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Kairos in Soho (KIS) is a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) voluntary and community organisation (VCO) in London.

KIS's vision is of a society in which LGBT people have every opportunity to achieve their potential and aspirations. This is a society in which the enormous contribution of diverse LGBT people in the social, cultural, political, and economic life is recognised and acknowledged openly and in which prejudice is consistently challenged.

One of the organisation's objectives is to engage in the development of policy, sector strategy and infrastructure so that the LGBT voluntary and community sector (VCS) is collectively more empowered and so that policy better serves the LGBT community

This report has been developed as part of the IN Project funded by London Councils to develop London's LGBT contribution to policy and change.



Borough **by** Borough

Analysis of Local Authority Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Equalities Policies and Equalities Initiatives



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**‘If we are to achieve
a richer culture, rich in
contrasting values,
we must recognise
the whole gamut of
human potentialities,
and so weave a less
arbitrary social fabric,
one in which each
diverse human gift will
find a fitting place’**

Margaret Mead | 1901-1978

1 - Introduction

This report is a summary of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT) equalities policies and information about LGBT initiatives found on the websites of the thirty three local authorities in London during the months of May and June 2009. It covers four key areas:

- The context within which LGBT equalities policies have been developed by local authorities since 2000. This section includes a summary of relevant legislation and the equalities frameworks which have driven and shaped the development of LGBT policies and practice
- The key LGBT equalities initiatives introduced by London local authorities
- A borough by borough breakdown of the information about LGBT equalities policies, and the services and information on the websites geared towards LGBT people.

LGBT voluntary and community organisations (VCOs) contribute to policy development locally, regionally and nationally. Despite the fact that the sector is small and poorly resourced it plays a significant role in influencing social policy. This is evidenced in the PiP Report: London's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Voluntary Sector Infrastructure Report (Kairos in Soho, 2007) which demonstrates that LGBT VCOs play an active role in policy development on a wide range of issues. The report also identifies the barriers experienced by these groups related to influencing the development of policy. These consist of internal capacity issues and external factors such as resistance by some local authorities to engagement with LGBT policy issues.

2 - Background

Building on the learning from research and interest in the role of LGBT VCOs in influencing public policy Kairos in Soho secured funding from London Councils to undertake policy work and campaign/lobby for the LGBT community. Having analysed the LGBT VCO experience it seemed useful to closely examine the experience they may have in attempting to engage with local authorities.

Local authority websites are often first points of contact for LGBT individuals, LGBT VCOs and other public sector organisations seeking information about services, policies and equalities issues. It is therefore important to clarify the nature and extent of LGBT information provided on local authority websites and to understand how LGBT issues are presented to the public.

Local authorities are key local policy makers and providers of services. There is an expectation that they engage and consult with the communities they serve in the development and delivery of services. It is important to understand what exists, to know what LGBT policies have been developed and to identify what, if any, services are provided by local authorities as a first step in developing LGBT equalities strategies.

This baseline information will form the basis of more detailed and intensive work aimed at improving the inclusion of LGBT equalities in local authority policies and practice.

This "Borough by Borough Analysis of Local Authority Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender Equalities Policies and Equalities Initiatives" represents a first step in this process. It maps the LGBT policies and initiatives undertaken by London's thirty three local authorities. In fact, there is a significant lack of information about LGBT issues on local authority websites and what is available cannot be easily found.

This process has highlighted the difficulties involved in assessing LGBT policies and confirms that LGBT equalities issues continue to exist on the margins of local authority policy making. In many instances they are difficult to find, the information is limited and sometimes out of date and there is little celebration of positive initiatives which have been undertaken.

3 - The Legal and Political Context

Equalities are integral to the roles and responsibilities of all public authorities including the police, health service and local authorities. The equalities policies and priorities developed by local authorities have been influenced by many factors. The raft of equalities legislation, European directives and equality standards introduced by the government have had a significant role in shaping the current equalities priorities and the actual equalities work carried out by local authorities.

In addition government agencies have produced a range of guides and frameworks to support local authorities in developing their equalities practice and in recent years equalities policies have been linked to and developed within a social cohesion framework which has affected the emphasis of these policies. Undoubtedly LGBT and other VCOs and communities have also to some extent influenced the changes introduced at local authority level.

3.1 Equalities Legislative Framework

Legislation has been a key driving force in determining the approaches taken by local authorities to LGBT issues. Section 28 (Local Government Act 1988) which significantly inhibited local authority involvement in the development of LGBT equality policies between 1988 and 2003, has without doubt left a legacy of uncertainty and insecurity.

The repeal of Section 28 in 2003 is said to have left a 'controversy over applicability'. Nevertheless, at a national level, during the last ten years there has been an array of new equalities legislation on race, gender, disability, age, religion and belief, and sexuality. All of this legislation is of relevance to the lives of LGBT people. The specific laws which focus solely on LGBT issue are mentioned below:

- The Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulation 1999 seeks to prevent sex discrimination in relation to gender reassignment.
- Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulation 2003 protects against discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation in employment, vocational training, promotion and working conditions.
- The Civil Partnership Act 2004 provides legal recognition and parity of treatment for same sex couples and married couples.
- The Gender Recognition Act 2004 gives transgender people full legal recognition in their acquired gender following from the issue of a full gender recognition certificate.
- The Equality Act 2006 introduces a positive duty on public sector bodies to promote equality of opportunity between women and men and to eliminate sex discrimination.
- The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulation 2007 prohibits discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation in the provision of goods, facilities and services in education and in the exercise of public functions.

