



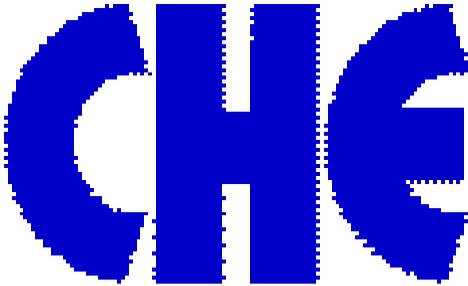
1975 to 2015



Nottingham LGBT Switchboard
celebrates 40 years
Pick up the phone



THE BEGINNING



Switchboard was a by-product of the Nottingham CHE group. Nottingham CHE started in 1971 and although its role was as a campaigning group, it also had a social side. Many who were uninterested in the campaigning contacted CHE as a social outlet - this was at a time when there were few social facilities (apart from pubs) in Nottingham and even fewer in nearby towns and cities.

The CHE committee realised that many of the people who contacted them did so because they wanted information or because they had “problems”. Switchboard was established as a consequence of this.

Its first embodiment was as a drop-in evening at the People’s Centre at 33 Mansfield Road. The People’s Centre was a sort of alternative Citizen’s Advice Bureau and was linked to Nottingham Community and Voluntary Service. Each night of the week served a different function: there was the medical night, the legal night, the housing night. Thursday was the gay night. Because of the lack of publicity (essentially a notice in the window, plus in the Hyson Green Guardian) there were few takers.

In 1975, Switchboard acquired a phone line. Free publicity in Gay News prompted a reasonable number of phone calls and letters. In 1976 Switchboard moved into 31a Mansfield Road, which was part of the Nottingham CVS building and that is where they stayed until 1999, when Nottingham CVS moved about 100 yards down the road to number 7, the Voluntary Action Centre. The much newer building was more secure, less smelly and did not have a leaky roof. It also accommodates a wide range of other voluntary groups and has pleasant rooms where meetings can be held.

OUR “HOMES”



The picture above shows our old home at 33 Mansfield Road after boarding up in preparation for the move to our current address at 7 Mansfield Road as pictured below.



PUBLICITY



NO! NO!! NO!!!

Switchboard's telephone helpline started in 1975. Those operating the service had to work out how to publicise it. In the 1970's most major local newspapers (The Evening Post, the Leicester Mercury) simply refused to publish our adverts.

The Evening Post relented in 1982, but the Newark Advertiser ("We are a family newspaper!") only changed its mind when the 2007 Goods and Services Act forced its hand.

Apart from a couple of very small local papers, our main publicity in the 1970s came from the free entry in the Gay News Gay Guide section.



These days newspapers are begging for custom. We advertise in CHAD, the Worksop and Retford Traders, the Evening Post, AdMag and the Newark Advertiser. We have links on numerous organisations' websites and our leaflets are widely distributed. Our newsletter takes our service to 30 libraries and our contact details are given out to those attending training events.

UNUSUAL CALLS AND LETTERS

I'm having trouble with my bunions (it's my orthopaedic shoes) can you help me?

I am Avon of Blake's Seven, and I am coming to destroy you".

Can you give me details of the hang glider which you have for sale?

You are all damned and within 21 days the Lord will descend on you and you will be cast into the fiery pit".

We received a letter from a vicar who claimed he had cured someone of AIDS.

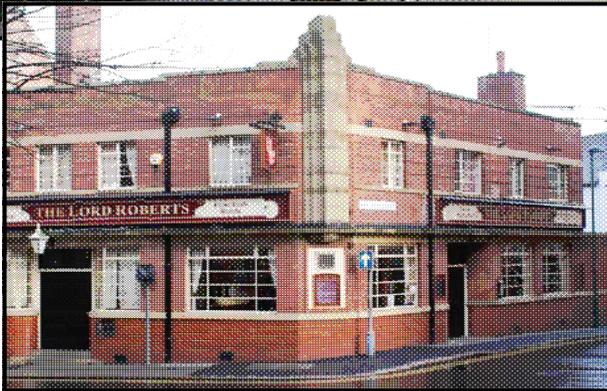
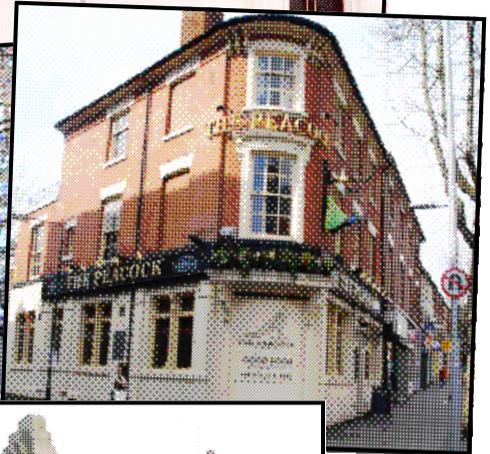
I would like to support Switchboard by being sponsored to have a nail hammered through my tongue.

