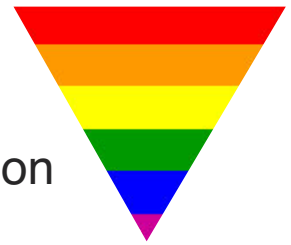




OLGA

Older Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Trans Association
A Community Network



PO Box 458 Scarborough YO11 9EH Telephone: 07929 465044 Email: olga@mypostoffice.co.uk

Newsletter Issue 11

March April May 2011

Winter gloom lightened by OLGA Socials

We hope you have managed to get through the Winter so far, safely, without falling on the ice, etc. As most of our Members, but not all, are older and may have disabilities, it has been great that we have supported them by offering transport help to get them to the social events. This is what Comic Relief have funded us for, as they recognise the loneliness

and isolation of the Gay and Trans community.

At our weekly socials, people can relax and be completely at ease, knowing that they are accepted. They don't have to use vague language about their home life, their same-gender partner or Gay friends.

What do we do at our socials? We

relax, we chat, we sign-post for advice, sometimes we play games, and sometimes we have speakers in on various topics. Poetry readings seem to be popular with some people. Basically, because OLGA is run by volunteers, we rely on Members to come forward with ideas and say what they want to do. Obviously then it is nice when they help us carry it out.



OLGA Members enjoying a chat before food is served at the Albion Pub

What does OLGA do?

A look at the services provided by our organisation

We provide socials for our members every Tuesday afternoon.

Once a month on a Sunday evening, we have a special Meet & Eat social at the Albion Pub, Castle Road, Scarborough. This Pub is gay-owned, and this meal is organised solely and privately for OLGA. The food is fabulous, meat and vegetarian dishes are on offer. Portions are very generous. The owner/chef serves you himself in a most friendly manner. Where else in the area can gay and trans people dine in an open and relaxed manner knowing that they are accepted completely?

We sit on many forums, both locally and regionally, eg. Independent Police Advisory Group. OLGA has been successful

in improving the presentation and clarity of homophobic and transphobic hate-crime figures and details. We are a Hate-Crime reporting centre, having been trained by the Police, in taking reports from victims.

We deliver awareness-raising workshop presentations to various organisations, including, Health and Social Care providers, Care Home managers, Equality forums and Gay groups. We need to keep our own community alert and advised about coping with possible abuse and poor service provision.

OLGA sign-posts for advice, having successfully partnered with many strategic partnership organisations.

OLGA's befriending service will

expand rapidly soon, as we engage positively more and more with Care Home managers. They already buy us in to deliver workshops, and we look forward to having our newsletter on display on their notice boards. When Care Home managers hear gay and trans people disclosing to them, no longer will they say "we don't have any of them here". Our befriending will play a vital role in educating Care managers, and keeping gay and trans people in touch with their 'WHOLE OF THEIR IDENTITY', which includes 'SEXUALITY'.

We produce regular newsletters for our members.

We also speak at conferences or to any group or organisation who invite us.

OLGA Volunteering Opportunities

OLGA can offer opportunities for volunteers to be involved in the areas of administration, befriending, and steering group membership.

- Administration work can be of difference levels, from filing & shredding to IT work.
- Befriending is ground-breaking work, as we believe we are the only Gay group in the Country offering

befriending in Care and Nursing Homes. The befriending will be mainly with vulnerable people, so the volunteers will be CRB checked.

OLGA Steering Group is entirely user-led. This is a requirement of our funders Comic Relief. We have monthly steering group meetings, and there is room for one or two people to join

the present steering group members, who feel very rewarded by the success of OLGA.

Any one interested in applying for any OLGA volunteering will be interviewed in an informal way, supported through a training programme, insurance covered, and given reasonable expenses for travel and subsistence, etc.

Volunteering is Good for your Health!

Recent research Volunteering England has found that volunteering can have a positive effect on volunteers' health. It can reduce stress and

depression, increase confidence and can enhance one's CV application for work. 62% of over 65s say volunteering helps them feel less stressed. All

ages of volunteers report that volunteering helps people keep fit and enables them to cope better with illness.

Some encouraging news!

Many denominations of Churches in this Country may soon officially allow Civil Partnerships within their places of worship, allowing hymns, etc.

Scarborough Pride Planning is forging ahead for the weekend of September 4th 2010 in the North Bay.

If any of you have business

contacts who want to be involved in the Pride, please contact OLGA. Organisations and businesses can have a stall at the Pride on the Sunday.



Jackie & Mary presenting an OLGA awareness-raising workshop to Ryedale Voluntary Action Equality Forum

Comic Relief Grant Funding

We can reassure our Members that in this climate of cuts in public spending, our funding is safe for another two and a half years.

