

lesbian
gay
bisexual
trans
history
month

LGBT HISTORY MONTH TOOL KIT



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LGBT HISTORY MONTH

TOOL KIT

February 2009

Education, Collaboration, Celebration

LGBT History Month 2009 is a national festival that gives everyone an opportunity to experience and participate in a wide range of related events that contribute to a safer and cohesive society. We are supporting a festival that celebrates diversity and promotes justice, equality and respect.

This tool kit will give you tips on how to host an event and will help you join in with a ground-breaking national event wherever you live.

Welcome! And thank you for taking part in LGBT History Month February 2009. This is your chance to ensure that LGBT young people and LGBT Communities are safer and more involved.

Let your creative side flourish!

For more information or to contact us or go to:

www.lgbthistorymonth.org.uk

Introduction to LGBT History Month

LGBT History Month is every February. 2009's theme is Education, Collaboration and Celebration.

Why has LGBT History Month Happened?

LGBT people have often hidden themselves in society for their own safety; their achievements and contributions have regularly been ignored by others. LGBT History Month is about changing this. LGBT History month will promote the achievements of LGBT people and respect the importance of all our recorded histories, such as archives, written and oral accounts, so that LGBT people will have a place to leave their memorabilia and personal experiences for posterity.

*Education, Collaboration,
Celebration*

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Why do we need to do this?

Secret longings, hidden lives! For years this was the fate of LGBT people who were forced into hiding. It was easy to stereotype and distort the reality of LGBT lives. As lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans people we have existed in all times and all places. The history books have made us invisible and this has promoted ignorance and prejudice, which results in homophobic and transphobic bullying and harmful discrimination. LGBT History Month is an opportunity for all of us to learn more about the histories of LGBT people in our area and gives organisations or groups a chance to replace ignorance with knowledge and understanding.

LGBT History Month

The Month gives all of us a chance to be involved in celebrating the heritage of LGBT people and communities across the nation. LGBT History Month promotes respect and understanding, justice, equality, an end to discrimination and contributes to a more cohesive community.

Key Objective for LGBT History Month 2009

(a) Empowering communities to interact with each other and develop positive, sustainable links in partnership with organisations and public agencies.

(b) Providing education and encouragement for young people to participate fully in the creation and maintenance of healthy, respectful relationships.

(c) Using LGBT History Month as an opportunity to address and/or raise awareness of local, regional priorities, needs and concerns.

(d) Recognising the importance of inter-relationships between all 7 strands of equality to continue the dialogue between these and other communities so we might tackle ignorance prejudice and conflict.

The LGBT History Month pre-launch was held at Hackney Free and Parochial Church of England School, London this year. Education minister **Baroness Morgan of Drefelyn** spoke.

For details, go to <http://lgbthmuk.blogspot.com/2008/11/lgbt-history-month-pre-launch.html>

LGBT History Month brief History

LGBT History month was created by Sue Sanders and the late Paul Patrick from Schools OUT; Britain's first LGBT organisation for LGBT people in education. It is now the biggest LGBT event in the UK and is five years old. LGBT History Month has given us all the chance to raise awareness of LGBT people, young, old, black, white in rural areas and urban, from every faith and culture across England, Wales and Scotland.

Steps in planning your event

Find out about your local or national LGBT history: how we lived, how we live now and how we see the future. You can find information on the LGBT History Month website www.lgbthistorymonth.org.uk

Decide on the following:

What type of event do you want to have?

You can choose to do anything you feel has meaning to you, at the same time encourages or attracts participation from the wider community. It can entertain, inform or both. The decision to run an event is based on the effectiveness of the event in meeting the aims of LGBT History month and the needs of your communities.

Your creative side can be fantastic.

Suggestions

- ❖ Poetry events or story telling in libraries, schools and colleges
- ❖ A quiz, concert/disco or dance in a gay venue
- ❖ A Festival of diverse histories
- ❖ A sports event
- ❖ LGBT History Month assemblies/lessons in schools or discussions in class
- ❖ Community safety awareness events
- ❖ A film evening
- ❖ A Polari night
- ❖ A talk or debate

You maybe get some ideas from previous events listed on the LGBT history month website www.lgbthistorymonth.org.uk

When should the event be held?

LGBT History Month runs throughout February so you have 28 days clear and 29 on each leap year! Go to and promote other events in your area as well as organising your own. Check out the events page on LGBT History Month web site.

