

Dear Sir/Madam

Thank you for your interest in becoming a Committee Member of the Brigstowe Project.

We are a Registered Charity and Registered Company limited by guarantee. These registrations bring with them laws and guidelines, with which the Brigstowe Project must comply. The Committee makes sure that the Brigstowe Project is operating correctly, within the law and within the best interests of the clients we serve. The Committee is made up of Trustees and Committee members.

The four main aims of the Brigstowe Project purposes are to:

- Provide directly managed housing
- Provide resettlement and housing related “floating support”
- Provide a free information and advice service in the following areas: welfare benefits, health and community care and housing
- Help other housing providers to better meet the needs of people living with HIV by working with them and by providing guidance on good practice information.

We are looking for new members who will be fully committed to Brigstowe's aims, objectives and values, and be willing to take on responsibility to further the needs and best interests of the Project.

The Committee's role is essential to ensuring we continue to deliver high quality services which improve the lives of people living with HIV.

Ideally we would like to add to the skills of the committee and therefore welcome good communicators with plenty of common sense who are able to meet most, but not necessarily all of the following criteria:

- Enthusiasm, willingness and commitment to making an important contribution to those living with HIV in the Bristol area;
- A commitment to the voluntary sector;
- Some experience of working in groups, formally or informally;
- A keen interest in housing, support or advice.

Committee members are unpaid but reimbursed for reasonable expenses, such as travel and childcare. Induction, training and support will be provided to ensure members contribute and gain from the work, and to improve our retention of members. We offer support and training through various methods, including mentoring, and training can be by distance learning, enrolment on courses or tailor made for Committee Members as a whole.

Please find enclosed an application form, including an (anonymous) equal opportunities monitoring form, and the following information about the project:

Latest Annual Report (separate file)
Background information
Details of role/activities of a Committee member
Recruitment/induction policy

If you would like to discuss any matter we would be happy to help. Please contact Steve Durnell, one of our trustees, on 07760 132 300, or me.

Thank you again for your interest, we look forward to hearing from you.

Best Wishes

Jill Turner
Project Manager

Background Information

Aims

The Brigstowe Project is an independent charity and company, whose four main purposes are to:

Provide resettlement and housing related support, known as Floating Support

Offer free, confidential, impartial information and advice on housing, welfare benefits, community care or health to people living with HIV.

Provide directly managed housing to people living with HIV

Help other housing providers to better meet the needs of people living with HIV, by working with them and by providing training and good practice information.

Origins

Brigstowe grew out of the 'Bristol HIV & Housing Group', which comprised representatives from BCC Social Services HIV Team, the Housing Department; Avon Health, Bristol Churches HA, Bristol Drugs Project and the Aled Richards Trust. The group's aim was to identify and plan for the housing needs of people living with HIV in the area. In the early 1990's, following a research report commissioned by the group, BCHA obtained capital funding to build 8 new purpose-built houses on scattered sites.

A development worker was appointed in 1994, and after consultation with local HIV+ people (who expressed a strong preference for independent, HIV+ specific housing management) Brigstowe registered as a charitable company in 1995.

In 1996 – our first year of operation – we won the national Sir Roy Griffiths Award for excellence in housing & community care.

Housing Management and support

We provide directly managed housing to people living with HIV, in partnership with Places for People, a Registered Social Landlord. We currently have 14 units owned by Places for People in management. The housing we use is a mixture of purpose-built houses, and flats from general needs stock. The accommodation is scattered across Bristol, and all tenants have permanent assured tenancies.

In 2008 Places for People put the management of their supported housing out tender, and the Brigstowe Project were successful in retaining management of the properties at a greatly reduced remuneration from April 2009, which will be carefully monitored by the committee during 2009/10.

Support needs and changing needs

Our tenants generally have low to medium support needs, although these vary enormously over time and between individuals, according to changing circumstances and physical / mental health.

When the Project started, people living with HIV in Bristol did not have access to the current drug treatments, and we were working on the assumption that we would have a high turnover of tenants due to their deaths.

