Southern Gay Health Project,
The Other Place,
8 South Main St.,
Cork.

18/7/95.

Gay Mens Health Network,
C/o Mick Quinlan,
19 Haddington Rd.
Dublin 4.

RE: S.T.D. Clinic Survey.

Dear Mick,

Please find enclosed a letter from Dominic Whyte of Gay Information Cork.

The members of the Southern Gay Health Project also have a number of reservations regarding the proposed S.T.D. Clinic questionnaire.

We strongly request that no further work is undertaken on this matter until such reservations can be discussed at the next Gay Mens Health Network meeting, scheduled for September 2nd 1995.

Thank you in advance for your co-operation in this matter,

Yours sincerely,

Emmett Flynn.

Gay information Cork
7/8 St. Augustine St.
Cork.

7 July 1995

Dear Gay Health Network

our attention has been drawn to the proposed questionnaire which is to be circulated by the Network to STD Clinic users and providers. Members of Gay Information Cork have expressed concern at a number of aspects in the questionnaire.

Firstly, some of the questions ask respondents to deliver normative judgements on the perceived service given at a clinic. There can be limited value in asking an individual whether specific levels of medical knowledge was displayed by the providers, if that person did not have the necessary knowledge themself. At worst it is insulting to even suggest that professionals providing the services are so incompetent.

Secondly, there is an inherent bias in the questionnaire suggesting that the answers are to be used to criticise the service in some areas, though we do not suggest the services are beyond criticism. Our fear is that this will serve to jeopardise some of the very good professional relationships between the community and the clinic services.

It is not possible to compare like with like, as all clinics are staffed and resourced by a specific Board. Invariably the workers in the frontline service of clinics, work as best they can with the resources provided. Some have little or no control over what is done, signposting etc. if this survey is to be used as a weapon in the arsenal to lobby for effective health services, it should be aimed at individuals who can effect change, not alienate service providers.

No meaningful conclusions can be made from such a few general questions. If there is any response from clinics it is likely to be of little value or negative. No indication is given as to how a representative sample of clients using clinics can be targeted. There is a body of opinion that such ill-conceived mini-surveys show groups with little else to do but count, while other valuable pressing work is neglected. While we share concerns that not every clinic is established and administered as a comprehensive confidential service, it is up to each of us to work in a constructive manner to effect changes for the best possible service. We hope you share this view. That is why we regard the survey questionnaire, in its present form, as wholly inappropriate and likely to be misconstrued.

Finally, congratulations on the Hot, Horny and Healthy booklet. It is vital that such national liaison continue. GHN can be proud of many achievements.

yours sincerely,

Dominic Whyte (Secretary)

Southern Gay Health Project,
The Other Place,
8 South Main St.,
Cork, Ireland.

Dear Andrew,

My name is Emmett Flynn and I am an outreach worker on a new project seeking to reduce the risk of HIV transmission in Gay Men in the Cork/Kerry region in Southern Ireland.

On a recent visit to London to meet with groups such as G.M.F.A., Rubberstuffers, T.H.T. etc. my co-worker and I were told about your project by workers in these organisations. Our somewhat overburdened schedule did not allow us to make a formal arrangement to meet with you during our short visit. I was able to talk briefly to one of the volunteers at your information stall at Pride '95 but in such hectic surroundings it was not possible to go into any great detail.

We intend to make arrangements to be in London towards the end of August in order to accompany G.M.F.A. on their outreach sessions to the Heath so that we can get some practical experience of this kind of work. Much of the work which we intend to do in Cork will be centered around Cottages, Parks and Cruising areas and this, I gather, is similar to the work your project is involved in.

I would like to inquire if it would be possible for my co-worker and I to meet with your project workers during our next visit in August (we are as yet unsure of the exact dates) in order to discuss the work that you do, what strategies you use etc. and perhaps accompany your workers on an outreach session. It would help us greatly to see how other groups do such work and if you could give us any assistance at all we would be more than grateful.

Please feel free to contact me on this or any other matter at the above address or alternatively call (021) 278 470. Thanking you in advance,

Sincerely yours,

Emmett Flynn.

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