

Policy on Developing Interventions

1. Purpose of the policy

- 1.1 To enable staff and volunteers to know the processes, values and criteria that the Board wishes GMFA's projects to adhere to.
- 1.2 To define ways of accessing support in meeting the values set by the Board.
- 1.3 To give guidance to GMFA staff and volunteers on the development of projects.
- 1.4 To provide objective criteria to assess differing opinions during the development of a project.

2. Terms used in this policy

ASTOR: A description of a project which specifies the **Aim** of the projects, its **Setting**, the **Target** audience, the project's **Objectives** and the **Resources** required to do the project.

Equity: The application of the principles of fairness in order to create equality in health.

Funding Body: This is the organisation that gave GMFA money to do the project. Sometimes GMFA uses its own money to fund projects. In this case the funding body is GMFA's Project Committee.

Incidence: The rate at which people suffer from a disease. For example in relation to HIV, HIV incidence is the rate at which people become infected with HIV.

Project Development Meetings: Meetings at which volunteers and Project Managers design projects.

Projects: A planned undertaking or intervention conducted by either GMFA staff or volunteers.

Robust: logical and able to withstand a close investigation or examination of the details.

3. Principles

- 3.1 The Board want GMFA projects (both individually and collectively) to be of the greatest value to gay men that can be achieved within the resources allocated to them.
- 3.2 This is the guiding principle on which the conception, development and delivery of projects should be based.

Process for developing a project

4. Clarity of purpose

- 4.1 Before any project is progressed, an ASTOR must be written in order that the project may be explained to others.
- 4.2 The ASTOR must then be peer reviewed. This will be different for different projects and will sometimes be specified within contracts. Where there is no specification within a contract, the Chief Executive will decide how a project ASTOR will be reviewed.
- 4.3 The ASTOR should then be updated to reflect the feedback.
- 4.4 Feedback will often contain conflicting and/or unfounded opinions which make it impossible to incorporate all feedback into the ASTOR. Therefore when feedback is not incorporated, a clear rationale for not incorporating the feedback must be used.
- 4.5 Only after the ASTOR has been finished and approved by the Chief Executive, should the project progress and resources be used to develop the project.

5. Ensuring the project meets its stated purpose

- 5.1 Decisions on the development of a project should be based on best meeting the criteria set out in the ASTOR and the values listed below. Consequently, arguments for or against differing opinions during the development of a project should be based on how best to meet the stated intention in the ASTOR and the values set out below.
- 5.2 After discussion as to the merits of differing opinions, the issue can be decided on a majority vote at a project development meeting.
- 5.3 All people at that meeting will have equal votes with no one having additional rights due to their position within GMFA.
- 5.4 If, in the view of the Chief Executive, any decisions taken do not ensure the project best meets the criteria set out in the ASTOR or the values set out below, the decisions will not be upheld. The Board, through the Chief Executive, will request that the decisions be changed in order to conform to best meeting the criteria set out in the ASTOR or the values below. Neither the Staff nor the Volunteer Disciplinary Policy will be used to settle infringements of 5.1 of this policy.
- 5.5 Should any individual or group of people strongly disagree with the majority but a policy has not been broken, then the decision may be challenged using either the staff or volunteer Policy on Dealing with Conflicts. The Chief Executive will be empowered to make a ruling should agreement not be reached.

- 5.6 During the development of a project it may become apparent that the contents of an ASTOR are incorrect, inappropriate or unachievable. This is not uncommon as it is only through the intense scrutiny of the developmental stage that clarity regarding the best project is possible. Should this be the case, the Chief Executive may authorise minor changes to the project so that it may be progressed. If, in the view of the Chief Executive, substantial changes need to be made to the ASTOR, permission for the changes must be sought from the funding body that allocated the financial resources to the project. There will no assumption that a project will continue regardless of any changes. Projects may be aborted.
- 5.7 Before a project is delivered it must be authorised using the Resource Approval Policy. A project will only be authorised if it can clearly demonstrate an ability to meet its stated purpose as outlined in the ASTOR.

