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| LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY STEERING GROUP  information and application pack |
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**Thank you for your interest in Switchboard's LGBTQ+ Community Steering Group!**

## About this pack

This information pack aims to tell you all you need to know about Switchboard LGBTQ+ Community Steering Group and how to apply.

The information in this document sets the guidelines for the group, but it is not set in stone. It is important that the group and how it is run reflects the needs of the people who make it up, so members can discuss together any changes they would like to make to how the group is run. Changes can be made to the document to reflect this.

## Accessibility

This pack will be made available in alternative formats upon request, including large print and dyslexia-friendly font.

Please email sophie.barnes@switchboard.org.uk or call us on 01273 234009 to request a different format.

## Switchboard's Services

The Steering Group will advise on inclusion in Switchboard’s services, with a focus on our Health and Inclusion Project (HIP). To find out more about these services visit **www.switchboard.org.uk**

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| [helpline](https://www.switchboard.org.uk/projects/helpline/) | Our **helpline** provides you with support and information and will connect you to the right LGBTQ services or advice. |
| [Trans survivor switchboard](https://www.switchboard.org.uk/projects/trans-support/trans-survivors-switchboard/) | Our **Trans Survivors** helpline provides support and information to trans and/or non-binary people, or those who are questioning. |
| [Rainbow Cafe](https://www.switchboard.org.uk/projects/the-rainbow-cafe/) | Our **Rainbow Café** is for LGBTQ people with dementia or concerned about memory loss. |
| [Health and Inclusion Project](https://www.switchboard.org.uk/projects/health-and-inclusion-project/) | Our **Health & Inclusion project (HIP)** promotes LGBTQ health and wellbeing and gives you the chance to have your say about healthcare and council services in Brighton and Hove. |
| [Older People's Project](https://www.switchboard.org.uk/projects/older-lgbt-project/) | Our **Older People’s project** is for those aged 50+ looking for a sense of community, support or information. |
| [TransLinkFINALFINAL](https://www.switchboard.org.uk/projects/trans-support/trans-link/) | **Trans Link** Community Navigation is a social prescribing service for trans and/or non-binary people. |
| [GriefEncountersblue](https://www.switchboard.org.uk/projects/grief-encounters/) | **Grief Encounters** is our peer support group for LGBTQ people who have experienced a bereavement. |
| [Disability Project](https://www.switchboard.org.uk/projects/disability-project/) | Our **Disability Project** is for LGBTQ disabled people looking for a sense of community, support or information. |

# Steering Group Terms of Reference

These terms of reference are to give you information about the aims and scope of the group and what taking part will involve.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of the group is to **support**, **drive** and **advise** Switchboard on inclusion matters, based on the **lived experiences** of Steering Group members.

## **Aims**

* 1. Ensure Switchboard’s work reflects the needs of a diversity of LGBTQ+ people in Brighton & Hove, especially those who have been under-represented at Switchboard.
  2. Act as a community voice on inclusion matters to Switchboard’s Trustee Board.
  3. Steer inclusive practices and community links for the Health & Inclusion Project (HIP)

## **Values**

There are five key values that guide Switchboard's work. We will aim for the Steering Group and the members who make it up will reflect these, by being:

* 1. **Supportive** – we are supportive of one another, of all our LGBTQ communities and of all those using our services
  2. **Inclusive** – we are inclusive and we promote and celebrate the diversity of all people and aim to be intersectional in our approach
  3. **Passionate** – we are passionate about making a difference to the lives of all LGBTQ individuals and communities
  4. **Friendly** – we are friendly with everyone that we work with
  5. **Professional** – we are professional in our approach to providing services, undertaking research and working with others

## **Remit**

* 1. Ensure Switchboard’s work reflects the needs of a diversity of LGBTQ+ people in Brighton & Hove, especially those who have been under-represented at Switchboard.
     1. Draw from lived experiences to act as a critical friend to Switchboard.
     2. Ask difficult questions, evaluate, and monitor who is represented and included in Switchboard’s projects.
     3. Develop practices that are affirmative, accessible, and responsive to all LGBTQ+ people. This includes creative and practical solutions to promote inclusion.
  2. Act as a community voice on inclusion matters at Switchboard’s Trustee Board.
     1. Ensure a priority on inclusion is present in Trustee Board decision-making, strategic planning, and future development.
     2. Develop targets on inclusive working, in partnership with the Trustee Board.
     3. Hold the Trustee Board accountable on the agreed targets.
  3. Steer inclusive practices and community links for the Health & Inclusion Project.
     1. Support Switchboard’s LGBTQ Engagement Officer by reviewing challenges in HIP research, identifying gaps, and sharing ideas, connections, and contacts.
     2. Help to reflect HIP findings into communities in an accessible way.
     3. Contribute ideas for the 2 open HIP research topics each year and identify priorities for pre-defined research topics

