



Summer OF Pride

SUNDERLAND

SOUTH TYNESIDE

GATESHEAD

June 2026



DON'T MISS



THIS SUMMER

FEARLESS TO BE YOURSELF.

We are proud allies of the LGBTQIA+ community. Supporting inclusion, equality and authenticity - in business and beyond.



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YOUR SUMMER OF PRIDE STARTS HERE

Welcome to our third Summer of Pride Festival, a vibrant and uplifting celebration bringing communities together across Sunderland, South Tyneside, Gateshead and beyond. Whether you are joining us for the first time or coming back for more, we are delighted to have you with us.

This year, we are doing things a little differently. We have brought the heart of the festival together into one joyful month, June, Pride Month itself. The programme is packed with events throughout, with a few favourites continuing into July and August by popular demand. A little extra time to celebrate never hurts.

At its heart, our Summer of Pride

festival is about connection. It is about creating spaces where people feel safe, seen and supported, where everyone can live, work and socialise as their authentic selves. That sense of belonging sits at the centre of everything we do.

There is plenty to explore, with something for everyone. From film screenings and thoughtful talks to live music and creative workshops, alongside family days and community takeovers, the programme offers a wide range of ways to get involved. You will also find concerts, sporting activities, and opportunities to celebrate and protest.

We are also pleased to share more about OUT North East and our work throughout the year, including the launch of the ONE Centre, the region's new LGBTQ+ community hub.

So take a look, get involved, and we will see you at the Summer of Pride 2026. **This is your festival. Everyone is welcome.**



Pride would not be possible without the support of our partners and supporters.

Their generosity helps us keep many events free and open to all.



If you would like to support the festival, you can make a donation or even host your own fundraiser. You will find more details in this guide.

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Welcome to Gateshead!

At the heart of the North East, Gateshead is a place where everyone is welcome.

We are proud to be here to support you to thrive throughout every stage of your life.

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- helping everyone to love where they live by improving our local environment
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- support for businesses and those looking for employment
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VOICES,

VISIBILITY,

IMPACT:

A Defining Year for OUT North East

You may know **OUT North East** for our fantastic **Pride festivals** but **we are so much more than that. This is an opportunity to reflect on a truly remarkable year of delivery, partnership and progress.**

The past 12 months have been incredibly busy, shaped by a dynamic programme of activity that has celebrated, educated, informed and amplified LGBTQ+ voices. While our roots are firmly in the North East, our impact has reached far beyond the region, gaining recognition on national and international stages.

Supporting our communities remains at the heart of everything we do. Guided by this commitment, we have continued to grow and evolve, working closely with LGBTQ+ organisations, local authorities and community partners

to create meaningful change. Together, we are empowering people, challenging prejudice and promoting inclusion.

A defining moment of 2025 was the Safer To Be Me summit. In partnership with ReportOUT and Pride Action North, we hosted the UK's first global LGBTQ+ conference, welcoming 700 delegates from more than 40 countries. This landmark event also saw the launch of the Newcastle Gateshead Declaration, a powerful statement of global LGBTQ+ solidarity.

We were equally proud to support Fighting With Pride, standing alongside LGBTQ+ veterans who were historically forced out of the armed forces.

Closer to home, our Summer of Pride brought communities together through a three month-long programme of free events across Sunderland, South Tyneside and Gateshead. With 55 events delivered, it was a vibrant, high-profile celebration embraced across the region.

Alongside these headline

achievements were quieter but equally important moments, one to one conversations, words of reassurance, and simply being there when it mattered most.

Of course, the year has not been without its challenges. Increasing hostility towards the trans community, alongside a shifting political landscape, has placed significant pressure on LGBTQ+ organisations and Pride events. But rather than step back, we have stepped forward. Our voice has grown stronger because the need for Pride has never been greater.

Looking ahead, we are entering an ambitious new phase. Taking ownership of Pride Radio has given us a powerful platform to share stories, raise awareness and connect with LGBTQ+ audiences across the North East and beyond. It also creates new opportunities to support the next generation through training, skills development and pathways into media and digital creativity.

At the centre of this next chapter is the ONE Centre, opened earlier this year, a space you can read more about in this guide.

PRIDE IN SOLIDARITY

One of our most meaningful projects this year was Pride in Solidarity. Funded by Point North and delivered in partnership with Durham Pride, it marked 40 years since the end of the Miners' Strike and honoured the legacy of Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners (LGSM).

More than 400 people attended a programme of events across County Durham, including talks, performances and community activities, alongside screenings of the award-winning film *Pride*. A special showing at Redhills,



Durham Miners' Hall, featured guest speaker Mike Jackson, co-founder of LGSM, who shared powerful first hand reflections on the movement and its lasting impact.

The project captured deeply personal stories from mining communities, highlighting how solidarity between groups led to real political and social change. It was a powerful reminder that standing together can challenge injustice and shape a better future. As the film says: **"You support me, I support you, shoulder to shoulder, hand to hand."**

SUMMER OF PRIDE FESTIVAL

In summer 2025, we delivered more than 50 events across Sunderland, South Tyneside and Gateshead, working in close partnership with local councils.

