

# External Request Policy

## 1. Purpose of the policy

- 1.1 To provide a clear process for dealing with requests from either members of the public or other organisations. This policy does not cover request made under the Data protection Act 1998, or requests from partner organisations in relation to contractual obligations.

## 2. General

- 2.1 GMFA is under no obligation to respond to requests for information from members of the public or other organisations. However, responding to requests will normally further the objects of the charity and GMFA will normally attempt to meet requests if we can.
- 2.2 Requests for information will usually come under one of the following categories:
  - 2.2.1 Helpline type requests
  - 2.2.2 Press or PR
  - 2.2.3 Information about GMFA interventions
  - 2.2.4 Help with projects/interventions

## 3. Helpline type requests

- 3.1 If able, GMFA employees should attempt to meet requests which are for basic HIV information or contact details for sexual health services in London.
- 3.2 GMFA employees should not attempt to meet requests for non-GMFA community events or information regarding commercial venues (eg. “Where is my nearest sauna?” or “What time does XXL finish?”).
- 3.3 GMFA employees should not attempt to meet requests for information that require some form of counselling or personal advice.

- 3.4 When it becomes clear that a member of the public is requesting personal advice or counselling, an employee should:
  - 3.4.1 stop the conversation.
  - 3.4.2 continue to be polite.
  - 3.4.3 explain to the caller that GMFA is not a helpline and that s/he is not qualified to help in these types of calls.
  - 3.4.4 inform the caller that s/he will give them the telephone number of an organisation that can help them. Employees should then refer the caller to a helpline.

#### **4. Press or PR**

- 4.1 The primary responsibility for meeting requests from the press and the media belongs to the PR manager.
- 4.2 All requests from the press should be given to the PR manager.
- 4.3 The PR manager may request that others provide information in order to meet the request. However s/he will retain responsibility for meeting the request. Consequently s/he should agree the outcome of the request before it is sent.
- 4.4 If the request for information is not associated with a GMFA intervention and involves a substantial amount of work, the PR manager should seek permission from the Head of Programmes before meeting the request.
- 4.5 If the PR manager chooses not to meet a request for information, s/he must inform his/her line manager that they do not intend to meet the request, and the reason why. It will then be at the sole discretion of the line manager as to whether or not further action is required.

#### **5. Requests for information regarding GMFA interventions**

- 5.1 If a request is made in relation to a GMFA intervention, that request should be processed by the Project Manager related to the intervention. If the Project Manager is not available, the request should be processed by either the Head of Programmes or the Chief Executive.
- 5.2 If an employee chooses not to meet a request for information, s/he must inform his/her line manager that they do not intend to meet the request, and the reason why. It will then be at the sole discretion of the line manager as to whether or not further action is required.
- 5.3 If the request has any legal ramifications or if the employee believes that the request may result in negative publicity for GMFA, the request should be forwarded to the Chief Executive.

## **6. Help with projects/interventions**

6.1 If GMFA receives a request for information (or other form of help) that does not directly relate to a GMFA intervention and involves a substantial amount of work, that request should be forwarded to the Head of Programmes. S/he can then decide if GMFA has the resources or capabilities to meet the request, and allocate the task to a member of staff.

## **7. Dissemination of policy**

7.1 This policy will go to all Board members and staff, and be included in any staff induction.

## **8. Review**

8.1 This policy will be reviewed every four years.

8.2 This policy was passed on 27/10/05.