



## STRATEGIC PLAN

Working to address health inequalities  
and improve the lives of LGBT people  
in Scotland

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# STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

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## **Building capacity to achieve better health and wellbeing within the community**

Through coproduction, consultation and collaboration, build the capacity of individuals, families and communities to achieve better health and wellbeing

## **Develop the ability of services to respond to the needs of LGBT individuals**

Through outreach, capacity building and demonstrable expertise, develop the ability of services with responsibility for health and wellbeing in Scotland to respond positively and sensitively to the needs of LGBT individuals.

## **Building collaborative partnerships**

As Scotland's national centre for expertise in relation to LGBT health and wellbeing, build collaborative partnerships with organisations in the public, private and third sectors with a view to delivering services, programmes and change that has a progressively positive impact on the health and wellbeing of LGBT people in Scotland.

## **Building a positive, proactive organisation**

Build a positive, proactive organisation with strong governance, leadership and the ethos of health, wellbeing and diversity at its heart, where staff and volunteers feel confident, empowered and supported in delivering better outcomes for LGBT people in Scotland.

## FOREWORD

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Over the past number of years, LGBT Health and Wellbeing has been successful in expanding our reach, building strong and successful partnerships and delivering better outcomes for some of the most vulnerable and marginalised LGBT people in Scotland. This strategy articulates the organisation's collective vision for the next period – one which focuses on partnership and coproduction, is ever more focused on outcomes and aims to positively tackle the health inequalities that hold back the LGBT individuals and communities from achieving their full potential. From a Healthy Living Centre established in 2003, we have grown to become an organisation that increasingly works across Scotland, and I very much hope this will continue to be a pattern as we reach out to communities beyond Edinburgh and the Lothians. The strategy is a living document and intended to be a guide to our activity – hopefully it provides a sense of who we are, what we do, and what we aspire to.



**Trevor Owen**

*Chair, Board of Directors*

Thanks to the very hard work and commitment of our staff and volunteers the organisation has over the last years succeeded in making a difference to the lives of a great many people. However the health inequalities experienced by LGBT people continue to be acute and there therefore remains much work to do, both in supporting individuals to achieve their potential, and in being a strong voice and influencer to champion LGBT health, wellbeing and equality issues. We are a growing organisation, committed to providing a wide range of programmes and services that aim to deliver better outcomes for LGBT individuals and communities, not just in Edinburgh and Glasgow but hopefully increasingly across Scotland. Our work is firmly rooted in the communities we serve and will continue to be informed by extensive and meaningful involvement and consultation with LGBT people to ensure we address gaps in service provision in meaningful and impactful ways.



**Maruska Greenwood**

*Director*

## VISION

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A Scotland where LGBT people are no longer marginalised and invisible, where health inequalities experienced by LGBT people are eradicated from society, and where the quality of the lived lives of LGBT people across every aspect of society is continuously improving.

## VALUES

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- We celebrate positive health and wellbeing in individuals and communities.
- We believe that all LGBT people should be free to live a life of human dignity, in equality with others.
- We aspire for the organisation to be economically secure, celebrate diversity, engage in a spirit of care, enjoy LGBT cultural competence, and be a fulfilling and enjoyable place to be – for staff, volunteers and those who work with us.
- We are singularly focused on our mission, solid and dependable in delivering services and credible with key partners in supporting and delivering real life improvements for LGBT people.

## PURPOSE

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We work to improve the health, wellbeing and the life experience of LGBT individuals and LGBT communities in Scotland. We achieve this through working to tackle and reduce health inequalities in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders, and through a combination of direct service delivery, through ongoing community development, capacity building within public services and influencing key decision makers and funders.

# PEOPLE

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## **Staff**

A group of dynamic, passionate and highly able individuals with a strong degree of professionalism, real expertise built throughout a career in the field, a range of complementary skills and abilities and a strong and burning commitment to achieving the organisation's mission and delivering our vision.

## **Trustees**

A mixture of individuals from across the community who bring wide perspectives from different sectors of Scottish life, our Board ensure that the organisation maintains a clear focus on our vision and creating the Scotland we want to see.