## **Structure and Reserved Posts**

* 1. The Steering Group has up to 12 members at any time.
  2. The Steering Group is designed to include people from communities that have been underrepresented at Switchboard. We have reserved a number of posts for people from these communities, in order to take action on the lack of diversity at Switchboard (particularly with regards to race).
     1. The reserved posts are minimum and not maximum limits; we explicitly welcome more members from the listed communities to participate.
     2. If we do not fill the reserved posts, they will remain vacant and targeted recruitment will continue until they are filled.
     3. The reserved posts are intended to recognise the value of people’s lived experiences; no Steering Group member is expected to speak on behalf of their entire community. We actively ask about the access and inclusion needs of group members on an ongoing basis and make efforts to meet needs wherever possible.
  3. As part of the reserved posts initiative, the Steering Group includes at least:
     1. One (1) person from Switchboard’s LGBTQ Disability Project
     2. One (1) person from Switchboard’s Older People’s LGBTQ Project
     3. Four (4) people of colour and/or Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic people (self-defined, including people who are not exclusively White British).
  4. The overall gender balance in the Steering Group includes at least:
     1. Three (3) people from the trans community (self-defined, including people who are agender, bigender, genderqueer, non-binary, transfeminine, transmasculine, trans men, trans women and others).
     2. Five (5) women (self-defined, including anyone who identifies as a woman at least some of the time).

## **Operation**

* 1. The Steering Group will meet at least four times per year, with more meetings during the set-up phase.
  2. Meetings will be co-facilitated by the Chief Executive Officer, the LGBTQ Engagement Officer, and a member of the Trustee Board (who will act as a key link point with the Board). An agenda will be shared in advance of each meeting as an opportunity for group members to familiarise and add to this.
  3. Steering Group members should confirm attendance or send apologies if they cannot attend meetings, in advance of scheduled meetings.
  4. Members of the Steering Group may form smaller working groups to lead on different issues and projects.
  5. Steering Group decisions will be made by agreement of the majority. Steering Group members are encouraged to take collective responsibility for the actions agreed at meetings. Issues or conflicts about decision-making can be brought to the Trustee Board link member, or to Switchboard’s Chief Executive Officer.

## **Confidentiality**

* 1. Because the group will involve discussing Switchboard's operations and speaking from lived experience, maintaining confidentiality is important so that group members feel safe and comfortable to speak freely. This means:
  2. Anything shared by a person in the meeting stays in the group meeting room. No information shared should be repeated outside of the room, without the person's clear consent.
  3. Some people will be happy to publicly share that they are a member of the Steering Group, while others will not. For the sake of protecting those who do not wish to be identified, group members should not disclose any potentially personally identifying Information about anyone else in the steering group, outside of the group itself.
  4. Like other parts of this document, this confidentiality policy is open to discussion in the group and changes can be made as needed.

## **Membership criteria**

You don’t need any kind of academic or professional experience. **We are recruiting based on your expertise from your personal lived experiences**, not any specific skills.   
  
The following characteristics are valuable for Steering Group members:

* 1. Lived experience:
     1. You fall in the spectrum of gender and/or sexual diversity that is often called LGBTQ+.
     2. You do not need to be ‘out’ to anyone else to join the Steering Group, and you will not be outed by participating. If you are unsure and/or questioning, you are equally welcome to participate.
     3. You will not be asked to justify your identity at any point during the recruitment process.
     4. You might not identify with the term ‘LGBTQ+’ because of whitewashing, linguistic and/or cultural differences. You may use other terms like QTIPOC, for example. You are welcome to apply to the Steering Group regardless of how you identify.
     5. We explicitly encourage applications from people of colour and/or Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic people, D/deaf people, people with disabilities, long-term health conditions, learning differences, impairments, and neurodivergence, people of faith, as well as people who are migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers.
     6. Members attend as representatives of their lived experience, not as representatives of organisations, professional bodies or other interest groups. If you do have a job role in a sector related to LGBTQ+, health or social care, please be aware that the group focuses on your lived experience as someone from the LGBTQ+ and other communities rather than any professional experience in this area.
  2. Passionate:
     1. You are passionate about inequalities, access, and inclusion.
     2. You want to support Switchboard to improve its work with Brighton & Hove’s LGBTQ+ communities.
  3. Problem-solving
     1. You are willing to be a critical friend to Switchboard and ask difficult questions.
     2. You are keen to solve problems by coming up with practical and creative solutions.
  4. Team-work
     1. You enjoy working with other people as part of a team.
     2. You are respectful of people whose lived experiences and needs are different to your own.
     3. You are able to negotiate and compromise with other people.
  5. Commitment
     1. You are willing to commit to the Steering Group for at least 1 year.
     2. We understand that it is not always possible to plan ahead, and no one will be penalised if they need to step down from the Steering Group for personal reasons.

