

# PRIDE FESTIVAL REPORT 2024



**OUT**  
NORTH EAST



## WHAT AN AMAZING SUMMER OF PRIDES.

When we started our journey in February 2024 to stage three month-long pride festivals, we didn't realise that we'd end up delivering 65 events ranging from dog shows to film screenings, crafting sessions and colour fun runs. Our aim was to engage with as many people as possible, with activities for all ages and abilities. We programmed events that entertained, educated, challenged and brought people together.

The result has been an incredible summer of activities made possible with the support of the communities of Sunderland, South Tyneside and Gateshead who embraced the festivals and celebrated with pride.

### We've also grown as an organisation.

Out North East was formed from a dormant charity in October 2023. We had an opening bank balance of £5 but our ambition and drive to deliver for the region was limitless. We rebranded the organisation and with the support of all three local authorities and Sunderland BID, met with partners, forged new relationships and shared our vision for the charity. In six months, we raised £200,000 to stage the festivals with £50,000 from grants and the rest in sponsorship, partnership and in-kind donations.

Of the 65 events staged, 90% were free including all the events organised by Out North East. The only paid for activities were from external partners who needed to charge a participation fee to cover their costs.

And though the weather challenged us at many of our events, it didn't dampen the spirit, enthusiasm and passion in which they were received.

In only a matter of months, Out North East has established itself as a charity that can work in partnership with local authorities, businesses, third-sector organisations, service providers and community groups.

We've also proved that we can be trusted to deliver.

**Peter Darrant**  
Chair  
OUT NORTH EAST



# PRIDE IN SUNDERLAND

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Pride in Sunderland launched at the Bridges shopping centre with a day of activities, stalls, music and workshops. It was a huge success with the centre reporting a 14% increase in shoppers.
- We worked with Sunderland AFC to take over the game against Swansea and renamed it the Pride in Sunderland match. Over 2000 people visited the 'LGBTQ+' fan zone and 40,000 fans got involved during the game. The club is now launching its first LGBTQ+ supporters club, Pride in Wearside.
- The Pride March through Sunderland was attended by over 600 people with hundreds of shoppers cheering from the sidelines. It was loud, proud and full of love.
- Over 2000 people danced and celebrated at the Pride in the City concert.
- We had 700 families join us for the Pride Family Picnic at Sunniside Gardens.
- We transformed an empty unit in the Bridges Shopping Centre into a pop-up gallery and exhibited the Flag in The Map exhibition which attracted 1500 people.

“

Wow – this year's Pride has been brilliant with so much to do. Can't believe it's all free.

Amazing to see Sunderland AFC supporting pride. Brought a tear to my eye.

Finally, a pride festival I can be proud of. Thank you Sunderland.

Loved the concert and it was free! Definitely be back next year.

”





South  
Tyneside  
Council

# PRIDE IN SOUTH TYNESIDE

## HIGHLIGHTS

- ▶ The South Tyneside Summer Parade burst with pride with thousands of people taking part and flying pride flags.
- ▶ We staged the first Pride in Hebburn bringing retailers and community groups together.
- ▶ Over 100 dogs, and their owners, enjoyed a wet but fun day at Pride Pooches in Jarrow.
- ▶ The borough brought the X-Factor with Joe McElderry's Big Pride Party at The Customs House and Jade Thirlwall threw an amazing After Pride Party at Arbeia.
- ▶ Libraries across South Tyneside had LGBTQ+ book displays.
- ▶ The sun shone – for the first time in a long time – at the Pride in South Tyneside concert which attracted 20,000 people.



