

Visit to Manchester City Council – Tuesday 5th September 2017

Present:

Lewisham: Councillor James-J Walsh, Vice-Chair, Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee; Councillor Joyce Jacca; Katie Wood (Scrutiny Manager).

Manchester: Councillor Bev Craig, Executive Member for Adult's Health and Wellbeing and Lead Member for LGBT Women; Councillor Peter Cookson, Lead Member for Gay Men's Issues; Keiran Barnes (Equalities Team Leader); Kath Hanna (Project Manager); Helen Hassall (Project Officer); Jude Millet (Housing Commissioning Manager); Zoe Robertson (Strategic Lead, Adult Social Care)

LGBT Foundation: Rob Cookson, Deputy Chief Executive

Manchester City Council has a Leader + Executive model with 96 Councillors (95 Labour and 1 Lib Dem). There are 9 Executive Members including the Council Leader. The Council also uses a system of Lead Members where backbench and Executive Councillors also act as Lead Members for certain issues. All of the protected characteristics from the Equalities Act 2010 have a designated Lead Member and some protected characteristics are separated to have a number of Lead Members such as the roles of Lead Member for Gay Men and Lead Member for Lesbian Women. Scrutiny is undertaken through 6 committees divided in a similar way to Lewisham's 6 Select Committees. These Committees are: Children and Young People; Communities and Equalities; Neighbourhoods and Environment; Economy; Health; Resources and Governance.

The following outlines a summary of the key points from the discussion at Manchester City Council and the LGBT Foundation.

- Manchester City Council worked closely with the LGBT Foundation. The LGBT Foundation had become increasingly active in researching the Trans community in Manchester and those with multiple characteristics i.e. Nigerian Lesbian refugee. Historically there had been examples where the LGBT issue had not been recognised as being needed to be taken into account.
- The Equalities Team commissioned research where they had gaps in available data such as commissioning a study of the Trans* community by the LGBT Foundation.
- The Equalities Team stressed the importance of developing strong relationships and reciprocal arrangements with relevant local groups. In addition to this, they saw an organisational commitment to funding as being crucial. For example they described their organisational relationship with the LGBT Foundation as being a "push-pull" relationship where both parties support and challenge each other in a collaborative way. Helping identify problems and proposing possible solutions. This positive relationship enabled the City Council to more accurately measure community needs. The Council's approach was to use the Comprehensive Equalities Scheme to develop a best approach for Manchester.
- The Council and Executive Members were conscious that the reduction in Council budget was an additional challenge. Partner organisations such as the LGBT Foundation and George House Trust understood the challenges the Council faced. Part of the success had been importance of building strong relations in past years. Other options around funding included considering "charge backs" to relevant authorities based on the addresses of service users. For example GUM clinic accesses in central Manchester could be charged back to the users' authorities based on their addresses.
- Influence in schools could be achieved by working closely with schools themselves; school alliances; CCG etc.

- Sign-posting members of the community to accessing services was a key role for the City Council. It was important to strengthen the approach around equality analysis and ensuring a broad approach to communications.
- House Proud is a collaboration of housing providers in the North West and the Strategic Housing Team have shared their information across the Manchester Housing Provider Partnership to ensure information reaches local community groups.
<https://www.equityhousing.co.uk/search/text-content/our-first-north-west-lgbt-residents-conference--1159>
- Older people in the LGBT community could be vulnerable through a number of factors relating to their housing. Ensuring providers of social care and social housing had LGBT policies in place to ensure older residents were not subject to discrimination or homophobia and felt safe and secure in their setting was essential. It was also important to ensure housing providers were monitoring and recording homophobic crime.
- Manchester City Council provided grant funding to a number of organisations through a combined equality fund aligned to Manchester City objectives. LGBT groups were also able to obtain funding through streams in youth/ public health etc.
- The LGBT scene in Manchester had changed and businesses in Canal Street and the Village had had to adapt to be successful. Representatives from businesses in these areas needed to be involved in regeneration discussions and considerations.
- Rob Cookson, Deputy Chief Executive, LGBT Foundation introduced the work of the organisation. LGBT Foundation was based in central Manchester. They had a building which included 3 floors of community space and was accessible to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans community. Services included one to one support, befriending programmes, advice and guidance and a safe place to talk and be. Individuals could also be linked up with or signposted to other services such as health services. There was also HIV testing available in a non-clinical and friendly environment.
- Concerns had been raised to the organisation about issues facing some older LGBT residents. These could be particularly acute when accessing sheltered housing or care in their homes and some reported feeling insecure and fearing prejudice or experiencing direct prejudice. One issue was where there was no key workers and providers relied heavily on bank staff. A resident may have a different carer each week and feel nervous about what their attitude may be.
- It was essential for equality needs of all residents to be built into the commissioning model for home care providers.
- Zoe Robertson and Jude Millett gave a presentation on “Developing an LGBT affirmative extra care scheme for Manchester.
- There are 7,650 people over 50 living in Manchester who identify as LGB, with a 45% expected increase in over 65s in the next 2 decades. 1 in 5 of the older LGBT population in Manchester have no one to contact in times of crisis – 10 times higher than the general population. 3 in 5 older LGB people were not confident that social care and support services would be able to understand and meet their needs. In addition to this, Trans people surveyed noted hate crime and anti-social behaviour from neighbours as common issues.
- The Council’s Equalities Team had commissioned a report entitled “Age Friendly Manchester” (see sources for link). The study identified that older people struggled to find routes to relevant Housing. HOOP in Manchester had been created which helped residents access the most appropriate help and was funded 50% from the City Council and 50% through the CCG. It is a City Council corporate priority to reduce the numbers of people

