



EMBRACE
A CULTURE OF INCLUSION

2020 - 2021

EVALUATION REPORT

YEAR TWO: Bringing Together / Consultation

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PREFACE

Our Goal

To create a culture of inclusion within health and social care provision across Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin for older and old LGBT+ people.

Outcomes

- Better experience for older and old LGBT+ people
- Providers more aware and inclusive
- Changes in policy

Intermediary Outcomes

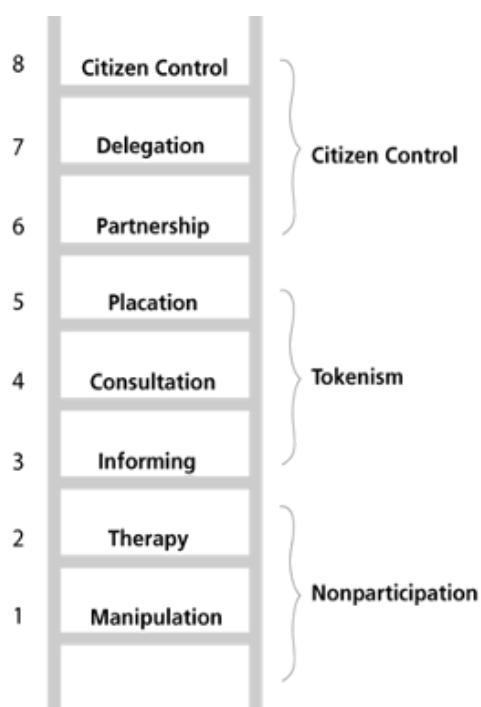
- Alliances with key organisations and agencies
- Groups and individuals active in and contributing to our campaign
- Providers more willing to be involved in and engaged with EMBRACE



INTRODUCTION

SAND is using two frameworks to help us identify and report on progress.

First: a modified, simplified interpretation of Arnstein's Ladder of Participation to frame this 5 year EMBRACE project.



Arnstein's Ladder (1969)
Degrees of Citizen Participation

YEAR ONE information giving

YEAR TWO bringing
together/consultation

YEAR THREE working together

YEAR FOUR deciding together

YEAR FIVE influencing

Also, as outlined in our original project proposal, our Engagement Plan takes the form of a Whole Systems approach based on one developed by the National LGB&T Partnership in June 2018.

[\[https://nationallgbtpartnershipdotorg.files.wordpress.com/2018/06/a-whole-systems-approach-lgbt-toolkit.pdf\]](https://nationallgbtpartnershipdotorg.files.wordpress.com/2018/06/a-whole-systems-approach-lgbt-toolkit.pdf).



To keep this at the heart of our work – and rise to the challenge of engagement in a County with no funded LGBT+ infrastructure, we have framed the chapters of this report under a modified series of the headings based on those provided in the toolkit. Whilst we understand that change is not linear, in YEAR TWO we continue to report against the first 6 elements only:

1. **Creating momentum** - to create and cultivate a moment where EMBRACE captures the imagination of key partners, the need for action becomes clear, and opportunities are identified.
2. **Building a guiding coalition** - to guide, coordinate, communicate and work with the change effort
3. **Agreeing a clear vision** - to clarify how the future will be different from the past and how EMBRACE can make that future a reality
4. **Enlisting allies** - to take the Campaign forward in different ways, in different sectors, on many fronts
5. **Considering barriers to change** - to recognise, remove or circumvent barriers that undermine the EMBRACE vision
6. **Demonstrating that change is possible** - to be visible, promote successes along the way, build morale and energise people to persist.
7. **Sustaining acceleration** - to build networks of influence
Instituting change – to keep up to date with changes in the field; keep people engaged, look for new opportunities
8. **Instituting Change** - to keep up to date with changes in the field; keep people engaged, look for new opportunities

As the toolkit clearly states: Whole systems approaches demand that policy makers, politicians, commissioners, service providers and community members work together to identify the challenges that LGBT people face, and act on them in concerted and coordinated ways. All relevant organisations should be engaged including public sector organisations – such as local authorities, schools, hospitals and the police – and voluntary and community sector organisations, as well as social housing providers. It is critical that LGBT people are involved from the beginning; they are the central part of the whole system.



The National Lottery Community Fund requires us to report back against 5 headings and we have framed each chapter with these, so that at every stage of our Whole Systems Approach, we consider:

- **The story of our project so far**
- **How we've involved people from our community**
- **The differences we're making**
- **What we've learned**
- **How we're changing what we do**

Having framed our first EMBRACE evaluation report in this way we understood that, if we follow this structure for the full five years, we could end up with a recorded case study of change, using a very systematic approach. Who can tell what may happen further down the line but, at the very least, we will most certainly have a documentation of our process.





