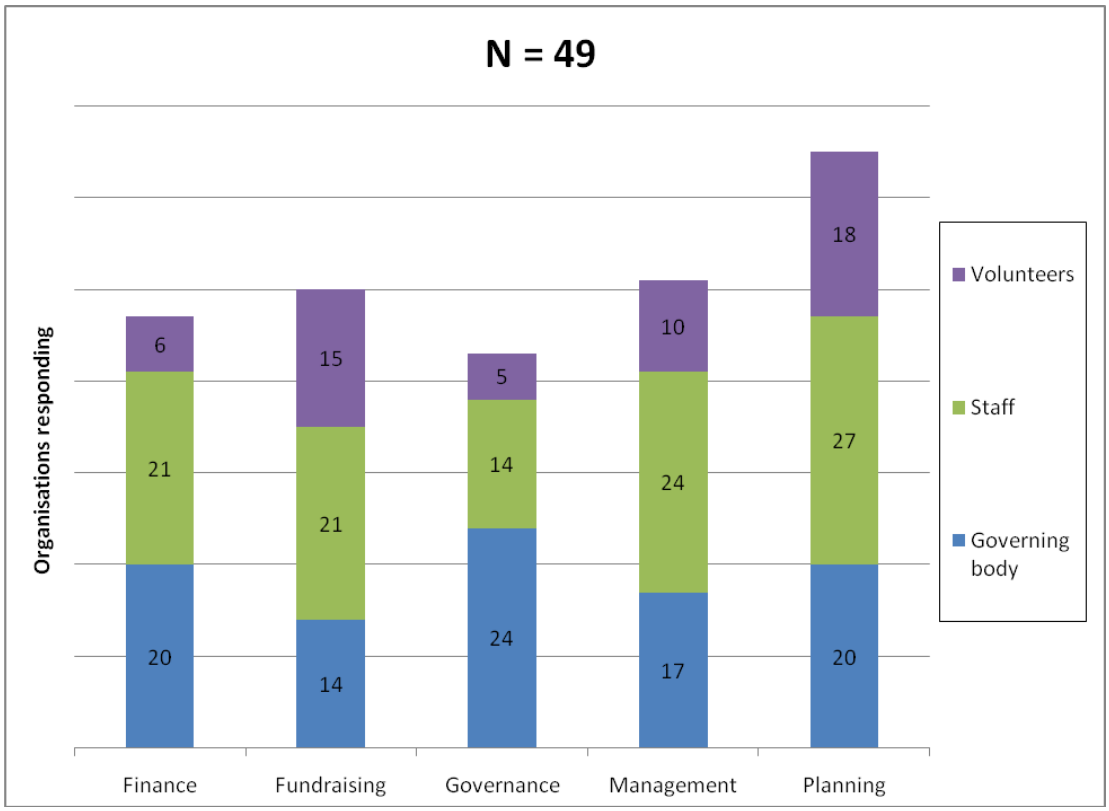
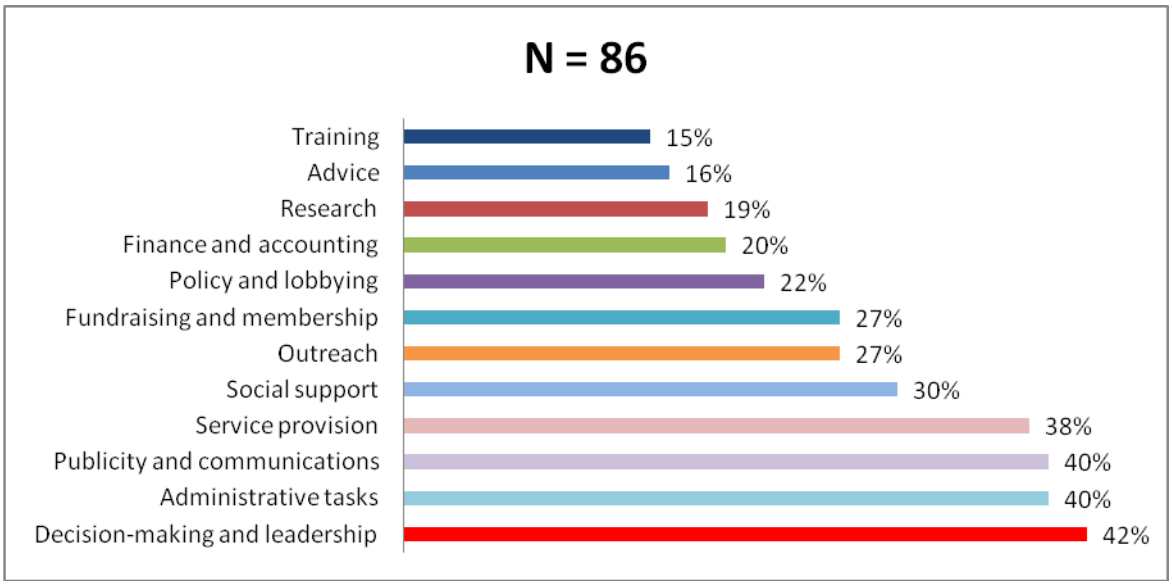


Figure 5: Volunteering activities within LGBT VCOs



When asked about whom the organisation serves, 14% of respondent organisations said they specifically serve disabled people and 34% specifically serve either youth or older people. Of the groups that specifically serve people of a particular faith (15%), only Christian, Jewish and Muslim LGBT organisations were named. Additionally, 12% of respondents indicated that they specifically serve LGBT refugees or asylum seekers.