Local authorities have implemented separate equalities schemes to promote Disability, Gender and Race Equality. Beginning in 2000 with the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, followed by the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and the Equalities Act 2006 local authorities have been required by law to produce Single Equality Schemes for disability, race and gender. These are three year plans which aim to make positive changes for local authority residents and employees in the areas of race, disability and gender equality. All schemes are accompanied by action plans which have to be undertaken within a given time period.

Under this same legislation local authorities are also required to carry out Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs) for disability, gender and race; examples of equality impact assessments for disability, gender and race can be found on some the local authority websites. The law regarding age, sexuality, and religion or belief discrimination is less comprehensive; this means that local authorities are not required to produce equality schemes for these equality strands. However, Lewisham, Islington and Tower Hamlets local authorities have exceeded their legal requirements by producing comprehensive Sexuality Equality Schemes. These were found on the websites of Islington and Lewisham while that of Tower Hamlets was not available on the website.

The new Single Equalities Bill (2009) proposes a general equality duty on public authorities. It will replace the existing duties related to race, gender and disability with a single duty covering race, sex, disability, gender reassignment, age, religion and belief and sexual orientation.

3.2 Equality Frameworks

The Equality Standard for Local Government was formulated in 2001 through a partnership of national equalities organisations. It is a framework used by local authorities to meet their duties under the equalities legislation. According to “The Equality Standard for Local Government 2007” it is “a means of addressing patterns of institutional discrimination that are embedded in the culture of local administration and governance”. It has been revised twice since it was first introduced; in 2006 it was extended to include the six equality strands, age, race, religion/belief, and sexual orientation; and in March 2009 the revised Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG) was introduced.

The purpose of EFLG is to support local authorities in meeting their duties under the equalities /anti discrimination legislation and to mainstream equalities into all aspects of their practice, the latter is a process which integrates equalities into all local authority functions. It provides management systems for improving performance on equalities.

The Equality Framework for Local Government is led by the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) which works with local authorities to develop good practice. This new equality framework (EFLG), like the one it replaces, also requires local authorities to carry out equality impact assessment (EqIAs) for all their services.

The EqIAs are designed to provide ways of identifying the disadvantages associated with race, gender, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation and age and to set targets to eliminate the barriers that create that disadvantage. This approach provides a management framework for equalities work, the uses of performance indicators means that equalities can be systematised across local authorities, the results can be measured and comparisons made between authorities.

This managerial approach to equalities does not necessarily take account of local need; it is driven by the requirements of the government’s equalities agenda. From the information accessed on the websites it is clear that local authorities meet their equality targets by supporting specific initiatives. These include carrying out basic needs assessments; running short term initiatives for LGBT History Month; actions to address Homophobic Crime; supporting LGBT Staff Forums; and consulting and collaborating with LGBT networks and forums. While these initiatives are positive, they can be limited as they tend not to integrate LGBT equalities into mainstream local authority services or change in any fundamental way institutional prejudice culture concerning gender and sexuality.

3.3 Equality, Diversity and Social Cohesion

There is a tendency by many public authorities to link the equalities, diversity and social cohesion agendas; this was evident on many of the local authority websites. The community cohesion agenda has had increased importance in public policy agendas since 2001 when it was introduced as a response to urban disturbances in some northern towns in the UK. Since then a number of social cohesion reports have been written and action plans devised to support local authorities in implementing community cohesion programmes. The main theme of the final report of the Commission on Integration and Cohesion, “Our Shared Futures”, produced in 2007, is integration. It sets out to promote communities working together, sharing resources and dealing constructively with conflict and difference.

However, in reality the cohesion agenda tends to priorities faith and race issues and is sometimes linked the violent extremism agenda. Linking equalities and social cohesion means that inequality resulting from discrimination is not recognised as a central issue and therefore the realities of structural inequality are not addressed. The assumption that all groups are different but equal has the effect of negating the entrenched power imbalances at the root of inequality. In addition, this approach to inequality is limited as it has not emerged from grass roots campaigns for justice as has mostly been the case with previous campaigns for equality. It also means that community organisations have limited engagement with and ownership of local equalities agendas.

3.4 Structures of Engagement

Local Strategic Partnerships are key structures through which local authorities develop strategies for the delivery of local services. They comprise representatives from local authorities, the health, police and fire services, business and voluntary sectors. The precise structures and composition of Local Strategic Partnerships vary from local authority to local authority. There is a legally established expectation that Local Strategic Partnerships and all public authorities will consult and engage with their service users when developing policies and services.

There are significant discrepancies however between local authorities in terms of voluntary and community sector representation on Local Strategic Partnerships. Evidence from this survey clearly shows that LGBT interests are seriously under-represented on these structures. In the small number of cases where there is LGBT representation it often relates to, or is derived from, a statutory responsibility to address homophobic crime specifically.

Existing local authority structures do not facilitate LGBT engagement in local policy making. They do not take account of the specific nature and structure of the LGBT voluntary and community sector in London. Three LGBT VCOs from a total of under fifty operate specifically at borough level.

Participating in local authority engagement mechanisms poses difficulties for LGBT VCOs as most provide services in more than one local authority area, and are mostly relatively small. Many of the LGBT Networks and Forums are run by volunteers. This means that engaging with the plethora of policy making structures is challenging. Often where there are resources for influence their focus is crime or sexual health related.

