



BRITISH LIBRARY

**EXTERNAL CONSULTATION
ON ISSUES RELATING TO
GENDER, TRANSGENDER,
SEXUAL ORIENTATION
AND
DOMESTIC ABUSE**

APRIL 2010

INDEX

	Page
Consultation introduction	3
Main areas and suggestions raised	4
Full report - sexual orientation areas	8
Full report - gender, transgender and domestic abuse areas	14
Appendices – introduction to the Consultation topics	21

EXTERNAL CONSULTATION ON AREAS RELATING TO GENDER, TRANSGENDER, SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND DOMESTIC ABUSE

April 2010

Purpose of the consultation

In 2007 the British Library held a very comprehensive consultation on gender and transgender areas, which involved surveys and focus groups for external and internal stakeholders. This consultation helped the Library to develop a generic Unified Equality Scheme for Disability, Gender and Race, and also informed its current three year Action Plan for gender initiatives.

Since then, the Gender Action Group, and colleagues across the Library, have been working on implementing the Library's Action Plan, and widening the remit to include areas such as transgender issues, domestic abuse and sexual orientation, which are key Library and national projects.

Now they wish to further involve people in the development of their new Action Plan from 2010-2013. The plan will affect employment policies and expectations for service accessibility and inclusiveness, and will be implemented from May 2010.

The intention was to give both external stakeholders and employees, through a series of focus groups, the opportunity to raise issues that they would like the Library to consider going forward.

This particular report is on the external stakeholder consultation. A companion report focuses on employee feedback.

Consultation process

The Library invited external stakeholders to take part in two consultations at its St Pancras site.

The focus groups were facilitated by the Library's host consultant, (who supported the original consultation) and consultant experts in LGBT (lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender) and domestic abuse. Two external focus groups were held:

12th April – sexual orientation

13th April – gender, transgender and domestic abuse

Confidentiality

The groups agreed to keep the content of the meetings confidential. No comments made are attributed to the contributor in the notes. The results of the focus groups were to be recorded, summarised and shared at a high level and would be viewable on the website as before, with good and bad points raised.

Setting the scene

It was explained that this was the second consultation on gender and transgender issues. A comprehensive consultation three years ago with online questionnaires and focus groups provided the organisation with a large amount of information to consider which the Library is still benefiting from.

The purpose of these focus groups was to review the progress of the Library and the Gender Action Group, and explore what needs to be done over the next 3 years including looking at the Library's current projects, which are:

- transgender areas (which the Library is developing a Policy for)
- domestic abuse, (the Library has developed a policy to support employees who may be experiencing domestic abuse, and support managers in assisting employees to the appropriate level)

This is an opportune time to develop the next three year plan and to build on the actions of the past 3 years. There is a lot of work to do in this area and concrete plans are needed for projects.

The report

This report comprises an account of the areas discussed at the St Pancras focus groups in relation to:

- general gender
- transgender
- sexual orientation
- domestic abuse

Main areas and suggestions raised by external stakeholders

Concerns and suggestions

How the British Library can better promote its services and in particular attract LGBT people

- LGBT groups can and have experienced exclusion and discrimination in their day to day lives and so the Library needs to be proactive to encourage and reach out to the LGBT community
- Staff need to be trained on how to behave when unsure of someone's personal identity. This is particularly important for transgender people
- The Library needs to think about how it can sell itself to everyone – (Suggestions follow below)
- A generic article with specific focuses to educate people
- Re-education in Library changes e.g. perceptions are that it is still difficult to become a reader and that there are restrictions
- Union knowledge of LGBT and the TUC LGBT event in June could be useful, could the Library have a stand?
- Publish articles about the Library's work around LGBT literature, saying that it welcomes research on LGBT issues
- Use LGBT organisations, publications and events to promote the Library – and don't forget the B and T in LGBT, which are sometimes invisible.
- Use the diversity calendar to plan events. Acknowledge and reflect events like IDAHO day (International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia), Holocaust Memorial Day, the Pride season, and incorporate these into your annual schedule
- Equality impact assessments are essential
- Multi diversity areas are important for instance when you do Black history month, contact LGBT groups too as LGBT crosses all areas of diversity
- In equality sections of your website, include links to LGBT and domestic abuse organisations
- Hold high profile exhibitions on transgender literature and issues, which will educate the public
- Consider having a Facebook page

