



**LGBTQ mental  
health service**



Strategic Plan 2020–2023

# Introduction

MindOut is a well-established, small charity run by and for LGBTQ people who experience mental health issues. We offer unique and highly effective, evidence-based mental health support. We have a great reputation and an ambitious future.

“...we provide *lifesaving and life-changing interventions*...”

We have a demonstrable impact on the mental health of people who use our services; we provide lifesaving and life-changing interventions. We help resolve crisis and prevent worsening conditions, often we are people's first service of choice.

Research shows that high incidences of mental health issues in LGBTQ communities is a major, immediate concern and that for many, access to LGBTQ specific support is seen as essential.

## Executive Summary

We are at a very positive place in our development, with resources to run our key services in place for the short to medium term. But we need to create a more sustainable funding model so that MindOut can expand its reach and operate in the longer-term as well.

We are recognised as a national, and international, voice on LGBTQ mental health.

We will consolidate our position as a thought leader on LGBTQ mental health. We will do this by lobbying, campaigning and developing research alongside providing excellent, co-produced services.



## Our History

We are run by and for LGBTQ people with experience of mental health issues and have been offering services for 20 years. We have thrived and grown, particularly since becoming an independent charity in 2011.

We are proud of and passionate about our values, particularly our co-production ethos and service user participation. We are a grass roots initiative, owned by and embedded in LGBTQ communities. We are independent of statutory services, affirmative, inclusive, and committed to free and affordable services.

## Where we are now

We continue to offer and develop a range of preventive and crisis services. These include: advocacy, peer support, low-cost counselling, workshops and courses, suicide prevention, out of hours on-line support and targeted services for minority communities. We offer training to mainstream service providers and we run anti-stigma campaigns and events. Last year our services reached over 2000 people.

We lobby on LGBTQ mental health locally and nationally. We have pioneered innovative, community responses to suicidal distress and peer support.

Over the last three years we have developed our services, our fundraising capacity and our governance. We have been very successful in our previous aims of consolidation and sustainability, flexible response to need and maintaining and developing current services. We have addressed substantial risk factors including ongoing funding for local services, diversifying our income streams and adding senior management capacity. See appendix 1 for more detail on our achievements over the last 3 years.

We have a skilled, committed, experienced staff team with a robust management structure and Board of trustees. We have expanded our volunteer teams with excellent training, support and supervision.

*We are **proud** and **passionate** about our values...*

# Building the strategic plan

We consulted widely for views and contributions to inform our new strategic plan. Service users, staff and volunteers were involved, as well as a public online consultation survey with 48 replies. We spoke to a range of partners, funders and other stakeholders.

*...MindOut is seen as a **valued community asset**...*

Our consultation revealed that MindOut is seen as a valued community asset, with a good reputation, good standard of service delivery and offers supportive employment.

It also told us that we could expand outside Brighton & Hove, offer more welfare benefits advice, do more national and international work, expand our offer for People of Colour, people in rural areas and our online services. We could develop our publicity and do more anti-stigma work.

We would like to thank everyone who contributed to the consultation. We listened carefully to all views submitted and they have been used to shape the strategic plan.

We commissioned research into national LGBTQ mental health provision to identify gaps, opportunities and competitors with a particular focus on online support, see appendix 2.

# Our vision, mission and aims

## Our Vision

A world where the mental health of LGBTQ communities is a priority, free from stigma, respected and recognised.

## Our Mission

To improve the wellbeing of LGBTQ people who experience mental health issues, reduce mental health stigma, and promote positive mental health amongst the LGBTQ community. We do this by:

Listening to and responding to the LGBTQ experience of mental health.

Offering hope through positive relationships and professional expertise.

Preventing isolation, crisis and suicidal distress in LGBTQ communities.

Providing safe spaces for people to meet and support each other.

Helping people protect their rights and get their voices heard.

Campaigning and creating conversations about LGBTQ mental health across the world.

## Our Strategic Aims

We have worked with the national LGBT+ sector to define common, shared outcomes which are reflected in our five strategic outcomes:



Better mental wellbeing for LGBTQ people.



Reduced social isolation in LGBTQ communities.



Reduced suicidal distress in LGBTQ communities.



An end to stigma associated with mental health.



Improved mainstream mental health service provision for LGBTQ people.





# Strategy action plan

In order to fulfil our strategic aims and following the consultation, we plan to develop in the following areas over the next three years:

1

## Provide LGBTQ mental health support

In order to address strategic aims 1, 2 and 3, mental wellbeing, social isolation and suicidal distress, we will continue to deliver and develop high quality, co-produced, accessible LGBTQ mental health services.

### Long term vision

- Consolidated core services, including low-cost counselling.
- Targeted, flexible response to demand, especially from minority groups: people of colour, people aged 70+ and bisexual people.
- National, international and regional reach.

### Short term actions

- Respond to emerging need from coronavirus pandemic, expand online support and provide telephone befriending.
- Increase access to digital services: national and international.

2

## Deliver sustainable funding

We will review our fundraising strategy in order to continue to diversify our income streams and build on the successes of the last 3 years. In the short term we will be responding to the opportunities and challenges presented by the Covid-19 pandemic.



# 3

## Improve access for minority communities

We aim to improve the mental health of people with intersectional identities and to ensure that our services continually improve access for minority groups.

### Long term vision

- We understand and meet the mental health needs of LGBTQ PoC, people aged 70+ and bisexual people.

### Short term actions

- To secure funding for bursaries for trans and PoC counsellors.



# 4

## Improve mainstream service provision for LGBTQ people

We aim to ensure that LGBTQ people receive affirmative, welcoming services by providing high quality training for mainstream service providers.

### Long term vision

- We will be a market leader in providing bespoke training for NHS Trusts, corporates and CVS service providers.

### Short term actions

- To review our trading model and costings to ensure maximum effectiveness.





## 5 Position MindOut as a thought leader and initiator of national campaigns

To adopt a strong communications and marketing culture as part of our operations and routine in order to consolidate MindOut's position as a leader, though-shaper and game-changer in the field of LGBTQ mental health. We will reduce stigma, both internal and external, around mental health both within and outside LGBTQ communities.

### Long term vision

- Enhance our understanding of key audiences and development of relevant, informed communications.

### Short term actions

- Develop communications action plan, including digital and social media, including dedicated social media position in the team.



## 6 Increase volunteering opportunities

We will build social capital in our communities through increasing volunteering opportunities across the organisation: volunteers are a vital part of our service delivery, they bring skills and expertise to the organisation and we offer a range of benefits in return.

### Long term vision

- A volunteer team which reflects the diversity of identities and of mental health experiences in our communities.

### Short term actions

- Promote the positive impact of volunteering for mental health.





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