4 - LGBT Initiatives Introduced by Local Authorities

The Improvement and Development Agency (I&DeA) published the second edition of “Sexuality – the New Agenda in 2007” which is a guide for local authorities on engaging with lesbian, gay and bisexual communities. Its production coincided with the introduction of the Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulation 2007. It is a practical guide which provides local authorities with checklists of actions to promote LGBT equalities at local levels and numerous examples of good practice are suggested. The evidence from the websites of local authorities suggests that the LGBT initiatives undertaken in London are similar to those being implemented across the UK.

There are significant differences between boroughs in terms of action related to LGBT equality. There is evidence that initiatives undertaken are largely similar to those recommended to achieve equality standards. Local authorities tended to implement recommendations that are highlighted as positive within the EFLG standards framework. However, there is little evidence to suggest that action goes any further than the limited suggestions for change. There is also a concern that initiatives are driven from within corporate and policy programmes and are not necessarily integrated into the wider institutional and service related areas of activity.

The following is a summary of the LGBT initiatives which are being developed by some of the local authorities in London.

4.1 LGBT Needs Assessments

LGBT needs assessments report on the issues and concerns faced by LGBT people in a specific local authority area. Some are based on extensive research and consultation with LGBT communities and service providers while others are sketchy documents based on very little robust research. The first reports were produced in 2003 and two have been completed this year.

It is often difficult to find these reports on the local authority websites; in some instances they could not have been located without prior knowledge of their existence. Others may exist, but it has not been possible to locate them.

The following LGBT Needs Assessments can be found on relevant local authority websites:

- Breaking the Silence – Experience of Lesbians, Gay Men, Bisexuals and Transgender people in Barking and Dagenham 2003
- Speaking Out – Experience of LGBT People in Newham 2003, updated 2004
- Sexuality and Related Equalities Review – Findings and Recommendations Haringey 2004
- Camden LGBT Forum Survey of Needs 2004
- Lambeth LGBT Matters - the needs and experiences of Lesbians, Gay men, Bisexual and Trans men and women in Lambeth 2006
- Revealing Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Trans Islington 2007
- Croydon LGBT Survey 2008
- Mapping LGBT Westminster: Investigating the needs and experiences of LGBT people in Westminster 2009.

The following reports could not be found on local authority websites when this piece of work was carried out:

- The Southwark LGBT Need Survey of 2002
- Speak Out: Lewisham lesbian, gay bisexual and transgender survey 2007
- Access All Areas Tower Hamlets LGBT Needs Assessment 2008/2009 published in February 2009 is not yet on the website
- West London LGBT Forum Survey (2006) was supported and funded by Ealing Council for Voluntary Services and West London Network. It covers the West London Voluntary Service Councils Sub Region, comprising Hammersmith and Fulham, Hounslow, Hillingdon, Ealing, Brent and Harrow. There is no information about this report on the websites of any of the local authorities included in the survey.

4.2 LGBT Forums

Local authorities have been empowered under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to develop strategies to reduce crime and disorder in their local areas. Some local authorities in partnership with their local police services are using powers under this Act to develop strategies on homophobic hate crime which has in some instances involved establishing LGBT forums or committees to deal with homophobic hate crime. Linking homophobic crime with equalities is problematic and limiting especially if it is the only LGBT issue addressed by a local authority.

A number of local authorities have also set up LGBT staff forums with support and policy functions and some have supported the establishment of forums which represent the range of service providers in a specific local authority area. Only a small number of LGBT forums are rooted in and represent the different voices of the LGBT communities. This means that LGBT interests are not well represented on policy making structures and have a limited role in shaping local services.

4.3 LGBT History Month

Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender History Month is an independent voluntary and community organisation which celebrates the achievements and lives of LGBT people. The first LGBT History month activities took place in the UK in 2005, and since then they have been developed and promoted annually during the month of February.

The range of activities run by local authorities to celebrate LGBT History Month varies widely. Some provide extensive programmes, some do one off activities and others take no action. These events are seen by some local authorities as a means of increasing awareness about LGBT people's lives and in some cases as a means of enhancing integration. However, in many cases, and similar to the approach concerning Black History Month, insufficient budgets and short term planning lead to events that are not integrated and cannot do justice to the complexities of the issues.

5 - Equal Opportunity and Diversity Policies in London Boroughs

The information summarised below is based on a survey of the websites of all of London's local authorities. It was carried out during the months of May and June 2009 and followed from an initial website search carried out during November and December of 2008; there were no marked differences between the information found by both surveys.

The A-Z directory of services was used to find information about equalities. A small minority of websites do not include equalities in their A-Z directory of services and LGBT is not included in the alphabetical listings of any of London's local authority websites. This means that a number of approaches are necessary in order to find LGBT related information as it often not found on the equalities sections of websites. Some local authorities have integrated LGBT equalities into their overall equalities web pages.

For the purpose of this report local authorities are grouped according to the London Regional Consortium of ChangeUp. This Consortium has representatives from the voluntary, statutory and public sectors. The five sub regional partnerships cover Central, West, East, North and South London. Each of the five sub-regions has a network of councils for voluntary service. (See appendix 1)

5.1 Central London sub regional consortium

Camden Council

Camden Council's "Equality Scheme Action Plan 2006- 2009" provides information about the intended actions of the council on each of the six equality strands. The following actions on sexuality are outlined: 'to increase awareness of those staff dealing with LGBT issues by providing training; to carry out a consultation of older LGBT people on housing issues; and to provide activities during LGBT History Month.'