Accessing LGBT material

- The book "*The Well of Loneliness*" is kept secured away as is the Jewish Encyclopaedia etc. As some readers deface them, use of these is closely supervised by a Librarian. However, if an LGBT person is not out, they may feel uncomfortable in this situation. Can these not be offered on microfiche, or scanned onto a PC, to be viewed in private – also how can a reader's privacy be better protected so others cannot see the subject matter or graphic content they are reading

- Does the Library have issues around cataloguing? LGBT have experienced other libraries where transgender, LGBT or sexuality areas have been categorised along with sexual disorders, or paedophilia
- The Library needs to look at how areas of LGBT interest are catalogued and made accessible both internally and remotely. Indexing and cross referencing is needed, and a policy for handling graphic issues.
- A mainstream idea can be that LGBT issues are just about sex e.g. when writing a dissertation on masculinity, it was difficult doing research on the assumption that the issue equalled looking at porn. Type in 'gay' and work is blocked. Firewalls can be altered so that people are not excluded from accessing LGBT information.
- The Library needs to be seen as somewhere where it is safe to research LGBT issues

Preventing third party homophobia and transphobia

- Using words like 'inclusive' or 'we welcome everyone' does not work, the Library's statement of intent needs to be clear and specific and use words like 'homophobia' and 'LGBT'
- The British Library needs to be proactive, with good stringent policies and guidance; showcase good practice.

Developing the Library's LGBT material

- Approach LGBT organisations to assist in providing a reading list to inform the development of a LGBT library
- Publish a leaflet entitled 'What you need to do if publishing community research'. Often excellent research disappears as it is often described as grey material and can't be found and the Library could help to conserve this and make it accessible
- LGBT history month within the Library should be organised by people from each gender to ensure there is no bias towards any one LGBT literature
- The Library's resources should be as diverse as its customers

Consulting on LGBT issues

- Establish ongoing relationships with LGBT organisations and draw on their knowledge and expertise
- Share consultation feedback and best practice with organisations such as the BBC and the Museums Association

- Linking with the libraries throughout the UK could lead to a consultation network

Physical access

- There can be issues around which gender toilet to use. There are trans men and women, and those that don't fit into either gender. Unless there is abuse in usage, let them use whichever WC they feel is appropriate. It would be good to have gender neutral WCs
- The use of WCs by trans people needs to be addressed as a training issue, to ensure that library staff do not act inappropriately

Customer service

- ID is needed to be a British Library reader which can be an issue for transitioning and transgender people in terms of photos, appearance and gender specific names e.g. appearance not matching photo ID. Guidance for staff on dealing with this is very important

Monitoring

- Monitoring and reviewing services in regard to LGBT areas, is very important. So too is considering how best this can be achieved
- LGBT organisations could be asked to carry out a survey of their members to find out how many are British Library users, and carry out a similar exercise at a later date for monitoring purposes
- Carry out equality impact assessments and publicise the results of these

Domestic abuse issues

- Statistics are high with 1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men assessed as experiencing domestic abuse which could indicate the number of Library staff who may encounter this and need support
- Often victims won't come forward. More needs to be done for the women coming forward unofficially. Community education is needed to inform children, and also for some cultural groups and LGBT cultural groups who find it harder to come out and seek support as they may not understand that domestic abuse is unacceptable.

FULL REPORT – SEXUAL ORIENTATION ISSUES

12th April 2010

12 external stakeholders took part.

[Contributions by the facilitators are in standard print, whilst comments by the focus group participants are in *italics*.]

There was a perception amongst some participants that to get a British Library reader pass, they had to be a researcher or an academic and that application was restricted. One person thought of the Library as a 'stuffy old institution' and had assumed that the building would not be wheelchair accessible.

How do people find out about the British Library?

There is currently an e-Bulletin and we use plasma screens in the library, posters, mail shots, intranet and internet.

- *Suggested the use of strategic development agencies /sector skills councils*

There is the strategic marketing section, which has targets, joint initiatives in all diversity areas and advertising.

How can the British Library better promote its services and in particular attract LGBT people?