Since the treatments have become available, most people living with HIV in the area have gained both quantity and quality of life. However, associated health problems have become an increasing issue alongside the side effects of drugs as people live longer with HIV, and the consequences of living with an unpredictable and still life-threatening illness.

Tenant profile

Our tenants include single people, single parents, gay and heterosexual couples and couples with younger and older children; currently 5 tenants are white British, 2 are white European, 4 are Black African, 2 are mixed heritage and 1 is Asian other.

Allocations policy

Tenancies are only given to HIV+ people. Although this has been a problem for some people who would like their HIV- partners to be joint tenants, the policy is designed to protect the security of the HIV+ person.

In allocating properties, we consider the person's long term support needs, availability of alternative appropriate housing or support, health, current housing / homelessness and suitability of available housing.

Information and advice

Brigstowe could not, and should not, aim to house everybody who lives with HIV in the area. Some people approach the Project wanting directly managed housing, but others, whilst not in need of long term support, request information, advice and advocacy because they are homeless, inadequately housed, unable to access essential services from where they live, or are under threat of eviction.

In response to these needs we developed an Information and Advice Service covering information and advice on homelessness and housing issues, welfare rights, community care and health.

Over the last three years we have experienced an increase in the number of clients using our service who have no access to public funds.

In December 2004 we were awarded the Community Legal Service Quality Mark for General Help with Casework in the Disability category.

In 2005 we were successful in securing funding from Lloyds TSB Foundation, The Elton John Aids Foundation and the Peter Moores Foundation, enabling us to appoint a dedicated part-time Information and Advice Worker in July 2005. Since then we have secured additional funding from Bristol City Council Adult Community Care of £15,600 (from the AIDS Support Grant (ASG), South Glos Council £5,250, and North Somerset Council £7,000) for 2008/09.

Floating Support

With the introduction of the government's Supporting People Programme In April 2003, we expanded our services within Bristol; we

now provide floating support to people on a short term basis (up to two years) in all forms of tenure, who may be having problems managing or sustaining their accommodation or require help with resettlement. Including approximately fifty percent of our tenants, we work on average with between 24 and 30 clients at any time and have a waiting list.

Geographical area

Our constitution leaves this intentionally vague ('Bristol and the surrounding area'). All our directly managed housing is in Bristol, but we offer our Advice Service to people in South Glos, Bath and North East Somerset, and North Somerset. As we are the only HIV specialist housing agency in the South West, we aim in practice to provide a basic housing advice service for anyone living with HIV in the region.

Staff structure

Brigstowe currently employs a Project Manager, for 4 days a week, who is responsible for leadership and management of the project, 1 Senior Project Worker working 4 1/2 days a week, 2 Project Workers one working 3 days a week, the other working 4 days a week, a Senior Information and Advice worker, working full time, and an Administrator, working 4 days a week

Governance

Brigstowe is a registered company and charity, and is managed by a voluntary committee of Directors / Trustees and Committee Members to whom the Project Manager is accountable. We currently have 4 Trustees and 3 Committee members.

We are subject to audit/review by The Charity Commission, Companies House, and Places for People, the Supporting People Team at Bristol City Council, and the Adult Community Care Departments of Bristol City Council, South Glos Council and North Somerset Councils.

Finances

Our income in 2008/09 comes from:

1. 40% of rents collected which we retain to manage properties owned by Places for People
2. Supporting People Grant, approx. £120, 000, for providing support to all our clients.
3. Grants for Advice Service approx £36,000

Current issues and future needs

The early optimism of 2007 about HIV vaccines such as the Merck vaccine was shattered in September 2007 when it was withdrawn, having been found to be not effective.

There has unfortunately been no good news with the new technologies to prevent the spread of HIV. The only thing to remember is that condoms work.

The news about treatments is better however, never have there been so many new drugs available and in the existing drug classes there are new drugs appearing that have different resistance profiles from the present drugs.

In Bristol we have seen an increase year on year in new cases of HIV, from 39 in 2001 to 119 in 2007/08, and 37 cases in January to March 2008 (latest figures). Southmead Hospital, part of Bristol NHS Trust, the main hospital in the Bristol region for HIV services, has seen an increase in the total number of patients to 954 by the end of March 2008, and an increasing number of cases are female. There has however been an increase in patients leaving the service.

