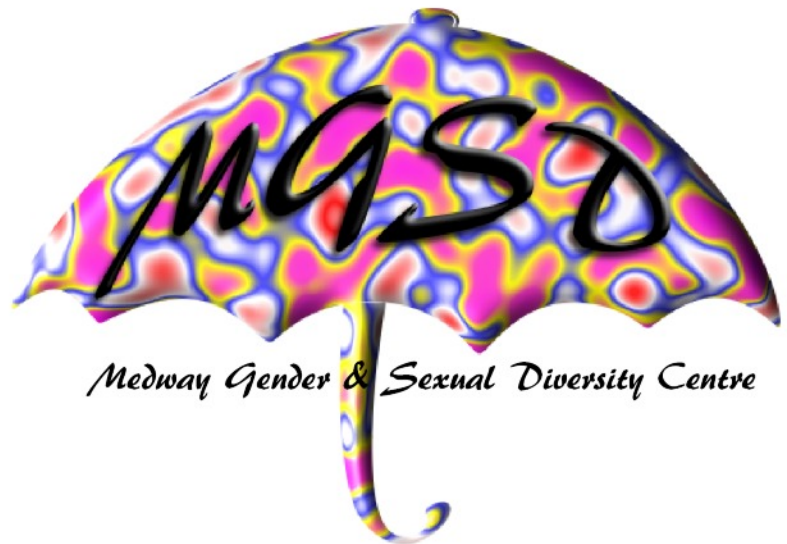


South East Gender Initiative
Medway Gender & Sexual Diversity Centre



Annual Report
2015

Thank you to All our
Supporters
Including private donations



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Chairs Statement

Hilary Cooke, Chair of the management team 2015.

This Annual Report is published on behalf of the South East Gender Initiative (SEGI) and Medway Gender & Sexual Diversity Centre. It covers the actions and activities carried out during the period April 2014 - April 2015, to achieve it's aims and objectives.

Firstly I would like to thank all the people and supporters who have helped support and run SEGI / MGSDC over this year.

The Idea behind a Medway based transgender support project was developed by Jacqui Alyn-Stacey and her partner Martin Weeds, with Hilary Cooke and Peter Moorcraft. They formed the management team to begin the project, and through their voluntary donations of time and funding they moved the project from an idea to a functioning support organisation.

We must also thank all our financial supporters who kindly donated funds or provided grants. As well as donations from individuals and organisations, they included a small grant for this period from Medway Council

The South East Gender Initiative was formed in October 2011 with the coming together of the fmanagement committee. The SEGI is a Constituted Not For Profit Community Group also known as the Medway Gender & Sexual Divesity Centre (MGSDC) based in Rochester, Medway, Kent.

The members of the management committee come from a diverse background and have direct experience of, and working with, lesbien, gay, bisexual & transgender* people, people with gender dysphoria, people who have or are undergoing gender reassignment, health promotion programs for LGBT people, transgender awareness training to organisations i.e. Kent Police, NHS, counsellors and other health professionals and providers of health and wellbeing services.

The Equality Act 2010 has provided a duty on public bodies and organisations working on their behalf to engage with service users to ensure that those with protected characteristics, including gender identity and sexual orientation are not discriminated against. This act has brought awareness of transgender people and the issues they face to the fore and media interest and broadcasts on transgender issues have and will increase the number of people who may seek help to understand and come to terms with their own gender identity.

The SEGI / MGSDC promotes awareness of and provides practical services for Transsexual*/Transgender people in Medway and Kent through peer support, mentoring and advice, delivered from the Rochester based drop-in facility, the Medway Gender and Sexual Diversity Centre (MGSDC) 331 High Street, Rochester, Medway, Kent ME1 1DA. The MGSDC was the first Transsexual/Transgender orientated drop-in centre based in Medway Kent.

* TRANSGENDER is an inclusive umbrella term used to describe the diversity of gender identity and expression for all people who do not conform to common / binary ideas of gender roles.

* TRANSSEXUAL is a medical term describing people whose gender and biological sex do not line up, and who often seek medical treatment to bring their body and gender identity into alignment.

There are several terms used to commonly described transsexual people including MTF (abbreviation for male to female transsexual people), FTM (abbreviation for female to male transsexual people), transman and transwoman (common language terms used to describe FTM and MTF transsexual people), (Stonewall)

There have been three surveys of the LGBTQ community in Medway and Kent

During 2014 - 2015 as well as providing our core services of counselling and peer support we worked in partnership with METRO Centre to provide volunteers to support their HIV Rapid Testing Service which we hosted at the MGSD Centre.

We have seen an increase in young people accessing our counselling service and the need for local support groups for younger transgender people. As well as tailoring our support to include younger LGBTQ people we will continue to fulfil the aims of our mission:

SEGI / MGSDC Mission

The South East Gender Initiative (SEGI) / Medway Sexual Diversity Centre (MGSDC) exists to promote and improve the health and wellbeing of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual / Transgender people and those Questioning their Gender Identity or Sexuality through

Support, Education, Training and Information

SEGI / MGSDC provides a place where LGBTQ people their families and friends can meet in a safe environment to enable them to receive peer support, education, training, advice, and information, signposting opportunities for service users to access services with partnership organisations and other service providers.