- *because of general previous exclusion and discrimination experience, the Library needs to reach out to the LGBT community and be proactive. Say what you have on offer, or people may assume they are unrecognised and unwelcome*
- *the Library needs to think about how it can sell itself to everyone. Think about a generic article with specific focuses to educate people. Re-education is needed so people learn about British Library changes. Prepare for next February [LGBT history month] and use the diversity calendar. Being proactive is cost effective. PCS and TUC LGBT event in June could be useful [2 days of LGBT unions] Library could have a stand*
- *publish articles about the Library's work around LGBT literature, saying that you welcome research on LGBT issues*
- *use pink organisations to get information out – but don't just work with the pink media – it's a bit exclusive. Sometimes the B and the T in LGBT*

are invisible. Ensure you work with those groups too in order to be well rounded. You may need to alter your communications to be inclusive

- *the Library needs to think laterally regarding associating with the LGBT sector. Be open about what you can offer. Perhaps offer meeting rooms at a discount to unfunded organisations - then they can feel welcome as a result*
- *Fyne Times is a free LGBT magazine in Southwest. They would probably be happy to publish a British Library strap line and information on how to use the Library's services. Similarly the Library could contact other LGBT magazines e.g. DD3, Gay Times, etc*
- *an expo including history, the queer text, could be funded with LGBT theme*
- *use LGBT events - there is IDAHO day (International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia), Holocaust Memorial Day, the Pride season, through the year for LGBT. Incorporate into an annual schedule*
- *an equality impact assessment is essential – when you do Black history month, contact LGBT groups too. LGBT crosses all areas of diversity*
- *in the section of your website relating to your equality schemes, have links to LGBT organisations on line. Similarly link to domestic violence organisations on your domestic abuse policy pages*
- *One person was concerned about overkill, that too much LGBT specific communication may alienate other communities, particularly older people*

Which of you uses the British Library?

- *I used the Library to research material for a book, and articles, using rare books and I am confident in the Library in terms of sexual orientation issues, compared to other institutions*

Are there issues around accessing LGBT material?

- *The Well of Loneliness is kept in a locked cupboard, along with the Jewish Encyclopaedia etc. They have to be read next to the librarian as some readers deface them. I would not have guessed the extent of the homophobia of some British Library readers*
- *if you are a LGBT person and want to see a 'sensitive' book which means sitting next to the librarian, when you are not out, that could be uncomfortable for some people*
- *I want you to look again at your policy on books in the cupboard. Can rare first editions be seen on microfiche, or scanned onto a PC, so things can be seen in private?*
- *there is an issue around cataloguing: when researching transgender or sexuality issues in libraries, LGBT people may be categorised along with*

sexual disorders, or paedophilia. Sensitivity is needed to avoid stigmatisation or the walk of shame

- *there are issues around graphic content and privacy issues in the library. There are issues about how to offer what you have to the LGBT community. Some things may not be classified as sexual relationships. Indexing and cross referencing is needed and a policy for handling graphic issues. A mainstream idea is that LGBT issues are just about sex. When writing a dissertation on masculinity, it was difficult doing research on the assumption that the issue equalled looking at porn. Type in 'gay' and work is blocked. The firewall can be altered so that people are not excluded from access. There are key words to use for research, one of which is 'rainbow'*
- *there are no blocks on heterosexual items!*
- *advancing technology enables people to come out in their comfort zone. The Library has a huge remit of influence so could improve best practice in the LGBT arena*
- *does the British Library have a Facebook page? There are peer relationships that can develop from interests seen on an individual's Facebook page*
- *what are the physical facilities for someone not wanting to have another Reader looking over their shoulder? People don't want to be outed by virtue of their being seen to read certain content*

The Library has carrels which provide private reading cubicles.

- *is there a process for dealing with a reader who displayed homophobic/discriminatory behaviour?*

There are procedures for readers who carry out abuse which have sanctions (similar to a disciplinary process with a hearing panel if appropriate) where e.g. reader passes can be stopped for a period or removed permanently or visiting restrictions are possible. As custodians, if items are defaced, the Library's management could end up in Court. There is an induction process outlining conduct penalties, grievance procedures etc and the Welcome Team would go through the Library's conditions.

- *there could be a handbook for new reader members, 3rd party discrimination could be included in values and behaviours. Something readable is needed which is reinforced in a face to face meeting*
- *the statement needs to use words like 'homophobia' or 'LGBT'? Using words like 'inclusive' or 'we welcome everyone' does not work, the Library's statement of intent needs to be clear and specific*

- *the Library needs to be seen as somewhere where it is safe to research LGBT issues*

When we had the Sacred exhibition there were issues about wearing bulky clothing or clothing that inhibited identification, such as veils. burkhas. Overcoats and bulky outerwear are not permitted in the reading rooms for security reasons under the Conditions of Library Use. Reassessment was needed as the Library is a custodian of rare items that have been legally deposited. The Library was able to be flexible enough whilst protecting and not compromising the rare texts. - being touched can ruin them.