CHAPTER 1 Creating momentum

To create and cultivate a moment where EMBRACE captures the imagination of key partners, the need for action becomes clear, and opportunities are identified

We do this by: presenting information; telling stories; linking with national strategic and policy initiatives

1.1 Creating momentum:

The story of our project so far

Clearly this year has been a tricky one in terms of building on the momentum of Year One. Many of our service provider contacts have been understandably caught up in the pandemic and LGBT+ people, like the rest of the world, have been largely confined to home. There is evidence that many have struggled for all kinds of reasons although we don't have any hard figures for Shropshire. Ironically, and maybe because of lock-down, more individuals have been getting in touch needing support, flagging up the lack of LGBT+ specific services.

This year we started planning an engagement strategy which aimed to work with service providers, encouraging them to identify opportunities for LGBT+ people to engage with them. A core group of 3 members of the SAND Action Team spent a focused 4 days together in a 'Summer School', aiming to nail some of the gritty issues and sketch out plans for the coming months.



We have identified different routes for different people to get involved and hope that this is just the tip of the iceberg! We want our budget lines to help and guide us. This has really come to life this year as the project funding and the match funding work together to take forward discreet parts of the overall programme.

We have reached out to other organisations and engaged in strategic groups, to forward equalities and diversity at a time when marginalised groups are at risk of increased isolation due to Covid-19. One of our SAND Action Group members is now Chair of the Voluntary and Community Sector Assembly, and we plan to work with her in YEAR 3 of our EMBRACE Project to challenge our partners and colleagues around inclusion and diversity.

The idea of a Covenant is taking shape, aligned with an online learning resource to encourage and support more inclusive practice. Now we have the idea we are talking to people about these and the Covenant has its own momentum in these growing conversations!

We were invited to deliver a presentation at the Community Health Trust Dignity Day on 1st February 2021.

In April 2021, we engaged an Events & Volunteer Officer on 10 hours p/week for 12 months. Her job is to organise & deliver all aspects of (on and offline) events to engage LGBT+ people, carers, allies and service providers with our EMBRACE Campaign. She will also identify opportunities for, engaging and supporting volunteers to work on SAND's EMBRACE events.

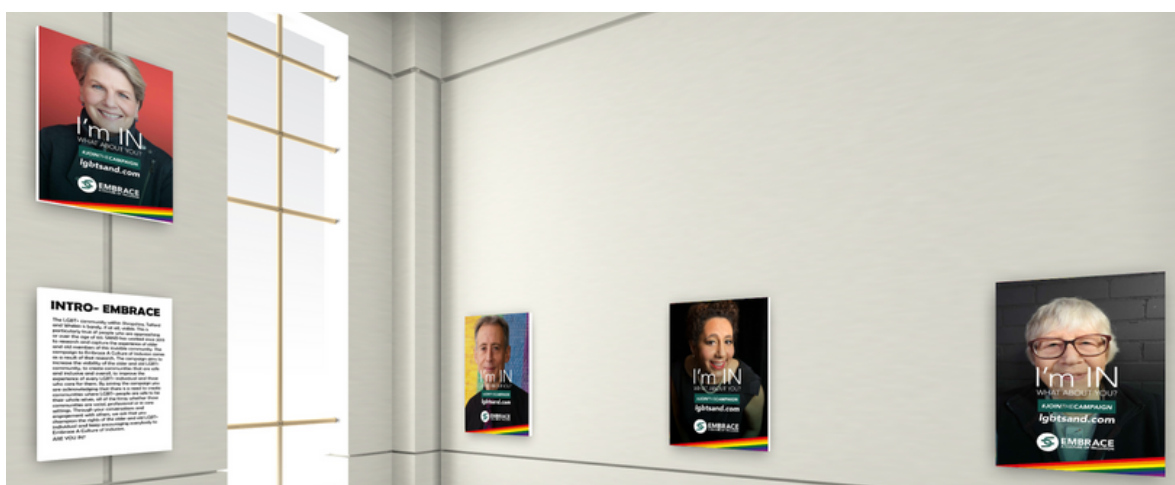
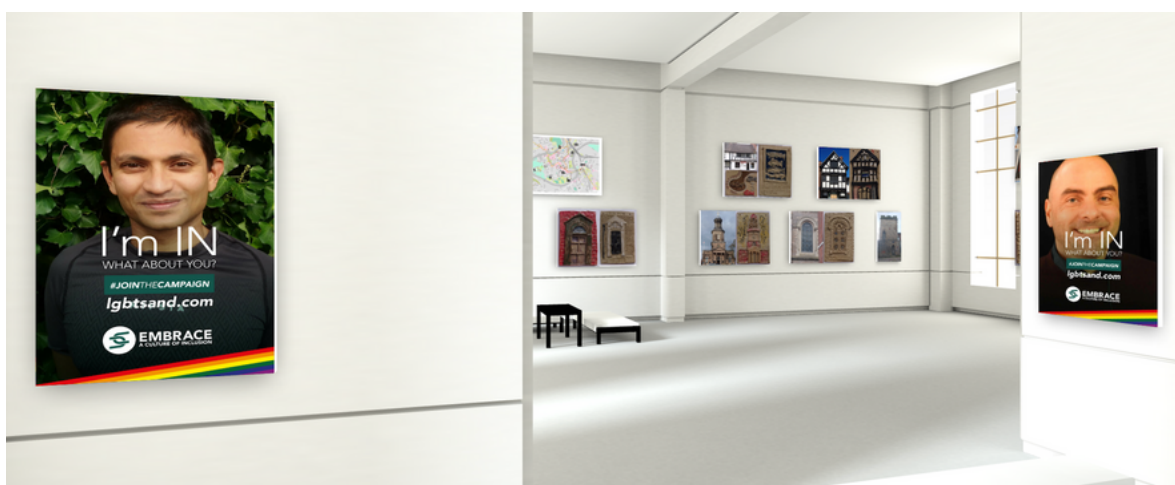
We have started sketching out a programme of events to inform and empower LGBT+ people, their families, friends, carers and allies to understand more about how health and social care, legal and financial services work and what they can – and should – expect.



