LGBT Strand conference: 29/4/07

# LBi Group

1. **Issues**

* Lack of provision for young people away from the scene
* Companies / businesses should actively promote themselves as LGBT friendly to encourage students to stay & work in region
* Need for a regional Pride – both for economy and equality
* Tyneside area – need for under-18s (esp. L) to meet up
* Youth group (similar to MESMAC) for LBis
* Sexual health awareness still needed as health (especially GPs) assume lesbians are safe and don’t require sexual health checks (smear tests) – some assume lesbians don’t have periods! Also ignore bi-sexual women’s needs
* Education for young people re sexual health
* Work policies around family planning, adoption, fostering, childcare etc. should be equally applied to same-sex partners with children
* Elderly people in care homes are not supported by staff re their sexuality
* Isolation – nowhere to socialise
* Negative image of lesbians in Tyneside
* Prejudice in Hartlepool – little provision (social) and no services
* Counselling frequently proposed as ‘solution’ when coming out
* Promotion of support groups e.g. via web site – but need to be able to access information without getting masses of pornographic sites. Proposed ‘Networking for Change’ as organisation co-ordinating such a web site
* Homophobia in workplace – e.g. of health staff outing LGB staff to patients thus increasing their vulnerability

1. **Benefits of working together regionally**

* Sharing ideas and information
* Strength in numbers, bigger voice, solidarity
* Could help with the fact that Teesside feels more homophobic
* Easier to obtain funding regionally – and more cost effective to have one regional event rather than several smaller ones
* Bigger networks
* Greater capacity for specialist groups (e.g. disabled LBi’s)
* Sharing resources and skills
* More strategic planning
* Sharing problems
* Being more comfortable about coming out

1. **Priorities (in order)**
2. Awareness in schools:
   * a lot of things going on in different areas – a conference bringing together all the people working in this area, and education authorities, would be useful
   * LBi sexual health included in sex education as a matter of course
   * Also challenging homophobia and homophobic bullying
   * Need to start from an early age – i.e. primary schools
   * Teachers need training
3. A Pride to knock the socks off Manchester
   * need funding from each of the authorities in the region
   * events around the region leading up to one pride event
   * will need transport from around the region
4. Annual LGBT conference
   * setting an annual workplan
   * needs a committee/organising group
   * needs funding
   * need to ensure the voices of all sectors and areas is heard
5. visible signposting for young people in every town
6. Sex education in schools
7. sexual health awareness – availability of dental dams
8. More regional social events – moving around the region
9. Web access