We are trying to catalogue newspapers. The challenge is that everyone has different priorities. We make as much as possible available. We digitise, so pages can be turned electronically for a lot of work but this work has to be prioritised.

- *The BBC Radio 4 did a 2-part programme on the rise of the lesbian novel. The Library missed a trick here – it needs to work with the BBC. Lateral thinking would be useful. Given the Equality Bill etc, interlinking would be useful which is more powerful in educating the public.*

The Library does already link with the BBC.

Would you feel comfortable reporting harassment?

- *I don't know*
- *I would*
- *is there anything in the complaints procedures?*

We have a team for this. We did a staff and public survey on the race topic; shocked by the quality and content of some responses from the public; we need to address the public side less than the staff side. We looked at public abuse and it is increasing in retail and the NHS. We are working on a Prevention and Management of Staff Abuse at work policy. We have facilities for meetings and coffee which are open to non-library users - how should we deal with non-library users, should they be abusive?

- *try a uniform approach, like the No Smoking sign.*
- *protection and legislation is recent for LGBT people. Safeguard users and staff using criteria known to all by training staff and communicating your values and expectations*
- *positive language is useful but challenging. Natural sentence structure tends to be negative. For 'Don't abuse our staff' people see 'abuse our staff'*
- *the Library needs to challenge the stereotypes about LGBT people that they are all young, male, non-disabled and white*

Developing the Library's LGBT material

- *LGBT research already carried out by the Library could facilitate work with schools and libraries. There could be a knock on effect. Link with the British Museum too. Some local libraries are ahead of you and could be useful links. 'Queer' could be a useful word and there may be a need to read between the lines to get information*
- *I approached the Library regarding working with them on LGBT issues but they were not interested, but the British Museum were, and have a tour of LGBT issues. There was a phenomenal one day event. As they welcomed us, their brand was made known. The British Library missed an opportunity*
- *in LGBT research, community organisations which publish information get their literature treated as 'grey' material and it becomes hard to find*
- *a useful leaflet could be 'What you need to do if publishing community research'. Reports get produced but then cannot be found. Often excellent research is lost as a result*

When we have our Action Plans we can show we have consulted inside the Library. We have published our Stage 2 Disability Action Plan and the Disability Action Group has up to 31 members. They have quarterly meetings with an average turnout of 25-26 Group members and they champion their own directorates. We do a statutory report annually reporting on progress and future plans, with key performance indicators going to the Board and Executive Team and their champions. It is lead from the top, down, up again and across.

- *champions are wonderful BUT it is essential to replace any champion who leaves the organisation*
- *LGBT history month should be organised by people from each gender to ensure that there is not a bias towards lesbian or gay literature*

LGBT month is new. The Unions, Action Group members and HR get together and contribute so if someone leaves, or goes on holiday, it will still continue.

This is part of a 3 yr Plan on sexual orientation. There is more on our website, the areas, related directorates and reporting systems.

There has been a history of legislation, best practice and case law for other areas like race, gender and disability, but areas such as sexual orientation, age and religion are new. When information from focus groups is gathered and summarised, the information is shared internally and goes to the Executive Team with a proposed action plan. This is then assessed and funding is

allocated where appropriate and the actions go to departments and sections for delivery.

We use focus groups to get information on expectations, rather than using long questionnaires. We can be better focussed on timing, content and outcomes, this way.

- *people taking part in consultations may not representative majority views! How do you baseline where you are at now; for plan writing you need information on users; where is the starting point?*
- *focus group members, such as those around this table, have a great deal of knowledge and can send the Library in useful directions for learning. We can provide ideas for you to build on*
- *the Library BBC should liaise with other organisations such as the BBC and the Museums Association, to share consultation feedback and good practice*
- *schools do little on LGBT issues*
- *what an organisation like the British Library says and does has an impact on other organisations. You are an educator*
- *linking with the libraries throughout the UK could be a way forward – could lead to a consultation network*

FULL REPORT – GENDER, TRANSGENDER AND DOMESTIC ABUSE ISSUES

13th April 2010

9 external stakeholders took part.