From film screenings and workshops to live performances and community activities, around 130,000 people took part. By embedding Pride into towns, city centres and public spaces, the festival strengthened community connections, supported local businesses and encouraged allyship at every level.

However, the programme also highlighted ongoing challenges. Our team experienced LGBTphobic abuse, alongside a rise in online hate, a stark reminder of the reality many still face. This only reinforced the importance of visibility, safe spaces and the continued role of Pride as both a celebration and a form of resistance.



EMERALD 55

Marking 55 years since the Stonewall Riots, Emerald 55 asked a simple but powerful question: What does Pride mean to you?

More than 300 people took part through workshops and creative sessions across Sunderland,

South Tyneside and Gateshead. Participants of all ages shared personal stories through art, writing and poetry, creating a rich and diverse exhibition that celebrated identity, community and lived experience.

The exhibition toured major venues

across the region, including shopping centres, cultural spaces and colleges, reaching an estimated two million people, with a further 10,000 engaging online. It demonstrated how Pride can mean different things to different people, while remaining a unifying force that brings communities together.



NORTH EAST LGBTPHOBIA SURVEY

In response to increasing hostility, we launched the #SaferToBeME? survey in partnership with the Northumbria Police and Crime Commissioner, supported by The William Leech Charity.

More than 300 people shared their experiences, with over half (56.4%) reporting LGBTphobia in the past year, particularly in public spaces and online. Many respondents said they feel less safe than before and are often reluctant to report incidents due to low confidence in outcomes.



The findings highlight growing concerns, especially among younger people, disabled individuals and ethnic minority communities. The report is already

helping to inform policy, shape local responses and drive conversations around safety and inclusion, with further research planned across the region.



#SAFERTOBEME SUMMIT

The North East was proud to host the UK's first global LGBTQ+ summit, welcoming more than 700 delegates from 40 countries.

Delivered in partnership with ReportOUT and Pride Action North, the #SaferToBeME Summit brought together activists, organisations and community leaders to share experiences, explore challenges and develop practical solutions for creating safer, more inclusive communities worldwide.

A defining moment of the summit was the signing of the Newcastle Gateshead Declaration, a landmark commitment to LGBTQ+ rights, dignity and protection. The event firmly positioned the North East as a leader in international LGBTQ+ collaboration, dialogue and action.



Drop In Queer Edition

Supporting young LGBTQ+ people to find their voice, build confidence and develop skills is a priority for OUT North East. That is why we partnered with The Drop In Centre in Dunston, Gateshead, to create Drop In Queer Edition, a podcast built from the ground up.



Across six sessions, participants explored identity, LGBTQ+ history and lived experience while developing skills in scripting, interviewing, recording and teamwork within a supportive, peer-led environment. In partnership with Pride Radio, they recorded in a professional studio, seeing their ideas valued and shared.



Pelaw Community Bowling Goes TikTok

Now a firm favourite in the Summer of Pride calendar, the Pride Bowling Tournament with Pelaw Community Bowling Club has led to an ongoing partnership.

When the club launched a TikTok account, we supported an intergenerational project with Bill Quay and St Alban's Catholic Primary Schools. Over six sessions, young people learned to plan, film and edit content while exploring community spaces. Club members also developed digital skills, sharing stories and experiences. The project concluded with a screening at the Pride Media Centre.

Healthy Choices for Local LGBTQ+ People

Community wellbeing remains central to our work, leading to the Healthy Choices programme



supporting LGBTQ+ individuals and families to build confidence, skills and healthier habits.

Focusing on practical, affordable approaches to healthy eating, we worked with Gateshead College to create accessible resources on budgeting, reducing waste and growing food at home. Hands-on sessions, including grow your own activities, encouraged learning and conversation. Outreach at the Pride in Gateshead Family Picnic engaged over 1,000 families.

Fighting With Pride

Ensuring overlooked voices are heard has always been a key part of OUT North East's work. We partnered with Fighting With Pride, supporting LGBTQ+ veterans and serving personnel affected by the historic military ban.

Through a series of In Conversation events, Carl Austin-Behan OBE DL shared his powerful experience of being dismissed from the RAF despite an exemplary record and an act of bravery that saved a colleague's life.

Fighting With Pride CEO Peter Gibson also outlined how veterans can access specialist support and claim reparations of up to £70,000. Several veterans from the region have since begun claims, demonstrating the impact of visibility, partnership and shared experience.



NOW IS YOUR TIME.

Enrol now.



If you would like to find out more about the work we have delivered, scan the QR code to read our Impact Statement 2025 or visit outnortheast.org.uk.



PROUDLY ACHIEVED



November 2024

Celebrate Pride with lumo this summer...

We're dedicated to equality, respect and understanding, standing proudly in support of LGBTQ+ communities.