## **Benefits**

* 1. Participation in the Steering Group is unpaid, though members expenses will be covered. Expenses include travel to and from meetings, as well as caring costs such as childcare. Expenses can be paid in advance of the meeting upon request.
  2. You will gain a hands-on understanding of equalities and inclusion work.
  3. You will gain experience of planning and service-delivery at a Charity.
  4. You will have a voice in steering Switchboard’s work whilst enjoying fewer obligations than Trustees.
  5. We will supply a reference for your participation in the Steering Group, if you require one.

## **Ownership**

* 1. These Terms of Reference (ToR) are a starting point and not a fixed policy. They are flexible and will change alongside the work of the Steering Group, in response to expanding ideas about inclusion.
  2. The ToR are owned collectively by the Steering Group. All members are invited to suggest changes, and the group shares responsibility for documenting edits.
  3. The ToR will be formally reviewed *at least* once per year, before the Annual General Meeting.
  4. This document should be read in conjunction with the Steering Group’s Safe Spaces Agreement.

# Safe Spaces Agreement

This policy will be discussed and reviewed in the initial Steering Group meeting, and is open to changing alongside the Terms of Reference.

* Meeting spaces. We will hold meetings in wheelchair accessible spaces, with wheelchair accessible and gender-neutral toilets available.
* Advance notice. We will circulate agendas in advance, including information about the location (access points to premises, access to toilets, restrictions about arrival and departure time, information on travel & public transport, parking locations). We will avoid changes of plan unless absolutely necessary, in which case we will communicate the changes to members as soon as possible.
* Timings. Facilitators will make sure meetings and activities keep to time.
* Avoid assumptions about identity.  We do not assume anyone’s pronouns or gender, and respect how they choose to define themselves.
* Tone. Sometimes talking about issues such as gender, race, and disability gets emotional and heated; we do not tell a person who experiences structural oppression on a daily basis to “calm down” or accuse them of getting too emotional.
* Boundaries. Not everyone will want to engage in social interaction, physical contact or sustained eye contact. We are mindful that not everyone is neurotypical, and our comfortable boundaries of interaction may not hold true for others.
* Listening and dialogue.  People speak from different positions of power, but nevertheless it is important for everyone participating to be given a fair chance to be heard if they are sincerely trying to speak. Mutual active listening and dialogue are central for understanding. We do not interrupt or speak over other people.
* Tokenization. People sometimes assume that someone from a marginalized group can speak for their community. That places a real burden on one person. We recognize that people can only speak about their own lived experiences, and avoid asking anyone to be a spokesperson for their race, gender, class, sexuality, neurotypicality, ability, nationality, etc.
* Privilege. We take a moment to consider which privileges help you move through the world (race, sexuality, gender, class, neurotypicality, ability, language, etc.) before engaging in discussions.
* Violence. We do not tolerate violence, including physical violence and violent language. We do not allow sexism, racism, ableism, ageism, homophobia, fatphobia, transphobia, classism, or the dismissal of experiences and pain.

Safe Spaces Policy (adapted from Resisting Whiteness conference 22.9.18 ([*https://resistingwhiteness.wordpress.com/blog/*](https://resistingwhiteness.wordpress.com/blog/) and Transgender Intersectional/International conference 28-29.5.19 https://transgender-intersectional-international.com/conference-details/call-for-papers/)

# How to apply

To apply to be a member of Switchboard’s Steering Group, please complete:

* Application Form
* Equalities Monitoring Form

Your equalities monitoring form will be filed anonymously and separately from your application form.

You are welcome to fill in this form using a computer, writing by hand, or verbally (either on the phone, or in person). We can provide an interpreter if required.

You can email the form to lgbthip@switchboard.org.uk or hand it in to Reception at Community Base, 113 Queens Road, Brighton, BN1 3XG.

If you would like to talk to someone about applying or to ask for support to write your application, you are welcome to contact the LGBTQ Engagement Worker at the same details above.

We explicitly encourage applications from LGBTQ+ people of faith, people of colour and/or Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic people, people who are migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers, D/deaf people, as well as people with disabilities, long-term health conditions, learning differences, impairments, and neurodivergence.

## Deadline

**The deadline for applications is 11:59pm on Friday 29th March 2019*.***However, applications will remain open until the minimum of Reserved Posts for members of under-represented communities are filled (see section 5 for more information on Reserved Posts).