Every six months we are monitored and evaluated by Comic Relief who need to see evidence of the work that they have funded us for. So, we keep attendance sheets for socials, our attendance at forums and meetings, and conferences. We record all work that we do on a daily basis, the training that we receive in an ongoing way, and most important of all the awareness-raising workshop presentations that we deliver to various organisations, on issues surrounding being lesbian, gay, bisexual & trans, and receiving health and social care.

In these workshops we stress the importance of using appropriate all-inclusive language. What success are we having in influencing language used by service providers? More and more, we are being consulted by managers of services, and advising on beneficial changes to their paperwork. All-inclusive language will allow Gay & Trans people to disclose, if they wish.

Upon disclosure, the service provider will be enabled to provide a more personalised care package. The benefit for the provider, is that when they are monitored and assessed for their equality and diversity awareness, they are rated favourably.

Our workshops are especially

important when delivered to Care and Nursing Homes, where traditionally, Managers have said “no Gay or Trans person has disclosed to us. We don’t have any of them here.” Clearly, Homes will have at least 5 to 7% Gay & Trans people, including their staff.

In the Scarborough area, we have a model of good practice in a Care Home, where the Manager and Senior Care Assistant have attended an OLGA workshop. The rest of the staff will similarly be trained soon. Upon inspection by CQC, favourable reports were made about changes made which show the Home is Gay-friendly. Once all of the staff are trained by OLGA, we will hope to support the Home in showing more signs of being Gay-friendly.

OLGA People

This is a regular feature. This time it is the turn of Jackie, OLGA’s Secretary.

Q. How long have you been with OLGA?

A. All of the 3 years, since it began.

Q. What do you do at OLGA?

A. I carry out the secretarial work, including help produce the newsletter, attend the socials and present OLGA’s workshops. All my work is done alongside the Project Co-ordinator.

Q. What do you enjoy the most about OLGA work?

A. I think it is the interaction with people, whether it be to do with OLGA’s business, or whether it is socialising with members.

As a fellow-sufferer of a mental health illness, I find that the work helps me to focus more and from my own experiences, give something back to the gay community.

Q. What do you not enjoy about OLGA work?

A. Because of my struggle with my own condition, I find it hard to be motivated, especially in the Winter months.

Q. How do you like to relax when not doing OLGA work?

A. Relaxing with my partner and pets at home. I enjoy many other hobbies when time permits, namely, walking, reading, meals out, sewing, and craft work.

Q. Where would you like to see OLGA in the future?

A. Leading the way, in helping and encouraging organisations to willingly offer all people in the community, properly worded forms, using all-inclusive language, enabling needs to be better met.

What is wrong with Health and Care Staff training?

In OLGA's 3 years of development, as we have attended many meetings and engaged with staff trainers, and service providers, it is clear that E-learning has been offered to staff as opposed to interactive face-to-face awareness-raising.

Obviously with E-learning, a person sits at a computer and responds by ticking boxes, etc. At the end of the session having correctly ticked the boxes, they leave with a certificate stating they are equality and diversity trained. Wrong! They can leave with exactly the same prejudices and discriminatory views as what they had before the E-learning session. There is no dialogue, no prejudices are teased out, no uncertainties are voiced, and no challenge can be

given to negative attitudes.

A face-to-face training session demands listening, engaging in workshop activities, discussion and allows the participants to ask questions. Staff trainers may think E-learning is a quick option. With a little bit of lateral thinking and an openness of mind, staff trainers could offer a much more enhanced training session, by inviting groups such as OLGA to present a workshop.

In some staff instances, some staff show that they do not think they need further training, and a few have difficulty engaging in workshop activities. Obviously, their attitudes have not been challenged successfully before.

A stark example of this recently,

was from 2 Social Care directorate managers who said during our workshop "we are nothing to do with social care"! This statement of course is very worrying, and comes at a time when media headlines have exposed yet again the ignorance and abuse about care in hospitals and care homes. Negative responses as serious as this have to be reported to the Care Quality Commission. Can we really have highly paid people in responsible jobs who are denying they have got anything to do with real people?

OLGA sees very much its role as educating, challenging attitudes, and whistle-blowing where necessary.