Stirling
29th August

Carlisle
26th September

Preston
26th September

Milton Keynes
12th September

Stirling ● Edinburgh
Glasgow ● Falkirk ● Morpeth
Motherwell ● Newcastle
Carlisle ●

Milton Keynes ● Stevenage ● London

Glasgow
18th July

Edinburgh
20th June

Gateshead
Throughout June

Stevenage
22nd August

London
4th July



PRIDE, POLITICS, AND THE FIGHT FOR EQUALITY

Kate Osborne is the MP for Jarrow and Gateshead East and a long-standing campaigner for LGBTQIA+ rights. From fighting Section 28 to delivering change at the Council of Europe to end conversion practices, we caught up with her to talk Pride, politics, and the fight for equality.

Every year when Pride month comes around, I am proud to see our LGBTQIA+ community show up loudly, visibly, and unapologetically.

Pride has never just been a parade or a party. It started as a protest, remains a protest, and still needs to be a protest. Even in the UK, where we thought we had progressed so far and now have the gayest Parliament ever, there is still work to do.

This visibility matters. It is a huge achievement that 15% of Members of Parliament are LGBTQ+ and that's just the ones we know about. It means our community is represented and should have a voice. I always speak up for our community, especially our trans siblings at the moment. Recently, during Lesbian Visibility Week, seeing so many members of our community in Parliament celebrating our history and recommitting to the fight was uplifting and much needed.

Much needed because despite this progress, the fight for LGBTQIA+ equality is far from over and, in many

ways, things are getting worse.

I see the challenges facing LGBTQIA+ people every day, from struggles with housing and mental health to the rise in abuse. Hate crime is increasing, and I receive daily homophobic abuse on social media, in my inbox, and in person.

Hatred is rising not just in dark corners of the internet but in the streets, workplaces, and politics. LGBTQIA+ rights have become a political football, and trans people are being vilified in a media environment that too often rewards outrage over understanding. It is exhausting, dangerous, and exactly why Pride still matters.

I am hugely proud of my recent work at the Council of Europe, where I passed a report calling for a ban on conversion practices. My report received support from across Europe and across the political spectrum.

It was overwhelmingly passed, with the home of human rights not only stating that conversion practices have no place in society but also adopting a legal framework for every country to follow to ensure they are banned.

My report sets out the steps needed to legislate, protect people, support survivors, and ensure accountability for those carrying out these abusive practices. Governments across Europe, including our own, must now follow that framework without delay.

I am also pleased that the UK Minister for Equalities has committed to a full trans-inclusive ban on conversion practices. These practices cause real and lasting harm.

Since my report passed, I have been elected Overall Rapporteur for LGBTI

rights at the Council of Europe. This role means I will work across Europe to protect our rights, monitor legislation, and push for stronger commitments on sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. It is a huge responsibility, and one I am determined to use to protect our community.

Moments like this remind me why Pride remains a protest. Globally, there is still a lot to do, and I look forward to marching alongside LGBTQIA+ people everywhere.

We march because we have had to fight for every inch of progress, and we must defend it.

We march because hatred has not gone away.

We march because visibility saves lives.

We march because when we stand together, whether in the streets or in the Council of Europe, we make real change happen.

Our community is at its best when we come together, work together and organise together. The best Pride events come from LGBTQIA+ people putting in the hard work to make their voices heard — those are the events you will find me at locally and globally.

From grassroots campaigning to national and international politics, we must always remember our roots, celebrate our brilliant LGBTQIA+ communities, and shout from the rooftops that we are here, we have always been here, and we will always be here.

Get in touch with me for any more info: kate.osborne.mp@parliament.uk

Solidarity and Happy Pride!





PRIDE IN THE NORTH EAST

Kim McGuinness,
North East Mayor,
talks about
her support for our
community and her pride
in this region.



Kim McGuinness takes to the main stage at Pride in Gateshead

Pride is a celebration, but it is also a statement of values. It says something important about who we are as a region, the communities we stand alongside, and the future we want to build together.

Across the North East, Pride brings people together in celebration, visibility and solidarity. It creates space for joy and creativity, while also recognising the journey so many LGBTQ+ people have taken - and continue to take - to live openly, safely and authentically. That journey matters, and so does our responsibility to keep pushing for progress.

Community has always been one of the North East's greatest strengths. We are proud of our resilience, our fairness, and our instinct to look out for one another. Pride festivals reflect that spirit at its very best. They show the North East as it truly is - welcoming, diverse and proudly inclusive. Places where people can belong, build a life, and feel at home, whoever they are and whoever they love.

As Mayor, my role is not just to celebrate that sense of

community, but to strengthen it. That means backing events and organisations that bring people together, supporting safe and inclusive public spaces, and making sure equality runs through everything we do, from opportunity and culture to housing, skills and community safety. Inclusion isn't an add-on; it's essential to a strong, confident region.

Our Pride celebrations do more than bring colour and energy to our towns and cities. They send a powerful message that the North East is a place where people are supported to live fully and freely. They help attract visitors, showcase our creativity and culture, and show businesses, talent and families that this is a region where everyone is welcome.

Throughout my working life, including roles focused on justice and community safety, I've listened closely to LGBTQ+ people about the challenges they face. I know the impact that discrimination, hate crime and exclusion can have, and I'm determined that the North East is a region where nobody feels unsafe just for being who they

are. Everyone deserves dignity, protection and respect - without exception.