Jade Smith, our Events & Volunteer Officer



Throughout February and into March 2021, we had an exhibition of EMBRACE posters at the 2021 online History festival. At the time of writing, this is still available to view: <https://artspaces.kunstmatrix.com/en/exhibition/4353116/shrewsbury-lgbt-festival-exhibition>



Stills taken from the 2021 Shrewsbury LGBT+ History Festival exhibition

1.2 Creating momentum:

How we've involved people from our community

Over $\frac{3}{4}$ of our SAND Action Group and $\frac{2}{3}$ of our freelance delivery team identify as LGBT+.

This year we have refreshed our Named Supporters and asked them to send us words of encouragement! We have added Dr Jay Stewart of Gendered intelligence and Caroline Paige of Fighting with Pride to our growing list and both have joined our EMBRACE Campaign: <https://www.lgbtsand.com/about-2/supporters/>



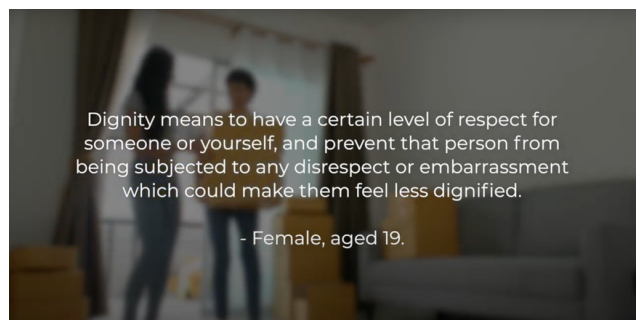
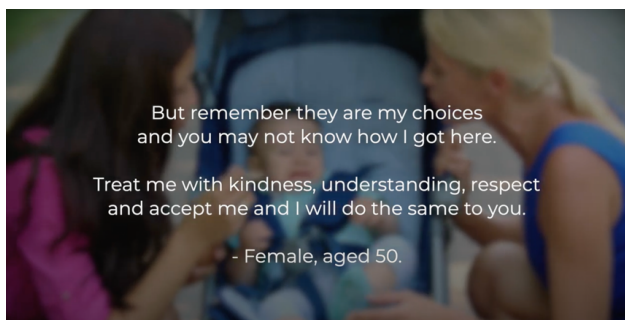
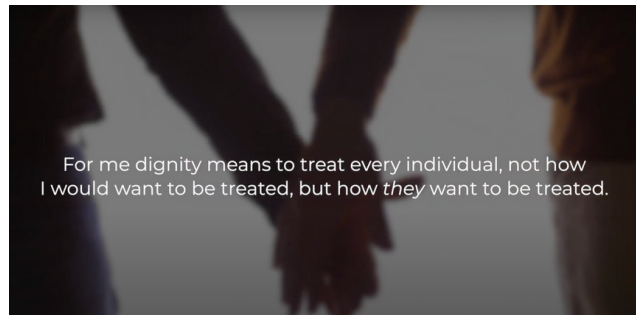
Dr Jay Stewart MBE



Caroline Paige

In August 2020, we hosted an online screening of the feature length Gen Silent film. It was streamed live from California and had a Q&A with SAND and AgeUK STW, attracting approx 100 viewers who all heard about our EMBRACE Campaign. We repeated the screening as part of the 2021 Shrewsbury LGBT+ History Festival with approx. 80 viewers and a live Q&A with a different panel.

We put a call out for local LGBT+ people to talk about what Dignity means to them and had a great response in a very tight timeframe. From this, we engaged an LGBT+ filmmaker who created a short film for the Dignity Day events which went alongside the presentation for the Community Health Trust: <https://youtu.be/Vv4wn-uMUcA>



Stills taken from the 2021 Dignity Day video

We have added some stories to our training delivery to introduce LGBT+ characters and illustrate their lives and experiences in context, as well as an historical story which weaves real local lives through from the 1950's to the present day.



