



Welcome!

Welcome to this first Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) newsletter. We hope to be able to keep everyone in touch with housing news and views and also what's going in the wider LGBT community.

Introductions

May I take this opportunity to introduce myself as Blackpool Coastal Housings (BCH)

enGAYge co-ordinator. My name is Sandy Grundy and I am a member of the Customer Involvement and Projects Team. I also positively identify as a member of the LGBT community.



When was enGAYge formed?

In 2009 BCH asked our customers to tell us about themselves. The information you sent back told us that our LGBT customers were not getting involved with BCH. Following this I wrote to all our LGBT customers to ask if they would like to form a new LGBT specific group. The aim was to give the community a group to meet with and also a consultation 'voice' to tell us what they thought about the housing services they received.

What have enGAYge been up to?

Here's a look back at what enGAYge did last year.

2010 has been a really busy year holding its first ever social housing LGBT Conference in February and preparing for Blackpool's annual Pride event in May. Members of enGAYge joined BCH staff in taking part in the Pride Parade promoting both the group and BCH. The group have also been instrumental in developing the BCH's first ever LGBT specific housing information leaflet. These are distributed in all BCH housing offices and the SHIVER office where the group meet. enGAYge members decided that they wanted a venue which would be accessible to everyone, was LGBT 'friendly', and near to town. After consultation we chose SHIVER offices on Dickson Road as they provide LGBT centred services and also public meeting rooms for other LGBT groups. The name enGAYge was chosen by group members who felt that it was a great 'play on the word' gay. Not only this, but the name shows that the group is open to all LGBT customers and they 'engage' with other local and national LGBT groups and services.

Part of the groups aim is to ensure that all BCH Tenants who tell us that they are LGBT have the opportunity to positively influence the services BCH Provides, so we hope that enGAYge fulfil this?



Pride Event

This years Blackpool Pride takes place on 11th & 12th June. BCH and enGAYge will once again be taking part in the march and having a stall on North Pier. Why not come and join in the fun with us or just come and say hello if you see us.



Want to Contact enGAYge? Here's how...

Phone: Sandy Grundy 477911
Email: sandy.grundy@bch.co.uk
Write to: enGAYge c/o Sandy Grundy
BCH, Coastal House, 17—19
Abingdon Street, Blackpool. FY1 1DG



Don't forget ...enGAYge meet on the 2nd Tuesday of each month 5.30pm at SHIVER Offices 102 Dickson Road.



Zero Tolerance!

BCH has a Zero Tolerance policy against any form of HATE related crime. To help reduce this the housing offices have trained 3rd Party Reporting staff. Working with the Police and local volunteers we actively encourage anyone who believes they are a victim of HATE crime to report it to us so that we can quickly resolve it and ultimately stamp it out!



3rd Party Reporting does work

In 2008 BCH became a 3rd party reporting centre and as a result HATE crime reporting increased. For us and the Police this was good news as it showed that our customers felt confident to approach staff to report and resolve incidents. It also told us that Tenants were aware that we had become a reporting centre.

It's a mystery

BCH wanted to find out what staff had when providing support on LGBT enquiries. enGAYge volunteer LGBT mystery shoppers undertook a series of shops through visiting housing offices and making phone calls.

Here is what they said about BCH's LGBT knowledge ...

Overall, shoppers were happy to approach BCH staff with LGBT queries. They were also confident that queries would be dealt with professionally. It was commented that several members of staff were regarded as 'quite' knowledgeable when answering queries. In general, staff knew who to forward shoppers to within BCH if they could not answer a query themselves. However, lack of awareness of other outside LGBT agencies was noted.

the extent of knowledge/awareness our support and advice on to our customers

visiting housing offices and making phone calls.



Credit where its due



To help BCH provide excellent services to all of our customers we asked enGAYge last year if they would like us to apply for the Navajo Charter Mark. Navajo are a North West based LGBT organisation who support companies to look at the needs of their LGBT staff and customers and work with them to develop these. We successfully gained this accreditation and now proudly bare the charter mark on our documentation.

What's on when?

Blackpool has one of the UK's largest LGBT populations so there's often local events taking place. Here are a few of the regular ones.

- LGBT PACT (Police and communities together) 1st Thursday of each month 6.30pm. Call 607242 for next venue.
- LGBT Forum 2nd Thursday of each month 6.30pm Town Hall.
- SHIVER offices at 102 Dickson Road has a wide variety of support groups on each week. Call Andy Thompson on 311431.
- enGAYge 2nd Tuesday of each month 5.30pm SHIVER office 102 Dickson Road. Call Sandy Grundy on 477911.

Useful Contacts

Advice Link: 476843
 Social Services Direct: 476847
 Police (volunteer) Blue Phone: 07940979610
 P.C. Julie Hall Diversity Officer: 604244
 Broken Rainbow: 03009995428
 S.H.I.V.E.R: 311431
 LGBT Forum: 477117
 Blackpool Council Customer First: 477477
 Citizens Advice Bureau: 308400
 BCH repairs hotline: 08000730184
 BCH Grange Park Housing Office: 477969
 BCH Mereside Housing Office: 477968
 BCH Queens Park Housing Office: 477971
 BCH Head Office: 477900
 BCH Rents Team: 477942
 BCH Customer Involvement: 477911

BCH believes in access for all. To ensure the services provided by BCH are accessible, information can be made available in a variety of formats and languages. For more information please contact your Customer Involvement and Projects Team on 477911.