This is PC Jones from Central Station. I'm phoning about the bicycle which was reported missing by Mr. McQueen

WE MOVE AROUND

For many years
Switchboard held its
monthly meetings in
various pubs

Firstly the Salutation,
but later the Admiral
Duncan, the Peacock
and the Lord Roberts.



After using the Salutation for several years, in 1987 we were informed that we were no longer welcome. This was the period of AIDS hysteria and the movement to introduce Section 28.

WHAT DOES SWITCHBOARD DO?

Switchboard's helpline has been the central thread of our work since we started. It provides information and support by phone, letter, e-mail and texting. In recent times the use of e-mail has increased, while phone calls have decreased.

Since 1975, the helpline has received about 70,000 contacts.

QB is our bimonthly community newsletter. 1000 free copies are printed and getting on for 1000 people receive it via e-mail lists. Contact us to be added to the e-mail list.

Copies go to social/support groups across the City and County, to 30 libraries, to the "gay scene" and places like Broadway, the Playhouse, the Tourism Centre and Five Leaves bookshop.

QB provides an opportunity for new groups, new services, important events and general news to reach much of the LGBT community.

Switchboard and its volunteers always try to have a presence at community events such as Pride, LGBT History Month activities and IDAHO Day.

We are regularly invited by organisations such as the Police and both Councils to events which they organise. We have also had a presence at occasions such as Holocaust Memorial Day.

The image shows the cover of the Nottinghamshire's Queer Bulletin (QB) for February/March 2015. The cover features a rainbow over a classical building facade. The main headline reads "LGBT HISTORY MONTH IS TEN YEARS OLD" with a "FREE" badge. The cover includes a table of contents, a preview of an article about LGBT History Month, and contact information for the organization.

QB
Nottinghamshire's
Queer Bulletin

February/March 2015
Number 82

In this edition

- Confess
- The Parry's Parlour
- Shakespeare letters
- Reading in ASDA
- Shakespeare's friend
- Big in Brazil
- Richard's House
- A History
- Coming out to work
- Having boards
- Paul and me at
- London
- Challenging designs
- Notts TV
- Thoughtful world
- Thoughtful people

and other stuff

If you have any information, news, queries or just want to connect on anything in QB, please contact:

CB
Lester and Day Switchboard
11 Mansfield Road
Nottingham NG1 3PB
see e-mail
nottinghamswitchboard@gmail.com

This deadline for the next edition will be February 27th

Switchboard is registered
charity number 1114273

LGBT HISTORY MONTH IS TEN YEARS OLD **FREE**

When LGBT History Month started in 2005 there was much bawling at the mouth in the Daily Mail – "Sugar the Tories and teach transvestism" "The origins there are rooted in 'sodding poison' and distorting history, 'is month' and 'asked the Mail. One answer is that the story of Alan Turing by 'last justifies LGBT History Month."

It's on Tuesday February 24th, 7 to 9 pm in the Council House ballroom. There will be displays on various themes, a quiz, talks by Notts Healthcare Trust, Nottingham City Homes, Notts Police, Adoption and Fostering and others. The year's awards are going to Catherine Conner from Notts Healthcare Trust, to the 'Team which saved Probi' and to Ed Out Society group.

The Guest of Honour is Professor Cécile Wright, chair of Nottingham Equal and of the Equality and Fairness Commission. There are no tickets for this event – just turn up - it's free – as is the food and drink. More on LGBT History Month on the next page.

Nottinghamshire's Rainbow heritage work for LGBT History Month is supported by Nottingham City Council Nottingham City Homes Notts Healthcare NHS Trust The Gender & Sexual Orientation Consortium

LWITE EGN EM

See page 3



WHAT ELSE DOES SWITCHBOARD DO?

Switchboard's database is unique. Search for LGBT information on the internet and you will find much that is out-of-date, inaccurate and incomplete.

The information which Switchboard gathers is both comprehensive and accurate, as each entry is regularly checked.

These days, possibly because of the Equality Act, organisations are taking steps to consult with the LGBT community.