There was information on the website entitled, "Addressing Homophobic Crime", and there was a comprehensive programme of activities for LGBT History Month February 2009.

Camden Council has produced an LGBT needs assessment entitled, "Camden LGBT Forum Survey of Need Abridged Overview January 2004", but it was not available on the website.

Camden LGBT Forum is an independent voluntary organisation.

Islington Council

The equalities policy "Dignity for All" includes a comprehensive statement on sexuality.

The information about LGBT issues includes, "Towards One Islington - Sexual Orientation Equality 2008-2011" which provides comprehensive information about LGBT equalities issues together with an action plan.

Information about LGBT History Month 2009 and an LGBT needs assessment titled "Revealing Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Trans Islington 2007" was also available on the site.

The information about LGBT VCOs is limited despite the fact that Islington has the largest number of LGBT VCOs located in the borough.

The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea

The equality and diversity documents on this website were not recent. A general statement entitled "Promoting Equalities and Diversity" was produced in 2004. "Towards an Inclusive Kensington and Chelsea 2007/2008, The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea's Equality Scheme" estimates the number of LGBT people living in the borough; this was the only reference to LGBT people in this document.

The A-Z directory of services had an equalities category and use of LGBT as a search category produced little up to date information. There was a link to the "Youth Support Equalities Action Plan" which committed to review LGBT recording by March 2008.

Lambeth Council

The Equalities and Diversity statement covers gender, race and disability equality schemes; there is no reference to the other equality strands in this statement.

An LGBT needs assessment; "Lambeth LGBT Matters, The Needs and Experiences of Lesbians, Gay Men, Bisexual and Trans Men and Women in Lambeth" was available on the website.

Information about LGBT History Month 2008, the Lambeth LGBT Forum, LGBT Hate Crime and a document entitled "LGBT in Lambeth – Assessing Services and Support, Information about LGBT Services in Lambeth and nationally" could also accessed on this website.

Southwark Council

The "Equalities and Human Rights Scheme 2008-2011" was developed in consultation with residents, stakeholders and local authority staff. "Southwark's equalities and human rights scheme 2008-2011 – consultation findings" includes a summary of the issues which emerged from the consultation held with LGBT people.

There was reference to the LGBT Network and Southwark Anti-Homophobic Forum. This forum has existed since 1995 and acts as an advisory body to the council, police and other agencies on matters related to hate crime.

Southwark Council employs an LGBT community development worker, the only post of its kind in London. This post is based in the Community Involvement and Development Unit which has a key role in supporting the cohesion agenda and has produced a number of publications. "How to Build Community Cohesion in Southwark", for example, was published in 2005, it provides examples of how to strengthen understanding of and links between some of the different communities of interest in Southwark, but the LGBT community does not feature in this document.

Wandsworth Council

The A-Z directory of council services did not include equality or diversity categories.

The "Corporate Equality Plan 2008-2011" reports that the local authority supported LGBT History Month in 2008, an LGBT Hate Crime flyer has been launched and civil partnerships have been conducted.

Information about the LGBT Network set up in 2005 to improve the lives of LGBT people living or working in the borough of Wandsworth, was also available.

Westminster City Council

The "Corporate Equality Policy 2004" states, "Westminster City Council is committed to eliminating discrimination on grounds of gender, race, ethnic or national origin, sexual orientation, disability, colour, faith, HIV/AIDS status".

There was reference to an LGBT Mapping Needs Survey carried out by Galop. This report, "Mapping LGBT Westminster: Investigating the needs and experiences of LGBT people in Westminster" was published on the website at the beginning of August 2009.

Documentation related to the Feasibility Study for a LGBT Social Action Centre being conducted in cooperation with Kairos in Soho could also be found on the website; there are no references to services for LGBT people.

5.2 West London sub regional consortium

Brent Council

The "Single Equalities Scheme 2008-11" aims to ensure that equality is integrated into all parts of the council's work. It includes a section on sexuality and undertakes to collect information about sexual orientation of the local authority workforce during this period.

An LGBT Staff Forum was mentioned. Information about the LGBT History Month 2009, a "LGBT History Time Line" which outlines LGBT history between 514 BC and 2006 could be found on the website.

There was also information about the Mosaic Youth LGBT Project, which provides educational and youth activities for LGBT young people under the age of 19 who live in the borough of Brent.

Ealing Council

The "Comprehensive Equality Scheme 2007-2009" sets out how the local authority plans to meet its statutory obligations on race, disability and gender.

No current information about LGBT issues could be found on the website; there was a reference to Ealing Council for Voluntary Services' Capacity Building Infrastructure Business Plan 2008-2011 which incorporated LGBT issues.

The West London LGBT Development Project, funded by Capacity Builders, is based at Ealing CVS; it collaborates with voluntary and public sector organisations to improve the position of LGBT people in West London. This project was not mentioned on the website.

In addition, there was no information about the "West London Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Forum Survey" which was supported and funded by Ealing CVS.

Hammersmith and Fulham Council

The "London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham's Equality Scheme 2005-2008" includes a section on sexual orientation, it provides information about the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulation 2003, commits to developing policies and functions which do not discriminate on grounds of sexual orientation and to consult with staff and community groups on sexuality.

