**Some steps towards working with LGBTQI communities – or any**

This is an edited version of part of the talk given by John Vincent at MOSI on 19 May 2014.

**Preparation**

* What do we need to know? Develop your (and your colleagues’) awareness of the national context
* What’s happening in our area/region?

**Ensuring your values are transparent**

For example:

* Integrity, honesty, transparency: make it clear why you want to build the relationship with local LGBTQI people
* Being open and responsive, both to the local community and to your colleagues.

**Getting to know our communities**

* Finding out about LGBTQI people in our area – make contact with and visit local LGBTQI community groups, meeting-places, pubs/bars/clubs: use magazine listings, internet searches to find groups and venues in your area
* Having mapped the people we make contact with, who’s missing?

**Consulting**

Having got a broad idea of who might be in our area, how can we find out what their demands and needs are? Common methods include:

* Meetings
* Visits
* Focus groups
* Reaching out to non-users (eg via outreach, the internet, and social media).

**Engaging – where to start?**

From your consultations, you should be getting a picture of local needs. Where do you start in terms of actually doing something?

* Assess what your service can contribute on existing resources
* Maybe start with an event that you can focus on/organise around, eg LGBT History Month, local LGBT Pride activities, specific temporary exhibitions/events that will raise your profile.

**Looking for and sharing good practice ideas**

* For example via the LGBT JISCMAIL list that I coordinate [email John for details]

**Mainstreaming**

To develop something ongoing, we need to look at:

* Management commitment: there need to be ‘champions’ who will help promote this work within and across the organisation (and who will lend support were anyone to object to the development of LGBTQI provision)
* Staff commitment: whilst an individual often has the passion to get a service/activity started, s/he will burn out unless other staff are also involved (and, as an ‘official’ service, there should be no excuse for the non-involvement of others)
* A broad, cross-organisation approach (together with the local community)
* Volunteers and community involvement, for example in running or co-running a LGBTQI reading group
* Resources: for example to develop the service; promotion/advertising; running events
* Policies: for example on buying, collecting; cataloguing and describing; on ensuring that LGBTQI issues run through all the organisations policies and practices; a critical part of equality and diversity policies
* Co-production and sharing information
* Museums can use the Accreditation Scheme to help raise standards and to ensure that they are being responsive to user needs and expectations.

**Into the mainstream**

It is vital that the cultural sector not only celebrates events such as LGBT History Month and LGBT Pride, but also engages in programming LGBTQI-related activities throughout the year – and also weaves them into other activities (such as mainstream exhibitions or displays) and events (such as Black History Month), for example.

**Promoting the service and its resources**

* Events, activities, talks, publicity, marketing, etc.

**Staffing**

* Staff need to be 100% confident in dealing with LGBTQI visitors, staff, content – and any issues that may arise
* Ensure that your organisation’s policies are positive and clear about welcoming LGBTQI staff and service-users (and also about how any issues of homophobia or harassment will be dealt with)
* Ensure that senior managers speak out about the importance of an inclusive workplace – and that their actions mirror this
* Recruitment: for example, does your organisation target any of its recruiting specifically towards LGBTQI people? Are your recruitment practices positive (for example, towards someone who is transitioning)?
* Monitoring
* Training and awareness-raising are vital
* Mentoring
* Working with/supporting workplace and Trade Union LGBTQI groups
* Professions’ approaches: does your professional body have a current set of policies about supporting LGBTQI people? Does it have up-to-date information about the make-up of its members? What is its stance on supporting members over homophobia?

**Benchmarking**

* For example, participate in the Stonewall Diversity Champions programme.

**Monitoring and evaluation**

It is vital to evaluate this work, for example to:

* Check if what we are doing is worthwhile and is working
* Gathering learning which can lead to change – what lessons have we learned from this? What goes well? And less well?
* Benchmarking
* Evidence-gathering
* Testing hypotheses
* Gathering information to report to funders
* Giving participants a voice
* Gathering information and learning in order to develop advocacy
* Gathering information which will feed into the political and economic contexts in which we work
* Build up a demonstrable model of practice
* Share good practice
* Demonstrate impact.

Taken from: John Vincent *LGBT people and the UK cultural sector*. Ashgate, 2014.

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