Photo credit: brett-jordan-unsplash

1.3 Creating momentum:

The differences we're making

The EMBRACE Campaign is raising the profile of LGBT+ people across the County. The photographs, events and constant reference enables people to ask questions and talk more freely about LGBT+ people and related issues.

SAND is more readily visible to LGBT+ people and we have had more communications and approaches from LGBT+ people struggling in the pandemic.

We are also more known amongst service providers who recommend us to others in discussions about equalities-oriented organisations.

The Dignity Day film gave us an opportunity to hear and capture different voices. It has also given us a resource which we have used – with screenings during LGBT+ History Festival 2021 and as part of our training for REACH tele-friending volunteers with AgeUK organisations.

We have created paid roles and taken on 3 freelancers, including 2 new graduates.

1.4 Creating momentum:

What we've learned

We have been reminded about the power of short films, such as the Dignity Day one, to encourage people to talk. They also provide an opportunity for local LGBT+ people to engage with us.

The past 12 months in 'pandemic times' remind us how easy it is for equality and diversity issues to slip down priority lists, ironically at a time that marginalised groups are often most affected and therefore inequality gaps widen!



1.5 Creating momentum:

How we're changing what we do

The Dignity Day video has led us to plan further films for year 3. With all the Zoom time in 2020-21 it feels even more important to capture local stories on video for wider dissemination and greater longevity.

We have made ourselves more available. We now have a landline telephone number which links directly to email so we can pick up messages from anywhere. We have recruited freelancers to help. Through open advertising we have diversified our own team, brought in fresh faces with new ideas and different contacts. We have learned to delegate and begin to spread the load more healthily across a range of people.

We schedule weekly or fortnightly team meetings and have adopted 'Slack' as a method of internal team communication. Our systems feel smarter and more collective.





CHAPTER 2 Building a guiding coalition

To guide, coordinate, communicate and work with the change effort

We do this by: *engaging people with passion; commitment and influence; set up guidelines to work together; utilise creative involvement; continually build relationships*

2.2 Building a guiding coalition:

The story of our project so far

We have been working up the idea of a Strategy Inclusion Group. Originally this was to be a body of invited individuals in key positions in a range of organisations. They would come together with SAND Directors perhaps 3 times a year to catch up on SAND's activity, with particular reference to the EMBRACE project. They would bring their own experience, knowledge and contacts into the room and take away ideas and practice to embed in their own organisations. The pandemic and associated priorities suspended the idea for most of Year 2 and we are now revising how this might happen.

We have engaged with professionals in the Health Sector to challenge current assumptions and practice that groups such as SAND go to them, sit on their panels and in their meetings, stretching ourselves thinly without gaining influence. We have sown the seeds of a radical change in practice and drafted a position statement which articulates a plan to change things around.



This is all part of establishing a reputation for positive progress, working with and learning together. Whilst this is more holistically a strategy for SAND to adopt, the driver behind it is the EMBRACE Campaign and the ways in which we can strategically engage service providers in meaningful change.

We are currently in conversation with key individuals involved in the Integrated Care System (ICS) on how we can work with them to begin to embed equality and diversity issues for LGBT+ people in service provision. We are hopeful that SaTH will agree to be the pilot for our ideas as we move into Year 3 of our EMBRACE Project.

We have facilitated interactive online workshops and discussions to co-design and pilot REACH, a tele-friending service with AgeUK organisations in both Shropshire Telford & Wrekin and in Herefordshire & Worcestershire. Contributors included Senior Managers, receptionists, training and volunteer coordinators.

We have also developed our own learning around Allyship in the Workplace, with 4 members of the SAND Action Group completing a course provided by The Other Box.

2.2 Building a guiding coalition:

How we've involved people from our community

In our 2nd year of EMBRACE, SAND has realised in excess of £41,000 donated in volunteer hours. We calculate that 80% of our current work is related to EMBRACE which means that we have generated £32,800 worth of volunteer hours for the project. Add this to our Year one calculation and we have a current running total of £53,300 worth of voluntary hours donated to date.

In Year 2 we logged activity with:

- **224 individuals connected with service provider organisations**
- **158 LGBT+ people connected with LGBT+ organisations**



Some key connections included:

- An information giving event with Shoosmiths Solicitors who piloted an interactive online workshop on Wills and LPAs, receiving feedback from 12 LGBT+ people

“It felt like we weren’t a passive audience, but were being encouraged to actively take part”

“It did feel different being in a space where the issues impact all of the people there in a similar way”

- Quotes taken from the Shoosmith sessions

- To ensure a robust and informed recruitment process we invited individuals from other agencies to shortlist and interview for our freelance delivery team. This included skilled and experienced staff from Wrekin Housing, The Hive and a trustee from Shropshire Rainbow Film Festival. The contact from Wrekin Housing has since joined the SAND Action group!