*I've really enjoyed the film screenings and learnt so much. It's great to see events for all ages other than a boozy party.*

*Joe's Big Pride Party was amazing. I danced, sang and celebrated with my lesbian daughter.*

*Pride Pooches was so much fun. My dog loved it. And we won a rosette, so we didn't mind the rain!*

*Thank you for a brilliant concert. It's the first time we've felt safe being our true selves in our hometown.*



# PRIDE IN GATESHEAD

FESTIVAL  
SPONSOR

GATESHEAD  
COLLEGE

## HIGHLIGHTS

- ▶ We took over the Metrocentre for a day of pride which attracted thousands of people who took part in activities and visited LGBTQ+ stalls.
- ▶ The first Pride Lawn Bowling Tournament was held in Pelaw with sixteen teams battling it out to win the trophy.
- ▶ Over 1000 families enjoyed a sunny day at the Pride Family Picnic in Saltwell Park.
- ▶ The 5k Pride Colour Fun Run took place at Chopwell Woods with hundreds taking part and getting covered in paint. It was colourful, fun and a real community event.
- ▶ We celebrated Pride in Gateshead Town centre with a day of activities that connected Trinity Square, VANE gallery and the railway quarter.
- ▶ The Pride on Tyne Concert was staged on the quayside and though we experienced all the elements in one afternoon, including a small hurricane; hundreds turned out to celebrate.



*The Colour Fun Run was amazing. We came as a family and loved it. So many happy memories made.*

*I never thought I would say this, but I LOVE LAWN BOWLING. What a funny, brilliant day.*

*The Family Picnic was lush. It's so nice to see so many families enjoying the day and I got a photo with the Metrognomes!*

*Walking through the Metrocentre and seeing how they've celebrated pride is amazing. As a young kid, in the closet, if I'd have seen this when I was shopping, then I wouldn't have felt so alone. It's brilliant.*



# OUT NORTH EAST DELIVERED MORE THAN A FANTASTIC SUMMER OF PRIDE FESTIVALS.

- ▶ Working in partnership with the Red Sky Foundation, we installed four lifesaving defibrillators in Newcastle, Gateshead, Sunderland and South Tyneside. Each unit branded in the progressive flag.
- ▶ We worked with Sunderland AFC to launch their first LGBTQ+ supporters club, Pride in Wearside.
- ▶ We supported a video produced by Lumo, showcasing independent businesses based in Gateshead which has had over 20,000 views.
- ▶ We delivered 12 LGBTQ+ history, inclusivity and diversity training sessions.
- ▶ Working with the office for the Northumbria Police and Crime Commissioner and an LGBTQ+ youth group, we produced a four-part podcast series aimed at supporting 13- to 16-year-olds called Our Voice
- ▶ Partnering with Lumo we delivered a national Rail Safety Awareness campaign at the Metrocentre
- ▶ We showcased Gateshead to the Mr Gay World delegates who shared their love of the borough across the world
- ▶ We donated £2245 to Pelaw Community Bowling Club to support their outreach work.
- ▶ £2000 of small grants were awarded to help organisations and individuals participate with pride.
- ▶ Working with Sorted Public Relations, we generated 153 million views on articles promoting Sunderland, South Tyneside and Gateshead. This equates to over £1.5million in positive PR.
- ▶ Pride Radio donated 18 hours of radio coverage with coverage on BBC, Tyne Tees TV and influencer sites. This generated an additional PR value of £1million.



## BUT IT'S MORE THAN NUMBERS, RIGHT?

We know organisations like to hear big numbers and we admit, it looks good in an eye-catching press release or when filling out a grant application.

We could easily say 100,000 people engaged with all three festivals and over one million experienced the Flag in the Map exhibition however, for us, it's about the individual numbers.

It's the elderly trans person who approached us and said they felt so lonely they were ready to take their life who now is getting the support they need; the mother who asked for help talking to her son about his sexuality; the bisexual teens who attended an event and felt safe for the first time in their town and the grandparents who shared a happy memory with their queer grandchild.

These moments and many more like them, are the numbers that matter to our charity.

## Not everyone was happy to welcome Pride

The following word cloud is made up of hate directed to Out North East on our social media platforms. We've not changed any words. Turning over might offend you. We make no apologies.