Switchboard has a presence at consultations organised by Notts Police; the City Council; Notts Healthcare NHS Trust; Notts Hate Crime Steering Group and others. We provide the Advocate for Sexual Orientation on the City's Equality and Fairness Commission.

Switchboard organises training at least once a year for new volunteers. In addition, many organisations have asked Switchboard to provide training and presentations. They include:

both universities; Notts Police; both Councils; Framework; Citizens' Advice Bureau; Crown Prosecution Service, Nottingham City Homes; Victim Support, Highbury Hospital and about 40 others.



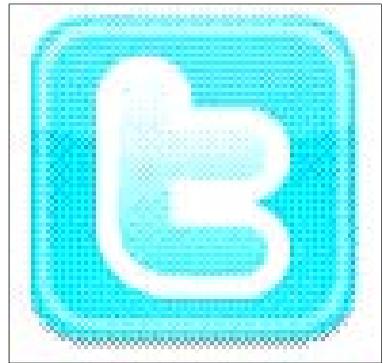
REACHING OUT TO THE COMMUNITY

Our website explains the service we provide and also gives details of social and support groups in Nottinghamshire. Our newsletter QB forms another method of getting news to the community, but it is bimonthly, so inevitably some items miss the deadline, or become old news by the time it is issued.

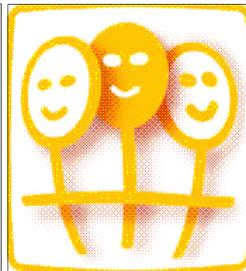
These days social media occupies a vital and popular role in passing on information.

Switchboard has an increasing number of “friends” on our Facebook page and a similarly increasing number of “followers” on our Twitter account.

Both give us a chance to get information out almost instantly to a large number of people. If you are not yet a “friend” or “follower”, then why not join up?



Another route which we use to distribute information to people is via several e-mail lists to which we have access. As well as our own e-mail list and our own volunteers, we also use the e-mail lists of QTNotts, LiNK Notts (Lesbians in Nottingham Konnected) and Nottinghamshire’s Rainbow Heritage. Together these reach nearly 1000 people.



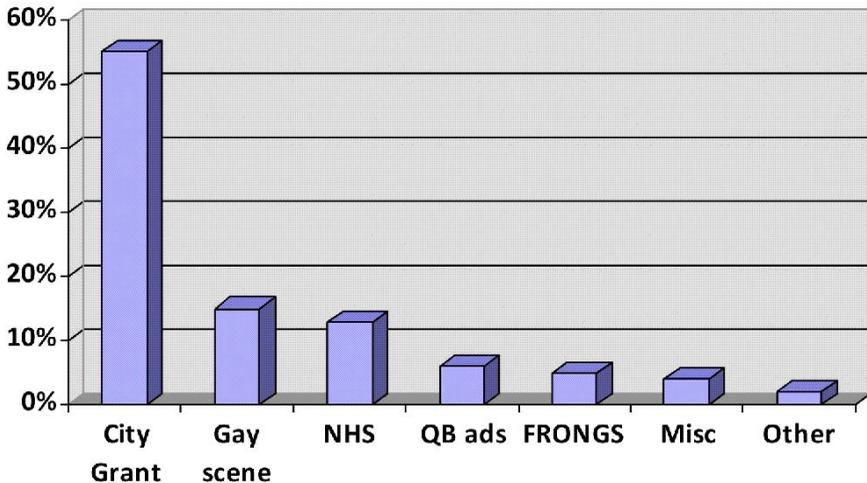
AREAS WHERE WE CAN HELP

Coming out	Mental health	Support groups	Isolation
Events	Social groups	Sexual health	Clubs
Education	Homophobia	Solicitors	Sports groups
Magazines	Travel	Police contacts	Books
Bereavement	HIV/AIDS	Publicity	Transgender
Bisexuality	The law	Civil partnership	Child custody
Harassment	Counsellors	Cross dressing	Pubs
Accommodation	Women's groups	Training	Volunteering
Youth groups	Research	Other helplines	Hotels
Discrimination	Hate crime	Equal marriage	Pride
LGBT History	Emergency	Surveys	Problems at work
Transphobia	Networking	Social media	National

FINANCING THE SERVICE

Many people are surprised to learn that the cost of our entire service is about £12,000 a year. The main reason for this is that we are an all-volunteer organisation. The second reason is that we have learned to use what money we have wisely. Several organisations have stated that we provide amazing value for money.

