



Looking back and moving forward

ABC, our relationship and sexual health programme designed to support people with learning difficulties, is now well into its second year! We had an extremely successful first year with many participants, parents and carers telling us what a difference the programme has made. The number of people we

worked with far exceeded our expectations, which is fantastic, and we continue to receive referrals on a regular basis. We are very pleased that a high proportion of referrals we receive come via recommendations from both parents and professionals who have used our service.

One of our most memorable moments from 2016 was the ABC event that took place in October; during the day and following the event we had lots of requests asking for another event to take place and, I'm very pleased to say, we have started to plan this to take place later this year.

In addition to ABC, we have also been busy delivering 'Understanding ABC' to parents, carers and professionals to help them feel more confident in talking about sex and relationships with the person they care for or work with. Participants have fed back that they have found the training to be informative and a good opportunity to talk about issues that are arising on a day to day basis and to get ideas on how best to support individuals.

If you would like more information about ABC or Understanding ABC, or you would like to make a booking, please get in touch. It would also be great to hear from you if you would like to join our ABC development group. We are always pleased to get feedback and ideas about any improvements we can make to our programmes.

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Young people's service – reviewed and renewed for 2017

The young people's team has recently expanded its understanding of SRE to include some new topics; as well as offering workshops on STIs and HIV, contraception, consent, pornography, healthy relationships, and internet safety, we also plan to offer workshops on body image and 'Am I normal?', which will examine healthy sexual development and how this links to healthy and positive relationships. On top of this, we hope to widen our reach by offering workshops in different formats and venues to spread the information in fun and innovative ways, including chill out sessions with blankets and fairy lights and through craftivism.

The team recently finished a 6-week pilot of our SLIP programme with the young offenders team. The programme is intended to target any young people whose wellbeing is being affected by missing out on, or not engaging with, SRE in school. Feedback was incredibly positive and we are currently reviewing and adding to the sessions before we begin to roll it out on a wider scale.

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Interact is a social and support group for men who have sex with men (MSM) – gay, bi, queer, however they choose to identify themselves. The group meets once a month, usually the second Thursday of the month, in the evening.

During the sessions, we talk about many things, including sharing experiences and providing support to each other. Past subjects covered have included 'coming out', hate crime, how to cope over the Christmas and New Year period, and sexual health. However, by far, the biggest subject we have covered is the gay scene in the Cambridge area; this has included talks from David, the coordinator of the Meet Up Cambridge LGBT+ group, about the meals, drinks and other social activities that they organise.

Before Christmas we went for a meal in the Burleigh Arms where we all spoke about what we would be doing over the festive period, how we felt about it and the ways that we could ensure that we looked after ourselves. The group are always asked what they would like to discuss during the sessions, or whether they would prefer to have a speaker organised, for example. Interact has its regular attendees, along with people who come along for just one or two sessions.



If you would like to join us, watch out for posts on our [website](#), [Facebook](#) and the [Meet Up website](#). If you would like to have a cuppa and a chat on a 1-1 basis, drop Graham a message and he'll be more than happy to arrange to meet.

'But I live in Huntingdon, where's my group?'

We are excited to announce that we are planning to launch a group in Huntingdon by this summer. We are still ironing out the details, but it is likely to be held on a Saturday, late morning—lunchtime; the exact time would depend on the venue – if you have ideas for a venue, all suggestions will be considered*.

*Within reason—we do have things particular requirements we must meet—the venue must be accessible to all, with having step free access and accessible toilets. Additionally, it should ideally have tea and coffee-making facilities, so that we can make hot drinks on cold days – or cold drinks on hot days!

If you are interested in joining the group once it gets going, but would like to meet up sooner rather than later, Graham would be more than happy to meet you before the ball gets rolling.

MSM outreach

"MSM outreach, what's that?"; good question!

I have been getting out and about on the Cambridge 'scene' for the last 6 months or so. As we know, Cambridge doesn't have a gay pub but does have many social groups (Meet Up, University of Cambridge LGBT Staff Association, and Addenbrookes LGBT staff group) and regular club nights, such as Dot Cotton. I have been attending some of these, where I have spoken with people, explaining the work of Dhiverse, answering questions and providing information and support.

When attending Dot Cotton, some months I have placed leaflets on tables promoting our work, and others... I have had lots of fun—how have I had fun?—I've taken plenty of condoms along and then asked my friends to 'micro volunteer' (they may describe it as being press ganged!) to take the condoms and give them to people. My 'volunteers' have then told people that the condoms are from Dhiverse, although I suspect some of them have also used them as chat-up lines for people they fancy – to quote from an age-old advert, 'Every little helps!'

If you are organising an event and would like Dhiverse to attend, or you would be interested in volunteering at a scheduled event, please get in touch.