NOTHING TO BE PROUD OF GET BACK IN YOUR CLOSET

GO TO HELL PAEDO SHOW BAN PRIDE

BAN THEM ALL GAY SNOWFLAKES

ABOMINATION

WASTE OF MONEY

STAY AWAY FROM OUR KIDS

DISEASED

ALL FUCKING PERVERTS

DEPORT THEM

YOU'RE ALL SICK

THEY'RE ALL MENTALLY ILL

MOKE SHIT

DISGUSTING MOB OF SICKOS

HOPE IT RAINS MINCING FAGGOTS

THE BIBLE SAYS ADAM AND EVE NOT ADAM AND STEVE

SHOULDN'T BE ALLOWED

IMMORAL FREAKS

YOU'RE GOING TO HELL

PATHETIC WEIRDOS

GET RID OF THEM

DISEASED

WHEN IS THERE A STRAIGHT PRIDE?

HATE THIS PUFFS AND FAGS AFTER OUR KIDS

MORE RAINBOW SHIT

PERVERTS

MAKES ME SICK

BAN TRANS

HOMOSEXUALITY IS A SIN

CHUTNEY FERRETS PARTY

PAEDOS

GOD HATES YOU

HATE THE PRIDE FLAG

DISGUSTING STOP FORCING IT DOWN OUR THROATS

WIPE THEM OUT

ALL WEIRDOS SOD OFF PUFFS AIDS

SICK IN THE HEAD

LOVE

RESPECT

FREEDOM

TOLERANCE

EQUALITY

PRIDE

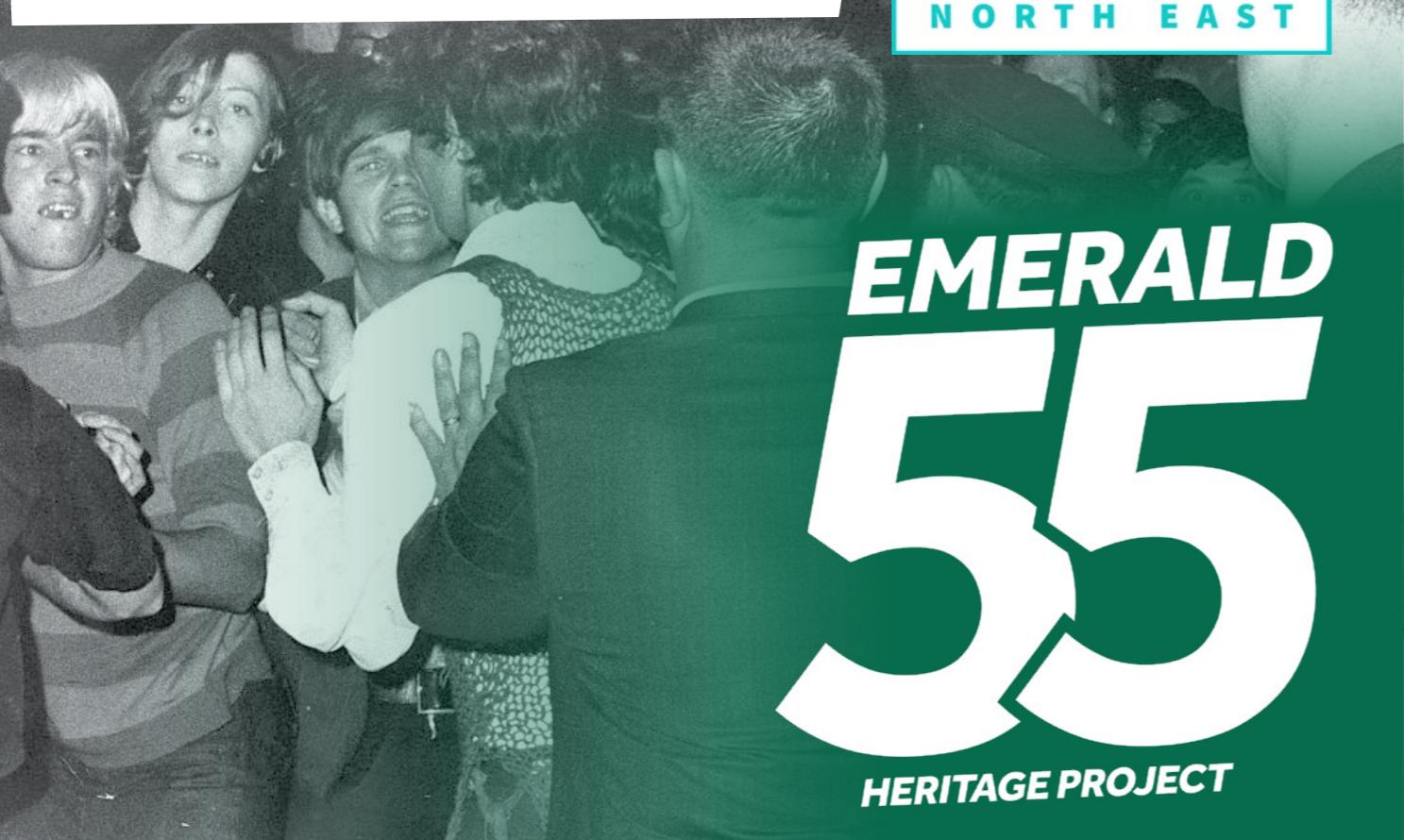
**There is still a lot of work to do to change hearts and minds but, as our first summer of pride showed, people are proud of who they are, their family, friends and the community they live in.**