Motivations and Barriers

Qualitative data from focus groups helped to shed light on some of the particular motivations and barriers that LGBT volunteers experience. The volunteers were people serving on the governing bodies of LGBT organisations in London or LGBT 'rank and file' volunteers who were doing a variety of activities such as counselling and administrative tasks. Participants were asked about what motivates them to be involved with LGBT organisations in particular. The two main types of responses were altruistic motivations and instrumental motivations (for a detailed explanation of types of volunteer motivations, see Cnaan, 1996). Altruistic motivations were somewhat more common and had to do with giving back to the LGBT community, pushing the political agenda forward, the feeling that there would be no one else to do the work and motivations that had stemmed from traumatic incidences such as the death of a loved one from AIDS or a horrific hate crime. Instrumental motivations are those that create some kind of benefit to the individual volunteer. These include social motivations such as meeting people, networking, support for coming out and creating an alternative to bars. Instrumental motivations also

include gaining practical skills, meeting a diverse range of people and creating a positive outcome from experiences of homophobia.

The following quotes in relation to motivation are from LGBT volunteers:

I really did it because of the Soho bombing…it reminded me that I needed to not go and just enjoy the scene but actually put something back in the community (FG1).

Volunteering has…allowed me to meet people that I wouldn't otherwise have met like different age ranges (FG3).

I thought from a sort of political perspective I just wanted to get involved in something that was LGBT because the thing is if you don't push things then nothing happens (FG3).

LGBT volunteers also spoke about some of the barriers they faced with regard to volunteering. Many of the barriers talked about are common to all volunteers, such as the lack of time or limited organisational resources. Other barriers that were mentioned included the need to break through organisational 'cliques' that felt insular and closed to many volunteers. Additionally, some volunteers felt that because the London LGBT scene is incredibly vibrant and diverse that people did not feel as much of a need to volunteer for social reasons as they might in areas with a less visible LGBT social scene. It should also be noted that some respondents wondered whether recent gains in legal status for LGBT people would create a future barrier to volunteering for LGBT organisations. This would likely be more applicable to campaigning organisations rather than service delivery or support groups. This is perhaps an area that deserves further research.

LGBT VIOs

Data from interviews and focus groups as well as desk based research has indicated that LGBT VIOs are under-resourced within a generally under-resourced voluntary sector. Estimates pertaining to the number of staffed LGBT organisations in London are under 100, with potentially hundreds more grassroots, unfunded and unstaffed groups in existence. Interview data from staff and leaders of 24 of

the most prominent LGBT organisations in London show that volunteer management and recruitment of governing bodies and volunteers quite often is a struggle. Volunteer management is haphazard and tends to be done by staff or volunteers with multiple responsibilities who tend to put volunteer management quite low on their priority list. Many organisations indicated that they had ongoing vacancies and skills shortages on their governing body. Most of the respondents expressed an interest in volunteer management but felt that they lacked the funds or capacity to prioritise this area.

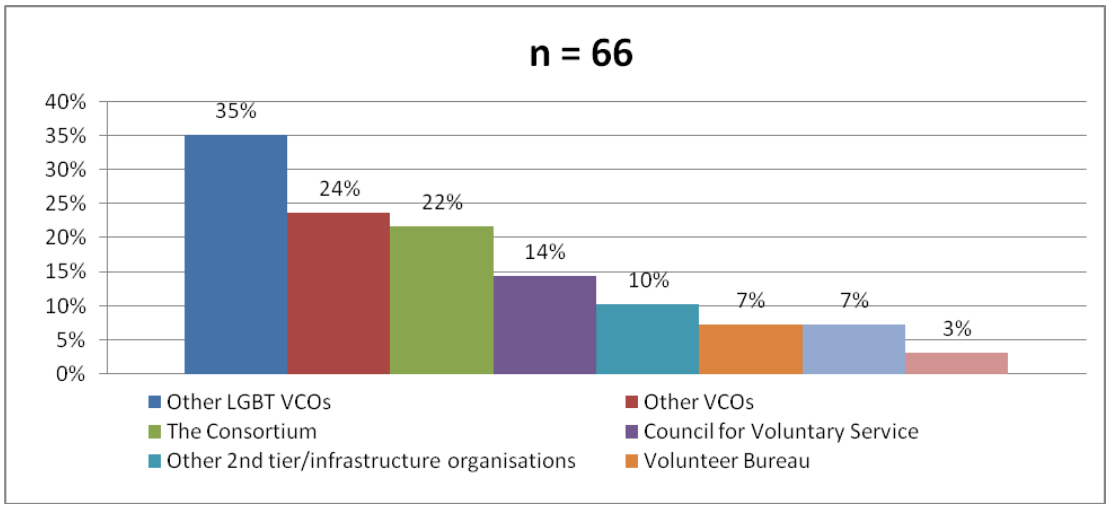
Staffing and membership of LGBT groups are related to volunteer management, as low levels of capacity and resources make volunteer recruitment and management more difficult. Staffing numbers among respondents reflect the general VCS trend of large numbers of part time staff. Respondents reported a total of 75 part time workers and 102 full time staff in the LGBT VCS. Just over half of the respondent organisations (52%) had any paid staff at all, of which 33% relied exclusively on part time staff. VIOs with low staffing resources and financial capacity are less likely to get volunteer management training and to tap into the volunteer infrastructure and management resources available to organisations.

