

Bevan House  
1 Esh Plaza  
Sir Bobby Robson Way  
Great Park  
Newcastle upon Tyne  
NE13 9BA

1 November 2010

Ms Johanne Mears  
North Tyneside LINK  
The Shiremoor Centre  
Earsdon Road  
Shiremoor  
North Tyneside  
NE27 0HJ

Tel: 0191 217 2758  
Fax: 0191 217 2701

Dear Johanne

Thank you for sending us the report 'Coming Out, Coming Together'. You kindly included our earlier comments in the report. We would like to make the following additional comments in relation to the recommendations.

- **To actively promote lesbian and gay inequalities in the borough**

We currently promote any health related activity through our communications and engagement with the community and voluntary sector networks in the borough, as and when they become available. If there are specific events targeting these communities we would always try to promote them. We will continue to work with our statutory partners to reduce health inequalities.

- **Create a space to be lesbian or gay**

As referred to in the full report, this recommendation is for North Tyneside Council.

- **To inform and affirm: creating identity within the borough**

We are happy to distribute any information as appropriate, such as a leaflet, to health service partners which promotes how LGB communities can access specific health services and gain advice on health issues. It should be remembered (as you have also highlighted in your report), that leaflets and other materials do have to compete with limited space in a range of venues, such as GP surgeries. GPs (and dentists) are independent providers of care and ultimately have a choice about what they display in their own waiting areas although we know that they are generally keen to help disseminate information which may be of benefit to their patients.

- **Involve LGB support organisations in delivering training**

Further to our comments regarding MESMAC and their LGB staff network, we would expect to continue this approach, dependent upon availability of funding and need to train groups of staff in specific LGB issues.

- **Include a specialist counselling service with current service provision**

The current programme for improving access to psychological therapies (IAPT) is completely inclusive in its approach and provides services for people with mild to severe depression. As commissioners, we have a duty to make sure IAPT services are available and appropriate to everyone in the local community. We have passed this report to the lead commissioner for mental health, who will ensure that services are aware of the need to take account of the needs of the LGB community.

- **Explore and develop ways to make room for older lesbian and gay people**

Your report mentions tailoring council services for older people (residential care and home care) to meet the needs of older lesbian and gay people). These are council services - people who receive specific health funding, for example as part of the continuing health care funding have the individual health needs specifically assessed. Continuing health assessment team (teams of nurses who carry out the assessment) would take account of individual needs when doing their assessment.

- **To make funding available for a community worker appointed for LGB issues in North Tyneside**
- **Develop a local support service for young lesbian and gay people and their parents**

In the light of the above, and as a general response to all the recommendations made in the report, we have passed the report to the North Tyneside Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) Steering Group to consider its inclusion in the refresh of the JSNA. The JSNA is a strategic document which highlights the health and wellbeing needs of people in the borough and would be part of the process for assessing whether, should funds become available, these could be supported.

We have also copied the report to the equality and diversity sub committee of the joint board for their information when considering commissioning in North Tyneside.

Yours sincerely



**Rachel Chapman**  
**Director of public engagement and communications**