2.3 Building a guiding coalition:

The differences we’re making

We are getting known. It is significant that 3 different individuals involved at key levels of the ICS have contacted us to engage in conversations about how we can contribute to inclusive practice. This has led to the recent development of an options paper for learning opportunities which includes: open courses on LGBT+ Awareness Raising; a proposed series of bespoke short online sessions and a training the trainers course to increase our capacity.

AgeUK Shropshire Telford & Wrekin had such a positive response from staff involved in the development of REACH that they have now asked SAND to start discussions about how we might train their entire staff team!



"I would say that the training was really accessible, easy to follow and take in the information/guidance. I would also say that the issues that came up were sometimes surprising/troubling which made for a really insightful and worthwhile session."

- Quote taken from REACH sessions

2.4 Building a guiding coalition:

What we've learned

Our key partners respect honesty. It is refreshing that our forthright statements about limited capacity and limited resources have met with a positive response from potential future partners who are also very welcoming of our creative ideas for future engagement.

As a lightly resourced, community-focused organisation, we can be nimble and adaptive – especially when we stick to our model of advisor and supporter rather than service provider. A small amount of funding can go a long way. The development of REACH with two AgeUK organisations has led us to consider how this could be adopted by others. We estimate that other AgeUK organisations could access this with an investment of £5K for SAND's contribution, matched by time from a nominated member of the team, as well as Senior Management participation to embed the learning and understanding.

2.5 Building a guiding coalition:

How we're changing what we do

Complementing our Draft Position Statement and options paper for learning opportunities, we have also been considering concepts of Allyship in the Workplace and are currently planning how to incorporate this into EMBRACE.

The idea of a Strategy Inclusion Group has recently resurfaced in a different form, with a notion to work with the Voluntary & Community Sector Assembly, looking specifically at attributes of 'Allyship' and practical application across the sector.





CHAPTER 3 Agreeing a clear vision

To clarify how the future will be different from the past and how EMBRACE can make that future a reality

We do this by: maintaining focus on where we're going; recognise that it's complex and many-layered; accept the process is iterative; being ambitious; celebrating achievements and steps taken

3.1 Agreeing a clear vision

The story of our project so far

We have maintained reference to our Theory of Change for the EMBRACE Project and adapted this to use in sub-projects, using the outcomes from the over-arching Theory of Change as the consistent Vision. For example – planning an event now involves revisiting the stated Outcomes, Activities and Key principles of the project and identifying which are pertinent to this particular event – which provides the starting point for organising and keeps us all on track!

The Evaluation Framework developed specifically for the EMBRACE Project also contributes to planning at different stages as we now add in our arrangement for identifying indicators and collecting data to evidence the outcomes.



Each sub-project of EMBRACE is subject to research and piloting, ably illustrated in Year 2 by REACH which has moved on from an initial idea in conversation, through researching existing materials to support volunteers, consultation on the appropriateness of training, marketing and promotional materials, and into the co-design of volunteer training.



REACH promotional material

Progress on our activities

Learning & knowledge exchange

We have started drafting a framework to share information. This makes great use of resources already identified which are being re-catalogued and tagged to aid access, alongside an additional cohort of resources which offer practical application guidance and a covenant process to encourage engagement, application and progress most appropriate for each individual or organisation.

Online directory

Our newly appointed Community Engagement Officer is researching organisations – the current impetus is to have effective signposting for REACH volunteers.

Training & supporting champions

This has been difficult to progress in any practical way in Year 2 due to the pandemic, but new agreements on the use of match funding from SPIC suggest we will be taking this forward at a greater pace in Year 3.

Grains of SAND

Practical collection of these individual stories have been suspended during the pandemic, and the focus has shifted to revisiting the questions we might ask. Our Community Engagement Officer has also started a separate series of interviews with LGBT+ people to explore how prepared we really are for ageing and dying.

Market place events

These had a total rethink this year and we have piloted individual events on Zoom, focused on specific topic areas and with invited participants from both LGBT+ and non-LGBT+ communities. The Shoosmith's training is a good illustration.



Training & consultancy

Through our partnership with SPIC and the REACH sub-project, we have developed new training resources to contribute to a growing bank of materials which can be mixed and matched for a variety of delivery formats.

Enabling Factors

- **Creativity** – people enjoy the sessions we deliver and we believe the mixed media approach, especially with video clips, is very powerful. We have subscribed to Zoom Webinar in order to screen better quality film footage
- **Strong track record** – we request and record feedback from all of our sessions and share this through our media channels
- **Trusted organisation** – we have repeat commissions for our training
- **Good relationships** – people seem to like us!
- **National and local profile** – we continue to nurture connections near and far, to keep engaged and relevant
- **Cover the whole country** – some of our activities stray further afield and our website is relevant beyond local boundaries
- **CIC structure** – allows us to be very flexible and responsive
- **Skilled and knowledgeable** – we have recruited freelancers to key roles to increase skills capacity around marketing & design, events management and engagement



3.2 Agreeing a clear vision

How we've involved people from our community

Taking forward the REACH tele-friending initiative, we have developed the volunteer training over a period of time – delivering a draft session to AgeUK staff who then made comments and brought their own knowledge of their volunteers and of their generic training into the space. The revised session was then delivered to frontline staff to inform them of the initiative and the rationale behind it. The pilot training for volunteers will take place in the Autumn of 2021.