Many organisations feel that volunteers are their greatest strength and many smaller organisations are run exclusively by volunteers. Respondents also spoke of their reluctance to engage with infrastructure support from the mainstream due to a perceived lack of awareness of LGBT issues and the fear of homophobia.

LGBT VIO Engagement with Infrastructure Support

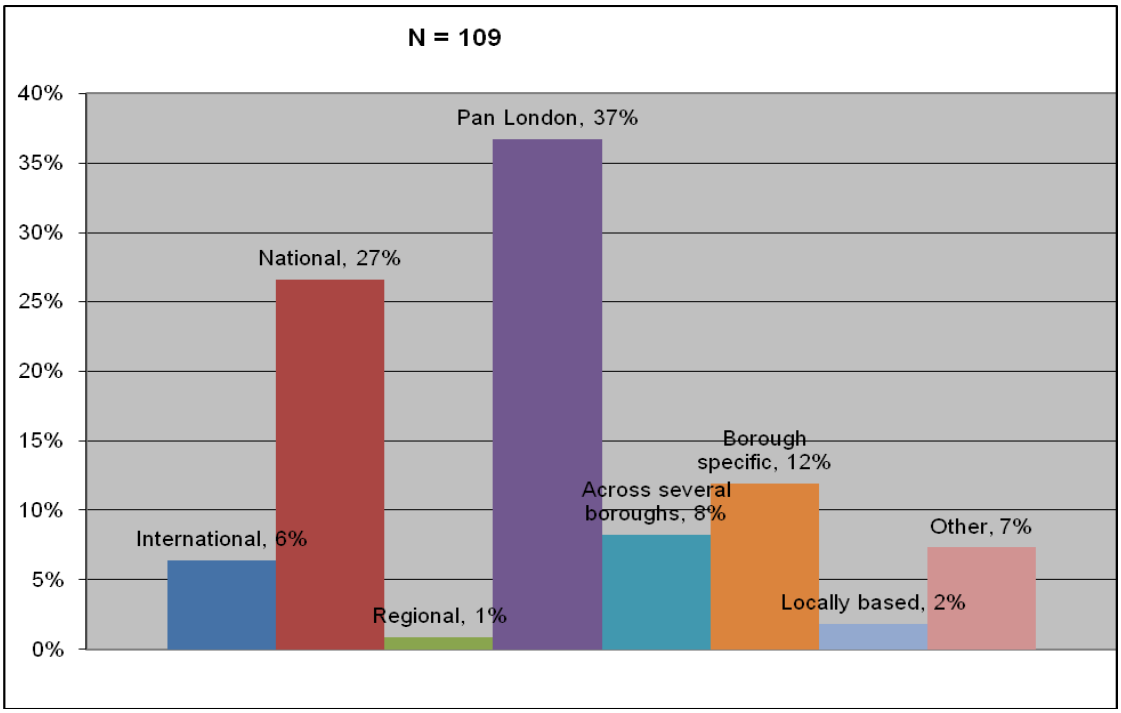
Respondents were asked to report on sources of non-financial support and capacity building from other organisations and second tier providers from both mainstream sources as well as within the LGBT VCS. In total, 62% of respondents reported accessing some kind of infrastructure support, ever. The most common source of support for respondents was via other VCOs, particularly LGBT VCOs, while least tapped resources were the private and public sectors, respectively (Fig. 6). Mainstream sources of infrastructure support such as the local CVS, Volunteer Bureaux and mainstream VCOs are reaching organisations that are more established and better resourced rather than smaller or volunteer-run groups, who get support mainly from LGBT VCOs and tend to stay within the LGBT community. Some LGBT groups have a fear of experiencing homophobia or discrimination from mainstream organisations or a perception of bias from those groups. While it is likely that many infrastructure organisations would be welcoming to LGBT organisations, this fear may be based in previous experiences of homophobia within the mainstream voluntary sector.

Figure 6: LGBT infrastructure support received by source



Infrastructure support is also linked to the scope of an organisation. From the PIP mapping in 2006, there is evidence that the majority of LGBT organisations are either operating at a pan-London or national level (Fig. 7). Volunteering infrastructure bodies (such as VCs) often limit their work to local or borough-wide organisations, effectively excluding organisations who are not able to work in that way.

Figure 7: Scope of LGBT Organisations in London



Qualitative data from interviews supports the findings from the e-survey. Respondents estimated the percentage of support their organisation received from each infrastructure body. Organisations looked to other VCOs and umbrella bodies for support and a small minority of interviewees received support from their local CVS or Volunteer Bureau (Table 1). It should be noted that in London, some CVS' host the local VC within their organisation and some VCs are completely independent of the CVS. Respondents spoke of the typical kind of infrastructure support areas such as advice, training and best practice guidelines as well as providing meeting space, research and networking opportunities. Both the frequency and satisfaction levels of support from CVS' were low. The LGBT infrastructure support organisation (The Consortium) had mixed reviews, as it was seen as having had low resource issues itself. Other, larger umbrella groups are being tapped somewhat more frequently, with higher levels of satisfaction reported.

