

# GROWTH STRATEGY 2017 - 2020

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## 1) Vision

Lesbians, gay men, bisexual and trans people will live in safer homes without fear of discrimination, violence or abuse.

## 2) Mission

We will work to ensure lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people and communities live in safer homes, free from fear, and where we can celebrate our identity and support each other to achieve our full potential.

## 3) Values

The following 7 values underpin the work we do with each individual as we respond to their housing need and the housing they aspire for:

**Challenging discrimination:** Legislative advances have given our communities more legal protections yet the numbers calling us for advice and support remains strong because our communities continue to experience harassment, violence and abuse in and around where they live. We will support those who experience this personally and challenge others to fight against homophobia, biphobia and transphobia.

**Listening actively:** Many LGBT people are expected to make do with how services are offered but we will not make assumptions about who people are or how best to meet their needs, rather we will listen to them so we can shape the work we do together.

**Raising voices:** LGBT people may have similar and different needs to others. Some may not have a good home, education, financial security, employment or support network, so we will advocate with people to raise awareness of their own needs and voice our communities' housing, poverty and related health, support and care needs.

**Pioneering approaches:** Stonewall Housing was created in 1983 by members of our communities who wanted to offer supported housing for young lesbians and gay men who had to leave their family home. LGBT people continue to face insecure and unsafe housing but organisations face increased demand with limited and shrinking resources so we will continue to facilitate the pioneering of new solutions that satisfy our communities' aspirations and needs.

**Recognising diversity:** We recognise that LGBT communities are made up of a spectrum of family units and identities, which includes intersex, questioning, queer, asexual and those who prefer not to be labelled, and all from a range of backgrounds with different experiences. So we will continue to ask who our communities are, which will shape what we do and what we say: challenging discrimination within and outside our communities and improving access to our services for those who share other protected characteristics.

**Working together:** We will work with other providers to improve services they offer our communities and develop new ways to meet our communities' needs and aspirations, collaborating with others to strengthen our organisation and the services we provide.

**Delivering value:** We will deliver our high quality services, making the most cost-effective and efficient use of our resources and the money received from donors, sponsors and funders.

#### **4) Background**

Figure 3 shows that 10 years ago the vast majority of Stonewall Housing's income came from Supporting People funding. Advice and project income increased to offset the reduction in this funding from 2010. The successful delivery of our previous 3-year strategy into 2015 saw us increase and diversify our income and develop our services, for example, we opened two more houses to offer support for those over 25 years old, one of which is specifically for trans people. However, in 2015, we were forced to take a huge cut in our main supported housing income in order to secure a further three-year contract.

This cut meant we had to make 4 posts redundant and had less capacity to develop our services at a time when 2 of our partners closed due to their own financial problems. Stonewall Housing was proud to be able to transfer the mental health advocate services from Pace within our organisation before they closed and supported Galop to do the same with the domestic abuse helpline when Broken Rainbow closed.

In 2016, with the assistance of London Housing Foundation, our Board and staff team looked hard at our future viability and options. We approached a number of agencies to consider how our organisation and its vital services for LGBT people could be secured. We were delighted that this resulted in a new strategic partnership with L&Q and an investment of £180,000 over 3 years from the L&Q Foundation to strengthen our senior management and deliver a new forward growth strategy.

#### **5) Context**

As we look forward to 2020 the spectre of cuts remains, the uncertainty of funding for supported housing, the implications of Brexit and more welfare reforms mean more challenges lie ahead for providers and the people they serve. In England in 2017, we celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the decriminalisation of homosexuality and welcome the legislative advances over recent years yet hate crime is on the rise and LGBT communities face persecution and the erosion of their rights in other parts of the world.

As we approach our 35<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2018, Stonewall Housing is on a firmer financial footing and we have secured funding for our advice and support services. We are also excited that new projects to develop a new extra care scheme for older LGBT people and more refuge spaces for LGBT people have been announced in early 2017.

