

Gay and Bisexual Men's Experiences of Sexual Health Clinics

In February, the West London Gay Men's Project launched a consultation looking at gay and bisexual men's experiences of sexual health clinics (GUM clinics/clap clinics). This is your chance to get involved and tell us about what you think of sexual health clinics and the services they provide. The results from the consultation will be reported to sexual health clinics and used to help measure the Hounslow Local Area Agreement and Sexual Health Strategy Framework targets.

A short questionnaire asking about your views and experiences will be distributed at venues with the outreach team. We will also be looking for volunteers to attend focus group meetings to discuss in further detail their experiences and opinions of sexual health clinics. If you want to volunteer for a focus group please **call 0800 587 8302** or **email oliver@westlondongmp.org.uk**

The questionnaires will be distributed throughout February and March, so pop along to the venues and fill one in (see 24s dates below). Alternatively, you can complete the questionnaire online at **www.westlondongmp.org.uk** or **email oliver@westlondongmp.org.uk** with your address and we will post you one.

the SOURCE

●●●● health information for the LGBT community

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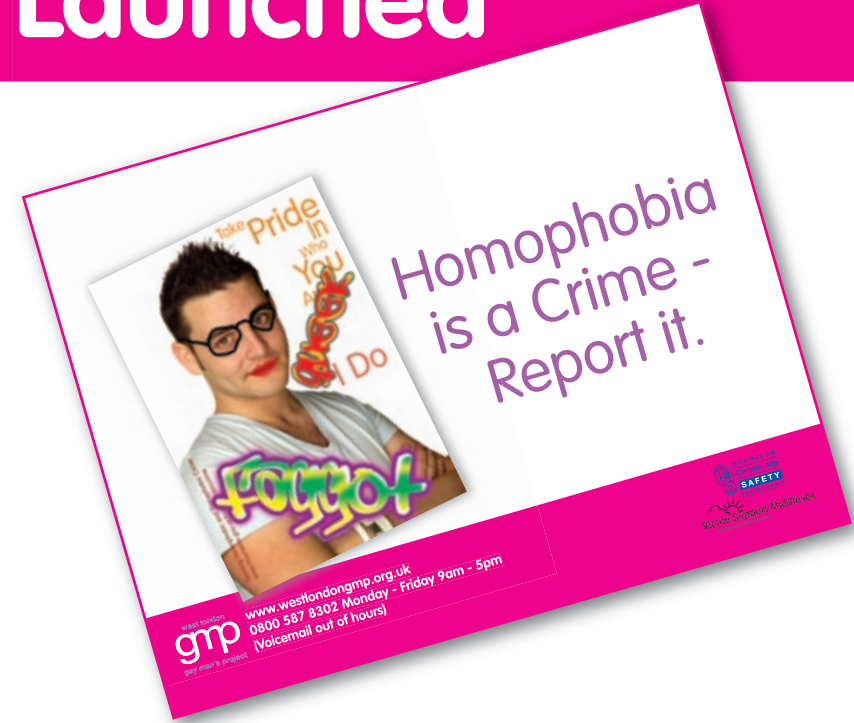
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Upcoming 4s Dates

- March**
 - Bromptons** • Fri 2nd 10pm -1am
 - Bootylicious** • Sat. 10th 11pm - 2am
 - Ted's** • Mon. 12th 8pm -11pm
 - Windsor Castle** • Sat. 17th 8pm - 11pm
 - Club Exilio** • Sat. 24th 10pm - 1am
- April**
 - Ted's** • Mon. 2nd 8pm -11pm
 - Bootylicious** • Sat. 14th 11pm - 2am
 - Windsor Castle** • Fri. 20th 8pm - 11pm
 - Culvert** • Fri. 27th 8pm - 11pm
 - West 5** • Sat. 28th 8pm - 11pm

Here are the upcoming dates for 24s, free bulk condom and lube distribution scheme. To sign up to the scheme, just speak to one of our friendly outreach workers on the night - they'll be wearing GMP T-shirts. Alternatively, call **George Leonard** on **0800 587 8302** or email **24s@westlondongmp.org.uk**.



