

A Development Proposal for the LGBT & Police Co-operation Group

By the Gender Diversity Organisation

<http://www.gender-diversity.org>

August 16th 2003

1. Foundations

Successful *co-operation* between LGBT people and all the statutory agencies in Brighton and Hove is recognised as urgently needed by the Gender-Diversity-Organisation (GDO)¹.

The main founding purpose² of the LGBT Group is to enable Sussex Police³ to fulfil its statutory obligations⁴ according to the Crime and Disorder Act, 1998 (CDA)⁵ which requires certain statutory bodies⁶ to *co-operate* with *homosexuals*⁷.

It is important to recognise that the CDA does not use the word *consult* when it refers to the relationship between statutory bodies and specific groups of people like *homosexuals*.

Parliament spent several years debating and producing the CDA legislation, it is therefore correct and appropriate to employ the same language as the CDA uses:

- a) To use the word *consult* is therefore incorrect.
- b) To permit and allow the word *consult* to continue in the title of the LGBT – Police Group will cause confusion because it is wrong, and
- c) To use the word *consult* will seriously undermine the foundations and credibility of the group.

Using the correct word: *co-operate* will enable healthy foundations to be established for the Group. This is because *co-operate* implies equality of purpose and process whereas *consult* implies a one way flow of information and unbalanced power. Parliament chose to use the word *co-operate* in the CDA because Parliament wants LGBT people and Sussex Police to *co-operate* with each other to achieve our mutual and agreed goals of reducing crime against LGBT people. Using the word *consult* instead of *co-operate* gives an entirely misleading and wrong and possibly illegal interpretation of the CDA.

2. Enabling Success

Enabling the successes craved by all, while avoiding past failures, requires first establishing then acknowledging and working from three facts:-

1. LGBT representatives have only ever been salaried once⁸ before Spectrum was launched in 2002 – volunteers have very limited time, experience and knowledge.
2. LGBT representatives, with the exception of Spectrum, have little claim to legitimate representation of all 35,000 LGBT people locally – they represent only a tiny proportion – the vast majority remain unrepresented and hidden.
3. There is a history of mistakes to learn from therefore new would-be representatives must thoroughly familiarise themselves with this history to avoid making similar mistakes.

¹ Web site:- <http://www.gender-diversity.org> email:- co-og@gender-diversity.org

² The Group's formation was called for and invitations sent out by Sussex Police.

³ The Group only represents LGBT people to Sussex Police – other statutory agencies are not represented – unless extra funding for training and running the Group as argued here is provided.

⁴ Statutory obligations require statutory agencies to target and deliver a legal minimum service.

⁵ The Crime and Disorder Act, 1998 (CDA) was introduced to help tackle crime.

⁶ Sussex Police, the Primary Care Trust, the Probation Service, and Brighton and Hove City Council.

⁷ Statutory Instruments 1998 No. 2452.

⁸ The others were the former LGBT Safety Forum's ex-staff. The current posts of Community Safety Worker (CSW) and Police Liaison Officer and (PLO) are wholly managed by the Council and Sussex Police respectively, these post holders therefore represent statutory authorities *not* LGBT people.

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3. Rubbish In – Rubbish Out.

These obstructions should be tackled together as an urgent priority if successfully *co-operation* between Sussex Police and local LGBT people is an aim of the LGBT & Police Co-Operation Group. There is virtually no capacity, (like funding, time, experience, knowledge or interest) encouraging LGBT people to *co-operate* with Sussex Police, (who have to *co-operate* because of the CDA). It follows that engaging in meaningful and successful *co-operation* with LGBT people must mean that Sussex Police will have to fund LGBT development to help create a solid community organisation to co-operate with!

4. Recommendation – Training for Essential Knowledge and Experience.

The Police Co-Operation Group will never function properly without a minimum trustworthy bench mark of shared experience and knowledge. Sussex Police should fund independent, accredited and expert assessments of relevant gaps in the new embryonic Group's existing knowledge and experience. An independent training authority and assessor such as the Working Together Project¹ also know which skills, knowledge and best practice are necessary for setting up and running new groups and organisations successfully. LGBT communities simply don't have the cash, infra-structure, or resources such as time or skills to benefit from appropriate training without extra funding².

A training needs assessment report should be submitted to the Group with recommendations and costs to achieve the agreed bench-mark of minimum necessary knowledge and skills to successfully run the Group. Sussex Police funds all the full costs of all the assessments and training needs identified.

4. Discussion

Without any minimum agreed training and funding, the group is destined to be seriously compromised – it will not be able to do, or understand, what meaningful business is or means, or be able to monitor it's own progress or effectiveness, or know how out of touch it may be, finally the Group will cause great damage to people, organisations and relationships – these are some of the lessons learnt by analysing the history of the LGBT Safety Forum. Sussex Police must agree to fund training of the new group as a minimum success criteria. This will of course involve extra cash being given to LGBT people to spend on *their* LGBT community development in *addition* to Spectrum's existing limited funding and capacity.

Would-be LGBT representatives attending Group meetings are forming relationships with Police staff who already have a very high degree of training with an intact history which is reflected in their strong culture. LGBT people on the other hand are highly divergent with many diverse disconnected identities, cultures and sub themes – this seems a threatening disobedient disarray to a hierarchical mono-culture. Adequate training and organisation are essential for successful co-operation with Statutory Agencies.

- The word “*consult*” is reserved to describe relationships between the various different statutory agencies addressed by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. See the full text here: (<http://www.hmso.gov.uk/acts/acts1998/19980037.htm>)
- The word “*co-operate*” is reserved to describe relationships between these different statutory agencies and certain other well defined groups of people who are listed as “*homosexuals*” in Statutory Instruments. 1998 No. 2452. See: (<http://www.hmso.gov.uk/si/si1998/19982452.htm>)
- This mean that the statutory authorities have a duty to: “**Co-operate with Homosexuals**”.
- However, thankfully, all LGBT people have been included in Brighton and Hove's Community Safety and crime Reduction Strategy 2002-05, (the LGBT chapter was written by the ex-Safety Forum's ex-Co-ordinator). The Strategy is a template from which the Group can obtain some guidance. See the full text here: (<http://www.safeinthecity.net/strategy/homophobic.html>)

¹ Working Together Project, see:- (<http://www.scip.org.uk/workingtogether/index.asp>)

² Count-me-in, see:- (http://www.spectrum-lgbt.org/countmein/strategy_executive_summary.htm)