#### **6) Service model**

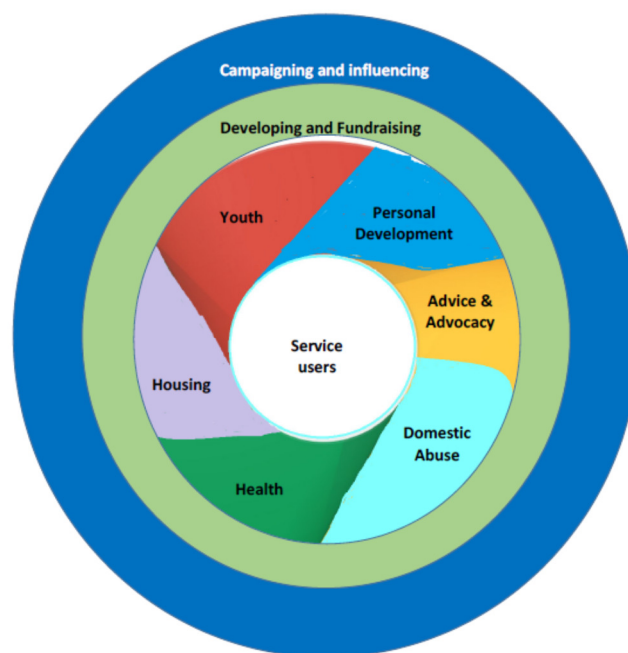
Over the next 3 years Stonewall Housing will access funding from a range of sources to secure our financial viability so that we can continue to provide vital services for our communities and develop new solutions to meet the housing, care and support needs and aspirations of our communities.

Stonewall Housing does not expect people to fit into a rigid approach to delivering services, rather our organisation will offer a range of services that support them to achieve their full potential. Similarly a person's housing situation cannot be addressed without considering other aspects of their experience, such as support needs and future ambitions.

Over the next 3 years Stonewall Housing will continue to develop a suite of services that work in synergy. LGBT people will have more safe housing choices, where they can access high quality advice and support from our specialist team of staff and volunteers in a range of settings through various tools of engagement, along with support from other service users and partners.

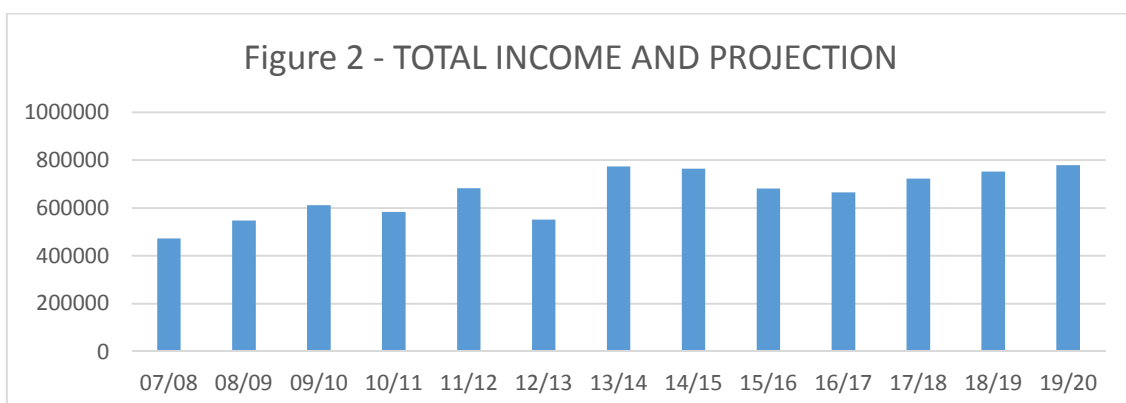
Figure 1 summarises that the people that we serve will be at the heart of all we do and this approach shapes our organisational development and our message.