**For every negative comment we received, hundreds cheered, took part in activities and celebrated their pride. And that's what Out North East aims to build on.**

# WHAT'S NEXT FOR



# EMERALD 55 HERITAGE PROJECT



## CONNECTING COMMUNITIES WITH PRIDE

**Emerald 55 is a unique heritage project which asks the question – What does Pride mean to me?**

Pride has been a rallying call for the LGBTQ+ community since the Stonewall Riots but it's not exclusive to our community. Pride is an emotion that connects everyone.

For some it's the celebration of sexuality, the fight for equality or publicly identifying as your true authentic self. For many it's the pride shared in a local

football team, a personal achievement or a memory.

Emerald 55 aims to explore what pride means to people in Sunderland, South Tyneside and Gateshead.

We'll be holding a series of community workshops, online events and activities at schools, colleges and universities exploring what pride means. There will also be a pack to download for people to engage with on their own, with their family or friends.

All the experiences will be curated and form three major exhibitions which will be displayed in Sunderland, South Tyneside and Gateshead during LGBTQ+ history month in February 2025. The collection will then be gifted to each local authority for their archives.

Emerald 55 is an important legacy project which will connect people and celebrate personal, community and civic pride.



## THE HISTORY BEHIND EMERALD 55

This year we commemorated the 55th anniversary of the Stonewall Riots, a watershed moment in LGBTQ+ history that sparked political and social change and was the catalyst for the modern pride movement. Every pride festival we celebrate today stems from this act of protest and defiance.

On 28 June 1969, the patrons of the Stonewall Inn at Greenwich Village gathered to remember LGBTQ+ icon Judy Garland, who had sadly passed away six days earlier. Emotions were high.

On the same night, the New York police raided the bar, attempting to arrest employees and patrons for violating laws prohibiting same-sex relations, cross-dressing, and serving alcohol to LGBTQ+ individuals. Members of the community decided it was time to make a stand. Against a backdrop

of constant persecution for the "crime" of being gay or being considered to have a mental disorder, they decided the discrimination and recrimination they suffered at the hands of the police needed to stop – and they hit back.

Fuelled by years of frustration and anger they resisted attempts by the police to arrest them, refusing to go quietly.

Storme DeLarverie, a proud lesbian, drag king and lifelong gay activist is widely acknowledged to have thrown the first punch in protest, though drag performers and trans activists Marsha P Johnson and Sylvia Rivera soon became the public faces of the riots. Over the following days, hundreds of people showed their solidarity and also fought back, challenging the police for their strong-arm tactics.

