

Ref. No: 165270622  
From: Commercial  
Date: 27/06/22  
Subject: Making the rainbow together social support group

## REQUEST & RESPONSE

**I have seen an advertisement for a “social support group” called #OTR Over the Rainbow / Making the Rainbow Together. The material states this group is for ages 13-25 and who identify as LGBT.**

**Please could you tell me what risk assessment was done regarding having a group for such a wide age range?**

A risk assessment is carried out on the group as a whole and is updated at 3-monthly intervals.

Each young person is triaged; a member of Over the Rainbow staff will contact the young person to arrange a one-to-one, this is to assess the young person's needs, requirements, and to safeguard against hate crime and other potential safeguarding risks.

This group is inclusive to all young people aged 13 - 18 and 18 - 25 years with additional needs. Once a young person has reached 18 years, and where appropriate, they will be offered an adult group. This can help with transition to eventually moving away from the OTR group to an adult group.

**Was any safeguarding assessment done and if so, please supply this?**

Risk assessment attached.

**How is the group supervised and is this done by Trust employees and if so, what are their staff roles?**

The group is always supervised by two members of Trust staff. The staff are all part of the Health Improvement Team working in Sexual Health. The staff attendance is on a monthly rota, with staff in attendance having various roles:

- Health Improvement Practitioner LGBT+
- Teen Advice Zone (TAZ) Outreach Workers
- Community Engagement Worker

**Is it held on Trust premises?**

No. The group is run in a community venue, with the venue disclosed to the young person on completion of the registration form, and after a meeting with OTR staff. This is to safeguard the other members of the group against possible hate crime.

The venue operates a secure magnetic door lock which can only be opened by a member of staff and any persons trying to enter the building must do so by ringing the video door bell. Staff working on reception of the building can let people in based on the reason for attendance.

**Are parents of minors (under 18) involved and kept fully informed of their child's attendance and the activities of the group?**

No, although we do encourage young people to discuss the nature of the group and where the parents are aware they are attending an LGBT group, some attend the parent support group. However, some young people do not wish to disclose they are attending a LGBT group and therefore state they are at a youth group.

**What activities take place at this group?**

The group activities vary from month to month, these can be:

- Guest speakers from Mental Health, The Healthy Living Team, LGBT role models.
- The group get involved with consultations such as "The Good Child enquiry" Local council, and how to make St Helens more Child and Young People friendly, LGBT friendly, The CCG.
- We have agencies such as the Heart of Glass - commission LGBT artists and they gather the groups ideas on various LGBT issues.
- Merseyside Police - Hate Crime.
- Quiz, arts, and crafts.
- Themed sessions based on the LGBT+ calendar.
- The group is young person led and they are consulted in what they would like to do in the group.

**Are any teaching materials used and if so, what?**

The only teaching materials that have been used are provided by The Proud Trust and Schools OUT - these are LGBT focused and are released annually to celebrate LGBT History Month.

The group may have a session on relationships or sexual health - the teaching materials are provided by our own service and are suitable for the age of the young person attending. If the session is about Sexual Health, the young people are informed a month in advance and are given the opportunity to opt-out of the session.

**Are outside groups such as LGBT charities brought in to give additional support?**

The LGBT Lead has extensive knowledge surrounding LGBT+ issues and support on offer within Merseyside. The LGBT+ Lead regularly liaises with other LGBT support leaders from across the UK. Each young person is given a welcome pack which outlines LGBT+ specific support outside of Over the Rainbow.

The LGBT+ Lead and OTR leader attend LGBT+ UK and youth leader meetings which are coordinated by The Proud Trust which is an LGBT+ Charity.

LGBT+ role models do attend sessions as guest speakers.

The leader of the group involves young people in the planning of the group. The young people are asked what guest speakers they would like to attend. If these guest speakers are someone we can arrange, we will try to. Prior to any guest speaker attending, the leader of the group will discuss with them, their intentions, and check safeguarding i.e. DBS confirmation. Upon this they will be given the location details of the group.

Prior to planned attendance the young people are informed of the guest speaker or visitor and given the opportunity to opt-out of attendance for that session. If they choose to opt-out, a discussion between the group leader and the young person will be initiated to see if it is possible for any of the reasons for opting out can be mitigated.

**Are attendees encouraged to keep in contact outside of the group, e.g. via social media, WhatsApp group etc? How is this monitored given the age range and that 13-year-olds may be exchanging messages with 25-year-olds.**

Facebook: The group has a closed social media Facebook page, which the young people must be pre-approved by the staff working within the group. There are restrictions on this page that prevents young people from commenting on the page or on each other's. The page is monitored by OTR staff and is only for information about the group and future sessions (This page is due to close on 30<sup>th</sup> June as it is no longer used by the young people within the group).

Instagram: Over the Rainbow has an Instagram page, this is used for sharing photos of group activities (permission is sought and anyone in the images must sign a disclosure prior to an image being published), future events, helplines, and support networks. Anyone can join this page and it is moderated by Health Improvement. Only Health Improvement can upload content and all comments are turned off.

WhatsApp: We have not set up a WhatsApp for this group. If young people choose to swap numbers, we cannot prevent this from happening.