⇒ [Graham Lewis, MSM Worker](#)
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Taking counselling in a new direction

Our counselling service is now available to anyone experiencing issues around sexual health, sexual identity, sexual relationships that are affecting their mental health, wellbeing and ability to move forward with their life, and risky behaviours, and the service will also continue to aid people living with and affected by HIV. Our counsellor is fully qualified and BACP registered, specialising in HIV, and sexual health counselling for:

- o MSM (men who have sex with men)
- o Young people 16+
- o LGBT
- o People with learning difficulties
- o People living with and affected by HIV

An HIV diagnosis can negatively affect our mental health and you may want to discuss and explore your thoughts, covering diagnosis, adherence to medication, relationships, work life and disclosure to others. Talking with a person trained to listen and support can help you to understand more about what you are experiencing and, in that way, give you the opportunity to identify the choices you have regarding how you want to live your life.

Our service offers sessions on a 1-1 basis, or for couples and family counselling. At present our sessions are free; however, we do welcome donations, especially from anyone in full time employment.

The counselling service can be accessed directly:

⇒ **Lisa Helm-Cowley**, *Counsellor*

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Early diagnosis campaign

Around 40% of HIV diagnoses in the UK are 'late' diagnoses – that is, after the best time to start treatment. Late diagnosis is one of the main reasons for hospitalisation and death from HIV related infections in the UK. There are excellent and effective treatments for HIV, but if we don't get tested, we won't know our status and, therefore, we won't get treatment at the optimum time – nor will we be in a position to make informed decisions about preventing onward HIV transmission.

DHIVERSE has been delivering campaigns promoting early diagnosis since 2014, but our next campaign is something rather special! Previous early diagnosis campaigns have been part of national campaigns such as National HIV Testing Week and Sexual Health Week – but this is our very own campaign addressing particular local health needs.

Cambridgeshire has a higher than average rate of late diagnosis, and within Cambridgeshire there are certain hotspots—Cambridge City, Hunts District and East Cambs. Our next campaign is going to focus specifically on Huntingdon; we will be carrying out health promotion events, insti-tests in community venues and training programmes/workshops. The campaign will be running from March 6th to April 3rd, so, if you are in or around Huntingdon, have a look at our website and see what we're up too.

Watch this space!

To request resources, or for more information on the campaign, please contact:

⇒ **Grant Chambers**, *Health Promotion Manager*

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The HIV support team would like to give a warm welcome to our new Peterborough support worker, Naisha, and congratulate Stuart on being promoted to HIV lead. HIV support is currently undergoing some big changes, which in due course will benefit all involved and improve the ever-growing service. The HIV team are continually trialling new and alternative approaches in their work, with the shared and ultimate goal of providing support for all who need it and to help end the still-ever-present stigma surrounding HIV. HIV support are increasing the number of support networks they have around the Cambridgeshire area and are always looking to add more to that list. To keep up-to-date with what's going on in the department, contact Stuart or visit the website, and the team hopes you will be seeing them around far more, very soon.

I was brought up in Colchester, Essex, and I have worked pretty much every day since I was 15. My background is health science and medicine, and I'm currently hoping to study for a degree in Psychology. Previously, I have managed one of the biggest retail companies in the UK (sorry, no spoilers!) and, yet, had you asked me 5 years ago where I thought I would be today—in Cambridge, engaged, and working for Diverse—I wouldn't have had the same answer; aged 23, I've already come across some massive hurdles in my life, but when taking a look at where I now stand, I couldn't have asked for anything more. I have always had a soft spot for support work, it is something I fell in love with a few years back; what else can give more satisfaction than knowing you have made someone else's life that little bit better, just by being yourself?

⇒ **Stuart Campbell**, *HIV Support Services Manager*

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I grew up in Tanzania, East Africa, and spent all of my childhood and school years there. After completing my undergraduate degree at the University of Exeter, I went travelling for 2 years—Australia, New Zealand, Indonesia, India, Argentina, Peru and Bolivia being just some of the places I visited, and I thoroughly enjoyed it! After funds began to run low, I returned to Tanzania where I began working for an organisation called Shanga, where I was Workshop Manager for over 2 years. We produced beautiful jewellery, tailored products, hand-woven items, recycled metal products and hand-blown glass items. I moved to Cambridge last year when my partner started his PhD at the University of Cambridge. To find a place to work, such as Diverse, has been perfect for me; I get to do what I love most, which is work with an organisation that is doing so much for people who need support. When I joined the team, it was a great time to start as I was thrown straight into the thick of it all. I was able to learn a lot about the work of each department and had the opportunity to meet so many amazing people that have been involved in Diverse, both past and present.

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Diverse is the HIV and sexual health charity for Cambridgeshire. Our focus is to promote good sexual health and work to prevent the spread of sexually transmitted infections and HIV, we provide support for people living with and affected by HIV and AIDS and we work to challenge the stigma and prejudice which can affect people living with HIV. We work with young people on a number of Sex and Relationship Education topics, provide training for organisations around sexual health and HIV and work with members of the BAME community on topics such as sexual health, wellbeing, domestic violence and empowerment.

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