Targeting resources: recruiting people from the LGBT community

Nicola Hill – foster carer and author of The Pink Guide to Adoption

RECRUITING PEOPLE FROM THE LGBT COMMUNITY

- A live case study – my experience of being recruited – top tips
- Why recruit more people from the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) community
- How to recruit from the LGBT community

How I was recruited

- Poster on the back of a bus
- Why fostering? Shortage, philosophy, ages and support
- First step - calling council
- Online form – 3 'local' agencies
- Mother and baby? Kent? Kitchen table
- No such thing as long-term fostering
- Open evening and follow up

Top tips

- Answer the phone personally
- Listen carefully and don't be pushy
- Make sure staff are well informed
- Hook people in emotionally
- Don't waste your recruitment efforts
- Keep people informed and be honest
- Handle the assessment efficiently
- Deliver the support that you promise

18 months ago this week

- Two children moved in with us
- We have bonded well as a family
- Attached, affectionate, looking to future
- Established rewards, boundaries, values
- Loads of activities and experiences
- Grown in confidence and much calmer
- Contact with birth family maintained
- Logs and photos

ONE OF MANY PHOTOS

Skimming stones on the lake by our house in France

Why recruit from the LGBT community?

- There are approximately 400,000 LGBT people living in London
- 3.6 million live in the UK
- 64% earn more than £21,000 per annum
- 60% have a degree
- 94% are employed

Source: www.londongayman.co.uk/advertising.html

Why recruit from the LGBT community?

- According to Gay Times, 42% of its readership plan to become a parent in the future.

  Source: OutNow Consulting2020 study/Gay Times sample January 2011

- According to the lesbian magazine, Diva, 49% of its readership plan to become a parent in the future.

  Source: OutNow2020 Study/DIVA sample January 2011

Not just statistics – 3 key advantages

- LGBT people often choose fostering as a first choice to have a family.
- They often don't have any other children, so the foster children will get all their attention.
- They know what it's like to come out, may have experienced prejudice and will have empathy with children who have had a difficult start in life.

Myths and fears

- Do you need to persuade someone that LGBT people will make good parents?

- Since 1980 there have been over 25 studies comparing outcomes for children of same-sex and heterosexual households. These have looked at social adjustment, school performance, mental health and emotional behaviour.

Myths and fears

- None of them have shown significant differences between the two groups of children.

- Brooks and Goldberg (2001) studied a group of gay and lesbian foster carers and adopters and interviewed their social workers. They said: “Agency staff mentioned additional strengths of gay and lesbian adoptive and foster parents, including psychological stability, resourcefulness, sensitivity, educational accomplishments and financial security.”

Myths and fears

- Will the children become lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender?
- Evidence from at least 12 studies in the UK and USA shows that children brought up by same-sex parents are no more likely to grow up gay or lesbian than those brought up in heterosexual families.

Myths and fears

- Will the children be teased or bullied?
- Research has shown that children brought up by lesbian and gay parents are no more likely to be teased than those brought up by heterosexual parents.

Myths and fears

- **Is there a greater risk of sexual abuse?**
- Results of general studies of molestation established no correlation between homosexuality and child molestation. A Child Welfare League of America report revealed that 90 per cent of all paedophiles are heterosexual males.

How to recruit LGBT people

- Raise awareness of long-term fostering
- Organise an event targeted at the LGBT community

1. Work with an LGBT organisation to get speakers
2. Secure features in LGBT media
3. Advertise in the local press
4. Hold it in an LGBT venue

LGBT parenting groups

- New Family social – national group for LGBT adopters and foster carers
- Rainbow Families – a support group for LGBT families in Brighton and Hove
- Rainbow Families Manchester – a support group for LGBT families in Manchester
- Proud 2B Parents – another support group in Manchester
- The South London Lesbian Mum's Group
- Rainbow Parents – support group in East London

LGBT media

Magazines

- Attitude
- Diva
- Gay Times
- 3 Sixty
- Pink Parenting
- G3

Radio

- Gaydar radio
- Gaydio

Websites

- Pinkpaper.com
- Pinknews.co.uk
- Transgenderzone.com
- Lgf.org.uk
- Bicommunitynews.co.uk

Local or regional magazines

- Out!North East
- Scots Gay
- Gscene

How to recruit LGBT people

- Make all events welcoming to the whole community – watch your language
- Include LGBT case studies in promotional literature
- Try to get regular features in the LGBT press, radio and online as well as local and national outlets
- Use LGBT foster carers at events
- Advertise on the back of buses!