Information about LGBT issues was not recent; it included information about HIV/AIDS, civil partnerships and LGBT History Month 2006.

Harrow Council

The "Comprehensive Equality Scheme 2007-2010 incorporating the Race Equality Scheme 2007-2010" includes a statement on sexual orientation which commits to combating discrimination against lesbian, gay and bisexual people working and living in the borough. "West London Celebrating Our Difference", about LGBT people, was produced for the Community Cohesion Partnership (2007) and could be accessed on this website. This publication was not available on the websites of Brent, Ealing, Hammersmith and Hillingdon Councils even though these boroughs are included in its remit.

Hillingdon Council

"Opportunities for All London Borough of Hillingdon's Equality and Diversity Policy 2004" includes a "Sexuality Equality Statement" but there is no reference to sexuality in the "Equalities Update 2008".

Reference was made to services for LGBT people who experience domestic violence.

Hounslow Council

The "Equal Opportunity and Diversity Policy" outlines the council's ten executive priorities. Sexuality is not included in these, but the policy does commit to providing equal opportunities for LGBT communities alongside other marginalised communities.

There was information entitled "Homophobic Crime" which provides details about the Homophobic Crime Stakeholders Group and there was a directory of local and national LGBT services.

Voluntary groups and organisations located in West London were mentioned. These include the West London Gay Men's Project and the NAZ Project London, which offers sexual health and HIV/AIDS services to LGBT people of South Asian, Middle Eastern, North African, Horn of Africa and Latin American origin. The NAZ Project London is based in the nearby borough of Hammersmith and Fulham.

Information about Outwest, a social and campaigning group for LGBT people in West London, was also included.

5.3 East London sub regional consortium

Barking and Dagenham Council

In April 2009 a survey was carried out on behalf of the council and health service in partnership with the LGBT Forum to examine the health and social care needs of LGBT people in the borough. The results of this survey are due to be published towards the end of 2009. Barking and Dagenham's first LGBT needs assessment entitled "Breaking the Silence (2003) Experience of Lesbian, Gay Men, Bisexual and Transgender People in Barking and Dagenham – issues for Barking and Dagenham council and other public service providers" was published in 2003 and was available on the website.

The report of a study visit to Brighton and Hove Council which exchanged information about the LGBT services offered by both councils could also be found on the website. It is called, "Report of the Barking and Dagenham LGBT Forum and Network 2004". This study visit was jointly funded by The Council, Barking and Dagenham Police Service and the Community Empowerment Network (2004).

Information was also available about LGBT History Month 2009 and the LGBT Forum.

There was also a link to "Health and Pride", which is an online resource for the LGBT communities and health professionals. This is the first resource of its kind to be provided by the health service.

Bexley Council

"The Equalities Policy Statement" expresses a general commitment to promoting equality. Information entitled "Homophobic and Racial Abuse" provides explanations of both these issues. A paper entitled "What kind of people can become foster parents" states that "gay men and lesbians can become foster parents."

City of London

This website had very little information about equality policies; what was available was not current.

Greenwich Council

There was little recent information about equalities on Greenwich Council's website.

"The Corporate Equalities Plan 2007-2008" includes a section on sexuality.

The most recent information about LGBT History Month was for 2007, and the Metro Centre was mentioned. This is a relatively large local centre which has been operating in Greenwich since 1984; it provides a wide range of services for LGBT people from Greenwich and across London.

Hackney Council

The A-Z of council services did not link to the range of equalities documents available on the site.

There was a comprehensive "Equality and Diversity Policy (2006)" and a shortened version of the same in flyer format available on the website. This policy includes sections on gender, transgender and sexual orientation.

There was information about LGBT History Month February 2009.

Information about the Homophobic Crime Forum was last updated in July 2007.

Havering Council

There was no recent LGBT information on the website: a flyer advertising a study about homophobic and transphobic crime in East London was not dated.

Lewisham Council

“The Sexual Orientation Equality Scheme (draft)” published in 2008 provides background information about the relevant laws and the actions undertaken by Lewisham Council on LGBT issues. It represents a positive commitment to LGBT work, and is one of few documents of its type produced by London’s local authorities.

Information entitled, “Dealing with Homophobia” and “What is Sexuality” was also available and there was information about LGBT History Month 2008.

A list of organisations which provide support for LGBT communities was also available.

The report of a LGBT needs assessment, “Speak Out Survey” carried out between October 2006 and 2007 could not be found on the website.

Newham Council

While there was a range of information about equal opportunities on the website a comprehensive equalities policy could not be found.

The following LGBT information was available: “Speaking Out – the experience of LGBT people in Newham and issues for public sector service providers” published in 2003 and updated in 2004.

There was information about LGBT History Month 2009 and a homophobic partnership board established in 2008.

International Day Against Homophobia - “IDAHO” - was also celebrated by Newham Council. IDAHO Day commemorates the decision made by the World Health Organisation in 1990 to remove homosexuality from its list of mental disorders.

Redbridge Council

The “Equalities Scheme 2006” (due to be updated in 2009) includes a section on sexual orientation which outlines the council’s commitment to the inclusion of sexual orientation in its equalities action plans and assessments.

“The Children’s Services Equalities Action Plan 2008-2011” commits to addressing homophobic bullying, to raising awareness of LGBT issues, supporting LGBT young people and to extending workforce monitoring on sexuality.

The intention to set up a LGBT Forum as part of the Hate Crime Strategy was mentioned, but further details about the forum could not be found on the website.