Members of the SAND Action Group have kept the project progression informed by taking part in learning opportunities provided nationally, for example:

- **LGBT Foundation Training on Dementia**
- **Mental Health First Aid Training which flags up the many issues that potentially face LGBT+ people, particularly at a time of Covid-related lockdown**
- **Webinar: End of Life care – with a focus on LGBT+ people**
- **Sessions facilitated by Opening Doors, focused on CQC standards**
- **LGBT Foundation Pride in Practice Training**

3.3 Agreeing a clear vision

The differences we're making

The benefits of these structured ways of working have led us to revisit SAND's overall organisational Theory of Change which we have produced alongside an Organisational Diagram and Team Plan.



3.4 Agreeing a clear vision

What we've learned

We know that, whilst our vision is constant our approach has to be flexible to adapt to circumstances. However, we are increasingly clear that we must maintain focus and not get side-tracked by others' agendas and engage in activities that do not have a clear pathway to desired outcomes.

On reflection, SAND would have benefited earlier from the Organisational Diagram that we now have in place, to help us to maintain focus.

3.5 Agreeing a clear vision

How we're changing what we do

We are now thinking about longer term sustainability for the EMBRACE Campaign beyond the life of our current funding.





CHAPTER 4 Enlisting allies

To take the Campaign forward in different ways, in different sectors, on many fronts

We do this by: bringing people together; recognising everyone's own context; equipping people; and motivating engagement

4.1 Enlisting allies

The story of our project so far

Our marketplace event in Year One was cancelled due to Covid-19. In Year 2 this took a different form as we piloted the online session hosted by Shoosmiths solicitors in September 2020. This aimed to bring LGBT+ people together with legal professionals to highlight and explore some of the issues that they may need to consider.

In February 2021, we recruited a Community Engagement Officer to "make connections and support LGBT+ people to engage with SAND through a variety of routes; identify further opportunities for SAND to engage with partners and other relevant organisations"

Via our campaign we reached out to LGBT+ people and our allies far and wide to encourage broader representation amongst our images of people who want to work with us to EMBRACE A Culture of Inclusion.

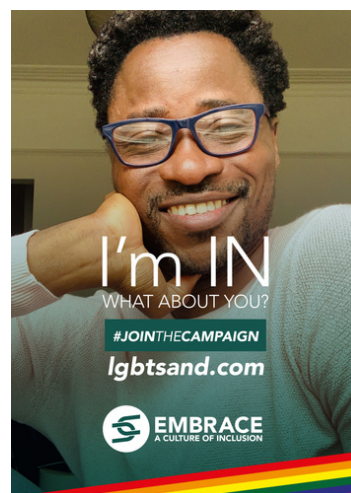


Over the past 12 months we have been in dialogue with the following public sector organisations who recognise the need to engage with the LGBT+ agenda. This conversation has progressed recently in the light of the moves towards an Integrated Care System and the need for agencies to collaborate with voluntary and community sector organisations around health and social care inequalities. These include: Shropshire Council Adult Social Care, Shrewsbury and Telford Hospitals, the Community Health Trust and the Midlands Partnership Foundation Trust

We have also had commitment from Wrekin Housing to work with us to take the LGBT+ agenda forward within their service.

Other allies include Omega, an End of Life national charity, Glyndwr University Social Work students, Lanyon Bowdler Solicitors and Healthwatch Shropshire.

It must be noted however, that over the past 12 months our allies within the social care sector have been concerned with Covid and the obvious fall out, making it impossible for us to engage with them as we had anticipated.



4.2 Enlisting allies

How we've involved people from our community

In our original (pre-pandemic) EMBRACE proposal, we anticipated that we would spend year 2 as follows:

- Preparing for ageing and dying consultation event I
- Gathering Grains of SAND
- Open visits for LGBT people to service premises
- Consultation with LGBT people on preferred methods to receive information
- Consultation with LGBT people on Year 3 event topics
- Gathering Grains of SAND
- Preparing for ageing and dying consultation event II
- Consultation with LGBT people on Discussion Forum for service providers
- Consultation with LGBT people on examples of good practice
- A trip for LGBT people to attend a national event
- Gathering Grains of SAND
- Preparing for ageing and dying consultation event III

In reality, this is more like what we were able to do:

12 LGBT+ people took part on the Shoosmith's session and responded to a survey monkey questionnaire about the experience in order to shape future sessions.