Table 1: Infrastructure Support Reported by LGBT Respondents

Type of Institution	Est. %	Frequency	Satisfaction	Type of Support
Mainstream 2nd tier	50%	High	Very high	Best practice, advice, research, publicity
LGBT 2nd tier	45%	Low	Mixed	Networking, publicity, space, conference
VCOs	40%	Medium	Mixed	Networking, space, information, advice
Local Council	35%	Low	Mixed	Information, space
CVS	30%	Low	Low	Advice, training
Funders	25%	Medium	Low	Due to mandates within grants
Volunteer Bureau	5%	n/a	n/a	Volunteer brokerage

NOTE: Mainstream 2nd tier refers to non-LGBT focused VCOs whose services are directed to other organisations (such as NCVO, however, some of these organisations were specifically singled out for responses – i.e. CVS' and Volunteer Bureaux), LGBT 2nd tier refers to LGBT groups who serve other LGBT groups (such as the Consortium) and VCOs refer to support received from other front line organisations.

Respondents were also asked to estimate their levels of volunteer management capacity and to rate the level of priority for this area of work. Among the 11 organisations who were able to estimate their level of volunteer management capacity, the average rating was 59%, with 100% being full capacity with very few additional support needs. This means that organisations felt that they had a modest amount of capacity internally to carry out basic volunteer management such as volunteer recruitment, supervision and training. Most respondents rated volunteer management as either a high or medium priority for the organisation, with the exception of two. They were asked specifically about any contact or support they received from VCs. Out of a total of 23 interviewees, 16 stated that they had no contact at all with any VC, while 4 said they had limited contact and 3 said they had been supported by their VC.

Interviewees were asked specifically about volunteer management and engagement with mainstream infrastructure support organisations. The following quotes give a flavour of the challenges that were expressed in relation to this:

One of the challenges is that you're overseen as 'other'...when you're an LGBT organisation, you're not seen as an organisation which is part of society. You're always seen as separate and it always feels like you have to knock on the door and ask a favour from the organisations which are actually set up (that our taxes go to) for us (I2).

The governance issue: the lack of people who are willing to put themselves forward to run organisations…It would be good for instance to have a bank of people who'd be willing and able to perhaps be external trustees of lesbian and gay organisations (I6).

I mean CVS' have employed me to do diversity training and stuff. But it's never occurred to me to go to them…Ah, this is the reason why: because I'm national. Who do I go to for national (I9)?

To have someone come and say "have you thought about, did you know about this" would be really helpful but it may be too much to expect in terms of hand holding (I10).

I think in terms of mainstream agencies half the time I don't think they'll know what we're talking about particularly if it's an LGBT-specific problem. We've sort of tried to deal with that but I wouldn't have expected any help from mainstream agencies. I suppose it's a suspicion of them and a concern that they won't know what the issues are particularly (I12).

Volunteer Centres

Primary research was conducted in the form of a phone survey to 25 VCs in Greater London in order to get feedback from their staff as to levels of LGBT engagement. VCs operate in most London boroughs and share the following core functions:

Brokerage (matching VIOs with volunteers)

Marketing volunteering

Good practice development (including volunteer management training for VIO staff)

Developing volunteer opportunities

Policy work and campaigning

Strategic development of volunteering

Half the VCs surveyed do not believe there is any level of engagement between their VC and LGBT VIOs. Of these VCs, some have specifically mentioned the lack of leadership from Volunteering England as a reason for not prioritising LGBT outreach, other reasons include the lack of awareness of any LGBT organisations in their borough. Many VCs believe that they have an 'open door' policy where all VIOs are welcomed equally, thereby eliminating the need for targeted outreach to LGBT groups. The other half of VC respondents mentioned some level of engagement with the LGBT community, including:

Using or producing leaflets with an LGBT theme (2)

Including LGBT opportunities when promoting volunteering in the media

Including sexual orientation in the VC equal opportunities statement which appears on the website

Working with the local LGBT forum, who use the CVS address and meeting space and do joint trainings and events

LGBT VIOs attending volunteer coordinator forum or the local CVS forum (2)

Expansion of VC registration criteria for an LGBT organisation which works outside the borough

Support offered to an LGBT volunteer brokerage organisation

Delivering volunteer management training to a LGBT organisation

Specific outreach to LGBT organisations and invitations to register

There were VCs who mentioned linkages between their work and LGBT organisations. One VC had a staff member who was the lead officer for the LGBT Forum and one VC sought advice from an LGBT organisation on the wording of their monitoring form for clients. The qualitative data from the phone survey shows that there is still a great deal of ignorance within VCs as to the LGBT sub sector and related issues. VCs may need to be more proactive in their outreach if they want to involve LGBT VIOs, as LGBT groups are often reluctant to approach VCs due to fear of homophobia, under-resourcing or lack of awareness of available infrastructure support. While an 'open to all' approach' is a great idea in theory, without any targeted outreach it may only exacerbate the exclusion that some LGBT groups experience.

VCs were also asked about any specific LGBT outreach that they have done with VIOs or individuals. Of the 25 respondents, 19 had not done any specific outreach to LGBT organisations or individuals. Reasons for this mainly included the lack of resources rather than an unwillingness to engage with the LGBT community. Of the 6 organisations who had done outreach, examples were as follows:

Researching and contacting LGBT groups in the area (3)

Contacting groups through links with the LGBT forum

Postcard campaign targeted at LGBT clients

Articles written by staff regarding LGBT monitoring

When asked about the numbers of LGBT VIOs registered with each VC, most VCs estimated that they had at least one LGBT VIO on their books (Table 2), although many groups were unsure about this number, two had no idea and several had no LGBT organisations registered. The largest number of registered LGBT VIOs at one VC was 8.