Tower Hamlets

The council’s diversity and equality statement, “Valuing Diversity: Our Policy Statement on Diversity and Equality” summarises the council’s commitment to promoting equality in all aspects of its work.

The “Diversity and Equality Action Plan 2008/2009” outlines the work carried out by the council during the previous financial year. The following projects supported by the council are mentioned: “The Rainbow Parents Support Group” for LGBT parents in the borough, and a plan to set up “No Outsider Project” by the end of March 2009 which aims to raise awareness about the diversity of family life through children’s literature.

There was information on the website about LGBT History Month 2009, the LGBT Forum and local, London wide and national LGBT VCOs.

Tower Hamlets also employs a Victim Support Homophobic and Transphobic Crime Worker who provides one to one support to victims of LGBT crime and same sex domestic violence.

The following sexuality equalities documents were not available on the website when this survey was carried out: "Tower Hamlets Sexual Orientation Equality Scheme 2009-2012"; "Access for All - Tower Hamlets LGBT Needs Assessment 2008/2009" and "Older LGBT Matters, the experience of older lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender adults in Tower Hamlets".

5.4 North London sub regional consortium

Barnet Council

The A-Z directory of information did not include the category 'equalities'. However, a number of equalities documents could be found on the website.

The equalities statement, "Putting the Community First: Barnet's Equalities Policy" includes a list of equality legislation, however the Equality Act (Equality Goods and Services Regulation 2007) and the Civil Partnership Act 2004 were not included.

There was a link to information entitled: "Putting a stop to homophobic crime" and contact details for the LGBT Network could be accessed on the website.

Enfield Council

Equalities could not be accessed through the A-Z directory of services.

"Enfield Council's Equality and Diversity Annual Report 2008" includes a section on sexual orientation, "Sexual Orientation in Enfield" which provides information about the relevant legislative framework and sexual orientation, the council's vision for sexual orientation equality, progress to date; and commitments for 2008/2009.

There was a commitment to working with a wide range of partners and to supporting the Enfield Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender Network.

Enfield Strategic Partnership has produced a checklist entitled "Engagement Checklist: A quick guide for partner agencies and organisations on useful factors to consider when undertaking engagement activities with traditionally hard to reach groups".

Haringey Council

There was a web page entitled "Sexual Orientation". It explained the term 'sexual orientation' and outlines the actions undertaken by Haringey Council regarding the inclusion of LGBT issues in its policy and practice.

There were links to: the "LGBT Service Directory" which provides information about LGBT VCOs and generic voluntary and public sector organisations thought to be of specific interest to LGBT people; to a "Sexuality Equality related Action Plan 2004-2007"; and also to "Equality Matters" Issue 24 (01/09), which provides information about and exploration of local and national equalities issues and to the LGBT Network which is managed by Wise Thoughts, independent arts and media organisation.

The LGBT needs assessment entitled "Sexuality Related Equalities Review of Findings and Recommendations," produced in 2004, was also available.

Waltham Forest Council

The “Council statement of intent regarding sexuality” outlines Waltham Forest Council’s commitment to LGBT issues.

The local authority commissioned Sigma Research to investigate the needs of LGBT people who live, work, and study or socialise in Waltham Forest. The results of the study were expected in September 2009.

A staff LGBT forum was mentioned as one of the actions taken to achieve a place on the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index.

International Day Against Homophobia was mentioned as was East London Out Project which is one of London’s funded LGBT VCOs based locally and providing services for LGBT people.

5.5 South London sub regional consortium

Bromley Council

Equalities could not be accessed through the A-Z directory of services and information. No comprehensive equalities policy document could be found nor was there information about LGBT policies, activities or events on the website.

Croydon Council

The Croydon Council Equal Opportunities Policy includes definitions of heterosexism and homophobia. There was an expression of commitment to LGBT people; an Anti Homophobic statement and a document which gives advice to employees entitled: “Discriminating at work. It’s over. New laws mean you don’t have to put up with grief over your sexual orientation”.

“The Croydon LGBT Survey 2008” was also available and there was information about the Crocus LGBT Network. Crocus has its own separate website.

The Croydon Anti-homophobia Local Strategic Partnership (AHLSP), a multi-agency group, which supports and oversees the development of anti-homophobia and transphobia work across the borough was mentioned.

Information about NRG Croydon, a project for lesbian, gay and bisexual young people was also available. This project is run as a partnership between Terrance Higgins Trust and Croydon Youth Service.

The Royal Borough of Kingston

LGBT interests are included in the “Equality Scheme 2007-2010”.

There was comprehensive information entitled, “How much do you know about the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community?” This document provides facts and figures about the LGBT population, the legal changes introduced in recent years to tackle discrimination against LGBT people; it also outlines what action the council is taking to improve the lives of LGBT people in the borough.

The LGBT Forum set up by the Safer Kingston Partnership was also mentioned.

Merton Council

The “Corporate Equality Scheme for the London Borough of Merton 2006-2009” includes a section on LGBT issues. The council consulted with the LGBT Network when developing its LGBT policies.

Information was available about: LGBT History Month 2009; national and London wide LGBT specific resources; contact details of LGBT organisations located in Merton and there was a list of social groups for LGBT older people.

The agendas for and minutes of the meetings of the LGBT Forum could also be found on the website. Equalities Bulletins have been produced which provide information about activities undertaken in the different equalities strands but these documents were not up to date.