8 LGBT+ people contributed to our Dignity Day video.

We also facilitated conversations following 2 screenings of Gen Silent

We have developed and run online training sessions for health & social care providers, including Shropshire Council (Adult Services) Awareness Training – 8 participants

And also Glyndwr University social work students – 25 participants

We drew in match funding from Shropshire Partners in Care (via Health Education England) to deliver the training aspect of a pilot project to engage leaders in a whole systems approach to change for their members. In this programme we delivered 6 training sessions achieving 46 attendances in total and engaging 26 unique individuals.



4.3 Enlisting allies

The differences we're making

Our online session with Shoosmiths Solicitors, explored ways of providing useful information about the practical and legal things that older and old LGBT+ people might want to consider, to protect ourselves and the people that matter to them' as they age, if they are unwell, if they need support, if they 'lose capacity', when they die.

The session clearly impacted on people who all agreed that they had benefitted:

"A talk about issues we all face, but don't often want to think about: wills, end of life care, power of attorney, next of kin and so on.. Knowing what rights we have, being prepared. An interesting and engaging session by a very knowledgeable solicitor who listens and responds honestly to our concerns. I left feeling I had learnt something. An empowering experience"

"A must attend session for everyone. It is a blink of an eye or a click of a finger when you or your love one could be incapacitated and having your plans in place is essential to have you wishes followed"

- Quotes taken from Shoosmiths session

Following our input on the Social Work course at Glyndwr College feedback was generally positive and included:

"Thanks, Sue and Claire, for a positive, moving and stimulating lecture. You managed the mixed group, the technology and the subject matter beautifully"

- Quote taken from Social Work course



And similarly from staff at Shropshire Council who noted intended actions as a result of the training they received:

"Making sure that I am not being unconsciously biased towards others. Taking a more holistic approach to supporting individuals and making sure I access training in areas that I feel I need to improve"

- Quote taken from staff at Shropshire Council

4.4 Enlisting allies

What we've learned

SAND's approach to allow time for relationships to form and strengthen is an essential element of shifting associates to allies.

We also recognise that there are lots of different levels of engaging people and it is helpful to work within their own constraints as well as highlighting our own.

We think that this section on Enlisting Allies will merge a bit into section 2 of this report, as we transform some of our allies into being a part of our guiding coalition!



4.5 Enlisting allies

How we're changing what we do

Glyndwr University have asked us about a student placement and this is something we are considering as part of our plans to engage more people in our EMBRACE Campaign.

We are keen to emphasise that these issues need to be addressed within professional training. We have been invited to be part of an advisory group on a recently successful research project headed by Birmingham University examining the extent to which LGBTQ+ identities are considered when social work practitioners are undertaking care assessments of older people.

We are now in a position where we need to start planning how to engage more facilitators and trainers.





CHANGE

CHAPTER 5 Considering barriers to change

To recognise, remove or circumvent barriers that undermine the EMBRACE vision

We do this by: *considering at all levels of engagement; developing strategies to overcome these; working with everyone – providers and users/potential users/family/friends*

5.1 Enlisting allies

What we've learned

Pandemic – priorities of health & social care providers have changed and it has been difficult to engage. At one point we started to establish some semblance of communication and then it dipped again.

Everyone is part-time, some with child-care responsibilities and differing facilities for remote working. There have been more calls on their time, and some of the people we have wanted to engage with have been furloughed for differing periods during the pandemic – or have been reassigned to more 'acute' duties. There has also, once again, been lots of reorganising going on in the health sector.

We have been unable to access our new office premises to sort out resources and meet people as we have all been a bit itinerant.



There has been lack of opportunity to engage in face to face activities with people from the LGBT+ community. Not everyone zooms or wants to zoom.

Zoom has been difficult for us to get our heads around – care staff also struggle and do not have equipment (cameras and mics) to engage.

Our SAND Action Group has not been able to meet physically which excludes older members – we have met in socially distanced circumstances when possible but this has not worked out for everyone.

Our REACH tele-friending sub-project is built on our understanding of the LGBT+ community as a marginalised group and our belief that all organisations could be promoting and delivering their services in a way which is most likely to remove that margin. We are increasingly aware that many isolated LGBT+ people are unlikely to feel confident that generic befriending services will meet their needs.

Equalities drops down people's agendas as health & social care providers have necessarily been prioritising other things. As always, once something has dropped down an agenda it is difficult to move it back up again!

Due to ill health we have been one crucial member down in our own team.

5.2 Enlisting allies

How we've involved people from our community

We have been using examples from real life stories brought to SAND to inform the training for tele-friending volunteers.

We are planning to expand on this much more in year 3 when we will advertise for LGBT+ volunteers and service users.



5.3 Enlisting allies

The differences we're making

Despite Equalities dropping down agendas, we have continued to speak out and have now established good relationships with influencers involved in the Integrated Care System.

We have captured the imagination of our local AgeUK organisation as they are now working with a neighbouring AgeUK on a joint project.

