

**STRENGTHEN  
BROADEN  
ENABLE**

Our Strategic Plan: 2018 – 2020

**dhiverse**  
sexual health matters

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# INTRODUCTION

Established in 1986 (then Cambridge AIDS Helpline) we've spent the last 30+ years listening and responding to the changing needs of people living with HIV and the wider community who seek support, information, training and education around sexual health, sexuality, sexual identity, sex and relationships, sexual trauma and keeping safe. In 2017, our 30<sup>th</sup> year, we reviewed our mission to ensure that it reflects how we have responded to these changing needs and the work we are doing today. In 2018 we are a well-respected sexual health charity serving Cambridgeshire, Peterborough and areas of bordering counties.

We are pleased that over the last three years, despite significant funding cuts for sexual health services, there have been some positive developments, which include:

- In March 2017 the Government committed to ensuring that by September 2019 SRE is delivered in all secondary schools in England
- Nationally and locally, there has been a reduction in unintended teenage pregnancy
- Nationally there has been no major overall increase in STI rates
- A steady decline in new HIV diagnoses in the UK. In 2005 there were around 8,500 new diagnoses and by 2016 the figure had dropped to around 6000 (this is mostly attributed to higher levels of testing and more people commencing anti-retroviral therapy (ART) at diagnosis). In addition to this, new prevention technologies such as Pre-exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP is a prescription drug taken as a means of preventing HIV infection in an HIV-negative person) are also expected to have a major impact on reducing HIV transmission.
- In August 2017 NHS England announced that from September 2017 PrEP will be provided to a limited number of participants by the NHS through an initial three year trial.

Although these are all welcome turning points in sexual health and HIV in the UK, we recognise that there is still some way to go before:

- a) everyone has equal access to education, support and guidance around sex, sexual identity, relationships and consent fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> century
- b) we see the end of HIV transmissions and the end of stigma and prejudice towards HIV and sexual identity
- c) we see sex and sexual health normalised – no longer an embarrassment or a taboo

Through listening to anyone who participates in and has an interest in our services and our work, we have agreed that whilst continuing to use our three pronged approach of *Prevention, Support, Action* we will refine our objectives and focus our work to enable us to have maximum impact on the areas of need defined above. We will do this through **strengthening** our existing work, **broadening** our reach and ensuring that we have everything in place to **enable** us to achieve this.

This plan aims to formalize our organizational 'to do' list for 2018-2020 in a straightforward and hopefully easy to understand way, so that anyone who participates in and has an interest in our services has a clear understanding of what we plan to do in the next three years.



Sharron Spindler, CEO

# OUR MISSION AND VALUES

## Our Values

**Empowerment:** We do not tell people what to do but support them in the choices they make. It is important that we give people the range of choices and options available to them so they can make their own informed decisions. This ensures that they receive the best possible treatment, support and care in order to maximize their health and wellbeing.

**Confidentiality:** Maintaining service user confidentiality is a core value of DHIVERSE. It is our responsibility to ensure service user information is held securely and not disclosed without written permission, unless the service user is at risk or is a risk to someone else. We understand unequivocally the need for confidentiality and in some exceptional cases anonymity.

**Respect:** We respect that not everyone wants to be supported or given information in the same way. We treat every person as the individual they are. We support, respect and value each other, work without prejudice, inequality or judgement and we promote diversity. We are professional and united in our vision and aims.

**Quality:** We aim to provide the highest quality of service possible. Our service users are the focus of what we do and we want to provide a good and positive experience for all. Our staff are fully trained in all aspects of their work and receive regular supervision and support to ensure they have the most up to date skills, knowledge and experience to deliver the services we provide.

We seek and welcome all feedback from anyone involved with us. This feedback helps inform and shape improvements and developments within our provision.

**Fun:** We embrace individuality, encourage creativity and create opportunities for voluntary sector work to be exciting and meaningful. Engaging our team, our service users and the people we work with in activities that strengthen positive relationships is important to us. We maintain a healthy perspective on work/life balance and inject fun, spontaneity and humour into our working day.

**Flexibility:** Being progressive, innovative, using new technology and always learning and adapting, is what we aim for.

## Our Mission:

To provide high quality sexual health and HIV support, education and information for all. We are inclusive, caring, non-judgmental and committed to upholding our organization's values. Through service user involvement, campaigns and collaboration we challenge stigma, prejudice and inequalities.