Values and criteria for developing a project

6. Use of evidence

- 6.1 The project should be evidence-based where possible. Evidence may be research based, theoretical models, the experience of a group of individuals that are the target group of the project or experience gained from previous projects.
- 6.2 Where there is conflicting evidence surrounding an issue, a fair assessment of the conflicting evidence should be made before deciding which evidence is used.
- 6.3 Where there is no evidence, a clear rationale for all aspects of the project must be included in the ASTOR.
- 6.4 If the only evidence that exists around an issue is believed to be flawed, then a clear and robust argument for not using the evidence must be presented.

7 Legal requirements

- 7.1 All projects must be within the objects of GMFA. GMFA's objects are:
- 7.1.1 To protect and preserve public health in particular amongst the gay male population of the United Kingdom.
 - 7.1.2 To advance public education in the subjects affecting the health of gay men including the causes, symptoms, treatment and prevention of illness in particular through the promotion of research and the dissemination of the useful results of research.
- This means that all projects must be health related and be done for the benefit of gay men. The gay men referred to here are the gay men who will receive the project and not any gay men who develop the project.
- 7.2 If a project is funded through a contract, GMFA are obliged to adhere to the terms laid out in the contract. We may be able to amend the project in some way, but this has to be agreed with the person who commissioned the contract.
- 7.3 A project may not have a political purpose (eg. furthering the interest of a political party). However, a project may be a political activity which is directed at securing, or opposing, changes in the law or in government policy or decisions if the changes relate to gay men's health. Further advice should be sought from the Board before engaging in a political activity.

8. Ethics

- 8.1 The Board expect all projects to comply with any ethical considerations as outlined in Making It Count. These include:
- 8.1.1 A project must not promote the health of one person at the expense of another.
 - 8.1.2 Considerations of whether or not a project might work must also be accompanied by considerations as to how they work. Consequently GMFA will only permit projects which empower people (eg. removing barriers to choice, education, awareness raising, skills development and responsibility giving) rather than taking choices away from people (eg. creating obstacles, withholding information, misinforming, limiting opportunity, indoctrination and banning).
 - 8.1.3 All people, whether they have HIV infection or not, are entitled to a satisfying and fulfilling sex life.
 - 8.1.4 All people, whatever their sexual identity, sexual behaviour or HIV status, are entitled to the same rights and respect as all other people.

8.2 Moreover, all projects must contribute to GMFA's Mission and Vision. That is:

8.2.1 **Vision**

GMFA wants a gay community where individuals are able to make informed choices about their health, and a society that embraces equality and respects the right of people to make informed choices.

8.2.2 **Mission**

Improving gay men's health by increasing the control they have over their own lives.

8.3 No projects should break any policy as set out in GMFA's Equality Statement.

8.4 Projects (collectively and individually) should prioritise in terms of impact on incidence, equity of health, and impact on incidence and equity of health together. For example, in relation to HIV:

8.4.1 **Impact on incidence** – Prioritise projects aimed at groups of gay men most likely to be involved in HIV exposure (such as men with diagnosed HIV infection, men with high numbers of sexual partners).

8.4.2 **Impact on equity of health** – Prioritise projects aimed at groups of gay men whose needs are poorly met compared to other groups of gay men (such as men with lower levels of formal education, behaviourally bisexual men).

8.4.3 **Impact on incidence and equity of health** – Prioritise projects with aims that are poorly met for large parts of the population (such as the expectation to disclose HIV status).

9. GMFA requirements

9.1 All resources must comply with any relevant GMFA policy.

9.2 All resources must comply with GMFA's Resource Approval Policy with regard to: the use of the GMFA logo; the use of GMFA's contact details; address and charity number; information regarding volunteering and donating; the promotion of Metromate; crediting images and the accuracy of time bound information.

9.3 Different methods and/or groups will have additional guidelines that the Board expects projects to conform to (see appendices). The Board has approved all of these guidelines.

10. HIV prevention projects

10.1 All HIV prevention projects must contribute towards meeting the targets in Making It Count.

11. Dissemination of this policy

11.1 This policy will go to all staff, and volunteers and be included in any staff and volunteer inductions.

12. Review of this policy

12.1 The policy will be reviewed ever four years.

12.2 This policy was passed on 24/08/03.