At the moment, over half our income comes from a City Council Grant. The remainder is made up by contributions from - in order of size - the “gay scene”/gay groups; the NHS; advertisements in QB; people who make monthly donations (these are our FRONGS - Friends of Nottingham Gay Switchboard); miscellaneous charitable donations made through our website and “other”. We will soon get a small grant from the County Council.



The graph above covers the financial year 2014-5. We are well aware that political favours are easily withdrawn, particularly in times of cutbacks. Any readers who would like to help are encouraged to go to our website and read about the FRONGS scheme for regular donations and the Mydonate scheme for one-off payments - both allow us to reclaim tax.

MILESTONES

1977: receives first grant (£100)

1979: gets over 1000 calls

1980: operates 3 nights a week

1981: holds formal minuted meetings

1982: Evening Post accepts advertisements

1983: first grant from City Council

1986: second phone line installed

1987: operates 5 nights a week/given free adverts on Central TV

1988: Tories stop grant

1991: changes name from "Gay" to "Lesbian & Gay"

1992: more free ads on Central TV

1993; adopts a formal constitution

1994: gets first grant from NHS

1996: puts our database on to a computer

1997: takes part in first local Pride festival (called Pink Lace)

1999: moves to a new building

2000: our millennium history book published

2005: Switchboard takes over production of QB from NHS

2006: becomes a registered charity

2008: receives large donation from closure of OutHouse project

2011: Tories on County Council stop grant

2014: 40 years since we started as a drop-in service

2015: 40 years since we started as a helpline

THE GAY GUIDE

When Healthy Gay Nottingham existed, it produced a useful annual “Gay Guide”, listing services, support groups and social groups throughout the County.

In putting together this 40th Anniversary booklet, we contemplated including a “gay guide” and then decided against it. Here are the reasons:

As soon as listings like the Gay Guide are printed, they become out of date, and, after a year, the inaccuracies become significant.

Switchboard’s website already contains a simple list of local services and a more detailed Gay Guide in the form of a Directory which can be downloaded. The Directory is one which is regularly updated as information changes.

Here’s how to access the Directory.

1. Go to our website

www.nottslgs.org.uk

2. Scroll down the menu and click on “Local Facilities”

3. Go to the bottom of the page where it says “For the Directory click here”

4. When you click on that, the Directory will open as a Word document.



We do our best to be as accurate as possible with our information, but if you notice something wrong or something missing, we welcome you letting us know.

If you, or someone you know, is organising something new, then send us the details so that we can publicise it by the various routes outlined in this booklet and, we hope, add to its success.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

If Switchboard is to celebrate a golden anniversary in ten years time, it must consolidate what it is doing at present, but also take up new opportunities which present themselves.

Readers of this booklet who think that they could get involved should contact us in time for our regular training sessions for new volunteers. Training is normally held in late Autumn. Apart from the satisfaction of helping those who contact us, what else do volunteers get out of being involved?

- learning new skills
- using skills that you already have in new contexts
- using experience for inclusion on CVs
- taking part in social activities
- making new friends
- networking with people from other voluntary and statutory organisations
- being among the first to hear about important new local developments

More and more organisations are asking for an input from Switchboard. Perhaps you could represent Switchboard at consultations with the NHS, or on Police training sessions, or at the City Council's LGBT Forum. We can also make ourselves more proactive in reaching out to other organisations.

You might enjoy staffing a stall at Pride, organising an event for LGBT History Month, putting together a display for a university freshers' day, speaking to a youth group or being interviewed for NottsTV. Do you have fundraising skills? If so, you will be welcomed with open arms!

Be a reporter. Our newsletter QB and our social media presence need people who will report back on events and/or take photos. We need people who are prepared to liaise with those running the local "gay scene" - doing so can be mutually beneficial.

SWITCHBOARD AT PRIDE



LESBIAN & GAY SWITCHBOARD

Registered Charity no. 1114273

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE'S
LESBIAN ,GAY, BISEXUAL & TRANS TELEPHONE HELPLINE

HOW TO GET IN TOUCH

☎ (0115) 934 8485
or (01623) 621515
or text 07624 809360

Mon to Fri 7pm - 9.15pm

📍 NLGS, 7 Mansfield Road
Nottingham, NG1 3FB

E-mail

nottinghamswitchboard@gmail.com

Website www.nottslgs.org.uk

Join us on Facebook at

www.facebook.com/NLGSUK

& Twitter at www.twitter.com/nottslGS

If you contact us after reading this
booklet, please mention the booklet.