going into residential care when an alternative option such as care at home (including extra care and sheltered housing) could be more suitable for individuals and also less costly. Historically residential social care had often been seen as the answer even when care was only needed for a short period such as recovery time. This could lead to people being in residential care before they needed to be when they could have a better quality of care in a different setting. The findings of the surveys and evidence indicated that there was a need for specific accommodation for older LGBT residents and these findings were supported by the Homes and Community Agency as well as at strategic director level, political level and through local community groups and housing associations.

- There could be tensions between aspirations for an individual's care and the reality of options available and funding. The Council departments worked together closely and partnership working was key.
- The flagship retirement home in Manchester "Village 135" had now been build and set a exceptional standard in extra care provision for residents. The LGBT housing scheme felt like a natural progression to this scheme and would help to address the requirements for more extra care provisions needed and less residential care.
- Key principles for the development were agreed: LGBT affirmative; a location where LGBT elders feel safe and comfortable; mixed tenure; pets allowed; accessible to the wider community; LGBT friendly trained carers and staff.
- A Comprehensive Equalities Impact Assessment was being developed. Different construction and management options were being considered.
- The Greater Manchester Action Plan <http://lgbt.foundation/actionplan/> had been produced in partnership between the LGBT Foundation and The Greater Manchester Combined Authority. It looks at what can be done at all levels and proposes interventions and recommendations.
- Consideration of LGBT issues and communities needed to be part of commissioning processes across service providers.
- Commissioning processes could be complex often with different funding streams.
- The City Council was working on training and awareness around all care contracts. The legal team was working to help ensure the requirements for providers were robust.
- More and more organisations were monitoring equalities data but there were many gaps. Previously, Council equalities impact assessments didn't always include specific reference to implications for the LGBT Community but this had now improved. Often there were high levels of "prefer not to say" in the sexual orientation monitoring box. More work had to be done to understand the reasons for this and what could be done to ensure the data was as robust as possible.
- LGBT Foundation actively and visibly championed the LGBT Community and ran LGBT Hero awards and community awards such as Employer of the year.
- The organisation promoted a quality assurance scheme for example in GP surgeries called Pride in Practice where people could report if they had experienced prejudice or poor service due to their LGBT identity. <http://lgbt.foundation/prideinpractice>
- The charity had also commissioned a Trans Visibility Report and was promoting a system of LGBT Community champions.
- One of the areas where more work needed to be done was around intersectionality of identity for example, Black gay men or Asian lesbian women or members of the LGBT community who also had a disability. Many people experienced increased levels of prejudice

and greater challenges. There was a lack of funding and a lack of data available on these particular issues.

- The LGBT Foundation ran a “Village Angel” scheme which provided support and information to people. They could also help to promote community safety and help people report incidents of hate crime. They also had a base around Canal Street called the Village Haven where people could have a safe place to go. They had links with police and health services.
- Many members of the community were highly skilled and did not suffer from inequalities resulting from their LGBT status. It was important to also look at the LGBT community in a community assets point of view in terms as a potential resource such as for volunteering.