Richmond upon Thames

The “Equalities Scheme for London Borough of Richmond upon Thames 2007-2020” undertakes to introduce measures for monitoring sexual orientation by March 2008.

There was information on the website about the services available to LGBT people experiencing domestic violence, a list of LGBT contacts and suggestions for ways of reporting hate crime.

No information about the LGBT Forum could be found, though this information was on the website when the first survey was carried out.

Sutton Council

Information about equalities was not easily accessible on the website and a category for equalities was not included in the A to Z of council services. Nevertheless, “Sutton’s Equalities and Diversity Policy” includes an explanation of what gender reassignment, heterosexism and homophobia, and sexual discrimination are.

There were two documents which deal with sexuality as follows: “Sexual Orientation Discrimination” which includes definitions of the different types of discrimination and the actions which Sutton Council plans to take to ensure that LGBT equalities are incorporated into its practice and “Sexuality: If you think you are gay, a lesbian, bisexual or you are unsure what your sexuality is you may want support and advice”.

The contact information about the LGBT forum was also available.

6 - Conclusions

This survey of local authority websites for evidence of LGBT equalities policies and practice raises a number of issues which require further attention. These will need to be addressed in order to ensure that LGBT concerns are integrated into local authority equalities policies and practice. These are addressed below.

If websites are any indication of the extent of commitment then LGBT equalities issues remain on the margins of most equalities agendas. This is despite the introduction of new equalities legislation and increased involvement by local authorities in developing and promoting equality and diversity policies. From the information accessed on websites it is clear that a number of local authorities have made little or no provision for LGBT people and only a small number provide accessible information about any specific LGBT related policy and initiatives.

Existing practice tends to focus on specific issues and activities such as homophobic hate crime, LGBT History Month, LGBT staff forums, and carrying out LGBT needs assessments of some kind. While these activities mostly represent first steps they cannot be substitutes for comprehensive equalities policies and actions which integrate LGBT perspectives into all aspects of local authority services.

Websites provide key information about local services and are a first point of access for many people. The lack of information about LGBT issues found on many websites means that LGBT people are likely to experience difficulties in accessing information about local services. For example, whilst some local authorities provide specific activities for LGBT young people, little information about youth related projects could be found on most of the websites. This lack of information means that LGBT people have to rely on informal networks and the grapevine to access information and services.

Websites represent the public face of local authorities; by marginalising LGBT interests and needs the impression is created that LGBT people are not important. The invisibility of LGBT people is perpetuated even where specific services exist to meet their needs. Local authorities tend not to highlight and celebrate good practice in this area on their websites. There is, for example, little or no information about housing and other cross borough projects funded by London Councils, and exemplar initiatives such as the support given by Westminster City Council to develop an LGBT social action centre. There is certainly very little evidence on websites of how LGBT people can engage and influence local facilities and services.

In general, the approach take by local authorities to LGBT equalities is piecemeal and minimalist. It tends to be driven by the need to comply with government legislative and regulatory requirements. LGBT equalities policies are not an integral part of local authority organisational culture nor do they respond to the interests and concerns of LGBT individuals and LGBT voluntary and community organisations. By contrast, those few local authorities which have developed LGBT equalities policies demonstrate that good practice is possible.

So far it has not been possible to carry out an in depth analysis of each borough.

7 - Next Steps

The intention now is to make the information we have summarised by borough available to local authorities. We aim to invite contributions in order to produce a more comprehensive picture. Where good practice does exist, and is not available on the website, this will ideally be remedied in the short term. The messages on websites can be improved to become more consistent with practice. Good practice can then also be shared between boroughs. In the next six months KiS will identify boroughs keen to improve their practice and develop standards of engagement and influence that improve the local experience of LGBT people both in terms of engagement and services.

The main recommendation from this interim analysis is that local authorities develop comprehensive equality policies that fully incorporate LGBT equality issues, and learn from each others good practice, comprehensively, rather than solely in line with recommendations for achieving against equality standards.

KiS will proceed to analyse one local authority in more depth to ascertain the possibilities for greater LGBT engagement on policy.

**Appendix 1:
Summary of key web-based LGBT related actions of the 33 London Local Authorities**

Local Authority	Overall	Policies	Needs Assessment/ Research
Barking and Dagenham Council			LGBT Needs Assessment announced, due to be published end of 2009 "Breaking the Silence (2003) Experience of LGBT People in Barking and Dagenham – issues for Barking and Dagenham council and other public service providers 2003"
Barnet Council			
Bexley Council	Limited information found		
Brent Council		Single Equalities Scheme 2008-11	LGBT Staff Forum Information about LGBT History Month 2009 Mosaic Youth LGBT Project
Bromley Council	No current information about LGBT issues found on the website		
Camden Council		Equality Scheme Action Plan 2006 - 2009	"Camden LGBT Forum Survey of Need - Abridged Overview January 2004" (not available online) LGBT Forum Consultation of older LGBT people's needs
City of London	No current information		
Croydon Council		Croydon "Equal Opportunities Policy"	"The Croydon LGBT Survey 2008" Crocus LGBT Network NRG Croydon (Youth Project)

LGBT Forum/Network

Barking and Dagenham LGBT Forum

“Report of the Barking and Dagenham LGBT Forum and Network 2004”