February includes Valentines Day if you have a romantic event in mind.

It also includes a half-term holiday if you are planning school events. The good thing for schools is that it is too cold for trips out and there are no exams to prepare for; so it's an ideal time for cross-curricular approaches to lessons promoting LGBT equal opportunities and human rights.

What will the measure of success be?

Bums on seats ultimately but you need to think about what you want to achieve and where your audience is coming from.

A gay bar is not the ideal location for an event where people need to talk.

Many LGBT people are disabled. Make sure your choice of venue is accessible.

Can people reach it by public transport?

Are you educating, informing or entertaining? Do you hope to do all 3?

Is your event for the whole LGBT community? If it isn't, could it be?

If there is food and drink, have you asked people about their dietary needs?

If you have a guest speaker, have you heard them before and do you know what they are likely to say?

What process would help to ensure a successful event?

- A funding and financial planning/monitoring
- B deciding whether to go it alone or in partnership
- C setting up a steering group/committee/working group
- D timeline and schedule
- E running a successful publicity campaign
- F RUNNING AN EVENT

Plan and make sure everybody knows about it well in advance.

Funding and financial monitoring

Funding can be sought for events to celebrate LGBT History Month. Plan your costs and think about how to raise the money in advance. Think about the venue: hiring a village hall for a presentation, discussion/debate, for example, will cost less than hiring the Council Chambers for a more formal conference.

If you would like to run a large event it is good practice to have a **lead body** responsible for carrying out the work and spending the funds and an **accountable body** responsible for obtaining funding with a robust budget reporting systems in place. They will be responsible for dealing with funders and monitoring. In some cases the **lead body** and the **accountable body** can be the same organisations. Work with others and do find someone who asks difficult questions.

You can approach many funders because the objectives of LGBT History Month are shared by many public agencies, charities and trusts. These include improving safety in local neighbourhoods, encouraging respect in the community, reducing hate crime and increasing hate crime reporting. It could also be, working with young people to increase their understanding, knowledge and acceptance of diversity and tackling homophobic and transphobic hate crime in schools, colleges and youth clubs. Remember: homophobic and transphobic hate crime is illegal and LGBT people are legally entitled to equality of opportunity at work and in the provision of goods and services. Most public and private organisations are

keen to meet their obligations but they may be looking for advice and support from you. Make a noise because you are a help; not a hindrance.

Funders you can approach are:

Your local Police force or Fire Authority;
The local council via the community safety team, equality team or the voluntary sector team;
Local grant making organisations;
Local businesses;
Trades Unions.

Setting up or running a steering group

LGBT History Month is practical grassroots response to promoting our communities. Ideally, ideas and events arising from the local level should take shape in partnership with statutory and/or community partners. Try to adopt the following key principles

- A partnership approach to events;
- An understanding of the key issues linked to LGBT History Month;
- Identification of the target audience and tailoring activities to suit.

A steering group enables a multi-agency approach to LGBT History Month because it can 'steer' events and gather expertise while ensuring a coordinated approach to the publicity, funding and delivery of events.

You may not wish to do any of this but it is always worth knowing!

Structure of the steering Group

Make sure key partner organisations sitting on a steering group offer a broad overview of LGBT History Month and projects/events. Set up smaller sub-groups with relevant members to work on specific tasks. These sub-groups can be dissolved once the assigned task is over. Alternatively named groups can lead on these areas then report back to the steering group.

Publicity and communication sub group

This group will publicise your event by targeted letters and communication or through wide publicity campaigns. Don't forget to let LGBT groups know what is going on. You can publish

your events on the **LGBT History Month Calendar**
http://www.lgbthistorymonth.org.uk/calendar/Events_Calendar.php Never assume people know about your event and tell them at least 3 times and in 3 different ways: letters; posters; fliers; emails, and, above all; telephone calls.

You can use our logo on your promotional materials.

Event sub group

This group will plan the proposed events for LGBT History Month. It will be responsible for venue arrangements, catering, technical, transport requirements etc. as relevant to the planned event.

Finances sub group

This group will identify sources of funding and manage the budgets.

Timeline and Schedule

A timeline and associated schedule is a sign of good planning. Breaking the many tasks down to manageable bite sized bits and putting them into a timeline can be useful, ensuring that deadlines are met and problems avoided.