Table 2: Number of LGBT VIOs Registered with London VCs

LGBT VIOs	Number of Respondent VCs
0	3
1	5
2	4
3	4
4	1
5	2
6	1
7	1
8	2
Don't Know	2

Of the VCs that run a Volunteer Coordinators Forum, just under half had not had attendance by LGBT VIO representatives. Another quarter did not know if any of their participants were from LGBT organisations and four VCs had the participation of an LGBT group. It is difficult to make a judgement regarding the lack of participation by LGBT VIOs in this case as it could be due to many factors such as lack of staff resources or poor publicity. What we can say for sure is that there is poor attendance at volunteer coordinator forums by LGBT VIO representatives.

Similar results were found in relation to volunteering best practice advice given to LGBT VIOs. Of all the VCs, only 4 had given best practice advice to an LGBT organisation. VCs were then asked about any training delivered to LGBT VIOs and two respondents had delivered specific training related to LGBT issues: one targeted to young people and one workshop on recruiting LGBT volunteers. Many more VCs (13) have provided LGBT related training in conjunction with a diversity or equal opportunities workshop. Other than these specific areas of training mentioned, no LGBT related training has taken place.

Unsurprisingly, most VCs do not monitor the sexual orientation of their clients. This means that there is a dearth of information regarding LGBT clients and their needs. When asked why the VCs do not monitor sexual orientation, several mention the technical difficulties presented by VBase. Most VCs use this database to track clients and while it has a field to monitor ethnicity, age and gender, there is no similar method to track sexual orientation. Some VCs (8) have been able to monitor this despite the VBase hurdle.

Summary

There is clearly a wide diversity of LGBT VIOs and volunteers working to build better communities provide services and create positive change. LGBT organisations vary greatly in their size, scope and purpose but they are all likely to rely on volunteers to carry out many of their services and to require a broader catchment area in order to attain the critical mass of support needed to survive. LGBT people likely volunteer across the spectrum of VCOs in London, however there is evidence that LGBT VIOs have small numbers of heterosexual volunteers. What is clear is that very little monitoring of sexual orientation takes place at all and this creates a dearth of information related to LGBT volunteer needs.

There are unique LGBT issues in terms of volunteer motivations and the barriers that exist for LGBT VIOs. Volunteers in the LGBT community can be particularly motivated by incidents related to homophobia or discrimination as well as the need to tap into social support networks. LGBT VIOs are not fully accessing the infrastructure support available from mainstream organisations and this reluctance is likely due to fear of experiencing homophobia or previous experiences of discrimination. In order to create an environment more conducive to LGBT VIOs tapping into existing support, mainstream second tier organisations need to send clear and welcoming messages to LGBT VIOs showing a willingness to support the LGBT community.

Recommendations and Conclusions

The LGBT community has clearly made great strides in recent years in moving forward its political, economic and social agenda. And yet still hate crimes against the LGBT community continue to rise (Grealy, 2005) and there is still a great deal of ignorance in regard to LGBT issues and needs. This report has highlighted some of the issues that LGBT VIOs share with other groups such as the scarcity of resources and volunteering trends as well as some unique LGBT issues.

The data from this report would suggest that volunteering infrastructure support has not fully caught up with the positive LGBT policy changes that have occurred in the last ten years. Related to this is the widespread lack of information regarding the needs and experiences of LGBT people due to lack of sexual orientation monitoring at the national, regional and local levels.

The insular nature of the LGBT voluntary sector, its scope and fears of discrimination from mainstream groups may combine to exclude LGBT groups from accessing mainstream infrastructure support. This phenomenon, coupled with the lack of proactive outreach by VCs could easily serve to entrench this dynamic for the near future. By encouraging volunteer development agencies to reach out to LGBT VIOs and to adapt to serve pan-London groups, we can change this dynamic and also foster a greater amount of cross-volunteering between the LGBT community and the 'mainstream'. The impact of this could only be one that will increase understanding and tolerance of difference between people and communities, as we have seen volunteering accomplish in other sectors.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are set forth based on the findings from the research data. It is suggested that they form the basis for a set of future guidelines for Volunteer Centres and other

volunteer development agencies on supporting the work of LGBT VIOs and on supporting LGBT volunteers generally. They are categorised by the specific outcomes the recommendations hope to achieve.