*I have worked with staff from the ABC team (Diverse) over the past 2 years that I have worked at Papworth Trust's OWL Centre in Sawston. During that time, they have: lead group sessions regarding relationships and social media awareness, supported our service users with 1:1 support on anger management and relationship management, as well as providing our service users with the annual ABC conference. Our service users have greatly appreciated the support and guidance that the kind and empathetic Diverse staff have given them. My staff appreciate the knowledge and professionalism that the Diverse team has been able to give to our centre.*

# OUR STRATEGIC AIMS

**We aim to fulfil our mission through:**

**Support:** To provide support, information and signposting to people living with and affected by HIV; To provide support, information and signposting in relation to anything linked to sexual health, to anyone in need.

**Prevention:** To prevent increases in HIV Infection, the spread of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and unintended teenage pregnancies, through training, education and consciousness-raising.

**Action:** To campaign and lobby to affect change for people living with and affected by HIV; To promote equality in sexual health by challenging sexism, homophobia and transphobia.

## HOW ARE WE DOING?

It's important to us that we are always working to the best of our ability to meet both our strategic aims and the everyday needs of people using our services. We are committed to acting on the feedback we receive to improve our services and our approach where ever possible.

In January 2018 we undertook an online survey (with other formats available) to find out what people who participate in and have an interest in our services thought we did well, thought we could do better and would like to see us do that we haven't done before.

In summary:

- 86% of respondents described their interaction/s with Dhiverse as 'Good to Excellent (65% excellent).
- An overwhelming 96% of respondents said that Dhiverse staff are '*Professional, Friendly, Caring, Polite, Knowledgeable and Willing to go the extra mile.*
- 'What do we do best as an organization?' *Educate young people; Educate and inform vulnerable people; Support people with HIV; Discourage stigma and prejudice Work in an all-inclusive and non-judgmental way; Promote respectful attitudes towards sex and sexuality; Make sex and sexual health easy to talk about; Listen*
- 'What could we do better?' *Promote your services better and more widely; Employ more staff so you can work with more people; More peer support and groups*
- What would you like to see us offer in the future that we don't offer now? *Reinstate the counselling service; Offer counselling to everyone; More of what you're already doing!*

# WHY OUR WORK IS IMPORTANT

- Sexual health, like physical, mental and emotional health, is one important dimension of overall health and social wellbeing. Being sexually healthy is more than being free of sexually transmitted infections. Being sexually healthy is also about sexual rights, sexual relationships and communication around sex, the ability to enjoy sexual pleasure alone or with a partner, respecting all sexual genders and sexual orientations and sexual identity. Many people are unaware of this or of how important it is to keep sexually healthy.
- Poor sexual health is much more common amongst people who already experience inequalities associated with their age, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, mental health, disability or economic status. Poor sexual health also affects a significant number of people who have other public health needs, in particular those relating to alcohol and drug misuse, and violence.
- Not having the opportunities to find out about or have support with sex, relationships, sexuality and how to keep safe can often lead to misunderstandings, risky behaviour and stress.
- Today, more than ever before, we have easier access to almost everything through the use of the Internet and Social Media which can open up a world of opportunities and be a great way to learn, create and have fun.
- However, if we're not able to make informed choices and decisions when we're online we risk accessing misinformation; accessing and sending inappropriate content and we risk communicating with people who might not be who they say they are or who might have negative reasons for being online.
- Although there is a steady decline in new HIV diagnoses in the UK, there are still around 6000 new diagnoses each year and around 110,000 people living with HIV in the UK. Although HIV is now seen as a long-term, manageable condition and not a death sentence for the majority of those with the infection, other long term manageable conditions do not have the level of stigma and prejudice still associated with HIV. Many people need emotional or psychological support to manage the stigma and the prejudice, even if it's a fear rather than a reality.
- With around 40% of HIV diagnoses categorised as late diagnosis (Public Health England October 2017) late diagnosis is still a significant problem. People diagnosed late i.e. after the best possible time to start treatment have a 1 in 10 chance of dying within the first year. There is still work to be done in raising awareness of the importance of early testing.
- Over one third of people living with HIV in the UK are over 50, and this proportion continues to rise. The proportion of older people being diagnosed with HIV is increasing – more people age 50+ are now diagnosed with HIV than people under 25. (Unchartered Territory Jan 2017 – a report by the Terrence Higgins Trust into the first generation growing older with HIV). The ongoing need for support for older people living with HIV will continue,

# OUR APPROACH

Our approach is holistic and person centred; we support the person, not just the issue. For many people, the presenting issue is often the tip of the iceberg and they find that while talking to us they are able to open up about other things. For example:

A young person participating in a sex and relationship education workshop in school might disclose that their boyfriend or girlfriend wants to have sex without a condom; that they are being coerced into taking naked photos of themselves and posting them online or that they are at risk of child sexual exploitation (CSE).

A person participating in a group might tell us that they feel lonely and isolated.