Looking ahead, my ambition as Mayor for the North East is clear: a region where opportunity is shared, communities are strong, and people feel proud of where they live. Festivals like Pride play a vital role in that future. They bring communities together, amplify LGBTQ+ voices, and help create places that are kinder, fairer and more connected.

Pride is also about allyship - communities standing side by side, showing support not just during celebrations, but all year round. That's how lasting change happens: through visibility, understanding and shared commitment.

So whether you're taking part in an event, supporting a local organisation, or simply showing solidarity in your everyday life, I encourage you to be part of Pride this year. Together, we can continue building a North East that is safe, inclusive and proud, a region where everyone can live, work, visit and thrive, with confidence and without fear.



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OUT North East's Summer of Pride Festival is bursting with energy, colour and joy - a month-long celebration of LGBTQ+ life bringing Sunderland, South Tyneside and Gateshead together in one unforgettable programme. This is your festival, and you won't want to miss a moment.

From live concerts and powerful talks to film screenings, family activities, sporting events and

Pride takeovers, there's something for everyone. Feel uplifted at the Northern Proud Voices concert at Sunderland Minster, dive into iconic stories with Rebel Dykes and Screaming Queens or get inspired at thought-provoking events exploring the future of Pride and LGBTQI+ rights.

Get creative with workshops like protest banner making and "Wear it with Pride," or come along for the fun drag shows, bingo nights, gaming marathons and themed parties. Families can enjoy inclusive events across the region, while those feeling active can join the Pride 5K Colour Run or cheer on the Pride Bowling Tournament.

Across the month, Pride will pop up in unexpected places from shopping centres and community venues to colleges and cultural

spaces transforming everyday locations into vibrant hubs of celebration and connection. Whether you join one event or the full programme, you'll be part of a shared celebration of identity, creativity and community spirit.

Expect big voices and unforgettable performances, with stars including Joe McElderry, Sonia, Angie Brown, Blu James (Basement Jaxx) and RuPaul's Drag Race star Sally TM lighting up stages. From feel-good anthems to dancefloor classics, these are moments to sing, dance and celebrate together.

Don't miss the big moments from live music to the Pride Fundraiser and at the heart of it all, the Pride March & Rally in Sunderland, where we come together to be seen, heard and proud.

This is your Pride. Come and celebrate it with us.

YOUR SUMMER OF PRIDE FESTIVAL 2026

WEEK 1 MAY 31 - JUNE 7

SUN 31ST 6pm – 7.30pm	Northern Proud Voices Concert at Sunderland Minster. A free concert with region's LGBTQ+ choir.	FREE CONCERT
MON 1ST 6pm – 9.30pm	Everyone is Talking about Jamie at Sunderland University. The hit film with heels, sass and great tunes.	FREE CINEMA
TUES 2ND 1pm – 2pm	What Should Pride Become? at Sunderland University. Do we need to drop the party and go back to protest?	FREE TALK
TUES 2ND 6pm – 8pm	Wear it with Pride at the ONE Centre , Gateshead. Crafting day for all ages	FREE ACTIVITY
WED 3RD 7pm – 9.30pm	Ophelia Balls Bingo & Quiz Night at the ONE Centre, Gateshead. Grab your dabbers for the campest bingo night with plenty of Balls.	FREE BINGO & QUIZ
THUR 4TH 10am – 6pm	Pride Takeover at M The Galleries , Washington. Stalls, activities and fun for all ages.	FREE EVENT
FRI 5TH 7.30pm – 11.30pm	Pride 26' Extravaganza at Diegos , Sunderland. A drag spectacular!	GET YOUR TICKET
SAT 6TH 10am – 4pm	Pride Takeover at Bridges Shopping Centre , Sunderland. Fun for all the family	FREE EVENT
SAT 6TH 6pm – 10pm	Pride Fundraiser at Sheepfolds , Sunderland. Let's celebrate Pride in Sunderland with Angie Brown, Blu James (Basement Jaxx), RuPaul's Sally TM, Lucy Phurr and more.	FREE CONCERT
SUN 7TH 11am – 3pm	Pride at the Beacon of Light , Sunderland. Fun activities for all the family.	FREE FAMILY EVENT

WEEK 2 JUNE 9 - 13

TUES 9TH 1pm – 2pm	The Men in the Pink Triangle at The Word , South Shields. Remember the LGBTQ+ community who died in the holocaust.	FREE TALK
TUES 9TH 7pm – 9.30pm	Rebel Dykes at The Customs House , South Shields. Fantastic documentary about the lesbian community in the 80s.	FREE CINEMA
WED 10TH 6pm – 8pm	Protest Banner Making with ReportOUT at Jarrow Focus, Jarrow. Fun crafting workshop	FREE ACTIVITY
FRI 12TH 7.30 – 9.30pm	Drag Me to the 80s at The Customs House , South Shields. Drag, 80s music, and a chance to dress up – the perfect night out.	GET YOUR TICKET
FRI 12TH 7pm – 11pm	Carnival House Pride Party at Carnival House, Sunderland	GET YOUR TICKET
SAT 13TH 10am – 10pm	Pride Gaming Day at The Clubhouse , Newcastle. A 12-hour gaming marathon	GET YOUR TICKET
SAT 13TH 10am – 5pm	Pride in Hebburn at Hebburn Town Centre . Music, stalls, activities for the family.	FREE EVENT