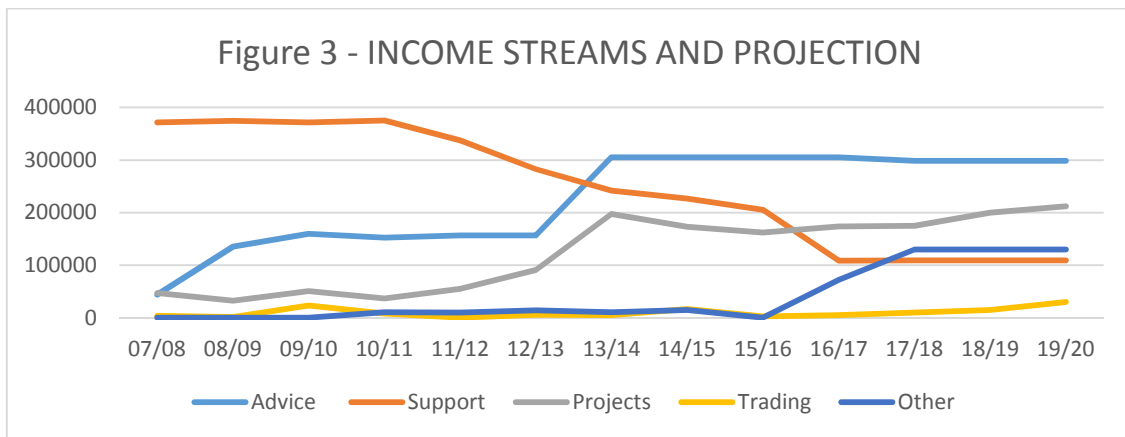
Figure 1: SERVICE MODEL



## 7) Financial projections

Figure 2 shows the history of Stonewall Housing’s income over the past 10 years. Income has increased by 40% over the decade. The chart also shows the projected income level through the period covered by this strategy. Rather than set targets of growth which are unrealistic or unsustainable, our ambition is to return to the high levels of income seen in 2013/14. Our aim is that income will come from new projects, partnerships, donations and trading (figure 3). This will form the bedrock for further sustainable growth beyond 2020.





**Advice and support income:** confirmed to 2021. Our aim will be to provide more supported housing in other boroughs and other cities, but this may counteract future cuts from current boroughs so growth in income cannot be guaranteed.

**Project income:** by 2020 this will supplement the support and advice projects to introduce new schemes in other parts of London and England and specialisms within the organisation. These new projects will provide a base to attract more income and services after 2020, which will be vital if advice and support funding is cut from 2021. 2017/18 income has been confirmed as of June 2017.

**Trading:** aggressively marketing consultancy and training services will attract more income by 2020, which could lead to a social enterprise beyond 2020 if linked to a charter mark.

**Other:** Match funding of the L&Q investment (2016-18) will invest into the infrastructure of the organisation. We will invest in developing closer links with other corporate partners and individual donors over the next 3 years to attract greater financial return from 2020.

	Projects	Trading	Other (Donors and Sponsors)	Total
2017/18	£182,000	£10,000	£70,000	£262,000
2018/19	£200,000	£15,000	£70,000	£285,000
2019/20	£212,000	£30,000	£130,000	£372,000

## 8) Our aims

Stonewall Housing's main aims are summarised under 9 themes over the next 3 years:

- A) **ADVICE AND ADVOCACY:** We will strive to ensure these continue to meet the Advice Quality Standard. We will work with other agencies to identify ways to increase access to our services through new contracts, new approaches, new technology and new methods of working.
- B) **ACCOMMODATION-BASED SUPPORT:** We will work with other local authorities and partners to develop a pathway or network of LGBT housing-related support services across London. We will continue to deliver accommodation-based support services and floating support services to a high quality standard, incorporating more group activities, peer support and online engagement.