Future Events

March

- Tuesday 1st – OLGA Scarborough Social – 1pm to 4pm
- Sunday 6th – East Coast Walking Group – a 5 mile walk around Millington – ring OLGA
- Tuesday 8th – OLGA Scarborough Social – 1pm to 4pm
- From 8th – York International Women's Day Festival – see Web Page
- Tuesday 15th – OLGA Scarborough Social – 1pm to 4pm
- Tuesday 22nd – OLGA Scarborough Social – 1pm to 4pm
- Tuesday 29th – OLGA Scarborough Social – 1pm to 4pm
- Sunday Date to be confirmed – OLGA Meet & Eat at the Albion Pub – 5pm

April

- Sunday 3rd – East Coast Walking Group – a 4.5 walk around Cockayne – ring OLGA
- Tuesday 5th – OLGA Scarborough Social – 1pm to 4pm
- Tuesday 12th – OLGA Scarborough Social – 1pm to 4pm
- Tuesday 19th – OLGA Scarborough Social – 1pm to 4pm
- Tuesday 26th – OLGA Scarborough Social – 1pm to 4pm
- Sunday Date to be confirmed – OLGA Meet & Eat at the Albion Pub – 5pm
- Scarborough Literary Festival – Long Weekend – some interesting authors will be present – contact Scarborough Library for full details

May

- Sunday 1st – East Coast Walking Group – 5 mile circular walk around Upper Poppleton – ring OLGA
- Tuesday 3rd – OLGA Scarborough Social – 1pm to 4pm
- Tuesday 10th – OLGA Scarborough Social – 1pm to 4pm
- Tuesday 17th – National Hand-holding Day – Ask your same-gender friends and relatives to hold hands in public. This will help desensitise issues about Gay people holding hands
- Tuesday 17th – International Day Against Homophobia
- Tuesday 17th – OLGA Scarborough Social – 1pm to 4pm
- Tuesday 24th – OLGA Scarborough Social – 1pm to 4pm
- Tuesday 31st OLGA Scarborough Social – 1pm to 4pm
- Sunday Date to be confirmed – OLGA Meet & Eat at the Albion Pub – 5pm
- MCC (Metropolitan Community Church) Sunday meeting – Dates will be notified separately

Useful contact information

SEXUALITY

OLGA Tel: 07929 465 044
Email: olga@mypostoffice.co.uk
PO Box 458, Scarborough YO11 9EH

MESMAC Yorkshire. Tel: 01904 620 400
PO Box 549, York. YO30 7GX

MENTAL HEALTH

Crisis Call Tel: 0800 501 254
(Free from landlines. Mobiles - cost for initial message and Crisis Call will call you back, which is free)

Samaritans Tel: 01723 368 888
Samaritan House, 40 Trafalgar Street West,
Scarborough YO11

Survivors Mental Health Resource Centre
Tel: 01723 501 049
9 Alma Square, Scarborough YO11

Mind Tel: 01723 377475
Drop in Centre at Queen Street Methodist Church,
Fridays 12.30 to 3.30pm.

HOUSING

Housing Support Tel: 0845 872 7374
North Yorkshire County Council www.northyorks.gov.uk

Stonham Homestay Tel: 01723 366 566
Scarborough & Ryedale Homelessness Prevention
Email: scarborough@homegroup.org.uk
Tenancy Support Services
Roscoe Street, Scarborough YO11

**Stonham is an organization which is committed to social inclusion, equality and diversity and equal access to services for all, hence they aim to try to make sure that they reach out to their local communities by all available means, so potential clients are aware that their service exists and that everyone has the right to access it.*

Yorkshire Coast Homes Tel: 0845 065 5656
Gladstone Road, Scarborough YO11

SOCIAL CARE

Social Services
North Yorkshire County Council Tel: 08450349410

SOCIAL

OLGA Tel: 07929 465 044
Email: olga@mypostoffice.co.uk
PO Box 458, Scarborough YO11 9EH

Albion Pub & Cabaret
136 Castle Road, Scarborough Tel: 01723 379068

Gay Scarborough Tel: 01723 375 849

Bacchus Night Club Tel: 01723 373 689
7a Ramshill Road, Scarborough YO11

GENERAL ADVICE

Customer First Tel: 01723 232 323
Scarborough Borough Council (General Enquiries)
St. Nicholas Street, Scarborough YO11

OLGA Tel: 07929 465 044
Email: olga@mypostoffice.co.uk
PO Box 458, Scarborough YO11 9EH

Age Concern Scarborough Tel: 01723379058
39 Aberdeen Walk, Scarborough YO1 11 BD

Advocacy Alliance Tel: 01723 363 910
Allatt House, 5 West Parade Road, Scarborough
YO12 5ED

Citizens Advice Bureau
Tel: 01723368710
2 Roscoe Street, Scarborough YO11

Police

Tel: 999 (Emergency/Crime Being Carried out)
Tel: 0845 606 0247 (Where Police attendance is required)
Tel: 0800 555 111 (Crime Stoppers/To pass on Information related to any Crime)
Tel: 01723 384 444 (Anti-Social Behaviour)