HELLO & WELCOME

to Issue 9 of The Source,

We are now firmly into 2007 and Issue 9 of The Source has arrived. In this edition we highlight the new poster campaign displayed throughout Hounslow & Hillingdon encouraging people to report Homophobic & Transphobic Crime.

We introduce the Gay Men's Project Outreach team, who can be seen working in venues throughout West London and spotlight the new GMP consultation on gay and bisexual men's experiences of sexual health clinics.

We also take a look at two couples' experiences of having a civil partnership, one year since same sex couples can have their relationships legally recognised.

Other regular features include our problem page, with answers provided this year by the enlightened Auntie Jee, plus details of GMP's free bulk condom and lube distribution scheme '24s'.

The Contacts page, offering information on local support services, sexual health clinics and LGBT youth groups can as usual be found on pages 6 & 7.

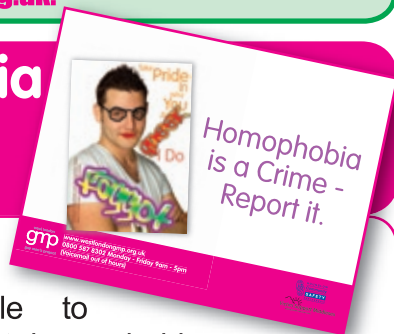
We would like to hear your thoughts on The Source, so please call or e-mail us with any comments, suggestions or ideas you may have to 0800 587 8302 or thesource@westlondongmp.org.uk.

New Anti-Homophobia Campaign Launched

In February, to coincide with National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender (LGBT) History Month, West London Gay Men's Project, Hounslow Community Safety Partnership and Victim Support Middlesex, launched their new joint campaign to encourage

people to report homophobic and transphobic crime.

The campaign is the follow up to the 2005 campaign that highlighted issues of hate crimes and homophobia within



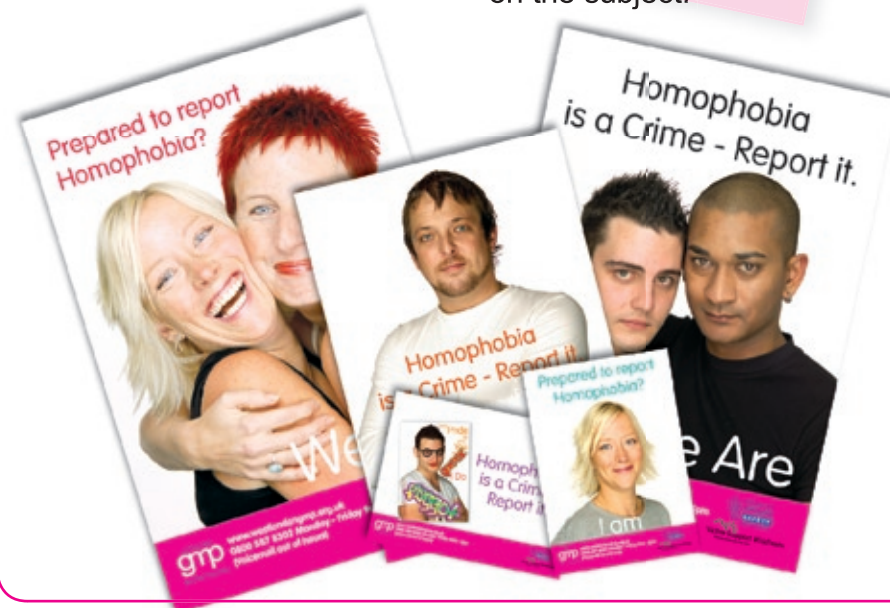
and beyond the borough of Hounslow. This new campaign seeks to go that bit further and promote the reporting of such crimes and emphasise the need for these crimes to be tackled.

The campaign has been distributed throughout Hounslow and Hillingdon on billboards, notice boards and in public libraries. Police stations, local government and NHS buildings such as GP Surgeries and clinics will also display the campaign, sending out the message that homophobic and transphobic crime is completely unacceptable and against the law.

Between January 2005 and 2006, 1,359 homophobic crimes

were reported to the police in London; but many more incidents go unreported because gay men, lesbians, bisexuals and transgender men and women will not come forward.