SEGI / MGSDC also provides a resource to other organisations, public bodies and private companies to enable them to understand the needs of the LGBTQ community in the South East of England.

LGBTQ Needs Assessment

The published evidence about the needs of Transsexual/Transgender people nationally is growing, and it all continues to point to poor levels of support in all areas, leaving the transgender community feeling discriminated against in the work place, by service providers, and by health care providers. This leads to poor mental health and wellbeing outcomes with a high rate of transgender people attempting suicide due to lack of support.

A lot of good work is going on to change the way transgender people are treated by society, with better representation within the media and by political initiatives to highlight the issues and improve the lives of transgender people in the UK.

The evidence about the needs of transgender people living working or socialising in Medway, Kent and the surrounding south east area is limited but reflects the national picture. Most of the research carried out included Transgender people within a larger LGBT group. Questions asked in LGBT surveys were in the main aimed at the LGB community therefore little data is available regarding the needs of the Transgender population.

There have been three surveys of the LGBT community in Medway and Kent

Medway Health Promotion survey - Many Voices Medway LGBT Consultation 2005

Metro Centre - Branching Out Kent & Medway LGBT Needs Assessment 2008

Metro Centre - East Kent Needs Assessment 2010

These assessments all point to the needs of LGBT people in Medway & Kent.

Mental Health and Wellbeing - 82% of respondents to the 2005 survey felt emotionally or mentally distressed as a result of issues related to being LGBT.

Social Acceptance – 32% of respondents to the 2005 survey said there were places they avoided because of homophobic / trans phobic reaction from others.

Bullying in School and College – 71% of respondents to the 2005 survey advised they thought not enough was being done to tackle bullying in school or college

Crime, Harassment and Community Safety – of respondents to the 2005 survey

60% advised they had been verbally abused
37% advised they had been physically attacked
17% had been attacked with a weapon
17% had property damaged
47% had been threatened with 'outing'
33% were subject to graffiti
7% had offensive mail

The latest national surveys also confirmed that Mental Health, Social Acceptance, Bullying and Hate Crime are all still of concern to the LGBTQ community.

METRO Centre Youth Chances Survey reported in 2014:-

Almost half of young gay people have contemplated suicide over their sexuality and 50 per cent have suffered with mental health issues. A new report published in January 2014 warned that a generation of lesbian, gay and transgender people are facing a mental health crisis prompting concerns that schools and health services are failing gay teenagers.

The Youth Chances project, England's largest social study into the lives of young LGBT people, warned that schools neglecting the issues affecting gay teenagers contribute to a climate of fear and hostility. Led by the charity Metro, the project questioned more than 7,000 young LGBT people between the ages of 16 and 25. The project found that 50 per cent of those questioned had self-harmed and 42 per cent had sought medical help for anxiety or depression. Findings also revealed one in five LGBT pupils claimed they were physically attacked at school. Just 25 per cent of young LGBT pupils said schools had taught them about safe sex with a same sex partner.

Dr Greg Ussher, Metro's chief executive, said: 'The clear message is that they are badly served. What they want most is emotional support and they are not getting it.'

http://www.youthchances.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/YC_REPORT_FirstFindings_2014.pdf

How have we worked to promote the Aims of South East Gender Initiative?

- **Support-** practical advice, support, information to the trans community, peer support, support for family members and their supporters.

We have an established facility the 'Medway Gender & Sexual Diversity Centre' at 331 High Street Rochester ME1 1DA where we facilitate the provision of peer support for the transgender community.

As part of the support provided to our service users we established links with other organisations to provide information and signposting of services they offer.

We worked with Metro Centre to provide health and wellbeing services with respect to safe sex and HIV / STD prevention.

We also provide a dedicated counselling service to help with issues including gender identity and sexual orientation as well as general issues that affect peoples mental health and wellbeing. This service is open to anyone who needs support, not just members of our support groups.

We canvas members of our peer support group to assess what information and activities they require to help them improve their lives and life choices. We have provided information, education materials on topics of interest to the group as well as an opportunity for social interaction.

Members of the peer support group have advised that they find the service very useful, that it has helped improve their lives. Peer support and counselling have given them a chance to explore the opportunities that are available to help them reach their potential and live happier fulfilling lives.

- **Education** – raising awareness and understanding among health and social care professionals, schools, employers and public service providers, consulting with HR teams.

Members of the SEGI Management Team sit on local advisory groups and/or work with other organisations to help inform on, and raise awareness of, the needs of the transgender community. These groups and organisations include:

Kent Independent Police Advisory Groups.
Medway Council
Medway Community Voluntary Services
Metro Centre

- **Training** - working in partnership with other agencies, to provide a resource on Transsexual/Transgender issues.