## **Volunteers**

We couldn't achieve success without the wide range of people with different skill sets and experiences supporting the organisation. They work with the staff to deliver events, services and outreach to communities truly through their desire to achieve our vision.

## **Communities**

Those communities are vibrant, multi-faceted and diverse. A wide range of LGBT people in Scotland benefits from the work of the organisation, and it is through our regular engagement with the communities that we serve that we become better at what we do, and we are able work with others to deliver better lives for the people of those communities.

## EXPERIENCE

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Since the organisation's establishment, we have achieved a range of successes that have made a tangible difference to the lives of LGBT people and contributed towards creating the Scotland we want to see. Here's what just some people think about the work that we do.

### Our Staff

*"I very much enjoy being a part of LGBT Health, seeing its expansion and contributing to some really ground-breaking and unique work. I think everyone who works here is passionate about what they do and the impact they make on the community and that is a great thing to be part of."*

*"Everyone does a fantastic job and I feel privileged and proud to be part of the organisation. We have a strong reputation in terms of outcomes and delivery. There is a great deal of integrity to what we do and a strong sense of believing in what we do."*

### Our Volunteers

*"I value the opportunity to have a role within an LGBT organisation, and make a difference for LGBT communities, with support and knowledge behind it, rather than struggling to make a point in the mainstream non-LGBT world!"*

*"I enjoy knowing that I'm giving back to my community and having a positive impact on people's lives by making them feel comfortable, happy and welcome."*

### Our Community

*"Feeling understood, being able to talk about the things affecting my life that people outside the community don't understand or can't relate to. Able to be myself and gaining self-confidence as a result".*

*“It's made such a difference to my life, given me the confidence to be myself. It's a unique place and we're all so lucky to have it. Keep up the good work!”*

## Our Partners

*“We not only delivers a range of health services to the public but recognises as a central responsibility the need to work in partnership to address inequalities in health experienced and endured by different communities. The LGBT community continue to experience discrimination, both intentional and indirect, which is profound and has detrimental effects on mental health and ultimately physical wellbeing. We know that the most powerful antidote to the experience of discrimination and isolation is friendship and inclusion. LGBT Health and Wellbeing provides an effective and powerful example of an organisation which has harnessed the strengths of its natural community (through volunteering) to provide a quite stunning array of activities for this community to engage in and meet the individual needs of people at different stages of their lives from early adulthood to old age. The design and presentation of these activities demonstrates real understanding of the needs and aspirations of this community together with a recognition of the need to integrate with wider communities and ensure those links are built and maintained. LGBT Health does this in partnership with a wide number of public and voluntary sector organisations to challenge discrimination and link people in to local communities. It supports its partners and enables them to understand the needs of this community in the provision of patient/client-centred care.”*

Health Inequalities Manager, NHS Lothian

*“Your project has had a real impact. As a result of the training you provided we have made changes to some of our service specifications in the commissioning process, requiring providers to create a welcoming environment for all people and to deal effectively with intolerance.”*

Planning and Commissioning Manager – Older People,  
City of Edinburgh Council

## ENVIRONMENT

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The organisation exists within a dynamic environment. Public attitudes towards LGBT people in Scotland have shifted sharply; positively, 61% of people in Scotland are supportive of same sex marriage, a significant increase over the past decade. Less positively, 27% of people in Scotland still hold discriminatory attitudes towards same sex relationships. Prejudice against transgender people continues to be particularly prevalent and is little demonstrable shift, with 55% holding discriminatory attitudes towards transgender people<sup>1</sup>. Both overt and subtle discrimination within society towards LGBT people continues to exist, with an adverse effect upon the health and wellbeing of our communities.