Simon Mitchell, Head of West London Gay Men's Project, said "Campaigns that tackle the issue of hate crime, particularly homophobic and transphobic crime, need to be clearly visible in public environments in order to successfully permeate into public consciousness. These types of crime should no longer be brushed under the carpet and the campaign aims to go some way towards challenging people's attitudes and thoughts on the subject."



The Road to Equality



The last 15 years have marked a sea change in Britain that has gradually given gay, lesbian and transgender people greater equality and introduced new civil and legal rights for same-sex couples.

February was Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) History Month, and the event celebrates the key moments that have led to positive change for these groups.

Arguably, the most important development was the introduction of civil partnerships last year.

For the first time, gay (men) and lesbian couples were afforded civil and legal rights enjoyed by married people, and 72 couples in Hounslow have taken advantage of that opportunity.

As part of LGBT History Month, West London GMP asked two couples what registering their civil partnerships meant to them, and advises same-sex couples on what they need to do to register their own civil partnership.

Two Local Couples

Simon and Jonathan are in the middle of preparing their civil partnership for July this year. In July they will have been together for 10 years and see the ceremony as a way of celebrating the fact, as well as offering some more financial security for the future (as Simon said "You never know how families will react with the death of a loved one – and I want to make sure that my partner gets what he is entitled to"). It is said that marriages are not always cheap affairs – and civil partnership ceremonies can be the same, "We have a budget of around £7,500, and that should cover a party for about 80 family and close friends, as well as all other costs involved such as hotel rooms for family, the registrars and our outfits."

Manjeet and George had been together for 7 years when they had their ceremony last January.



George said, "We decided almost as soon as we were able to, to have a ceremony – it is the next best thing to a 'conventional marriage' after all. It did stir up some feelings and emotions in our families that we were not aware of – some of my partner's family refused to attend as they felt it was 'inappropriate'! Apart from some family reactions, we've not really encountered any other prejudice though. The florist reacted strangely at first when the flowers were ordered for the ceremony, but that lasted all of about 10 minutes. It also took a while to get hold of invites that were appropriate

for a civil partnership. Nothing has changed in our relationship following the ceremony - life goes on as normal. We did contemplate going for the double barrelled surname – we just decided against that in the end – although a number of our friends have done that."

How can I register a civil partnership?

It is a legal requirement to give notice of your intention to register a civil partnership at the Register Office. After giving notice, you must wait fifteen clear days before the civil partnership can be registered.

Once given, your notice is valid for 12 months. A civil partnership ceremony can then take place at the Register Office, or approved building.

For more information, call your local Register Office.

Key Events:-

- 1999** - Transgender people gain legal protection in employment – The Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999, makes it illegal for employers to discriminate against transgender people.
- 2000** - A ban on lesbians and gay men serving in the Armed Forces is lifted.
- 2000** - 'Age of Consent' equalised for heterosexual & homosexual sex at 16.
- 2003** - The Government introduce the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003 to protect people against discrimination based on their sexual orientation.
- 2004** - The Gender Recognition Act 2004 allows transgender people to change the sex on their birth certificate to the correct (post-operative) gender.
- 2005** - Civil partnerships become legal for same sex couples.

CONTACTS



Local Support Services

The River House • Drop-in for people living with and affected by HIV.

020 8753 5190 www.riverhousetrust.org.uk

Naz Project London • Services for Spanish, Portuguese, Muslim, Somali, Ethiopian & Asian men **020 8741 1879** www.naz.org.uk

Living Well • Self Management Programme and support for people living with HIV **020 8746 2274** www.livingwellhiv.com

HART (Hillingdon AIDS Response Trust) • Practical and emotional support to people affected by HIV and AIDS **01895 813874**

The Bridge, Fulham Broadway Methodist Church • Thursdays 2pm-8pm
Drop-in, therapies and counselling for people living with HIV
 020 7381 3806

Hounslow African Health Project • Provides services around health and social care to the African migrant communities in the Borough of Hounslow **020 8580 1046**

OutWest • Social and support group for the LGBT community in West London **020 8892 5061** www.outwest.org.uk