Increasing LGBT Volunteer Support & Engagement			
Area of research	**Recommendation**	**Actions**	**Who responsible**
A) Training	Training for LGBT volunteers (including trustees) that is free, specialised, targeted and appropriate to LGBT organisations	Target training programmes in areas such as how to become a trustee and fundraising	VCs, LGBT second tier
B) Increase volunteering	Encourage leadership and volunteering within the LGBT community	Targeted mentoring, training and capacity building efforts	LGBT VIOs, VCs, second tier
C) Increasing volunteering	Develop a London-wide campaign to encourage volunteering with LGBT VIOs that includes governing bodies	Develop and implement a media campaign	VE, GLV
D) Networks	Development of a support network for LGBT volunteers and leaders in Greater London	Identify host organisation and publicise agenda	The Consortium of LGBT VCOs, GLV

Increasing Support for LGBT VIOs			
Area of research	**Recommendation**	**Actions**	**Who responsible**
A) Signposting	Increased signposting for LGBT VIOs as to what type of infrastructure support is available and how to access	Targeted messages to LGBT VIOs as to training, brokerage and advice available	VCs, second tier groups
B) Capacity building	Develop a project to support pan-London LGBT volunteering capacity building support workers	Assist LGBT VIOs to develop volunteer management systems, recruitment mechanisms and increase the uptake of infrastructure support available	The Consortium of LGBT VCOs, GLV

Area of research	Recommendation	Actions	Who responsible
C) Capacity building and advice	Increased provision of capacity building and volunteer management advice to LGBT VIOs	Some degree of specific LGBT advice	VCs, second tier
D) Publicity	Increased publicity for LGBT VIOs and issues	Publicise volunteer needs and experiences	VCs, LGBT VIOs
E) Networking	Develop a network for LGBT VIOs to share information and resources related to volunteering. This could be a physical and/or virtual network and there could also be a regional focus such as Greater London.	Create the network, identify host organisation.	The Consortium of LGBT VCOs
F) Policy	Ensure that national and local Compact agreements specifically mention the engagement of LGBT VIOs	Comment on Commission for the Future of Volunteering	Volunteering Hub, The Consortium of LGBT VCOs
G) Policy	Investigate the potential impact that the Goods & Services legislation will have in relation to LGBT volunteering and services from VCs	Liaise with legal experts and incorporate into new guidelines	The Consortium of LGBT VCOs

Increasing Capacity for Volunteering Infrastructure Support			
A) Sharing expertise	Enable LGBT VIOs to provide expertise to VCs and CVS about how to develop services that include LGBT groups	Create formal and informal sharing opportunities	Second tier groups
B) Sharing expertise II	Identification of a specialist LGBT advisor for volunteer development agencies	Provide advice and support to groups	Third tier
C) Engaging LGBT VIOs	Engage frontline LGBT organisations in a process which would enable them to identify both their infrastructure needs and how infrastructure provision could be designed to meet	Consultation events	The Consortium of LGBT VCOs
D) Equalities training	VC, CVS and other staff should attend training and development on LGBT issues and capacity building needs	This should specifically include training for people to equip them to talk about issues related to sexual orientation, monitoring and confidentiality	Second tier groups
E) Monitoring	Train VC staff on implementing monitoring that includes sexual orientation	Specific training for VC staff on how to create and implement best practice monitoring procedures	VE, The Consortium of LGBT VCOs
F) Monitoring II	Train VC staff on implementing monitoring that includes sexual orientation	Specific training for VC staff on how to create and implement best practice monitoring procedures	VE, The Consortium of LGBT VCOs

Area of research	Recommendation	Actions	Who responsible
G) Communication	Facilitate a discussion between volunteering infrastructure organisations such as VE and GLV with LGBT frontline and second-tier organisations	Discuss the unique needs of the LGBT sector and next steps	The Consortium of LGBT VCOs
H) Equal opportunities policies	Examine the policies and procedures of each VC to ensure that they are not unwittingly discouraging LGBT engagement	There should be a statement regarding equal opportunities that specifically mentions LGBT volunteers and organisations	VCs
I) Outreach	Enable and encourage volunteer brokerage agencies to directly recruit and register LGBT organisations		VCs
J) Outreach II	Address LGBT issues (especially monitoring) in current networks such as GLV	Dedicate a session to the topic of engaging LGBT VIOs	VE, GLV
K) Information sharing	The Consortium should share information with volunteer development organisations as to any LGBT groups that fall within their geographic or issue areas	A quarterly e-bulletin to VCs and others	The Consortium of LGBT VCOs
L) Inclusion	VE should specifically mention LGBT organisations in their publications, trainings and as a suggested target group for VCs	Develop case studies or example LGBT VIOs	VE

Future research needs

The focus of this research has been specifically on LGBT volunteering issues and levels of engagement with VCs however throughout this report other issues and areas for future work have been uncovered. It is clear that the LGBT voluntary sector needs further research, especially related to the capacity needs of organisations. LGBT volunteering trends are not very well understood, mainly because there is very little data at present due to the widespread lack of monitoring by the public and voluntary sectors. While this work has focused on Greater London, it is clear that future research and guidelines should be rolled out across the UK. Additional areas of research might also include levels of LGBT informal volunteering, motivations and barriers.

Next steps

The key stakeholders related to this project, namely Volunteering England and the Consortium of LGBT Organisations, should discuss developing a plan to further the guidelines and recommendations in this report and to ensure that there will be a continuing dialogue on these issues. The implementation of these recommendations should be a priority, although it is acknowledged that some will take longer than others to roll-out and some will need to develop funding mechanisms. If we are to make further strides to facilitate volunteering within the LGBT community and to encourage engagement between VCs and LGBT VIOs then both mainstream infrastructure organisations and LGBT VCOs need to take steps in each other's direction. Communication and goodwill may be the tools that everyone should sharpen in order to create mutually agreeable plans and solutions for a future that embraces the full diversity of London.