If you are working in partnership with others this will make it clear which jobs/activities you all have to do and when it's important for them to be done. It's worth agreeing on allowing some time for unexpected problems.

Running a successful publicity campaign

Publicity for the month serves three key purposes:

1. To recruit volunteers to get involved in LGBT History Month. Volunteers are invaluable and play an important role in successful events.
2. To publicise the various events occurring during LGBT History Month 2009
3. To raise community awareness of hate crime reporting, LGBT groups and helplines.

LGBT History Month website www.lgbthistorymonth.org.uk will publish events nationally. LGBT History Month produces a monthly bulletin which goes out across UK. Just go to www.lgbthistorymonth.org.uk and join the mailing list.

Partner web sites are great places to advertise, so if your local council is supporting your event, ensure they list your event on their web pages. Every local council is aware of LGBT issues and many have a steering group. Some have an LGBT History Month planning group too.

LGBT History Month publicity campaigns might also include;

Local community/ parish newsletters, which are vital for rural areas, where local newsletters will go through people's doors and reach those who may not otherwise hear about events, groups or helplines.

Local papers often have a 'what's on' page, if you cannot get an article.

Local libraries have notice boards and community news books so go with several copies of your publicity material.

Distribution of flyers, posters, invitations, letters etc. and word of mouth

Promotional items such as sweets, balloons, badges, bookmarks etc.

Local TV and radio might be keen to report on or cover the event

All of this will depend on how many people you would like at your event. The higher the number, the more advertising is needed and in more and varied places.

On the Day of your LGBT History Event

Put yourself in the position of the audience and think about what they should expect. Have a plan for inevitable problems, big or small, that will be sure to come up. Be prepared for problems you didn't expect. Volunteers can make dealing with hiccups so much easier.

If you are using a hired venue, ensure you know where all the exits, toilets and disabled access is and pass this information on to your volunteers and attendees. Ensure that everybody knows what to do in case of emergency.

Set up signs, flags, information tables, tea urn, music systems etc.

If you are running a conference or large event you may wish to register participants as they come in.

Ensure you have an evaluation method, either written or noted evaluation, so that this can be fed back to funders as well as LGBT History Month.

A reception afterwards to thank volunteers is always a great way to treat all those who have put in their time and hard work.

Post event tasks

Send out thank you letters or cards to volunteers. They don't take much but they go a long way.

Evaluation

This will involve looking at your written or noted evaluation records. Was one part of the month better than other parts? Was there enough participation? Was there enough engagement? Were venues good? Was the content pitched right? How did your finances and schedule work? All this is important and best considered right after the event so that mistakes can be remedied and excellent events planned again for next year. If suitable, prepare an evaluation form in advance. Have a de-brief afterwards and share the good things.

Write an email to info@lgbthistorymonth.org.uk telling us what you did and how it went. We'll flag it up and use it in our report so that other people know what works well. It's no good keeping good practice to yourself, so pass it on.

Summary

Remember that LGBT History Month can offer;

Advice, information and publicity, on the calendar, on websites and in bulletins.

Information about groups currently meeting in your area.

Offer presentations, exhibitions and training to organisations

Provide branding for LGBT History Month

Link your activity with other local and national events

Provide links with statutory bodies and community groups

There are lots of events listed on LGBT History Month Website. Each event has its own importance, however large or small.

Poetry nights

book reading

fancy dress club nights

Exhibitions and timelines in

- museums
- libraries
- records office
- universities
- community centres

Talks and discussions with LGBT youth groups.

Collecting oral history.

A schools toolkit is available for schools to enable them to take part in LGBT History Month 2009. <http://www.lgbthistorymonth.org.uk/schools/main.htm>

We hope that these examples show the diversity of opportunities and ideas available to you.

LGBT History Month is a success because of people like you with enough energy to create something special. LGBT History Month is rapidly growing now in its 5th year it is bigger and better which reflects the aspirations of all people across England, Northern Ireland and Wales. Scotland has its own LGBT History Month and it enjoys the support of the National Assembly at Holyrood.

Wishing you all the best!

We now invite you to tell us what you are doing for LGBT History Month 2009.

www.lgbthistorymonth.org.uk

Patrons: **Sarah Weir**, Executive Director of Arts Council England, **Cyril Nri**, actor, director and writer, **Sir Ian McKellen**, actor, **Labi Siffre**, poet, songwriter and singer.