- C) **IMPROVED SERVICES:** We will be proactive in developing a range of specialist advice and advocacy services that complement our core work. We will also collaborate with partners and community groups to introduce our models of working across the country and for parts of our communities that are often overlooked, e.g. rough sleepers, bisexual and trans people, asylum seekers and refugees, people living in poverty, people living with HIV.
- D) **NEW BUSINESS:** We will facilitate discussions with community groups, providers, academics, funders and investors to transfer knowledge across the country and internationally, to improve services and to design and deliver new community-led solutions. We will continue to invest in development and operational management roles to ensure there is capacity to take advantage of new opportunities and service improvement.
- E) **TRAINING AND CONSULTANCY:** We will market our training and consultancy services, share our expertise and experiences to drive up standards in other services. We will deliver a charter mark for older people's services following a pilot in 2017/18.
- F) **INFLUENCE:** We will continue to make the most use of our partnerships and our representation on various boards to increase awareness of the specific housing and support issues experienced by LGBT people and how these relate to the health and care priorities that local authorities and national bodies are tasked to address. We will identify emerging themes which will inform our campaigns and research opportunities. We will develop a proactive communications strategy to raise the profile of the organisation to attract more support for our work through improved online and community presence. We will update our website to improve its accessibility and functionality.
- G) **RESOURCES:** We will increase the organisation's free reserves to ensure the future viability of the organisation by attracting a range of income streams, such as individual donors and corporate sponsorship. We will review our staff terms and conditions and our office and running costs to ensure we continue to offer value for money services, collaborating with other partners if practicable. We will invest in our IT and office systems to ensure staff have the tools necessary to carry out their roles and engage with each other and our communities more effectively. We will increase the use of volunteers within the organisation.
- H) **GOVERNANCE:** We will continue to review our charitable status, rules and governance to ensure compliance with relevant charity legislation and so that the organisation has robust strategic and financial scrutiny. We will consider more effective ways of delivering services in collaboration with a range of partners. We will review the skill-base of our Board, staff and volunteers to ensure we have the right skills, knowledge and necessary support to help the organisation achieve its Growth Strategy.
- I) **INCLUSION:** We will improve our communications with our communities to ensure we are accountable to the people we serve. We will monitor the demographic make-up of our Board, staff and volunteers to ensure our services are accessible to all our communities and that we are representative of those we serve.

## 9) Action plan

This section draws out the priorities for the organisation to ensure we achieves our aims. These themes are interrelated. Fundraising and communications are not separate themes, rather these support the achievement of the aims under each theme and each will have

their own workplans to achieve their specific targets. Activities for the first year of the strategy are summarised in Appendix 1.

### **Advice and Advocacy:**

Our advice and floating support services have been secured by partnering with other agencies to deliver LGBT-specific services within pan-London contracts to tackle homelessness, which now includes employability support. We also offer support and advocacy to LGBT people on a spot purchase basis. The Advice Quality Standard quality mark sets Stonewall Housing above many providers. Staff record all cases on Salesforce database.

#### Actions

- *Promote spot purchase model of advocacy and support to other local authorities and providers*
- *Complete quarterly reports for partners and review emerging themes to inform campaigns, development and partnership opportunities*
- *Ensure Salesforce database is fit for purpose and functional to record necessary data and outcomes*
- *Periodic checks to ensure AQS mark can be retained in 2018*

### **Accommodation-based Support:**

Our supported housing projects have continued as local authorities have recognised the importance of specific services for young LGBT people but at a much reduced contract cost. The annual audit of services by the commissioning boroughs achieved level B. We have also opened more houses through a partnership with St. Mungo's for those over 25, with one house specifically for trans people. One house closed in 2016/17 and will be relocated to a new address. The Government's review on the future funding of supported-housing is due to be published in summer 2017. One volunteer has rejuvenated our approach to community events, service user and corporate engagement in 2016/17.

#### Actions

- *Complete quarterly performance reports and annual audit for commissioners*
- *Market the support model and pathway to new boroughs and potential business partners in social housing and private rented sector*
- *Introduce the Work-Ready scheme and group activity plan with a range of companies, then promote scheme through events and campaigns*
- *Launch the relocated scheme(s)*
- *Review implications of future funding of supported housing*
- *Secure funding to implement and market the new models of support, including Work-Ready scheme, group work, peer support and online engagement*

### **Improved Services:**

More LGBT people are experiencing financial hardship and living in poverty. LGBT rough sleepers and those experiencing domestic abuse are often not accessing services from any agencies. LGBT people continue to experience hate crime and antisocial behaviour. All of these issues impact on people's mental and physical health. This Growth Strategy is based on the new service model for advice and support services.

#### Actions

- *Complete new service model, integrating all aspects of advice and support*
- *Secure funding to recruit specialist workers to provide holistic support services (e.g. rough sleepers, domestic abuse, mental health, people living with HIV, financial hardship, asylum seekers and refugees and other protected characteristics such as trans people, young people, older people, BAME and disabled people)*
- *Market our advice and support services as franchises in other parts of England*

### **New Business:**

Our domestic abuse and older LGBT housing projects, which both come to an end in 2018, have the potential of developing new schemes and business opportunities across the country.

