



Lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans+ people in the South West

Registered charity 1171878

"It's like a family here and I am so proud of what we do and how we do it. The support we offer has the warm and caring essence that really makes the difference to people's lives. And it's never boring! There are always new challenges and developments ahead."

Quote from Andy Hunt, CEO

Strategic Plan 2019 – 2024

Our Vision

A South West where people respect, celebrate and engage with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities; and where LGBT+ communities live with real equality.

Our Values

Intercom is a community-led LGBT+ specialist organisation that:

- has high professional standards;
- promotes equality and justice;
- is confidential and trustworthy;
- is transparent and has integrity;
- is fair, inclusive, non-judgemental, and respectful of difference.

Background

Intercom was founded in 1997 to address gaps in social, health, and wellbeing services for LGB people in the South West. The needs of LGB minorities were not heard and social isolation was a key problem for the most vulnerable. The founders mandated that Intercom must never lose sight of the principle that we are, and must remain, community-led.

The need for Intercom is still critical today. Despite advances in attitudes and legislation, our communities still face inequality, intolerance, prejudice, and discrimination. We work tirelessly to improve the quality of life of LGBT+ people across the region and continue to evolve to meet the changing needs of the communities we serve. We support more people each year, especially young people and those who are trans+, and demand for our training to improve the practice and understanding provided by other services also continues to rise.

Our 2019 – 2024 Goals

- 1. To evolve our high quality, locally accessible services in innovative new ways.**
 - Build capacity and innovate to meet ever-increasing and changing demand for our services.
 - Develop and refine our Training provision.
 - Enhance our recording processes to better evidence our impact.
- 2. To deliver locally and influence nationally.**
 - Gain acknowledgement as the leading LGBT+ community-led organisation in the South West.
 - Represent our communities' interests as best we can in local and national levels.
 - To further develop our partnerships both locally and nationally.
- 3. To strengthen our financial sustainability and internal governance.**
 - Diversify our unrestricted income streams and maintain existing funders.
 - Grow our high-quality education, training, consultancy and conference portfolio
 - Develop robust governance and management structures and processes.

What we do

Help, Support & Advocacy

This service provides direct support to people who are in need because of prejudice or discrimination, or are supporting someone who is. This accounts for the majority of Intercom's activities.

Our Helpline provides support and signposting across the region and is complemented by LGBT+ Practitioners and Counsellors who provide face-to-face support. We also facilitate a number of LGBT+ Support Groups and maintain a directory of around 100 grassroots LGBT+ organisations to help people access their communities.

The demands placed on our service have never been greater and we have a strong evidence-base both for the need for our work and for the real difference it makes to people's lives.

Support Young People

We have a number of projects to meet the ever-increasing demand from young people and those that support them.

Our youth group, Young and Yourself (YAY), provides social and personal development opportunities for young LGBT+ people in Cornwall, promoting equality and rights for the next generation. Our regular Gender Identity Family Days, held across the region in partnership with local youth groups, provide a safe space specifically for young trans+ people and their families to come together and share their experiences.

For schools, we continue to develop LGBT+ Lunchtime drop-in sessions and co-produced Trans Guidance for Schools (DFE best practice document), which is now in its second edition. We also hold conferences which bring professionals and young people together to enhance understanding and practice in schools and other youth services.

Training & Consultancy

Our standard and bespoke LGBT+ training and consultancy offerings are informed by the communities we support and live within. They are relaxed, accessible, and engaging, and are suitable for any organisation striving to better meet their diversity and inclusivity goals.

We continue to support schools, commercial firms, third sector providers, local government, police, NHS, and other public bodies to meet their particular needs and helping to instil cultural and institutional change to the benefit of all LGBT+ people.

Partnerships & Collaborations

We understand the value of working in collaboration and consultation with a variety of local and national organisations to ensure the greatest impact of what we do.

We work with police authorities, clinical commissioning groups, and local councils to help them to better support victims of hate crime and LGBT+ people with mental health and social care needs. We also sit on the Equalities Reference Group at Devon County Council to represent our communities and are supporting Dorset Police to set up a similar group.

We work in partnership with the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust who provide clinical support for under-18s living with gender conflict and variance and their families.

Our relationship with Plymouth University Clinical Psychology Department enables doctorate students to be placed part-time with us and are valued expert members of the Help, Support and Advocacy team.

Looking Forwards

Recent years have seen political and economic turbulence in which many support organisations, including statutory health and social care services, are struggling to meet people's needs. Many in the third sector are finding funding more difficult to secure, with increased competition for reduced resources.

Financial stability is unlikely to improve over the next few years and so it is crucial that we continue to evolve to meet increasing demand with innovative solutions and that we build the best possible case for future funding. To do so, we need to be better at demonstrating our impact, at diversifying our income sources, and improve the quality of support for our clients.

Feedback from staff and clients reveal a wealth of innovative ideas, including expanding our group work and family support, getting more involved in local and national research, and exploring new avenues for improving the educational, health, and social opportunities for LGBT+ people across the region.