Sexual Health Clinics

Ealing Hospital • Level 8 Clinic, Pasteur Suite
 020 8967 5555 (Reception) no appointment necessary

West London Centre for Sexual Health (Hammersmith) • West 6 Clinic, for men who have sex with men **Tuesdays 5.30 pm- 7.30pm**
 0845 811 6699 Appointments **APPOINTMENTS ONLY**
 020 8846 1579 Health Advisers

West Middlesex Hospital Sexual Health Clinic (Hounslow)
 020 8321 5718 (Reception) no appointment necessary

Tudor Centre (Uxbridge/Hillingdon)
 01895 279537 (Reception) **APPOINTMENTS ONLY**

Lesbian, Gay & Bisexual Youth Groups

O.O.T (Hammersmith)
 0800 169 4318 www.outonthursday.org.uk

Your Zone (Ealing)
 07985 12 64 42 yourzone@ealing.gov.uk

Local Police Community Safety Units

Ealing
020 8246 9617
Hammersmith
020 8246 2436
Hounslow
020 8577 1212

IN AN
EMERGENCY
ALWAYS dial
999

CRIMESTOPPERS
0800 555 111

Other Useful Numbers/Sources of Information

West London Gay Men's Project Sexual Health Advice Line
 0800 587 8302 or text/call **07947 734201**
 info@westlondongmp.org.uk
 www.westlondongmp.org.uk

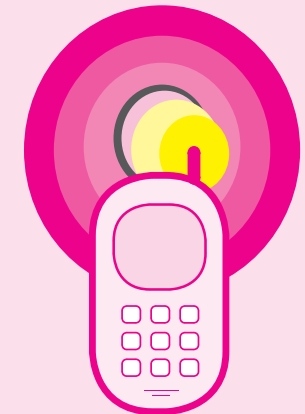
London's Health Directory for Gay Men on the Web
 www.metromate.org.uk

NHS Helpline
 0845 46 47 www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

National HIV/AIDS/STI Helpline
 0800 567 123

THT Direct
 0845 12 21 200

London Lesbian & Gay Switchboard
 020 7837 7324



GMP Outreach Team

Possibly the first time you found out about the West London Gay Men's Project may have been from seeing outreach workers in bars and clubs.

Each year the team, led by George - Community Outreach Officer, delivers 70 sessions throughout West London and at some Central London venues. Outreach workers Rui, Doug, Ajamu, Colin and Ibrahim are there to ably assist George.

At each session the latest booklets about sexual health for gay men are available to read or take home. The leaflets and booklets are also about other health and wellbeing issues like relationships, drugs and negotiating safer sex. They make sure there is a good stock of these resources at the venues.

The free condom and lube scheme 24s, is primarily delivered by the outreach team, although as you will know from reading previous issues of *The Source*, you can also sign up via the website, sexual health clinics and at gay youth groups (See

back page for 24s venue dates).

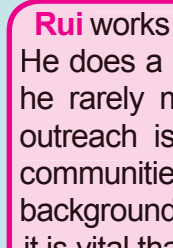
The team is happy to answer questions about sexual health and related issues. If you have a worry, whether it's about you or someone you know, see George and co, and you'll be treated in a friendly, sensitive and professional way. They hold more information than is displayed on the stand and can answer many questions on the spot. If not, they can refer you to organisations or Internet resources that can help. The team is also very happy to hear your views on current campaigns that are being displayed on the stand and your experiences of outreach work.

Don't be shocked if they try to make conversation with you. If you don't want to chat just let them know (they can take a surprising amount of rejection) and they'll leave you to your night out. It's just a way to break the ice and reach lots of people.

Now let us introduce the team of outreach workers who bring a diversity of experiences and characters to the project.



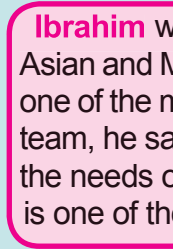
Doug by day is a Human Resources Advisor in central government; he is a qualified mediator and workplace counsellor. "Outreach work gives me experience outside my normal working environment. I also think it is a vital service for the gay community".