We continue to work to promote greater understanding of transgender issues among the wider community.

- **Information** - encouraging greater integration-reduction of poverty, ill health, unemployment, mental suffering, risk of self-harm, reporting of trans phobic crime.

Working with and for the transgender community we have encouraged trans people to socialise and integrate with the wider community, to help reduce isolation, depression and mental suffering.

Provided a dedicated counselling service to combat mental health issues.

Held regular meetings with Kent Police Local Community Liaison Officers to build confidence in reporting Hate Crime incidents.

Worked with Medway NHS Clinical Commissioning Group to review its equality and diversity policy

Profit & Loss For Period Covering 01/04/2014 to 31/03/2015

Revenues

<i>Income</i>		£0.00
<i>Interest Income</i>		£0.00
<i>Other Income</i>		
<i>Grants</i>	£1,000.00	
<i>Reimbursed Expenses</i>		£0.00
<i>Sales</i>	£0.00	
<i>Use of Rooms</i>	£10,148.12	

Total Revenue **£11,148.12**

Expenses

<i>Expenses</i>		£0.00
<i>Insurance</i>		
<i>Disability Insurance</i>	£0.00	
<i>Liability Insurance</i>	£125.08	
<i>Professional Fees Counselling</i>	£300.00	
<i>Counselling Supervision</i>	£1,242.50	
<i>Rent</i>		£0.00
<i>Rent Featherstones</i>	£4,860.00	
<i>Evolution</i>	£1,710.00	
<i>Travel and Entertainment</i>	£0.00	
<i>Entertainment</i>	£0.00	
<i>Meals</i>	£0.00	
<i>Travel</i>	£893.90	
<i>Utilities</i>	£0.00	
<i>Electric</i>	£799.85	
<i>Internet</i>	£12.10	
<i>Phone</i>	£0.00	
<i>Water</i>	£531.06	

Total Expenses **£10,474.49**

Net income for Period £673.63

Management Team

Trustee / Chair / Secretary	Hilary Cooke.....
Trustee / Treasurer	Kim Ricketts.....
Trustee / Members	Peter Moorcraft.....

The SEGI / MGSDC is a not for profit community group managed by a team of 3 individuals. The management team is bound by the constitution document.

The SEGI / MGSD Centre based in Rochester Medway provides a safe place where LGBTQ people can discuss the issues that affect their lives and access information to help them move forward in their life.

Members of the SEGI / MGSDC management team have worked with the LGB and Transgender community in Medway since the late 1980's, providing advice and information via Medway NHS Health Promotion Service, Medway Gay Men's Health Project and XESGEN Project.

This work included providing health & wellbeing / HIV prevention information, peer support and advice to Transsexual/Transgender people, providing diversity training to Kent Police, NHS Staff, Counsellors and other health professionals / organisations. They have also been involved in health and wellbeing initiatives to reduce smoking and alcohol consumption.

Trustee / Chair / Secretary - Hilary Cooke, Dip TGBE,MGBT, HABC-NADT

Hilary is an Equality & Diversity Trainer and a founder member of XESGEN Project SEGI / MGSDC. She provides Gender Awareness and Equality & Diversity training on behalf of SEGI / MGSDC, as well as helping to facilitate peer support groups. Hilary also represents the transgender community on Kent Independent Police Advisory Groups, and works with other groups & organisations and the wider LGBTQ community

Trustee / Treasurer - Kim Ricketts

Kim has acted as Treasurer for SEGI / MGSDC since April 2013. Kim has worked in adult education providing training to counselling students as well as diversity training. Kim is a qualified Counsellor specialising in gender and sexuality issues.

Trustee / Member - Peter Moorcraft

Peter is a founder member of Medway Gay Mens Project, SEGI / MGSDC and a Professional Consultant on Human Sexuality & Gender Diversity. Peter has worked with NHS and Public Health to promote sexual health and wellbeing initiatives and works with other LGBT groups & organisations.

Looking Forward 2016

In the coming year SEGI / MGSDC will continue to provide its peer support and counselling services to the LGBTQ population of Medway & Kent. We will also continue to work with other organisations to promote greater awareness and understanding of the issues that affect transgender people.

Due to an increase in younger transgender people using our counselling services we are planning to develop a young transgender support group for those under 21. This is an area of support that is needed in Medway with young people currently needing help having to travel to other locations to access peer support services.

Working with other organisations and local LGBT groups we intend to continue to provide health and wellbeing initiatives to our service user group.

Contact Details

The South East Gender Initiative is based in Rochester and can be contacted as follows.

Postal address:

**South East Gender Initiative
Medway Gender & Sexual Diversity Centre
331 High Street
Rochester
Medway
ME1 1DA**

Telephone: **01634 408668** (Confidential Answering Service)

email: **info@mgsd-centre.org** **info@genderinit.org**

Website: **www.mgsd-centre.org** **www.genderinit.org**

Facebook: **www.facebook.com/MGSDC** **www.facebook.com/genderinit**