WEEK 3 JUNE 15 - 21

MON 15TH 7pm – 9.30pm	Screaming Queens at the ONE Centre , Gateshead. Before Stonewall there was the Compton's Café Riot. This documentary tells the story.	FREE CINEMA
TUES 16TH 7pm – 9.30pm	What is happening to LGBTQ+ rights across the globe? at the ONE Centre, Gateshead. A look at how the world is changing and how this affects our community.	FREE TALK
WED 17TH 5.30pm – 8pm	Gateshead LGBTQ+ History Group at the ONE Centre , Gateshead. A fascinating evening exploring Gateshead's LGBTQ+ history.	FREE TALK
THUR 18TH 1pm – 9pm	VANE Gallery and Orbis Community Pride at VANE Gallery and Orbis Community, Gateshead. Crafting, sharing and coming together.	FREE EVENT
FRI 19TH 10am – 6pm	Pride Takeover of Gateshead College at Gateshead College. Film, fashion, music and events for everyone.	FREE EVENT
SAT 20TH 10am – 4pm	Pride Takeover at the Metrocentre , Gateshead. Stalls, fashion, beauty, music and the Metrognomes.	FREE EVENT
SUN 21ST 11am – 3pm	Pride Bowling Tournament , Pelaw Lawn Bowling Club, Gateshead. Will you lift the trophy and be names the Pride Bowling Champion 2026?	GET YOUR TICKET

WEEK 4 JUNE 22 - 30

MON 22ND 6pm – 8pm	OASNE Pride at the ONE Centre, Gateshead . Pride event celebrating our LGBTQ+ migrant community	FREE EVENT
TUES 23RD 11am – 2pm	Pride at Quorum at Quorum Business Park. Stalls, music and celebration	FREE EVENT
FRI 26TH 7.30pm – 10pm	Drag Show at Carnival House, Sunderland.	GET YOUR TICKET
SAT 27TH 11.15am – 3pm	Pride March & Rally Sunderland. A time to come together in solidarity and march out, loud and proud.	FREE EVENT
SUN 28TH 12pm – 4pm	Pride Takeover at Bensham Grove Community Centre, Bensham. A fun day for all the family.	FREE FAMILY EVENT
TUES 30TH 5.30pm – 8pm	Pride 5k Colour Fun Run , Chopwell Woods. Lots of paint and lots of laughter.	FREE ACTIVITY



We are adding new events all the time. Scan the QR code to stay up to date and find out more.

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SATURDAY 6TH JUNE | 6PM TO 10PM

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WE BUILT IT TOGETHER: INSIDE THE ONE CENTRE

During LGBTQ+ History Month, something incredible happened. The North East made its own history with the opening of the ONE Centre — the region's dedicated LGBTQ+ community centre.

Redefining what a community space can be, it has been shaped by LGBTQ+ voices from across the region. Following extensive consultation with more than 220 people, OUT North East has created something entirely new: a space built by the community,

for the community, driven by participation, connection and shared purpose.

People spoke about the need for somewhere welcoming and inclusive, a sober environment, and a space where they could

feel safe to be themselves. They wanted opportunities to learn, explore new interests and access support, as well as somewhere to spend time away from the scene. Above all, they called for a place where everyone's voice matters and no one is excluded. With support from Gateshead Council and The National Lottery Community Fund, those ideas have become reality.

Based in Pelaw, chosen for its strong transport links, regional accessibility and free parking,



Members of the LGBTQ+ community and allies gather for the opening of the ONE Centre



the Centre has already become a vibrant hub of activity. Hundreds of people have come through the doors, joining groups, volunteering their time, and helping to shape what comes next. New ideas continue to emerge, led by the people who use it.

At its heart, this space is about people. It offers a safe, welcoming environment where individuals come together, take part and build something bigger than themselves. From wellbeing and safety programmes to creative and social projects, everything is designed to encourage involvement, spark conversation and reduce isolation. This is not just a place to visit; it is a place to belong.

The ONE Centre also opens doors to opportunity. Through volunteering, training and hands-on experience, people are building confidence and developing skills that support employment and personal growth. Alongside this, work with schools, employers and public services helps to strengthen understanding and inclusion across the region.

As a hub for research, consultation and advocacy, it ensures LGBTQ+ voices in the North East are heard, valued and acted upon. With Pride Radio now based in the building, those voices are amplified even further.

The building itself reflects that ambition. Once empty and overlooked, it has been transformed into a vibrant, flexible

space supporting counselling, workshops, drop-ins and training. But more than the facilities, it's what happens inside them that matters: collaboration, creativity and community in action.

This is not just a space. It's a movement. It exists because people spoke up, and it continues to grow because people get involved.