Rui works in healthcare management at a university. He does a lot of charity work, including triathlons, but he rarely mentions it. "The main reason why I like outreach is because it keeps us in touch with the communities we work for. For someone like me whose background is mainly theoretical and research based, it is vital that we keep a link with the real world".



Colin works as a town planner and has recently graduated. "I got interested in outreach work while researching gay men's sexual health at university. Outreach is more hands-on and we inform people to help them make choices about their health."



Ibrahim works as a sexual health advisor for South Asian and Muslim men at The Naz Project, London. As one of the most disarming and friendly members of the team, he says, "I feel I have a unique understanding of the needs of Black and Minority Ethnic clients and this is one of the strengths I bring to the team."



Ajamu is a community activist and has been the Black gay men's outreach worker since 2005. He believes that effective outreach cannot be done behind a desk, "It's not just about using condoms, it's about people skills and being aware that different approaches are needed for the rich and diverse community we belong to."

Ask Auntie Jee

Dear Auntie Jee



If you have a problem that you would like Auntie Jee to answer, email it to source@westlondongmp.org.uk or send it by post to: West London Gay Men's Project, Public Health & Health Improvement Unit, Housing & Community Services, Civic Centre, Lampton Road, Hounslow, TW3 4DN.

Dear Auntie Jee,

I've been with my boyfriend for over a year now and recently we've been having threesomes with another guy. Secretly, I really didn't want to do this, but my boyfriend wanted to make our sex life more interesting. I'm not happy because we keep having sex with the same guy and I'm worried that my boyfriend has feelings for him and might be meeting up with him behind my back. What d'you think I should do?
Sal, Hillingdon.

Sal, I am very concerned that you have felt pressured into having the kind of sex that you really don't want. It sounds like the issue was never really discussed and so no ground rules were set when you started having sex with the other guy.

I'm wondering whether or not your worries have more to do with your

unhappiness with the situation, and talking about this with your boyfriend might help. If you still believe that he has feelings and is meeting up with the other guy behind your back, then you need to ask yourself if this is the type of relationship you want to be in. There are organisations that can offer you support and can talk things through with you, such as the GMP helpline (see Contacts page).

I'm concerned that if you have felt pressured into having the threesomes, you may also not be looking after your sexual health. To help protect yourself from HIV and sexually transmitted infections it's important to be using condoms when you're having sex with multiple partners, and to make sure you use a new condom each time you have sex with a different partner. See the

back page for details of how to join 24's, our free condom and lube scheme.

Remember, if you don't feel comfortable doing something, it's okay to say 'no' and you shouldn't feel pressured into doing it. If your boyfriend wants to be in a relationship with you then he will understand.

Dear Auntie Jee,

I am a 54-year-old gay man and I live on my own. For the last few years I have found things really difficult as my partner died 4 years ago and most of my friends have moved away. My social life is non-existent and I don't have any family nearby that I am in contact with. I would love to find another partner, but worry it's too late to find someone at this stage in my life. I no longer feel comfortable going onto the gay scene to meet people because I feel extremely old and out of place. I feel there is little hope left for me and I can't see any way of meeting someone else, please help.

Jeremy, Hounslow

The good news Jeremy, is that while I understand that the gay scene is geared towards younger gay men, this is not necessarily the best place to successfully meet

a partner anyway. There are several gay groups that exist in and around London which cater for many different hobbies and interests and for older gay men.

GMFA has produced a booklet called 'GMFA's Guide to Gay Sports Clubs and Social Groups' that contains a list and description of all the groups in London, from dancing to water polo or science fiction writing to bird watching (e-mail gmfa@gmfa.org.uk or call 020 7738 6872 to get a copy sent to you). By meeting people in a group setting, you can take the time to get to know them in a safe and not-so-noisy environment.

Alternatively GMFA and PACE run free workshops for gay and bisexual men. One course you may wish to look at is 'The Friendships Course' which helps you to see what your needs are within your friendships, as well as helping you to build the friendships you want (log onto www.gmfa.org.uk for this and other course details).

It's important to remember that you are not alone and by attending a group, you may meet and become friends with other gay men that are in similar situations to you.