[Contributions by the facilitators are in standard print, whilst comments by the focus group members are in *italics*.]

Domestic abuse issues

Domestic abuse cuts across all diversity areas. Based on statistics alone, 287 British Library staff at any time could be experiencing some form of domestic abuse.

If people go to a safe house, they still work, use the library etc. Perpetrators have come to the library to see an employee as their control has been lost in their domestic situation. We have experience of readers having issues at the Library too. We have an interest in preventing and managing abusive behaviour from outside to inside the British Library.

- *there are issues regarding employers that need addressing*
- *police response is variable but victims need information on where to get support and this is key; the support services then usually help irrespective of justice agencies. There is more LGBT research emerging on the needs of survivors*
- *domestic abuse is a pattern of controlling behaviour. Justice only focuses on one incident. We suggest other ways of collecting evidence in a broader way. The government has introduced a strategy, so we want to see violence against women being a contributory factor to women's equality*
- *many Asian Muslims from the North of the UK are stereotyped. What is the conviction rate for domestic violence?*

There is a very low conviction rate, 4%. I deal with survivors daily but see things objectively as a lawyer, and it is essential to have high levels of proof and evidence, but I see the effects of this high level of evidence on the victims, when cases cannot be pushed through.

Should you have a lower burden of proof?

- *often victims won't come forward. More needs to be done for the women coming forward unofficially, as they think it is un-Islamic to complain, or a noble thing to be beaten. Community education is needed*
- *there are gay/lesbian Muslims who find it hard to come out and receive abuse at home*

- *what happens if the woman falsely accuses the man?*

It usually happens around child contact, to strengthen applications for contact. It is often foreseeable. The law protects both ways. In the civil court, a temporary order may be granted. Legislation may be useful but there will be people misusing it, albeit rarely.

- *forced marriages, domestic violence, honour killings are against Islam. Islam gives both genders many rights*

I saw the Karma Nirvana presentation recently which is an organisation that has been formed by two Muslims females who are survivors of forced marriage, honour and shame scenarios and want to help other females and males who are facing these situations. The situations can be oppressive and abusive and the two females have become ostracised from their families and have put themselves at risk in confronting both their families and other families who believe in honour and shame. The organisation has moved office due to threats, hate mail and other unpleasant targeting. They have concerns about personal and organisational survival. They have campaigned with Councils and schools and key affected areas but these organisations do not want to rock the boat.

There is however statutory guidance that agencies must respond to honour violence, domestic violence etc.

The National Domestic Helpline can refer victims to support and safety. Gypsy traveller communities need help too.

Transgender issues

Generally speaking transgender people may experience discrimination or access concerns in their day to day life. The Library aims for equal access to goods and services for all and would like to discuss any access concerns for transgender people. The Library also aims to provide good service and be aware of different needs so is interested to discuss this also.

- *do you have resources list for transgender issues at BL?*

We have reference assistants to help but the Library may consider looking at this as a new area/project. A curator recently took a sabbatical for 3 months to research LGBT reserves at the Library from 1500 AD and has started to document this. People may know about the books but there are other document sources such as newspapers. The Library does look at different projects and would consider them for action plans.

- *will you seek outside assistance for employees on medical issues, legal issues, domestic violence etc.*

The British Library is tasked with selectively archiving the internet and is looking at what can be resourced in terms of information access. The Library would have some mechanisms by information provided to redirect people to experts but there are other organisations who would specialise and be experts too. For instance we don't have information on procedures for transgender people needing domestic violence advice but there are specialist organisations that could be referenced. On the employment side we have law and best practice but we have to develop procedures and policy for employees ourselves. There needs to be more consideration and debate about access to services.

- *experts could present at your Annual Conference*

The British Library is interested in your comments around LGBT areas of concern with regard to remote access, physical access, customer services, events and reader facilities. How does transgender relate to these areas?

- *transgender people will want to avoid social difficulties so prefer remote access. How do transgender people find out what resources are available?*
- *regarding physical access, there can be issues around which gender toilet to use. There are trans men too, and those that don't fit into either gender. Unless there is abuse in the WC, then let them use whatever WC is appropriate; it would be good to have gender neutral WCs*
- *it's not just about the risk of abuse, some women only want to be with women. It isn't about fear of abuse*
- *a trans woman was denied access to a ladies WC at a Pride event. There was a trans man with a beard, and he was not told that he should use the Ladies as he didn't have the certificate. Appearance can be deceiving*

The Library are looking at moving to a more accessible WC, with child changing facilities too, which can be used by anyone, including people in transition.

