

Introduction to London Lighthouse : a centre for people facing AIDS.

Contributors

London Lighthouse

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Wellcome Collection
183 Euston Road
London NW1 2BE UK
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722
E library@wellcomecollection.org
<https://wellcomecollection.org>



Introduction to London Lighthouse

*A centre for people facing
the challenge of AIDS*

This leaflet tells you why London Lighthouse was set up, what it hopes to achieve, what services it can offer, and how you can get involved. We are always happy to answer questions or supply more information. Please ask.



London Lighthouse

Britain's first major residential and support centre for men and women affected by HIV and AIDS opened in November 1988.

The project is based in a specially designed building off Ladbroke Grove in west London.

It is committed to providing the best possible care, support and facilities so that people affected by AIDS can live their lives to the full.

The project was set up in 1986 by a group of people who were living with HIV and AIDS, or who knew others who were. They saw the need for a centre where people affected by HIV or AIDS would be supported to live well, have control over their lives, and make key decisions about the organisation and its quality and range of services. People affected by HIV and AIDS are involved throughout the organisation.

London Lighthouse gives support to the partners, friends and families of people affected by HIV and AIDS. We also strive to change attitudes to HIV and AIDS through education and training, and through developing best practice employment policies.

The main aims of London Lighthouse are to provide care and support, and to empower people affected by HIV and AIDS. The project has three commitments.

First - to build into all its activities time and space for the giving and receiving of care and attention between individuals and groups.

Second - to work to change deep-rooted attitudes which deny that death and dying are central to life and living.

Third - to challenge prejudice and oppression.

What services are provided?

Drop-in centre

A large drop-in centre (open 9am-9pm seven days a week) provides an informal meeting place with newspapers and magazines, as well as information about other AIDS organisations and services.

The atmosphere is relaxed, welcoming and often busy with activities. These include:

- legal advice sessions;
- support and information service;
- sitting room/library;
- afternoon tea parties on Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday;
- exercise class every weekday evening;
- knitting class;
- haircutting service;
- camouflage make-up sessions; and
- child care sessions three times a week and by arrangement.

Welfare advice is available by appointment. Free condoms (both male and female) and oral shields are always available.

There are several activities just for women, including massage sessions on Mondays and Wednesdays.

There's a comfortable smoking area and machines with hot and cold drinks. A quiet room offers space for anyone who wants to meditate, pray, read, reflect or grieve. A garden at the back has space to relax or sunbathe.

Café

Lighthouse's café serves healthy home-made meals for lunch and dinner, and drinks and snacks during the day, seven days a week. For customers who are HIV positive, and receiving benefits, reduced prices are available through the Positive Discounts scheme. Dietary advice can be given by appointment. There's also space for 40 people to eat in the garden.

Counselling and support groups

London Lighthouse offers counselling by appointment for individuals, couples and families, as well as support groups. All these services are designed to provide a safe environment for people to look at the many issues and feelings which arise through living with HIV and AIDS. These include groups for:

- people who have just found out they have HIV infection;
- heterosexual men and women;
- gay men;
- partners of people with HIV and AIDS;
- people concerned about HIV and AIDS; and
- families and friends of people with HIV and AIDS.

Creative and complementary therapies

London Lighthouse provides a wide range of complementary and creative therapies. As well as the many one-to-one treatments such as massage, acupuncture, reflexology and hypnotherapy, we also offer group activities which include art, writing and drama. Occasional workshops are also held.

Day care

Lighthouse has a Day Care centre with places for up to 10 people. It provides a service for those who need nursing care or psychological support, or both, throughout the day. There is an emphasis on complementary therapies and occupational therapy to improve people's quality of life. Fridays are set aside for women only.

Community services

Lighthouse's Community Services department manages all the organisation's volunteers, provides a London-wide home support service, welfare rights service, pastoral care and a six-person shared housing scheme.

The home support service is provided by neighbourhood teams of trained volunteers offering flexible and reliable support so that people can continue to live at home. People using the service have a key worker from the home support staff team, plus one or more volunteers who will give emotional and practical support. Special services available include the nightsitting service, women-only support and a service to children. The service is available to people in prisons, hospices, psychiatric units or in short-term accommodation.

The welfare service provides advice and information on a wide range of subjects. We can help with filling in forms,

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Fridays at London Lighthouse

Every Friday there is an open morning in the Ian McKellen Hall. Led by a team of paid and unpaid staff, this event traces the project from its beginnings to the present day. This is followed by an optional afternoon workshop which examines the philosophy and management of the organisation in more depth. Let us know if you want further details of these events and a booking form.



BENN KEAVENEY

claiming benefits, housing problems and housing transfers, debt, employment matters and so on.

The pastoral care service offers spiritual support and guidance to people with HIV and AIDS and to their carers, partners and relatives. We can also offer help with arranging funerals and memorial services and are often able to put people in contact with a sympathetic locally-based person who shares their religious beliefs. The pastoral care service is available to people in hospital, at home or on the Residential Unit.

Education and training

Public information, education and training courses are run for individuals and organisations from across the UK on a wide range of topics from providing services and direct care issues to the implications of AIDS for employers in developing good practice in the workplace. Custom-made training courses are also run for specific agencies and organisations, on request.

Residential services

London Lighthouse's 23-bed Residential Unit is for people who need temporary care when their carers need a break or convalescent care after acute illness and treatment. It also provides a place where the terminally ill can live a dignified life up to the moment of death.

People staying at Lighthouse are supported to take part in any decisions about their care. The Unit strives to give the highest quality nursing and medical care, aimed at controlling symptoms and relieving pain.

There is a choice of single and shared rooms. Each has its own bathroom with shower and toilet. There are two day rooms, an assisted bathroom, a treatment room and a small kitchen. Visitors are welcome 24 hours a day and limited facilities are available for people to stay the night.

Anyone throughout the UK wishing to use this service can refer themselves. Or they can be put in touch with Lighthouse by other organisations, GPs, health workers, hospitals and so on.

Volunteers

Volunteers are vital to London Lighthouse. Without them the organisation would not have grown so fast, nor could it provide so many services. Around 350 fully trained volunteers work for Lighthouse - either in the home support service or at the centre - handling all sorts of jobs from fundraising to working on the Residential Unit.

London Lighthouse appeal

In the 1993/94 financial year we need to raise £4.5 million to run our services. Although part of this is funded by the regional health authorities and the Department of Health, we still need to raise over £1 million this year from other sources. Any help you can give, either by donations, covenants, bequests, give-as-you-earn, collecting boxes or through organising fundraising events will be very gratefully received.

How to find us



Tube: the nearest tube station is Ladbroke Grove which is on the Hammersmith & City line

Buses: numbers 7, 23, 52, 70, 295 and 302

Parking: private car park, controlled parking in street and free parking locally



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London Lighthouse is committed to equality of opportunity and to challenging prejudice and oppression

London Lighthouse Ltd
111-117 Lancaster Road
London W11 1QT

Phone 071-792 1200

Fax 071-229 1258

Minicomms - for the hard of hearing only:
071-792 2979 (Reception)
071-229 6062 (Residential Unit)

Access details on request

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