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Script - LGBTQ+ History Month – C3 Division Event

Opening Remarks: Supt Lorna Gibson will provide a brief welcome, emphasising the significance of UK-based LGBTQ+ activism and its impact on the community's history and future.

Good afternoon, everyone, my name is Lorna Gibson and I am the Service Delivery Superintendent here within Contact, Command and Control. As we gather virtually to celebrate LGBTQ+ History Month 2024, I am honoured to welcome you all to this event that not only highlights our history but also underscores the importance of community. It's my privilege to set the stage for this afternoon's event on the theme of "Claiming Our Past, Celebrating Our Present, and Creating Our Future," with a special focus on LGBTQ+ Activism during the AIDS Crisis.

The significance of LGBTQ+ History Month is a time to reflect on the struggles and triumphs of those who have fought for equality and justice, often in the face of great adversity. The activism that emerged during the AIDS crisis in the UK, particularly the tireless efforts of those working with the LGBT Switchboard in Scotland, exemplifies the courage and resilience of our community. Their work not only provided support and information but also fostered solidarity and hope during one of the most challenging periods for LGBTQ+ individuals. As we delve into these glimpses of our past, it is essential to recognise that the values of integrity, fairness, and respect resonate deeply with the values of the LGBTQ+ movement.

Our commitment to these values is unwavering, as we strive to create a society where every individual can thrive without fear of discrimination or prejudice. The impact of activism on our community's history and future is profound. It has paved the way for progress in rights and recognition, yet the journey is far from over. As we celebrate the present, we must also look to the future, to continue the work of those who came before us, ensuring that the legacy of their activism lives on and inspires the next generation. We are here to listen, learn, and be inspired by the stories of our guest speakers: Arwen and Bob, who have been instrumental in our history. Their experiences remind us of the power of collective action and the importance of claiming our past to create a more inclusive and equitable future. Thank you for joining us in this celebration of our history, our present achievements, and the future we are committed to creating together. Let us carry forward the torch of activism with the same passion and dedication that has been demonstrated by countless individuals throughout our history.

Now, without further ado, let us begin our journey through the past, present, and future of the LGBTQ+ community.

Panel Discussion: Lived Experiences (40-45 minutes)

Introduction: JS will introduce the two guest speakers; [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] emphasising their work with the LGBT Switchboard during the 1980s and 1990s.

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Bio: [Redacted]

[Redacted]

Bio: [Redacted]

[Redacted]

JS: "To start off, could you both share what motivated you to get involved with the LGBT Switchboard, and what was the atmosphere like during your respective times of service?"

JS: "Reflecting on the early days of the AIDS crisis, what were some of the unique challenges you faced in Scotland, and how did the Switchboard serve as a resource for the community?"

JS: "The Switchboard was more than just a helpline; it was a lifeline for many. Can you describe a particularly memorable moment or call that has stayed with you over the years?"

JS: "How did volunteering at the Switchboard impact your personal views on activism and the fight for LGBTQ+ rights?"

JS: "The AIDS crisis demanded a strong response from activists. Could you discuss any specific campaigns or initiatives that you were involved in that aimed to raise awareness and support those affected?"

JS: "The role of the Switchboard evolved as the crisis unfolded. How did the services and support offered change from the 1980s to the 1990s?"

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JS: "Looking at the present, how do you see the legacy of the Switchboard's work during the AIDS crisis reflected in today's LGBTQ+ activism in Scotland?"

JS: "And finally, as we think about creating our future, what lessons from your experiences do you believe are crucial for the next generation of LGBTQ+ activists to carry forward?"

JS: Thank you both for your insightful responses. It's clear that the work done during those critical years has laid a foundation for the rights and resources the LGBTQ+ community has today. Now, let's open the floor to questions from our audience.

Supt Gibson - Close

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