



**lancashire  
friend**

# Information Pack

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Lancashire Friend is a charity for the lesbian and gay people in Lancashire, and their friends and families. We offer a range of services, from a phonenumber to free professional counselling to befriending and regular social events. This leaflet aims to inform you of these services.

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## **Phoneline**

Our free phonenumber runs three nights a week, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, 7.30pm till 9.30pm.

The volunteers who answer the phone are given full training on how to handle a caller, who could be ringing for information about their local gay pub, or needing someone to talk to because of how they feel. The phonenumber receives a lot off calls about different topics, but there's always support available whatever they need.

The information we provide comes from several sources – we use a computer database of resources useful to LGB people; we use information passed on to us by local groups and from gay magazines; and we also use our own experiences, the things we know, things we've done and things we've learnt.

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## **Befriendings**

A befriending is a great way for a client to get support from us in person.

A befriending is when two of our volunteers meet up with a client. What happens then is based around what the client wants – they may just want to chat face to face to another gay person, so they might go somewhere like a café and just chat. The client may want support in going to a gay venue, so we may go with them to a local gay pub or club, or even further away to places like Manchester or Blackpool, whatever the client wants to do. The service is completely based around the client, and what we can do to support them.

Befriendings always take place with two of our volunteers for safety, so

no one is ever alone. We also usually meet in a public place. We occasionally go to a clients house, but only if appropriate, and by prior arrangement.

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## **Outreach Work**

We frequently get involved in public events which need us to go out and make ourselves known, and make people aware of the services we provide.

Over the past year, this has included having information stalls at Blackburn Mela, Blackburn Arts in the Park, a council event for Sex and Relationship Education services and at Manchester Pride. We were also very proud to have been part in the Manchester Pride Parade 2004, which was a great day for us, and to raise awareness of the charity.

We have previously held drop in sessions at Accrington and Rossendale College which allowed young people to come and talk to us directly. Although these sessions have now finished, we are looking at restarting them in other colleges.

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## **Counselling**

Lancashire Friend is able to provide a free counselling service to anyone effected by LGB issues.

All our counsellors are trained and qualified externally, and all have their own experiences of LGB issues in some way.

The counselling is usually provided from our base in Blackburn, but can be offered from other places by arrangement.

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## **Safer Sex Packs**

'BLUSH – Blackburn Uniting Sexuality & Health' is a project started several years ago by the NHS to provide free condoms to the local gay community. Now, Lancashire Friend is involved in the project, working with the Jarman Centre, part of Blackburn with Darwen Primary Care Trust.

The packs are now put together by our volunteers during the phoneline

hours, and are made up of a condom, lubricant sachet, and an insert with information and contacts. These packs are then distributed to local gay pubs and clubs for free.

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## **Publicity**

Publicity is necessary for our group to attract new clients, and make other services aware of what we can provide.

We currently have leaflets and posters distributed throughout the region, in pubs, schools, doctors surgeries and council branches. We're also listed in local newspapers, and LGB magazines. However, we always need to do more to make ourselves known to the LGB community and to local services.

Alongside this, runs our website, [Lancashirefriend.org.uk](http://Lancashirefriend.org.uk). This contains in-depth information about the charity, local LGB resources, and links to other groups. This is updated regularly.

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## **Admin**

As we are a charity run completely by volunteers, there's a lot of administration work that we need to do.

General correspondence has to be managed regularly, as do sending out information to anyone who requests it, and linking with local groups and services.

We also have to raise funds to keep the charity running, and to fund any additional projects we want to run. Fundraising is a very important task in the group, as it is essential to our continuation.

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## **Associations**

We are associated with many local groups who help us to provide our service, including:

- Blackburn with Darwen PCT
- Brook Blackburn
- Connexions
- FLAG Burnley
- Lancashire Constabulary
- Blackburn with Darwen Community Network

**To contact us for further information**

Helpline

0800 052 0151

Open 1930 - 2130 Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday

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The Jarman Centre  
Blackburn  
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