#### Actions

- *Take advantage of the business opportunities which stem from partnerships developed outside of London around domestic abuse and older people*
- *Fundraise for alternative funding for projects which come to an end in 2018*
- *Develop the charter mark of older people's services following the pilot in 2017*
- *Promote the achievements of the projects through campaigns and events*

### **Training and Consultancy:**

The amount of training we offer other providers has increased again in the past year as organisations recognise our unique insight into the experiences of our communities.

#### Actions

- *Evaluate the success and satisfaction of training to inform new programmes*
- *Market the range of training and consultancy services on offer to providers*
- *Review the capacity to market, administer and deliver the additional work*
- *Fundraise and recruit the required personnel for administration and delivery*
- *Investigate potential of social enterprise of training and consultancy services, tied to our charter mark*

### **Influence**

Stonewall Housing is represented on a range of local, regional and national boards and a member of national partnership projects, such as the National LGB&T Partnership, where we have led on projects about dementia and social care issues. We also speak at a range of conferences and events and support others to develop resources and complete research projects. More people now access our advice through our website and/or email.

#### Actions

- *Develop engagement with Greater London Authority and Mayor of London following productive introductory meetings in 2017, which may open opportunities around domestic abuse, rough sleeping and older people's services.*
- *Use monitoring and outcomes data and case studies from services to inform regular newsletters, social media posts and campaigns*
- *Update website to improve journey and accessibility of service users and partners then include more interactive functionality to improve advice/support experience*

### **Resources:**

Following the L&Q investment Stonewall Housing has been able to increase the size of its management team which includes a Director of Operations, Director of National Engagement and a Trust Fundraiser. This infrastructure supports a dozen front-line staff and 5 volunteers, based at a head office in Islington and at 4 satellite offices and using a range of advice drop-in locations. Stonewall Housing received funding in 2016/17 from the Local Sustainability Fund to improve relationships with other LGBT groups and corporate partners.

#### Actions

- *Increase reserves to target levels as agreed in the annual review of the Reserves Policy*
- *Match fund for the L&Q investment to ensure the continuation of the senior management team positions, through fundraising and direct approaches to other housing providers*
- *Complete upgrade of IT equipment and software at offices and schemes*
- *Review Terms and Conditions of staff*



- *Complete programme of 360 appraisals for all staff*
- *Review office, overheads and other running costs, with other partners if practical*
- *Diversify income to attract individual donors and corporate sponsorship to increase reserves and enable investment in new solutions*
- *Recruit more volunteers to carry out specific tasks which support the core services*

#### **Governance:**

Stonewall Housing's Board of Trustees is made up of 10 volunteers with a range of skills and experiences. Their time and commitment has ensured the organisation is now able to consider a Growth Strategy after some challenging years. Stonewall Housing is registered as a Community Benefit Society and not registered with the Charity Commission. Stonewall Housing's Annual General Meeting is held in October and we celebrate our 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary in October 2018.

#### Actions

- *Trustees to complete the Governance Review*
- *Review charitable status*
- *Skills audit, training analysis to be carried out to ensure skills gaps are identified at all levels of the organisation*
- *Consider potential collaborations with other partners to ensure future viability*
- *Begin planning 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary year celebrations*

#### **Inclusion:**

Nearly 80% of Stonewall Housing's service users are from black, Asian and ethnic minorities. 18% identify as trans. 50% identify as having a disability. More people accessing our services are aged over 55 and aged 25-35.

#### Actions

- *Review reach of our communications to ensure we reach all members of LGBT communities who can support the improvement and development of our services*
- *Trustees and staff recruitment to improve representation*
- *Plan further equalities training for staff, trustees, volunteers and service users*
- *Review terminology and acronym used by the organisation to ensure we are welcoming to all within our communities, e.g. intersex, non-binary, questioning*

## **10) Review process**

This Strategy will be formally reviewed in April each year. The actions within this Growth Strategy will be regularly reviewed through individual appraisals and supervisions, staff meetings and Board meetings.

The Service User Forum and new peer support network will review and suggest ways of implementing the strategy to ensure this strategy continues to adapt to meet emerging themes through the next 3 years.

These reviews will include consideration of the risks faced by the organisation and the funding secured because income received needs to come from a range of sources to ensure growth is sustainable.

## **Appendix 1: Activity timeline: 2017/18**

See attached.