*Dhiverse has been in to my school regularly and delivered workshops on a variety of SRE topics. These are relevant, age appropriate and well resourced. Students find them engaging and learn lots from the materials. It is great to work with a team that understand the needs of young people and also the needs of PSHE curriculum delivery at a secondary school.*

Becky, Head of PSE Cambridge Secondary School

*I liked your session because you seemed to enjoy what you were talking about and because you were closer to my age and you were perkier than other nurses that came in to talk to us I felt more comfortable asking you questions.* Student – Age 16

A person with a learning difficulty might want to talk to us about how to say 'no', or about being abused.

*Having recently being diagnosed with HIV, I was put in touch with Dhiverse by my nurse at Addenbrookes. Over the past 3 months since meeting my support worker, my health has improved, as well as my mental and physical strength. My weekly meetings are what keep me going and always make feel I am not going through this on my own.*

*"I've learnt to say no if I don't want people to touch me."  
"It has helped me to learn a lot. I know how to have safe sex"  
"I was embarrassed to talk about this subject but now I'm more confident"*

ABC Participants

A person taking a HIV test with us might tell us that they are at risk of domestic or sexual abuse.

A person having a HIV support session might disclose that they have had suicidal thoughts.

*The environment at the INTERACT groups allows discussion around sexual health developments and what's happening local and nationally. Not everyone is clued about what's going on so it's a good opportunity to share news. It's also a good opportunity to meet people with shared experiences.*

*Outstanding training –very detailed but accessible and left no grey areas – possibly the best I have ever had.*

Participant in Communication Skills training

A person participating in one of our training courses might tell us that they now feel confident to go for a sexual health checkup.



# THE CHALLENGES

- From September 2019 it will be a government requirement that all secondary schools in England teach sex and relationships and education (SRE) and that all primary school children are taught about healthy relationships. However, questions around what funding will be available for teachers and resources needed to deliver SRE in classrooms and if/how LGBTQ and learning disability inclusive SRE will be built into the curriculum, have yet to be answered.
- The fact that HIV is now seen as a long term manageable condition means that it's no longer the major public health concern it once was. This means that the level of awareness raising has significantly reduced and there is generally less funding available.
- There is still stigma and embarrassment surrounding sex, sexual health and sexual identity.
- There are few long term conditions that have the same level of stigma and prejudice associated with them as HIV. So, while people living with HIV are able to have a physically healthy life, the stigma and prejudice that still surrounds HIV can often affect their emotional and psychological health. This in turn can affect other areas of their life, including their work, social life and relationships. Many people living with HIV, whether newly diagnosed or having lived with the infection for some time, still need support and they prefer to receive that support from an organisation that fully understands their situation; they do not want to have to upskill every professional they see. We want to see more funding for emotional and psychological support for people living with HIV.
- April 2019 will see an end to the ring-fencing of local authority public health budgets in England, which is likely to result in unprecedented pressures on services. We hope that this is not used as a simple cost saving exercise to replace frontline services. There is still a need for support for people living with HIV and the need for support for older people living with HIV will increase in the face of diminishing health and social care funds and resources and people with HIV living a normal lifespan. HIV remains a complex health condition and we must ensure that people have the information and support they need, wherever they are.
- With the ongoing development of both the Internet and Social Media and growth in users there will be a continued need to raise awareness about how we can limit the risks to our personal safety, mental health and wellbeing.
- The NHS England PrEP trial, will last for at least another two years. It is important that in 2018 those people who could benefit from PrEP have the opportunity to take part in the trial, including women and the trans community. At present we don't know what will happen when all the places on the trial are filled or what will happen when the trial ends. We want to see PrEP routinely available on the NHS. NHS England still has a number of key questions to answer.
- Due the rurality of Cambridgeshire and the fact that public and community transport services have been, and continue to be cut, accessing services for those in the most rural parts of the county can be a huge challenge and often impossible. Therefore, to ensure that those in need have the support they need we often have to take our services to the service user. Given that our county wide services have had a 30% cut in funding, the need for Diverse staff to travel around the county more frequently is eating into our already limited budget.



# OUR 'TO DO LIST' 2018 – 2020

Our overall aim is to strengthen and broaden our charitable objectives to support:

- a) access for all to education, support and guidance around sexual health, sex, sexual rights, sexual identity, and relationships, fit for the 21st century
- b) the end of both HIV transmissions and the stigma and prejudice towards and HIV
- c) the normalisation of sex and sexual health so that they are no longer seen as an embarrassment or a taboo

| STRENGTHEN                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                       |         |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| Objective                                                                                                                                                                                           | How?                                                                                                                  | By?     |
| Further strengthen our sexual health workshops and sessions for young people, to ensure that they fully reflect what young people need and are always relevant, interactive and creative.           | Continual review and evaluation with more input from young people                                                     | Ongoing |
| Improve the way we raise awareness of the importance of prompt testing for HIV and the way we campaign against stigma and prejudice, so that our messages are always relevant and reach more people | Through better planning and resources and working in collaboration with service users and relevant providers          | Ongoing |
| Review and evaluate our current training programme to ensure that our trainings fully reflect our organizational aims and objectives and meet the needs of the communities we work with.            | Through a needs assessments and staff training.                                                                       | 2018    |
| Secure future funding for the ABC programme                                                                                                                                                         | Through application to the Big Lottery                                                                                | 2018    |
| Ensure that our HIV support service reflects the changing needs of people living with HIV in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough                                                                        | Through a survey and focus groups with HIV+ people, clinicians and other providers. Relevant reports from the sector. | 2018    |
| Be prepared to respond to the implementation of the government's requirement for SRE to be compulsory in all secondary schools and for healthy relationships to be taught in primary schools        | Young people's conference. Working in collaboration with local schools, PSHE teams and Public Health                  | 2019    |

| <b>BROADEN</b>                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                       |            |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <b>Objective</b>                                                                                                                                                       | <b>How?</b>                                                                                                           | <b>By?</b> |
| To provide a counselling service that is open to anyone using our services.                                                                                            | Secure funding for minimum of 3 years                                                                                 | 2018       |
| Assess the sexual health support needs of people with physical and/or sensory impairment                                                                               | Carry out a needs assessment                                                                                          | 2018       |
| Investigate the need for 'consent' workshops in the work place                                                                                                         | Survey 100 organisations across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough                                                       | 2018       |
| Assess the sexual health support needs of sex workers                                                                                                                  | Carry out a needs assessment                                                                                          | 2018       |
| To develop sexual health information for people 45+ in line with our 2017 survey                                                                                       | We will involve people 45+ in the development of information                                                          | 2018       |
| To help parents and guardians to understand the SRE taught to their children.<br>To support parents in communicating with their children around sex and relationships. | Run 'SRE for parents' workshops<br>Develop a programme of support in line with new SRE curriculum                     | 2018/19    |
| To provide support, education and awareness raising around PrEP                                                                                                        | Staff training; events and working in collaboration with the Cambridgeshire PrEP trial team                           | 2018/19    |
| If there is evidence of need to support people with physical and sensory impairments we will develop a programme of work                                               | We will work with people with physical and sensory impairments to develop a programme and apply for funding.          | 2019       |
| If there is evidence of need to support sex workers we will develop a programme of work                                                                                | We will work with sex workers to develop a programme and apply for funding.                                           | 2019       |
| To provide programme for young offenders, any young person who, for whatever reason, could not engage with SRE in school and looked after children.                    | Secure funding for a minimum of 3 years                                                                               | 2019       |
| To support older people living with HIV                                                                                                                                | Working in collaboration with older people; older people's services, care and residential home                        | 2019       |
| To obtain accreditation for our key training courses                                                                                                                   | Review and evaluate current trainings and develop new trainings to reflect our findings through all areas of our work | 2020       |

## ENABLE

To help us achieve this plan, our strategic enablers will be to:

- improve our research information/data collection
- increase our unrestricted income
- improve staff incentives as agreed with the board and staff team
- ensure our IT equipment is fit for purpose
- strive to achieve full cost recovery on all projects
- improve our marketing and communication (internal and external)
- find new and innovative ways to engage with our service users in the ongoing review and development of our work
- strengthen and grow relationships with other relevant organisations and services so that we can support each other in meeting our aims and objectives



# TRUSTEES AND PATRONS

Our trustees are responsible for the governance of Dhiverse, helping to set our strategy and helping to achieve our objectives.

## Our board of trustees as at March 2018:

Robert Turner (Chair)

Hannah Schober

Dr Susan Walker

Dr Andrew Carmichael

Professor Jeffery Grierson

Dr Renee West

## Message from the board:

As the board of trustees for Dhiverse we are responsible for setting the overall strategy and direction of the charity and for ensuring Dhiverse uses its resources effectively in order to realise our mission, our approach and our objectives. We are pleased with what the charity has achieved over the last 4 years and we are confident that we are well positioned to manage the challenges alongside some exciting new opportunities and developments in the coming years. Of course none of the really excellent work undertaken by the charity would have been possible without the dedication of numerous people. As a board we would like to express our particular gratitude to Sharron Spindler, CEO and the rest of the staff team and volunteers. Of course we would not be able to function without the support of our funders and donors, to whom we are extremely grateful. And yet most important of all, we would not exist without our service users who continue to inspire and challenge us to offer them the best possible support we can.

**Andy Bell, singer and songwriter and founding member of the band 'Erasure' has been our patron since 2015.**

## CONTACT US

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Our key funders:



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**LOTTERY FUNDED**