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**Both overt and subtle discrimination within society towards LGBT people continues to exist, with an adverse effect upon the health and wellbeing of our communities**

Action is being taken on a number of fronts to address this. Scotland is moving towards an ever greater focus on outcomes, and the Public Service Reform agenda is prioritising and promoting prevention, partnership and person centred approaches. Public services, including the NHS, local authorities and Police Scotland have a key role to play in tackling health inequalities. Coproduction and collaborative working is increasingly emphasised, with the role of the third sector as a bridge

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<sup>1</sup> *Public Attitude to Discrimination in Scotland: 2010*, Scottish Government Social Research, 2011.

between the public sector and communities, an alternative provider of services and a key influencer in community partnership working achieving greater prominence and understanding. As a dynamic and growing third sector organisation, we occupy a key part in the equality landscape, which is underdeveloped in comparison to other equality sectors. Working with key partners, we can make a tangible difference towards delivering better outcomes for the people of Scotland.

## OUR OUTCOMES

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**LGBT people live healthier lives**

**LGBT people live their lives free from crime, hate and danger**

**LGBT individuals and communities are strong, resilient and healthy**

**Our public services are designed and delivered in a way that meets the needs of LGBT people**

## HOW WE DELIVER PROGRESS

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- We deliver a series of events to LGBT individuals providing social opportunities, peer support and awareness raising. We aim to increase social capital through the delivery of these events in parallel with specific interventions where required. These include individual befriending, mental health support and providing information and advocacy.
- We support the development of community groups through provision of advice, support and promotion through networks. We aim to provide alternatives to the traditional LGBT scene through the organisation of events and activities.
- We work with a range of public sector partners to increase their awareness and understanding, through direct training delivered to staff and attendance at various conferences and events.
- We continue to work hard to develop our links with voluntary, statutory and private sector organisations and individuals working in the health, wellbeing, support, equalities, arts and leisure sectors, thus increasing our capacity to publicise the organisation's programmes and services more widely to try to ensure access from all sections of the community.
- We are adept at gathering evidence of the change we are making, providing this in a high quality format to partners and funders with a view to strengthening partnerships and better informing the approach of others.

- We recognise that our dynamic and skilled staff and volunteer team are our major asset, and therefore work to support, develop and empower them to deliver the organisation's mission. We underpin the health and wellbeing of our own staff through the ongoing development of a comprehensive people framework and a range of operational policies and procedures that support staff in carrying out their roles. We invest in the learning and development of our staff to ensure that they are able to fulfil their roles and continue to improve their skills.
- Geographically, we have office bases in Edinburgh and Glasgow, delivering our business in these areas as well as across Scotland. We use these twin bases to build relationships with service users, community groups and stakeholders across the country.

## HOW WE MEASURE PROGRESS

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In relation to the strategic priorities, we measure impact using a range of quantitative and qualitative measurements, using data gathering to inform discussions with key partners and develop our services further to maximise benefit to users. As an organisation we are firmly committed to comprehensively evaluating the reach and impact of our services. Each project has specific sets of outcomes and progress is measured against these in a consistent manner. The key learning and impact of our projects is also captured in Impact Reports which are shared with funders and stakeholders. In addition, since 2010 we have been carrying out a rigorous annual Service Evaluation of all our Lothian-based services, which provides detailed service user profile information, as well as evaluating how individuals experience our services and our impact across a range of key health and wellbeing measures.

## WHAT WE'RE WORKING TOWARDS

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Progress towards full LGBT equality, particularly in terms of policy, legislation and societal attitudes, has been marked in recent times. Nevertheless, discrimination against LGBT people in society, particularly in relation to their real lived experiences, remains significant. This needs to be addressed across Scotland if the cumulative impacts of negative health and wellbeing are to be addressed, and better outcomes achieved for all LGBT people in Scotland.

As an organisation, we are increasingly delivering services and working with organisations across the central belt in Scotland. Going forward, we will continue to build on this, seek opportunities to work in partnership with others in our role as a national centre for expertise, and ensure that as many individuals and communities in Scotland as possible can benefit from the work that we do and the change that we are making.



## LGBT Health and Wellbeing

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Edinburgh

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Further information can be found at [www.lgbthealth.org.uk](http://www.lgbthealth.org.uk)

In all that we do, we are grateful to our funders for their support.



The LGBT Healthy Living Centre (known as LGBT Health and Wellbeing) is recognised as a charity by the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator, no. SC034216.