The Stonewall Riots lasted for several nights, serving as a turning point in the fight for LGBTQ+ rights. The demonstrations garnered significant media attention and became a rallying cry for the emerging gay rights movement.

It was also the catalyst for a worldwide movement for equal rights, leading to the establishment of the Gay Liberation Front and the Gay Activists Alliance. The first Pride event was held and through the actions of a handful of brave people at Stonewall, the position of the LGBTQ+ community worldwide changed – and continues to do so.

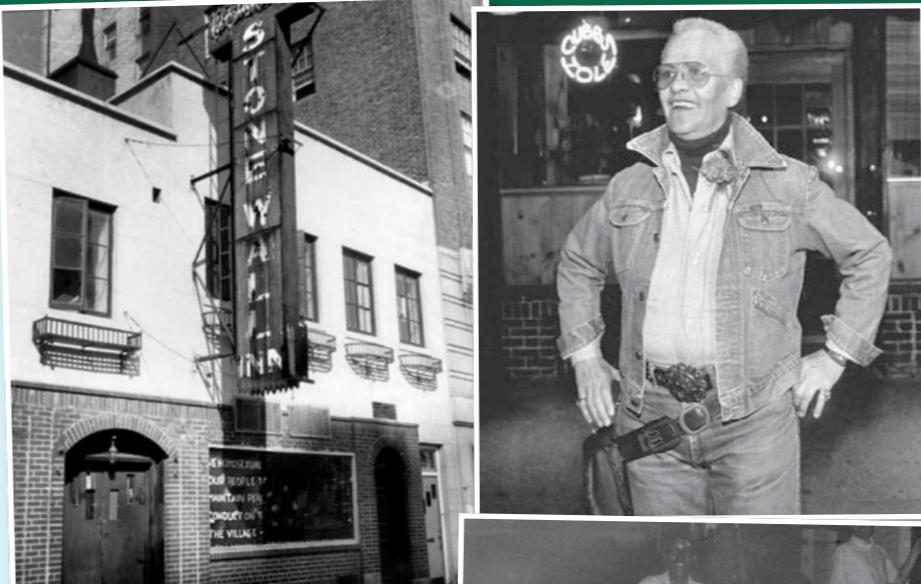
It is against this backdrop that we have created Emerald 55 – a chance to remember our past, celebrate pride in our achievements and bring communities together.

## WHY EMERALD 55?

We've been asked about the name of the project. Let's explain it:

- It's 55 years since the Stonewall Riots
- Emerald is the gemstone for 55th celebrations
- Emerald connects Judy Garland (Wizard of Oz, Emerald City)

**Emerald 55 – simple!**





**W**e'll be delivering Emerald 55 until LGBTQ+ history month in February and planning our next Summer of Pride festivals which will run from June to August in 2025.

This year we delivered 65 events; can we go bigger?

With the support we've received from the communities of Sunderland, South Tyneside and Gateshead, and working in partnership with local businesses, charities, service providers and third-sector organisations, we believe we can.

We really want to engage with more people and build on the success of Pride in Sunderland, Pride in South Tyneside and Pride in Gateshead.

Pride is more than a celebration and it's much more than rainbow flags and marches. It's about showing authentic support for all communities and creating an inclusive environment where everyone can thrive.

We want everyone to be proud of who they are, where they live, their neighbours and community. We can only achieve this by learning from one another, respecting our differences and celebrating what brings us together.

**With your support, we can do this.**

## IF YOU'D LIKE TO HELP OUT NORTH EAST OR WANT TO START A CONVERSATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

**Peter Darrant (Chair)**

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You can also reach us on [linkedin](#) or any of our [socials](#).

**Thank you for being part of our journey as we celebrate the region as a safe and inclusive place to live, work and visit. A North East bursting with pride.**

Photography credits: Hayden Brown, TJMOV, Rachel Deakin, Tim Richardson, SOLStock





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