Shaped by the people who use it, there are countless ways to get involved. Each week, the ONE Centre comes alive with activity, offering opportunities to try something new, meet others and make it your own.

From creative workshops like Stained Glass Making and Zine Making, to active sessions such as KickOUT Inclusive Kickboxing and Stretch as ONE Yoga, there is something for everyone. Social spaces like Queer Games, Natterflix and the Relax and Reading Club offer a chance to unwind and connect, while groups like Happy Hookers Crochet bring people together through shared creativity.



It reflects the full diversity of the people it serves. Bright Beginnings creates a welcoming space for parents and toddlers, the LGBTQ+ Youth Group supports younger people, and the OASNE LGBTQ+ migrant group brings people together to share experiences and build connections. For those looking to explore new skills, opportunities like the DJ Academy offer a chance

to learn, create and express yourself.

What makes it different is how it continues to grow through the people who use it. New ideas are always welcome. If there is something you would like to see, you are encouraged to share it and help make it happen. This is where ideas turn into action.

There is no pressure here. You don't have to join a group to belong. You can simply drop in, have a coffee, play pool, darts or table tennis, watch TV, listen to music or pick up a book. However you choose to spend your time, you are welcome.

More than a programme of activities, it is a space to connect, to create and to belong. Visit our website to explore what's on, find your place and get involved.





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**STAINED GLASS
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setting for every idea.

Each space is practical, welcoming and easy to use, making it simple to focus, collaborate and create something meaningful together. Whether it's a team meeting, training session, community event or digital content production, this is where ideas come to life.

What truly sets it apart is the impact. Every booking directly supports OUT North East's work, helping to fund services, programmes and opportunities for LGBTQ+ people

across the region.

So when you use the space, you're not just hiring a venue, you're contributing to something bigger, helping to build a stronger, more connected community.

The ONE Centre exists because people got involved, and it continues to grow because they do. Now you've heard about it, why not come and see it for yourself? Visit outnortheast.org.uk or call in for a chat.

Just a sample of some of the great things happening at the ONE Centre. Scan the QR code to view our weekly calendar of activities



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Kate Osborne MP officially reveals the Spray it with Pride artwork

SPRAY IT WITH PRIDE

A bold new piece of LGBTQ+ artwork has been unveiled at the ONE Centre, celebrating identity, history and the vibrant voices that shape the community today — with icons and places chosen by the community.

Revealed during LGBTQ+ History Month by Kate Osborne MP, the striking work weaves together global icons, local heroes and recognisable landmarks, reflecting what matters most to the people who took part. Figures including Judy Garland, George Michael and

Alan Turing sit alongside Penshaw Monument and Grey's Monument, while distinctive regional details bring it firmly home to the North East — from the Metro in trans colours and the entrance to the old Metroland to a rainbow sausage roll. Each element was selected by community members, making the piece a deeply personal reflection of shared identity and pride.

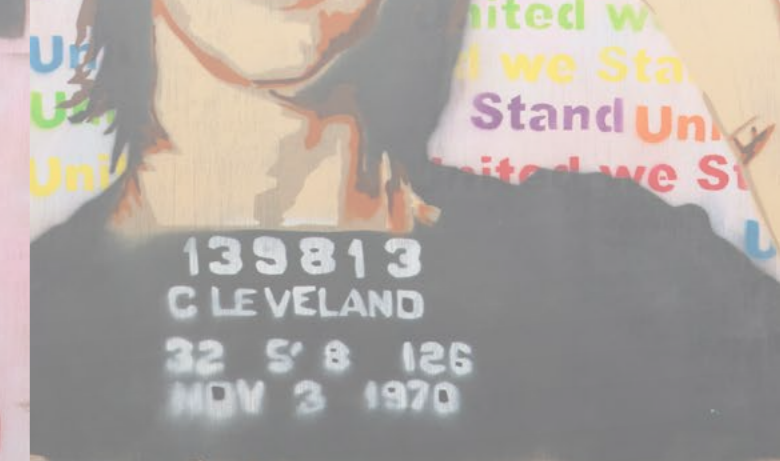
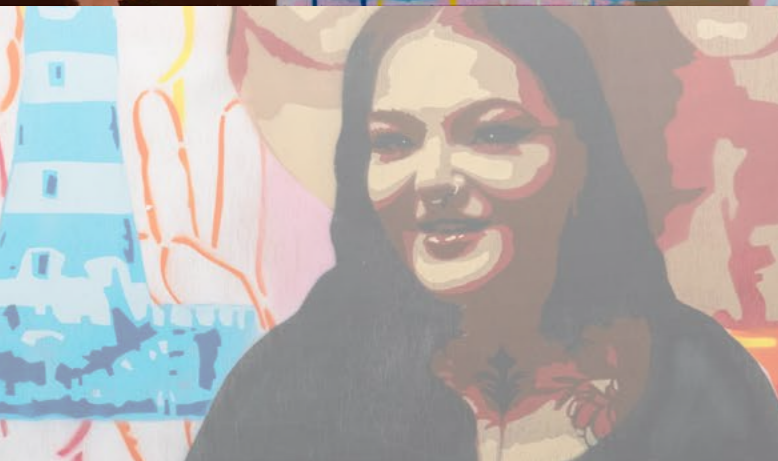
The artist behind the work is Gateshead-based Chris Fleming, also known as Ida4, whose practice is rooted in shared voices and experiences. More than 160 people contributed ideas, ensuring the artwork is shaped by real stories and meaningful connections. Workshops brought people together to co-create the design, including participants from Out and Safe North East, a regional group supporting LGBTQ+ migrants, who

created stencils and contributed words that add further depth.