- *the use of WCs by trans people is a training issue, to ensure that Library staff do not make inappropriate decisions*
- *because of the gender duty equality act, the onus is on the organisation to show it trains to prevent discrimination*

The Library has a large remit / package of training; but is aware of the cost impact too and thus has to be selective on delivery of face to face training; but does have a compulsory interactive online equality training tool, which includes a test for those undertaking the training.

- *you have personal appraisals, is there an equality aspect to these which includes LGBT? There are other ways to train informally, seminars, noting key dates, allowing staff paid time off to attend workshops. Is the equality objective in the plan?*

There is core competency for performance in that area and there are specific objectives too, for HR, key managers and frontline services.

- *ID is an issue for transitioning and transgender people and you need ID to be a British Library reader. You ask for photo and address IDs. In respect of trans people, there may be issues of appearance not matching photo ID*
- *it is dreadful for a user to be quizzed on personal identity - so guidance on dealing with this is very important. When in a dialogue with an official, all sorts of suspicions arise if the respondent is uncomfortable with the questioning. It could be a transgender issue*

Female to male people blend in more easily and less prone to challenge on visual ID.

- *monitoring and reviewing British Library services regarding LGBT issues is very important*
- *in the long term, how will the Library monitor its activities and performance? How do you show that you have reached more trans people than before - how will this be measured?*

The Library can not collect all statistics so will not always know, for instance the Library do ask people questions around gender identity on equality sheets, e.g. is the person of the same gender as that assigned at birth but people are not keen on completing these sections. There is also a 'prefer not to say' option. There have been gender questions and these are on the staff survey now but the Library has very few statistics and not a long history of collecting the statistics that we have. Also the Library needs to consider what it captures and how will it help us. Will it help us fund projects?

- *distinguish between employees and customers. The latter are none of your business. You cannot ask me if I have been another gender now legally as I have a Certificate*

If someone is doing research, it is legitimate to ask a question and to see if there is an explanation or something that needs to be resolved. If the equality of services and employment provided by the Library is to be measured and monitored, then statistics showing usage, performance etc are important. The responses are optional and this is a separate issue to asking people for a gender certificate in inappropriate circumstances. You cannot just ask someone

to complete a questionnaire. There is no legal obligation. Given the option of male/female/transgender, people tick male or female, and you don't know the transgender statistic unless you ask, and there is an option to respond.

- *how effective is your public service in reaching transgender people and how is it evaluated?*

Can you suggest how to do this to inform the Action Group? This is exactly what we are talking about when we are looking to measure and monitor.

- *when we do events we have detailed monitoring forms, which are optional to complete, and most people are willing when we say the information will help with future service provision*
- *a 'suggestions' section is also useful on monitoring forms*

Not all LGBT people belong to an LGBT organisation but if the Library asked LGBT organisations to ask their members whether they were British Library users, would it work?

- *we would put this request in our Newsletter. Responses can be anonymous*
- *doing it online is good. I am on Twitter, and a link is useful. Student Unions are useful too*
- *consult with customers. What do they want?*
- *I would like to see more challenging of homophobic behaviour - what are your commitments in those situations? Is there an LGBT customer forum?*

Even with today's focus groups we have difficulty getting people to attend, and we have the same with difficulty with most forums even when using external and internal posters, plasma screens, intranet and internet and e-mailing out a bulletin to readers and service users in excess of 45,000. However British Library staff set up a social LGBT group and we have set up a corporate Sexual Orientation Action Group for departments with specific action plans.

How do we go forward?

- *as long as you are considerate with your staff and deal equally with all, why do this?*

Because of legislation.

- *what gets measured gets done*

The British Library needs to apply for grants to fund its services. There is often a requirement to evidence Policies and performance results around equality provision.