AgeUK STW is now considering engaging SAND to deliver training to all members of staff – some 50 office staff and 198 Home Support Workers – this could have a significant impact.

5.4 Enlisting allies

What we've learned

Covid 19 flagged up more issues for LGBT+ people. Following the LGBT Foundation's Hidden Figures report (May 2020), Opening Doors London launched their first ever virtual research seminar to address the specific effects of the pandemic on older LGBT+ people. From 103 respondents:

- **50%** reported a negative impact on their psychological wellbeing
- **18%** felt much more depressed than usual
- **23%** experienced worsened physical health
- **37%** felt more lonely than usual
- **27%** hardly ever, or never had someone to talk to

From this research they changed the way that they delivered their services, in ways similar to AgeUK locally.



We have learned that it now takes even more time to engage with older and old LGBT+ people and it needs dedicated resource to do this well. It is important to do what we can to keep people up to date and informed.

We are increasingly finding that some do not have the facilities or know-how to operate in a virtual world. We ourselves did not have the skills to deliver our activities on line to a quality that we would be happy with.

We do not believe that the situation created by the pandemic is going to go away any time soon. The care sector feels very fragile.

5.5 Enlisting allies

How we're changing what we do

We have recruited a freelance Community Engagement Officer to do more outreach for EMBRACE, an Events & Volunteers Officer with technical skills to support high quality on line delivery and a Marketing & Design Officer to accelerate our communications.



**Trudy Lutwyche, our
Marketing and Design Officer**



**Fran Jackson, our Community
Engagement Officer**

In terms of service providers we are increasingly aiming to go in at 'the top end', positioning ourselves more strategically.

We need to make it a lot easier for service providers to engage with us and plan how the covenant can support organisations to make pledges which are proportionate and realistic, whilst also illustrating positive change.

We are maintaining our approach of 'supporting a service provider to be more inclusive' rather than 'delivering a service ourselves' but we will also maintain a connection for troubleshooting and ongoing support.





CHAPTER 6 Demonstrating that change is possible

To be visible, promote successes along the way, build morale and energise people to persist

We do this by: notifying all participants in the project; developing a positive marketing and promotion strategy, recognising, collecting, celebrating and communicating success

6.1 Demonstrating that change is possible

The story of our project so far

In January 2021 we engaged a Marketing and Design Officer to “work with us to enhance what we do, keep in touch, maintain flexibility and be part of the team delivering activities and events across the county”.

We:

- Have revamped the EMBRACE Project pages on our website.
- Will start a monthly e-bulletin (first issue June 2021)



6.2 Demonstrating that change is possible

How we've involved people from our community

- Our new delivery team meets bi-weekly – on Zoom or in person
- We have consulted our delivery team about the EMBRACE Evaluation Framework
- We have collected feedback from all the sessions we have run

6.3 Demonstrating that change is possible

The differences we're making

In our experience, people enjoy our sessions, learn more about LGBT+ lives and make changes in what they do as a result. The following quotes provide some evidence of this:

"Your feedback is invaluable to this project and very much appreciated. I can assure you that the Equality Assessment Form will be amended"

- Support Services Manager

"I feel learning things such as asking the individual how they would like to be addressed and remembering to ask them if I am not sure about something has given me a greater understanding and more confidence to take forward in practice"

- Social Work Student



"Before this presentation I assumed older people felt as I do, that they are mostly accepted.... But this has really opened my eyes. Just because I feel kind of comfortable with my life, I shouldn't assume everyone does"

- Social Work Student

The sessions have given me ..."Confidence (particularly in discussing topics which may have previously made me feel uncomfortable due to not wanting to offend - now I realise people will more than likely hear good intentions), being mindful of history (somebody may have experienced/experiencing years of 'coming out', hidden lives), and intersectionality of people (one of the quotes that has stuck with me 'being a lesbian is the least interesting part about me')

- Contributor to REACH development

"You have made a lasting impression, and one which I hope can directly impact positive change within the organisations we all work for"

- Volunteer Coordinator

"I very much enjoyed the training and I'm sure you'll like to know that it's propelled me onto further learning. My friends and I have started a diversity book club to expand our awareness of disability, LGBT+, ethnicity, racism, refugees - as much as we can get through, I suppose"

- Charity Worker



6.4 Demonstrating that change is possible

What we've learned

To have a clear marketing focus.

We do not always know when change has happened.

6.5 Demonstrating that change is possible

How we're changing what we do

We will ask our partners and allies to tell us when change has happened.

We are going to request testimonials from partners and participants.



APPENDIX 1 Engagement - Number Crunch

Our YEAR ONE Action Plan had a target engagement figure of 300 people, with 170 of these identifying as LGBT.

Actual engagement achieved:

LGBT+ People	Service providers	TOTAL
YEAR ONE 2019-2020		
199	249	448
YEAR TWO 2020-2021		
158	224	382