Support from The National Lottery's Awards for All programme helped bring the project to life, with a focus not just on the finished piece but on participation, creativity and representation. As Peter Darrant, CEO of OUT North East, explains: "This is a stunning piece which merges global icons with our local community. It's a celebration of colour, history, community and hope."

And this is just the beginning. The artwork will now tour across the region, alongside projects in schools and community groups, giving people the chance to create their own Pride-inspired pieces.

Uplifting, inclusive and vibrantly bold, this is more than art on a wall — it's a living, community-created celebration of Pride.



YOUR GUIDE TO SPRAY IT WITH PRIDE

A home for stories, ideas and imagination

A multi-purpose cultural venue, home to the City Library. Packed with interactive, digital features and fun things to do for all ages.



Find out more at culturehousesunderland.co.uk

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The National Centre for Creative Smart Cities

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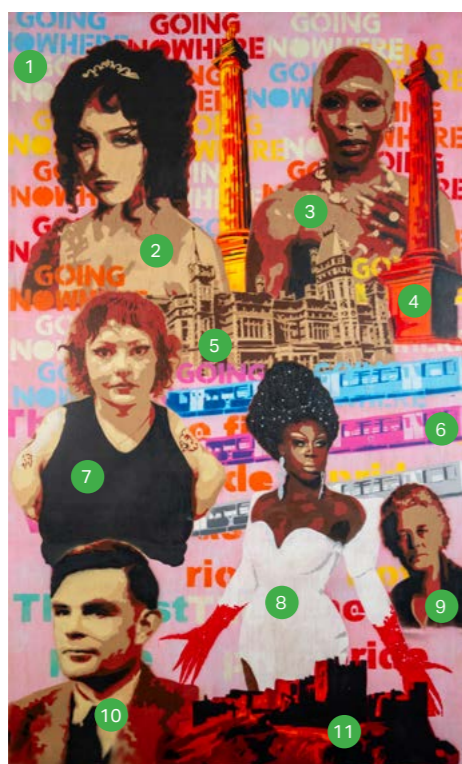
1. Clenched fist of solidarity
2. Sunday – Trans Drag Artist
3. Soundwaves of trans slurs received by trans collective, Doll Haus
4. The Vivienne - a celebrated LGBTQ+ drag queen and Drag Race UK winner, who captivated audiences with their sharp wit, flawless impersonations and bold style, becoming a powerful symbol of queer talent and visibility.
5. Angel of the North
6. Penshaw Monument
7. Aesop's Fable statue, Gateshead
8. The old Commercial House, Newcastle. Home of LGBTQ+ studios and Vane Gallery
9. Julian Clary
10. Patricia Routledge aka Hyacinth Bucket
11. The Glasshouse



1. Wording: Love Liberates
2. Judy Garland as Dorothy with characters from The Wizard of Oz
3. Phil Dunning, Smoggie Queens
4. Keith Haring was an openly gay American pop artist and activist, renowned for using his public art to combat stigma, promote sexual health, and advocate for LGBTQ+ rights. He became a vital 1980s queer icon, using bold imagery to address the AIDS epidemic, promote safe sex, and celebrate queer identity before his death from AIDS-related complications
5. Emmanuel, Newcastle Panthers (LGBTQ+ Football Club)
6. Neil Tennant, Pet Shop Boys
7. Jill Scott, Footballer and presenter
8. Sheena Revolta, local queer drag artist and alternative arts pioneer
9. Danny Delonco, drag queen
10. Freddie Mercury
11. Hayden Brown, queer freelance photographer
12. Pebble Dash, drag queen
13. Romy, tattooist
14. Roker Lighthouse
15. Peace sign