- *what are the plans to move beyond British Library remit? I could go to the Bodleian Library and ask if they are doing anything similar. You are a point of reference for other libraries. You distribute ideas and show the way forward. Pride's name was changed to include LGBT; the organisation didn't change, but other organisations took similar actions. Others will follow good examples set by the British Library. Does best practice get shared?*
- *What is the British Library doing about local Libraries*

The Library is a national body that is separate in organisation and structure from local libraries – this is the beginning of a project for the Library but we have shared best practice from other projects that are more advanced such as those in relation to Disability or religion and belief and will likely share progress again in the future. Unlike Disability, Gender and Race initiatives which have a longer history of law, case law, and best practice, other areas such as Transgender, sexual orientation and age are new development areas for most organisations.

- *We are really happy and pleased that the Library has opened the door to initiatives like this – more of this should ,happen- The Library is like a beacon for this and it would be good to show case this for a way forward.*

Given the resourcing and expertise the Library would need for any identification of transgender literature, if approached, would you be happy to provide a list to inform the initial development of a transgender reading resource for the library?

- *all participants indicated that they would be happy to assist with this*

As we close today your points will become key issues for the various groups at BL to consider. As a final request can you each suggest one thing for the Library to consider:

Feedback summary of main areas:

- *be mindful of equality awareness and networking*
- *with respect to online and other resources, be as diverse as your customers*
- *regarding domestic abuse, statistics indicate that there will be members of the Library's staff who are subject to domestic abuse – have help available for these staff members*
- *have good written promises for staff and service users*
- *carry out equality impact assessments and publicise the results of these, and action plans*
- *the British Library needs to be proactive with good stringent policies and guidance;*

EXTERNAL CONSULTATION

- *showcase good practice and share skills and expertise*
- *hold high profile exhibitions on transgender literature and issues which will educate the public*
- *develop partnerships and work with partners, explore the issues in more detail*
- *health and safety issues –for instance sensitivity for first aiders when handling trans people or people with domestic abuse issues. This may be complex to resolve.*

Appendix A- Sexual orientation introduction

The first Gender consultation was 3 years ago and the action plan will be completed in April 2010. For the next 3-year plan, the Library would like a separate sexual orientation plan, as this has been identified as a strategic need, and follows initiatives from the Gender Action Group. This is the first sexual orientation consultation and we need feedback to know how the Library is doing and what actions are needed.

The Library is forming a Sexual Orientation Sub Group and would like to see some more members. The Library would like to progress in this area and would like to discuss all aspects of sexual orientation.

The Library is interested in everyone's views with regard to sexual orientation and different orientation.

Some staff in St Pancras have formed a social club for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual staff and details may be found through the sports and social club site on the intranet. The Library would be interested in knowing how people feel about having a similar network in Boston Spa.

There have been big changes in a short time since the introduction of equal rights 1967. It is clear that it is easy to change the law but not as easy to change people's attitudes. Gay and lesbian people have had protection since 2003. Things have changed but there is evidence that harassment still goes on e.g. in the UK, over 4 million people have witnessed homophobic issues but have not reported them.

Gay rights are very important, as is coming out at work. It is the individual's choice to make this decision and the employer's duty to help and support when the decision has been made. It was found that well-being and productivity were much improved if people were treated fairly and taken seriously.

Employers need to take the subject of sexual orientation very seriously, and equality is the right thing to do, as there may be legal obligations and ethical issues. All people need to be treated fairly. This is best practice from recruitment onwards. If employees are happy, they will want to stay.

Customer Services need to be involved. There is an economic argument as well. We need to be creative to proactively create a workplace for all people. Our Policy needs to be legally compliant and up to date. The anti gay Policy includes behaviour in the workplace. We need to support people who have been harassed, and train staff, especially managers, on how to deal with issues raised.

Benefits need to be the same for same sex partners at work, at grass roots level and sexual orientation issues need monitoring.

The Library's Policy needs to be up to date for civil partners etc.

The Library has started monitoring sexual orientation statistics. As this is in its early stages, statistical information is low and the early data needs to be treated with caution. Later there will be more to measure and benchmark against – if we don't monitor, we don't know what is happening. Also statistics need to be monitored as to who sees the figures and how the figures are monitored and communicated in the workplace. Confidentiality must be maintained so that individuals can not be identified.

As part of the staff survey the Library needs to ask people if they are living in the same gender that they were born with, in order to be able to monitor progress and support. Some questions can be open to misinterpretation i.e: in the gender survey in 2007, no one objected to be asked about their sexual orientation, but in the last staff survey, people thought this was personal and could not see what the requirement to know this was. Some thought they were being asked about their sexual activities rather than their sexual orientation. Also people were reluctant to give this information as they were worried in case they could be identified, so assurances need to be given.