There is evidence that whilst new treatments are more effective for physical problems, the longer length of time for which people are living with HIV is leading to increasing associated health problems. For us this has meant an increase in demand, and people returning for further help as needs change. The anticipated 'turnover' of tenants / clients due to deaths has not materialised, meaning we have fewer vacancies in our permanent housing and a greater need to help people find alternative suitable housing or ways of staying put.

Finally, we need to continue demonstrating need in a climate where it is largely perceived that people with HIV are now well, and where our government does not consider HIV to be a priority.

We face some difficult times ahead, along with other voluntary sector organisations, with reductions in funding. In 2009/10 there will be a reduction of £17,000 in our funding from Places for People. The level of the Supporting People grant is under pressure and may be reduced in 2010/11. In addition, we are entering a new era of competitive tendering. The committee is planning ahead to secure the sustainability of the organisation – we want to ensure that the Brigstowe Project is appropriately resourced to continue to respond to the changing needs of people living with HIV.

January 2009

BRIGSTOWE PROJECT COMMITTEE MEMBER Role Description

Role:	Committee member
Location:	176 Easton Rd, Easton Bristol BS5 OES
Responsible to:	Chair of Board

Main Duties:

- Attending monthly Committee meetings from 6.00pm - 8pm and 1-2 days per year for planning/ development
- Participating in a sub-group of interest to you. e.g. policy , client involvement
- Undergoing training as and when appropriate
- Ensuring the project works to meet the housing, support, and advice needs of people living with HIV
- Taking a strategic overview of the project and all its work and developments
- Supporting the staff team to develop and monitor Brigstowe's aims and objectives, policies and procedures
- To safeguard the good name, reputation and values of the Brigstowe Project, representing it to its stakeholders and in the public arena as appropriate

This role description is a broad guide which may be refined through discussion and practice.



Committee Member Recruitment, Induction and Development Policy

Introduction

The recruitment, induction and subsequent development of a new committee member of the Brigstowe Project (BP) present an opportunity to improve the governance and effectiveness of the organization.

The Committee

The Committee led by its Trustees needs to ensure that it takes on the responsibility of the recruitment, induction and development of its new members. Existing trustees have a clear role to play in overseeing the effective management of an open and efficient process.

Appropriate membership on the Committee goes a long way to ensuring the effective working of the committee and the business of the Brigstowe Project. By ensuring continuous assessment of skills of the existing committee, accompanied by relevant training, and reviewing the skills required for the developing interests and objectives of the project, a more focused recruitment process can be adopted. The Committee actively values its members and any skills, both professional and personal, plus experience they may have that might fall outside of the required specifications.

Open and inclusive methods of advertising and recruitment will be adopted including existing members using known networks.

Recruitment and Selection

When recruiting new members to the committee there must be a clear understanding of the charity's purpose and aims. Apart from the broader duties and responsibilities of committee members, members need to be recruited to serve the best interests of the charity and other committee

members need to be able to explain the key objectives and purpose of the project and what will be expected of them as a committee member. The committee needs to ensure that they retain overall responsibility of the recruitment, induction and development process of new members. They can of course delegate aspects of the process to the staff.

Main Responsibilities of the Committee

- To ensure that the BP and its representatives function within the legal and regulatory framework of the sector and in line with the organisation's governing documents, continually striving for best practice in governance.
- To take appropriate professional advice in all matters where there may be material risk to the charity. This course of action will ensure the obligation to exercise their duty of care.
- To determine the overall direction and development of The BP through good governance and clear strategic planning.
- To ensure conflicts of interest are managed in accordance with policies.

Role of Committee Members: Activities will include;

- Regular attendance at monthly committee meetings which currently take place on the third Wednesday in the month 6.00 pm –8.00 pm.
- Participating in planning and development days (1 or 2 days per year).
- Promoting and developing the BP in order for it to grow and maintain its relevance to society in general and to people living with HIV specifically.
- Participating in the development of policy, procedure, and client involvement etc., forming appropriate sub groups from time to time.
- Undertaking training as and when appropriate / required.