## Interviews

The LGBTQ Engagement Officer and the CEO will review all applications together after the deadline. Applications under the Reserved Posts initiative will be reviewed as and when they are received.

If your application is successful, we will get in touch to arrange a time to meet for an informal interview at a mutually convenient time during the week of 8th April 2019.

Due to limited spaces in the group and the need to ensure diversity, not everyone who applies will be able to take part in the group.

## Timeline

Below is a timeline of the key deadlines and meetings to be aware of for 2019. Where exact dates are not yet confirmed a range of dates is given. We may decide as a group to arrange additional meetings if necessary.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Friday 29th March | **General Deadline**  Applications open until minimum Reserved Posts filled - see Section 5 |
| Thursday 4th April | **Hearing back about your application**  We will let you know whether you have been invited to interview by the end of the day |
| Tuesday 9th- Thursday 11th April | **Informal interviews**  We will be in touch to arrange a mutually convenient time to meet for an informal one-to-one interview during these dates. |
| Thursday 11th April | **Hearing back about your interview**  If you had an interview we will get in touch to let you know whether it was successful by the end of the day on this date. |
| Tuesday 16th - Thursday 18th April | **Group Pre-Meeting**  This will be our first time getting together as a group to get to know each other and discuss how you would like it to run before the first official meeting. |
| Tuesday 30th April- Thursday 2nd May | **First LGBTQ+ Community Steering Group Meeting** |
| Tuesday 9th - Thursday 11th July 2019 | **Second LGBTQ+ Community Steering Group Meeting** |
| Tuesday 1st - Thursday 3rd October 2019 | **Third LGBTQ+ Community Steering Group Meeting** |

# Application form

Thank you for your interest in applying to volunteer for the LGBTQ+ Community Steering Group! Please complete the below application form, along with an Equalities Monitoring Form by **11:59pm on Friday 29th March\**.***

You are welcome to fill in this form using a computer, writing by hand, or verbally (either on the phone, or in person). We can provide an interpreter if required.

You can email the form to lgbthip@switchboard.org.uk or hand it in to Reception at Community Base, 113 Queens Road, Brighton, BN1 3XG

If you would like to talk to someone about applying or to ask for support to write your application, you are welcome to contact the LGBTQ Engagement Worker at the same details above.

\*Applications will remain open for people from under-represented communities, particularly people of colour and/or from Black, Asian and Minority ethnic backgrounds until the minimum of Reserved Posts are filled (see section 5 for more information on Reserved Posts).

|  |
| --- |
| 1. **Name** |
|  |
| **Pronouns** (e.g. they/them; she/her; he/him, etc. optional): |

|  |
| --- |
| 1. **Email address** |
|  |

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| --- |
| 1. **Contact number** |
|  |
| **Can we leave a message?** YES / NO |

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| --- |
| **4 . Please tell us where you found out about this volunteering opportunity** |
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| 1. **Please let us know if you have any communication needs e.g. dyslexia-friendly documents** |
|  |

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| --- |
| 1. **Please let us know why you are interested in joining the Steering Group** |
| More space overleaf if required |

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| 1. **Please let us know why you feel you are suitable. We are interested to hear about your life experience – you don’t need any professional or academic experience.**   We encourage you to focus on the Membership Criteria listed in the Terms of Reference (passion, problem-solving, teamwork, lived experience, and commitment – see the Membership Criteria in the Terms of Reference for more info). |
| More space overleaf if required |

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| 1. **Steering Group Structure**   The Steering Group is designed to include people from communities that have been under-represented in Switchboard’s past work. We have reserved a number of spaces for members from those communities. See section 5 of the Terms of Reference for more information.  Note: this information helps us to make sure we have the right balance in the overall membership of the Steering Group. It will not influence how your application is assessed In any other way.  Please let us know if you are:   * A member of Switchboard’s LGBTQ Disability Project * A member of Switchboard’s Older People’s LGBTQ Project * A person of colour and/or Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic people (self-defined, including people who are not exclusively White British). * Trans (self-defined, including people who are agender, bigender, genderqueer, non-binary, transfeminine, transmasculine, trans men, trans women and others). * A woman (self-defined, including anyone whose identifies as a woman at least some of the time). |
| 1. **Is there anything else you would like us to know?** |

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| --- |
| Space to continue answers |

End of application form

Thank you for taking the time to apply for the LGBTQ+ Community Steering Group!

Please get in touch at the contact details below if you have any questions about the group, or making an application.

*Sophie Barnes (she/ her) LGBTQ Engagement Officer*

*sophie.barnes@switchboard.org.uk*

*01273 234009*

*Switchboard  
Community Base  
113 Queens Road  
Brighton  
BN1 3XG*

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