Reassuring people is very important when asking questions like are they out at work. It would not be a good idea to rush into monitoring. Transport for London are very good at engaging with LGBT people e.g.:

- safety using transport
- lesbian/gay people from youth groups meet apprentices and ask questions, for example: are you able to come out at work. This makes them more comfortable to be out and gives a positive message to other staff

They run a scheme whereby they have a member of staff at a higher grade who is out, to mentor new recruits. This could make them feel more comfortable about coming out

Appendix B - Domestic abuse introduction

Domestic abuse is an area of concern as the British Library wants to support employees who may be experiencing domestic abuse, and managers, to enable them to assist their employees to an appropriate level. Domestic abuse is a key Library and National Project under the Libraries' Gender Equality Standard.

The Government introduced the National Domestic Violence Delivery Plan to address all the aspects of domestic violence ranging from prevention, victim care and the responses from the Criminal Justice System. The Domestic Violence Crime and Victims Act 2004 introduced a statutory basis for local agencies to hold homicide reviews for victims of domestic violence. As well as increased multi-government agencies working through the Crime Prosecution Service, Police Authorities and charities e.g. NSPCC, Victim Support, Refuge, Men's Aid and Broken Rainbow supporting the LGBT community.

The Library is working towards having a formal policy in place with supporting mechanisms and has a draft Domestic Abuse Policy ready to be negotiated with the trade unions this year. .

Government definition of what constitutes domestic abuse:

“Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality.”

This includes issues of concern to Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities, such areas of 'honour based violence', female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage. Domestic Abuse in BAME communities is highly visible on the news. Honour based violence is more often reported It is complex and in many cases is a violent reaction within a family against someone who is perceived to have brought shame or dishonour on that family.

Domestic abuse in general may be in any of these forms:

- psychological – manipulation tactics, making a partner feel like they cannot cope without him/her, no choices in decision making
- physical – violence or in extreme cases, murder
- sexual – rape or sexual aggression
- financial – withholding money or stopping their partner from working
- emotional – calling names, undermining their partner in public which affects their self-confidence

1:4 women is likely to experience some form of domestic abuse, compared to 1:6 men. Domestic abuse affects:

- the individual - causing stress, anxiety, depression, mental health issues
- the family - where domestic violence occurs within a family, 90% of violence is witnessed by a child and in 50% of cases, children are directly abused
- the employer – domestic violence costs businesses in the UK over £2.7billion a year
- the tax payer – domestic abuse costs £23billion a year (Social Services, Housing, Justice System,

Appendix C - Introduction to the transgender consultation topics

Statistically:

- 1:2000 people is born Intersex – with ambiguous genitalia

- 1:80 born with some kind of sex/gender anomaly that may be associated with chromosomal patterns
- in a 2004 survey of major UK employers – 3:1000 employees identified as transgender (Gender Identity disorder)
- in 2000, ratios for transgender surgery: 71.5% Male to Female/28.5% Female to Male (indication now closer to 55%/45%)

Transgender is the collective umbrella term used for the transgender community (transsexual, transgender, transvestites and cross-dressers).

- Transsexual – feels consistent and overwhelming desire to transition and fulfil their life as a member of the opposite gender
- Transgender – individual (like a transsexual) transitions (sometimes with hormone therapy and/or cosmetic surgery) to live in chosen gender role but has not undergone, or intend to undergo, genital surgery
- Transvestite – dressing in clothing of the opposite sex – majority male to female (social or erotic) – do not seek hormones/surgery

Individuals put a lot of thought and anxiety into making the change and the process is very long. First someone must live as the other gender for a year to prove that they are serious about the change. In this year they can begin the hormone treatment. Sometimes the individual cannot have the surgery for medical, financial and personal reasons. Without support, people who live in the sex they do not identify with, or are suffering in the change-over, can become depressed and commit suicide.

In some situations people are married and have children, so they have to think about the children, marital partners, family, friends and work colleagues.

For the Library, with the estimate of there being around 5,000 people in the UK with gender dysphoria (discontent with the biological sex they were born with), the instance of support being required is quite low, but the Library would like to have a Policy so that they know how to support them people going through a gender change. Also the Policy and associated guidelines will increase knowledge and expertise in handling issues that may arise in public and service user areas.