Activities

- Information about LGBT History Month

Services/ Information

“Health and Pride” online resource

Barnet LGBT Network

Brent LGBT Staff Forum

- Mosaic Youth Group
- LGBT History Month 2009

Camden LGBT Forum
(independent Voluntary Organisation)

Information about LGBT History Month 2009

“Addressing Homophobic Crime”

Crocus LGBT Network
Croydon Anti-Homophobia LSP

- Expression of Commitment to LGBT people
- Anti-homophobia statement and the Croydon Anti-homophobic Local Strategic Partnership
- Advice to LGBT employees
- NRG youth group

Local Authority	Overall	Policies	Needs Assessment/ Research
Enfield Council		Enfield Council's Equality and Diversity Annual Report 2008	LGBT Network
Ealing Council	No current information		
Greenwich Council		The Corporate Equalities Plan 2007-2008	
Hackney Council		Equality and Diversity 2006	
Hammersmith and Fulham Council			Information about LGBT History Month 2006
Haringey Council		Sexuality Equality Related Action Plan 2004-2007	Sexuality Related Equalities Review of Findings and Recommendations 2004 LGBT Network LGBT Service Directory
Harrow Council		Comprehensive Equality Scheme 2007 - 2010	
Hillingdon Council		Sexuality Equality Statement	
Islington		Dignity for All equalities policy Towards One Islington – Sexual Orientation Equality 2008-2011	
Lambeth Council			“Lambeth LGBT Matters, The Needs and Experiences of LGBT Men and Women in Lambeth”

LGBT Forum/Network

Activities

Services/ Information

Enfield LGBT Network

Information about LGBT
History Month 2007

Metro Centre mentioned

Homophobic Crime Forum –
information last updated 2007

Information about LGBT
History Month 2009

“West London Celebrating
our Difference 2007”

Services for LGBT people
who experience domestic
violence mentioned

“Revealing LGBT Islington
2007” Activities for LGBT
History Month 2009

Lambeth LGBT Forum

Information about LGBT
History Month 2008

LGBT in Lambeth –
“Accessing Services and
Support”, Information
about LGBT Services in
Lambeth and nationally
LGBT ‘hate crime’

Local Authority	Overall	Policies	Needs Assessment/ Research
Lewisham Council		“The Sexual Orientation Equality Scheme (2008)”	LGBT History Month 2008 List of organisations which provide support to LGBT communities
Newham Council			
Merton Council		The Corporate Equality Scheme for LB Merton 2006-2009	
Redbridge Council			
Richmond upon Thames Council		Equalities Scheme 2006 – due for 2009 update Hate Crime Strategy	
RB of Kensington and Chelsea	No current information		
RB of Kingston		Equality Scheme 2007-2010	
Southwark Council		Equalities and Human Rights Scheme 2008-11	
Sutton Council	Not easily accessible	Sutton’s Equality and Diversity Plan	LGBT Forum

LGBT Forum/Network

Activities

Services/ Information

LGBT History Month 2008

“Dealing with Homophobia”
“What is Sexuality”

LGBT History Month 2009

“Speak Out- the experience of LGBT people in Newham and issues for public service providers 2003”
Homophobic Partnership Board

Merton LGBT Network

LGBT History Month 2009

List of national and local LGBT specific resources
Contact details of LGBT organisations located in Merton. List of social groups for LGBT older people

Limited information about LGBT issues on the websites

Limited information about LGBT issues on the websites

Kingston LGBT Forum

“How much do we know about the LGBT Community?”

Southwark LGBT Network and Southwark Anti-Homophobic Forum

LGBT Community Development Officer

Sutton LGBT Forum

Sexual Orientation Discrimination
“Sexuality – if you think you are gay, lesbian or bisexual”

Local Authority	Overall	Policies	Needs Assessment/ Research
Tower Hamlets Council		Valuing Diversity: Our Policy Statement on Diversity and Equality Diversity and Equality Action Plan 2008/9	
Waltham Forest Council			LGBT Needs Assessment to be published September 2009 LGBT Staff Forum
Wandsworth Council			
Westminster City Council		Corporate Equalities Policy 2004	“Mapping LGBT Westminster: Investigating the needs and experiences of LGBT people in Westminster 2009” Feasibility Study for LGBT Social Action Centre in Soho

**Appendix 2:
London’s Sub Regions**



LGBT Forum/Network

Tower Hamlets LGBT Forum

Activities

LGBT History Month 2009

Services/ Information

Rainbow Parent's
Support Group
No Outsider Project
LGBT Forum website on
council website

Wandsworth LGBT Network

Information about LGBT
History Month 2008

LGBT Hate Crime Flyer

North London

- 1 Barnet
- 2 Enfield
- 3 Haringey
- 4 Waltham Forest

East London

- 5 Redbridge
- 6 Barking & Dagenham
- 7 Havering
- 8 Hackney
- 9 City of London
- 10 Tower Hamlets
- 11 Newham
- 12 Lewisham
- 13 Greenwich
- 14 Bexley

South London

- 15 Bromley
- 16 Croydon
- 17 Sutton
- 18 Merton
- 19 Kingston Upon Thames
- 20 Richmond Upon Thames

West London

- 21 Hammersmith & Fulham
- 22 Hounslow
- 23 Ealing
- 24 Hillingdon
- 25 Harrow
- 26 Brent

Central London

- 27 Camden
- 28 Islington
- 29 City of Westminster
- 30 Kensington & Chelsea
- 31 Wandsworth
- 32 Lambeth
- 33 Southwark