Acronyms and abbreviations

CEHR	Commission for Equality and Human Rights
The Consortium/ The Consortium of LGBT VCOs	The Consortium of Lesbian Gat Bisexual and Transgender Voluntary and Community Sector Organisations
CVS	Community Service Volunteers
GLV	Greater London Volunteering
LGBT	Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender
LGBT VCO	LGBT Voluntary and Community Organisation
NCVO	National Council for Voluntary Organisations
VE	Volunteering England
VIO	Volunteer Involving Organisation

Appendix A: E-Survey Questions

(* Indicates a mandatory question)

***Q1a**: What is the full name of the LGBT organisation you wish to tell us about?

***Q1b**: What type of organisation is it? (tick all that apply)

Registered charity; Company limted by guarantee; Unincorporated association; Informal group; LGBT project of a larger voluntary organisation; Borough wide LGBT Forum; Statutory organisation

National Health Service/PCT organisation; QUANGO (Quasi Non-government Organisation); Peer support organisation (e.g. within an employer organisation); Profit-making company; Housing Association/Co-op; Don't know; Other (please specify)

***Q1c**: What year was the organisation started?

***Q1d**: Has the organisation closed? (Y/N) If yes, what year?

***Q1e**: Would you describe the organisation's scope as predominantly -

International; National; Regional; Pan London; Across several boroughs; Borough specific; Neighbourhood/locally based; Other (please specify)

Q1f: If the organisation works in one particular London borough please tell us the name of the borough (open-ended)

***Q1g**: Does the organisation have a website? (Y/N)

Q2a: What is the web address of your organisation? (open-ended)

Q2b: Is your organisation exclusively web-based? (Y/N)

***Q3a**: Does the organisation have a current postal address? (Y/N)

Q4a: Please tell us the postal address (open-ended)

Street; City; Postcode

***Q5a**: Are lesbian gay bisexual or transgender people as a group specifically part of the organisation's purpose or mission? (Y/N)

Q5b: Please state the specific target population/s in the organisation's mission

Lesbians; Gay men; Bisexual people; Female to male transgender people; Male to female transgender people; Intersex people; Other (please specify)

***Q5c**: Please briefly describe the organisation's purpose or mission (open-ended).

***Q6a**: Does the organisation have a written constitution or governing document? (Y/N)

***Q6b**: Does the organisation hold an Annual General Meeting (AGM)? (Y/N)

Q6c: Please tick if your organisation has any of the following monitoring procedures in place.

Equal opportunities - governing body; Equal opportunities – staff; Equal opportunities – volunteers; Equal opportunities - members or users; Financial monitoring; Outputs and outcomes; Quarterly monitoring for funders; Other (please specify)

***Q6d**: Does the organisation have a governing or decision-making body such as a Board of Trustees or a Management Committee? (Y/N)

Q7a: How often does the governing body meet?

Weekly; Monthly; Bi-monthly; Quarterly; Annually; Other (please specify)

Q7b: What percentage of the governing body would identify as lesbian gay bisexual or transgender?

100%; 75 - 99%; 51 - 74%; 26 - 50%; 1 - 25%; None; Don't know

Q7c: How would you describe the governing body of the organisation? (tick all that apply)

Gay men; Lesbians; Bisexual people; Male to female transgender people; Female to male transgender people; Heterosexual people; Intersex people; Other (please specify)

Q7d: Are more than half of the governing body of your organisation Black or an ethnic minority? (Y/N)

Q7e: Would more than half of the governing body describe themselves as disabled? (Y/N)

Q7f: Are more than half of the governing body either young people (16-24) or older people (50+)? (tick one)

Yes - young people; Yes - older people; No

Q7g: Are a majority of the governing body people of a particular belief or faith? (tick one)

No; Yes – Christian; Yes – Hindu; Yes – Jewish; Yes – Muslim; Yes – Sikh; Yes - other

Q7h: Are more than half of the governing body of your organisation male or female? (tick one)

No; Yes – female; Yes - male

Q7i: Are more than half of the governing body of your organisation refugees or asylum seekers? (Y/N)

***Q8a**: What issue/s does the organisation address or focus activities around? (tick all that apply)

Human rights; Prejudice/discrimination; Sport; Volunteering; HIV/AIDS; Social exclusion; Equality; Community development; Public policy; Education; Housing ; Health ; Drug dependency; Alcohol dependency; Employment ; Sexual health; Mental health; Crime and violence; Domestic violence; Arts; Culture; History; Environment; Family; Adoption and parenting; Immigration; Philosophy/religion/belief; Spirituality; Other (please specify)

***Q8b**: What methods does your organisation use to achieve its aims (tick all that apply)?

Advice; Advocating with or for an individual; Befriending; Group work; Counselling/therapy; Telephone help line; Campaigning; Policy work; One to one case work; Domiciliary services; Translation services; Consultation; Research; Outreach; Information provision; Housing; Volunteering opportunity; Employment opportunity; Training and education; Direct action; Support groups; Other (please specify)

***Q8c**: How often does your group meet? (tick one)

Never; Weekly; Monthly; Bi-monthly; Quarterly; Annually; Multiple meetings happening regularly; Other (please specify)

Q8d: Does your organisation have a regular and reliable meeting space? (Y/N)

Q9a: How would you describe the members, users or clients of the organisation? (tick all that apply)

Gay men; Lesbians; Bisexual people; Male to female transgender people; Female to male transgender people; Men who have sex with men; Heterosexual people; Intersex people; Other (please specify)

Q9b: Are the majority of members users or clients of your organisation Black or ethnic minority? (Y/N) If yes

Q9c: Does your organisation specifically serve disabled people? (Y/N) If yes

Q9d: Does the organisation specifically serve younger (16-24) or older (50+) LGBT people? (Y/N) If yes

Q9e: Does the organisation specifically serve LGBT people of a particular faith or belief? (Y/N) If yes

Q9f: Does the organisation specifically serve refugees or asylum seekers? (Y/N) If yes

***Q10a**: Does the organisation have volunteers? (Y/N)

Q11a: What types of jobs do volunteers do in the organisation (tick all that apply)?

