

**Minutes of the Steering Committee  
Connexions Development Fund  
The Jarman Centre  
13/12/02 @ 3.30pm**

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**Present**

Steve Aitken HIV Team, Jarman Centre (SA)  
Francis Carbery SELF, Blackburn with Darwen PCT (FC)  
Chris Finney SRE Development Officer (CF)  
Sue Lindsey YMCA (SL)  
John Marsden Lancashire Friend (JM)  
Jeremy Sharples Lancashire Friend (JS)  
Sharon Whalley Lancashire Friend (SW)

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**1. Introductions**

There was a round of introductions. JM volunteered himself as the secretary. JS chaired the meeting and will report to the Executive Committee of Lancashire Friend. SL is available for sessional work.

Everyone provided contact details so that the minutes can be posted out.

**2. Co-options**

The meeting discussed widening the membership to include a young person, someone from the ethnic minority and a member of staff from Connexions. Other suggestions included someone from Blackburn College and someone from the Learning Mentor Scheme. SL asked for John Poulson from the Youth Service to be included.

The meeting agreed to approach Sarah Coupe from Connexions to ask if they wanted a place on the committee (Action: JS).

Abdul Mullah at Bank Top Community Centre would be asked to join the group (Action: SL)

If Abdul Mullah is unable to join JM will contact Abdul at the Foyer Project and then Nav and Mukhtar (NASEEB)

John Poulson will be asked to join and was added to the contact list and will receive a copy of the minutes and the date of the next meeting (Action SL & JM).

**3. Function**

SA outlined the function of the steering committee: To oversee and manage the writing of a report with recommendations about the problems young lesbian, gay and bisexual people have accessing services (including Connexions) in Blackburn with Darwen.

#### **4. Time Table**

The official deadline for the report is March 2003, but Connexions have struggled to put the funding in place on time. We will certainly have the report written by April 2003.

One possible timetable might be: January - prepare the project  
February/March - research  
March/April - write the report

#### **5. The Project**

The funding application was very broad in its proposals and it is for the committee to decide on the shape of the project, including research methods and target groups. SA has already contacted Edge Hill regarding farming the research out to them. The cost (some £15,000) made this impossible.

After a discussion it was decided that in addition to a literature review we would target service providers, young people aged 13-16 and young people aged 17-19. SA agreed to complete a review of literature.

SA said that Angie at the Jarman Centre had offered to help with the processing of statistics. He also suggested we might need to purchase a Software Package.

There was some discussion about which service providers we would target: schools, the employment service, social services, Connexions and the Youth Service were all suggested.

To research the problem 13-16 year old gay, lesbian and bisexual children have with accessing services SA suggested interviewing school nurses. CF suggested contacting learning mentors and the pupil referral scheme.

When asked about the attitude of governors CF said it depended on the type of research that was intended. Making the research broad would help.

SA suggested surveying groups of children about accessing services and asking them what they thought it might be like for LGB children. This would be a useful marker.

Problems accessing young lesbian, gay and bisexual people may be a feature of the report.

SA pointed out that there was little monitoring of homophobic bullying at the moment.

#### **6. Action Research**

The funding is provided by Connexions for "action research". This is not about testing a hypothesis; it is about someone from the community working with the community. An activity such as group work or confidence building is organised and the research findings are a by-product of the activity.

The meeting discussed taking a group of children on a residential weekend. This would be a "diversity" weekend and might involve children from secondary schools, special schools and youth groups. Youth groups can be accessed via the Youth Service and CAMHS.

One possible venue is Coldwell Activity Centre near Nelson. This has some 20 dormitory style beds with facilities for disabled children and is set in lovely countryside.

Youth workers would be needed and we could ask the Youth Service to provide them and invoice Lancashire Friend.

Support Workers at Crosshill School might also be interested in a residential weekend.

### **Date of Next Meeting**

10/01/03 @ 1pm  
Jarman Centre