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A person brushing his teeth

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Lived Experience Steering Group

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**Thank you for your interest in Switchboard's Survivor Lived Experience Steering Group**

## About this pack

This information pack aims to tell you all you need to know about Switchboard’s Survivor Lived Experience 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 raf.galdeano@switchboard.org.uk or call us on 01273 234009 to request a different format.

## Switchboard's Services

The Steering Group will advise on the activities and direction of our Domestic Abuse (DA) Service. This will have a focus on increasing access for marginalised people within our communities, and determining what our resources and groups look like. To find out more about Switchboard services visit **www.switchboard.org.uk**

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|  | Our **Helpline** provides support and information and will connect you to the right LGBTQ services or advice. |
| A pink circle with blue text  Description automatically generated with medium confidence | Brighton’s first LGBT-led **Domestic Abuse** service, supporting LGBTQ victims and survivors in an inclusive and affirmative community space. |
|  | Our **Dementia Support** is for LGBTQ people with dementia or concerned about memory loss. |
| A green circle with white text  Description automatically generated | 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. |
| A blue circle with white text  Description automatically generated | Our **Older People’s project** is for those aged 50+ looking for a sense of community, support or information. |
| A red circle with white text  Description automatically generated | **Trans Link** Community Navigation is a social prescribing service for trans and/or non-binary people. |
|  |  |
|  | **Grief Encounters** is our peer support group for LGBTQ people who have experienced a bereavement. |
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# 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, based on the **lived experiences** of Steering Group members.

## **Aims**

* 1. Ensure Switchboard’s domestic abuse work reflects the varied needs and lived experiences of LGBTQ+ people in Brighton & Hove, especially those who have been under-represented at Switchboard.
  2. Act as a community voice on domestic abuse work to Switchboard’s Trustee Board and Management
  3. To hold Switchboard’s Domestic Abuse Service to account for its’ ethos of being truly survivor led.

## **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 domestic abuse service.
     3. Develop practices that are affirmative, accessible, and responsive to all LGBTQ+ people. This includes creative and practical solutions for an intersectional service.
  2. Steer inclusive practices and coproduced projects within Switchboard’s Domestic Abuse service.
     1. Guide the content and direction of the Polari Programme, a new domestic abuse recovery venture written by and for the community.
     2. Help us decide the engagement and research opportunities the service engages with, including any undertakings which are deemed important by the steering group.
     3. Develop resources, materials and outreach opportunities that are truly survivor-led, providing a much-needed survivor voice for the service.

## **Structure and Reserved Posts**

* 1. The Steering Group has up to 5 members at any time.
  2. The Steering Group is designed to include people from communities that have been underrepresented at Switchboard. We have reserved several posts for people from these communities, to act 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. Two (2) people of colour and/or Black, Asian, or of a racialised community (self-defined, including people who are not exclusively White British, and includes Jewish and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities).
  4. The overall gender balance in the Steering Group includes at least:
     1. Two (2) from the trans community (self-defined, including people who are agender, bigender, genderqueer, non-binary, transfeminine, transmasculine, trans men, trans women, and others).
     2. One (1) woman (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 Casework Manager and an external facilitator, and 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, 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 paid at £25 per hour, which includes work undertaken at the steering group, and any additional work that you may undertake outside of meetings. If there are limits on how much you can earn for whatever reason, let us know and we may be able to provide you with gift vouchers instead. You are also entitled to expenses, which include travel to and from meetings. 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.
  + We’ll ensure spaces are warm and quiet, and seek to understand any sensory or other access needs in advance to make sure these are met.
  + Wifi information, where available, will be shared.
  + To better suit the needs of the group, we may hold meetings online using MS Teams, or Zoom. We will decide this as a group.
* 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.
  + We will find out and use members’ preferred form of contact for this – whether this be Text, WhatsApp, Email or Phone.
* Timings.
  + Facilitators will make sure meetings and activities keep to time.
  + We ask that members let us know if they will be arriving late so we can know to expect you.
* Avoid assumptions about identity.
  + We do not assume anyone’s pronouns or gender, or any other aspects of identity and experience. We respect how each person chooses to define themselves.
  + We recognise it is okay not to know it all, and that it is okay to ask non-intrusive questions if we want to better understand.
  + At the same time, we are sensitive to the fact not everyone will want to answer all questions, and this is fine too.
* 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.
  + We recognise that different tones can also carry cultural associations, and respect that people will express themselves in different ways.
* Confidentiality and Anonymity
  + Anything shared by a member in the meeting stays in the meeting room. No information shared should be repeated outside of the room, without the person's clear consent.
  + We recognise that while some members will be happy to publicly share that they are a member of the Steering Group, 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, without their express consent.
* 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.
  + We check for consent before touching another person and are attentive to verbal and non-verbal communication.
* 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.
  + We recognise that it is okay to ask clarifying questions, and no member is expected to ‘know it all’ when it comes to inclusion.
  + We recognise there may not always be time in a meeting to fully hear all points, and will use a ‘parking space’ to log and come back to any missed points in future meetings.
* 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.
  + We recognise that, although often well-meaning, assumptions about anothers’ experiences or needs can be alienating and hurtful. If unsure and it’s appropriate, we ask.
  + We speak from our individual experience using ‘I’ statements.
* Privilege.
  + We take a moment to consider which privileges help you move through the world (race, sexuality, gender, class, neurotypicality, ability, language, education, etc.) before engaging in discussions.
  + We are open to challenging and being challenged in a respectful way - challenging the behaviour/ belief, not the person.
  + When we cause harm, we seek to understand the needs of the other person over our own justifications, and aim to understand what they would like, if anything, to repair and move forward together.
  + We offer compassion to ourselves and others in this process.
* 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.
  + We support members who may be experiencing oppressive harm due to the actions or words – intentional or unintentional – of another member.

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 domestic.abuse@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.

# 

# Application form

Thank you for your interest in applying for the LGBTQ+ Community Steering Group!

You are welcome to fill in this form:

* using a computer
* writing by hand
* verbally - either on the phone, or in person. We can provide an interpreter if required.

If completing with a computer or by hand, you can email the form to [domestic.abuse@switchboard.org.uk](mailto:domestic.abuse@switchboard.org.uk) or hand it in to Reception at Community Base, 113 Queens Road, Brighton, BN1 3XG for Raf at Switchboard.

If you would like to talk to someone about applying or to ask for support to write your application, please contact our domestic abuse team at the email above.

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

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

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

|  |
| --- |
| **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:   * θ A person of colour and/or Black, Asian, or of a racialised community (self-defined, including people who are not exclusively White British, and includes Jewish and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities). * 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 who identifies as a woman at least some of the time). |
| 1. **Is there anything else you would like us to know?** |

|  |
| --- |
| 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.

*Raf Galdeano, Casework and Client Services Manager*

*Raf.galdeano@switchboard.org.uk*

*01273 234009*

*Switchboard  
Community Base  
113 Queens Road  
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