Everything; Service provision; Decision-making and leadership; Finance and accounting; Administrative tasks; Research; Publicity and communications; Outreach; Policy and lobbying; Fundraising and membership; Advice; Training; Social support; Other (please specify)

Q11b: Please estimate the total number of volunteers in the organisation (tick one).

1-5; 6-10; 11-20; 21-50; 51-75; 76-100; More than 100

Q11c: On average how many hours per week does each volunteer contribute to your organisation? (open-ended)

Q12a: Has the organisation ever received non-financial support from any of the following organisations? (tick all that apply)

Council for Voluntary Service; The Consortium; Other second-tier/infrastructure organisations; Volunteer Bureau; Other voluntary and community organisations; Other LGBT voluntary and community organisations; Other (please specify)

Q12b: Has your organisation ever participated in the following types of training? (answers for: Governing body, Members or users, Staff, Volunteers)

Finance; Fundraising; Governance; Management; Planning

Q12c: Does your organisation have any paid staff? (Y/N for each)

Full time; Part time

Q12d: How many part-time? (open-ended)

Q12e: How many full-time? (open-ended)

Q12f: Does your group have sole use of any buildings or offices? (Y/N for each)

Own; Lease; Rent

***Q12g**: Does the organisation have any income or spend any money? (Y/N)

Q13a: Please estimate the total annual expenditure for the organisation in an average year. (open-ended)

Q13b: Where has the organisation's funding come from in the past 12 months? (Approximate % for each)

Individual donations; Payroll giving; Central Government; European Government; Regional Government; Local Authority VCS Grants Programme; Local Neighbourhood Renewal Fund; NHS/DoH/PCT; Metropolitan Police; Big Lottery Fund/Community Fund; Charitable trusts;

Community Chests; Companies; Fees for services; Membership fees; Income from events; Trading/earning; Other

Q13c: Over the past 5 years has the organisation's income: (tick one)

Increased; Decreased; Remained the same

***Q14a**: Does your organisation have a written strategic plan? (Y/N)

Q14b: Does your organisation engage in any of the following activities at least annually (tick all that apply)?

Strategic planning; Forward planning; Business planning; Revisiting the vision; Revisiting the mission; Quality management; Accreditation

***Q14c**: Has your organisation ever been invited to consult with government policy makers? (Y/N)

***Q14d**: Does your organisation prepare and submit policy papers to government policy makers? (Y/N)

Q14e: Can you provide an example of how the organisation has strategic or policy influence? (open-ended)

***Q14f**: Has your organisation ever collaborated with other groups in order to influence public policy? (Y/N)

***Q14g**: Has your organisation ever undertaken or published research related to the LGBT community? (Y/N) If yes

Q14h: Does your organisation provide information to the media in order to: (answer Y/N for each)

Educate the public; Influence government decision-makers; Sway public opinion

Q14i: Which of the following best describe the organisation? (tick all that apply)

Aspirational; Frustrated; Creative; Growing; Just about managing; Surviving; Challenging; Tired; Stretched; Courageous; Hopeful; Inspired; Dynamic; Oppressed; Excluded; Other (please specify)

Q14j: Is there any additional information you would like to provide? (open-ended)

Q15a: Please tell us your role in the organisation (tick all that apply).

Trustee; Management Committee member; Staff; CEO; Volunteer; Member; User or client; Funder; Supporter; Former staff; Other (please specify)

Appendix B: Phone Survey Questions

1. In what ways does your Volunteer Centre engage with LGBT volunteer-involving organisations?

2a. Has your VC ever done any specific or targeted outreach to LGB orT organisations or individuals?

2b If so, please give examples.

3a. How many of your registered organisations are LGBT/ have an LGBT project?

3b. If this info is not to hand, do you have the means to find out?

4a. If you have a Volunteer Coordinators Forum, are you aware of the number of LGBT representatives who have attended in the past year (Apr 06 – Mar 07)?

4b If this info is not to hand, do you have the means to find out?

5a. How many LGBT organisations have you given best – practice advice to in the past year (Apr 06 – Mar 07)?

5b If this info is not to hand, do you have the means to find out?

6a. Do you deliver training/organise training in areas of volunteering best-practice?

6bIf so, have any LGBT issues been covered in these training sessions?

6c If so, please give examples.

7a. Do you monitor numbers of LGBT clients? If so, how is this done?

7b. How many LGBT clients you have had contact with in the last year (Apr 06 - Mar 07)?

7cIf this info is not to hand, do you have the means to find out?

8. Do you have any specific suggestions on how LGBT VIOs could be better engaged with and make use of the services of VCs?

9. Anything else you'd like to add?

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Appendix D: Acknowledgements

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consortium

of lesbian, gay, bisexual & transgendered voluntary and community organisations