- Ensuring that the project works to meet the housing, support and advice needs of people living with HIV.
- Taking a strategic overview of the project and all its work and developments.
- Being supportive of the staff team.
- Maintaining absolute confidentiality of all sensitive/confidential information received in the course of their role as a committee member.

Skills Checklist

To ensure that the BP is well governed and run effectively, economically, and appropriately to its size and complexity, the committee will require prospective new members to fill out a skills checklist questionnaire.

(The committee will be aware of its specific skills needs, identified by a bi-annual audit)

The committee will ensure that appropriate training will be identified for any new member to meet the minimum requirements over an agreed period of time (12 months).

The Committee must periodically consider its position in respect of numbers and skills to decide:

- how many committee members it needs to run effectively
- what skills or competencies it is lacking
- what attributes or competencies new members should have to add value to the board

This will be achieved by using a number of tools:

- Clarity over the Aims and Objectives of the BP
- A skills checklist questionnaire (and bi-annual audit)
- Clarity over the role / activities of a committee member
- Use of a mentoring and induction process.

The Recruitment Process

The use of wide and inclusive methods of search, such as advertising, using existing member brokerage and networking with other charities

and agencies will be employed. It will be of benefit to the BP to recruit and retain members who have committee experience and knowledge of HIV and/ or other areas in which the BP operates.

1. When an individual makes an enquiry to become a member of the BP this will be acknowledged within 14 working days with a letter/Email/phone call and the following information will be included:
 - Purpose and aims and objectives of the project
 - Latest Directors Report and Summary of Annual Accounts
 - Details of the role / activities of a Committee Member
 - Terms and Conditions; Code of Conduct (To be written)
 - Promotional Material
 - Background Information
 - Recruitment/Induction policy
 - Application form
2. On receipt of the application and references, an interview/meeting will be arranged with the Project Manager or a Trustee to assess the suitability of the person, with reference to the application form
3. Guidelines for interview/meeting will be used for the initial meeting
4. When the interview has been completed and references considered, the application will be taken to committee by a Trustee or Project Manager with a recommendation to accept or refuse application. The person making the recommendation to provide a brief summary of applicant's background, skills, experience, reasons for wanting to join etc.
5. Committee will accept /refuse recommendation
6. If the applicant is accepted a trustee will be appointed as their mentor and maintain that role for the first 12 months
7. The prospective member will be informed of decision, and if accepted, requested to contact named mentor to set up meeting and sent a copy of the following policies to read before the first meeting :
 - Confidentiality

- Equal Opportunities
 - Conflict of Interest
 - Expenses Policy and Claim Form
8. By the end of the first meeting g the following will be achieved:
- i. Discussion on the following polices to ensure an understanding:
 - Confidentiality
 - Equal Opportunities
 - Conflict of Interest
 - Expenses Policy and Claim Form
 - ii Completion of the skills audit
 - iii The provision of a development plan, which will be reviewed on a regular basis with the mentor
 - iv The provision of an Induction pack
9. As part of the mentoring process there will be at least four meetings during the first twelve months and any training issues identified will be progressed during this period.
10. There will be on-going training and support to assist the new member to obtain the minimum competency required to be able to effectively undertake the role of a committee member.

Induction

All new committee members, as part of their induction, will receive a copy of the charity's key documents and be provided with an explanation of their purpose and effect.

Induction Pack:-

1. General information

- Committee /group structures and practice
- Roles of members

2. Brigstowe Project Policies

3. Brigstowe Project Information

- Who's who at Brigstowe
- Membership Form
- A copy of the BP's Memorandum and Articles;
- minutes of recent committee meetings;

4. Other Useful Information, to include:

Governance

The National Hub of Excellence in Governance (2005) "Good Governance A Code for the Voluntary Sector " plus Toolkit

Relevant Charity Commission documents

Housing

HIV/ AIDS

Useful websites

On Going Development

The mentor will oversee the development of a new member, using the four meetings, Skills Audit and Development Plan plus informal contact.

Review: Annually