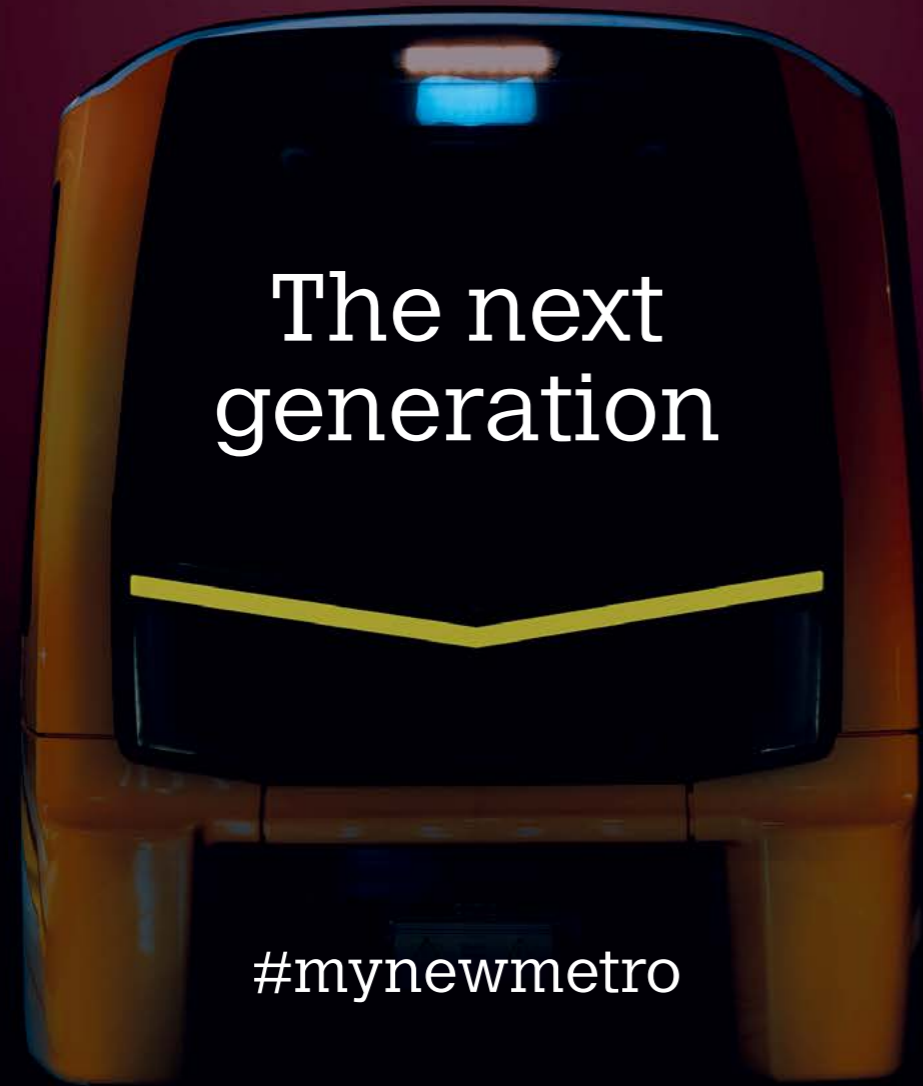
1. Slogan: Going Nowhere from the first Pride banner
2. Chapell Roan
3. Cynthia Erivo
4. The Monument, Newcastle
5. Saltwell Towers, Gateshead
6. Metro
7. Venus De Milo, queer performer and advocate for disabled rights
8. Bob the Drag Queen
9. Dr. Ethel Williams (1863–1948) was the first female general practitioner (GP) in Newcastle upon Tyne. She was a prominent campaigner for women's suffrage. While her sexuality is not explicitly documented in the historical record, it is noted that she lived for most of her adult life with her "companion" and partner, Frances Hardcastle and shared a life of "togetherness, love, and trust."
10. Alan Turing
11. Bamburgh Castle



1. Frida Kahlo
2. Annie Lennox
3. Lily Savage
4. Madonna
5. Lil Nas X
6. Grace Jones
7. George Michael
8. Miners lamps signifying the LGSM, an alliance of lesbians and gay men who supported the National Union of Mineworkers during the miners' strike which inspired the movie Pride.
9. Bees and flowers represent the many parks nominated
10. Old Metroland entrance
11. Sausage rolls (in Pride colours)
12. Jane Fonda
13. Kate Osborne MP
14. Slogans: Love is Love, United We Stand, You Belong, Be You Be Pride – created by OASNE (Out and Safe North East), a group of LGBTQ+ migrants who meet at the ONE Centre



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PRIDE, POLITICS AND POWER



Drew Dalton,
CEO, ReportOUT

Pride has always been more than celebration. Rooted in protest, shaped by history and constantly evolving, it reflects shifting conversations around identity, rights and visibility, and at a time when those conversations feel more urgent than ever, it's worth pausing to reflect on how far we've come and where Pride goes next. As part of our Summer of Pride, we're hosting a series of free talks that do exactly that, exploring the stories that brought us here, unpacking today's realities and looking ahead, offering a chance to reconnect with the true spirit of Pride: informed, inclusive and unafraid to ask difficult questions.

DREW DALTON is a passionate campaigner for LGBTQ+ rights, which is why he's the perfect person to lead a number of thought-provoking free talks as part of Summer of Pride.

For Drew Dalton, the lessons of the past and the issues of the present and the future are inextricably linked.

Drew, the founder of ReportOUT, which research, monitors and documents the abuses taking place worldwide against the LGBTQ+ community, has made his name as a social justice activist and is a passionate public speaker on the whole gamut of LGBTQ+ related subjects.

And that's why he was the only choice to spearhead a range of talks which will take place across Sunderland,

South Tyneside and Gateshead this summer.

The series kicks off with a look at What Should Pride Become? and how the movement may need to regroup and return to its roots, given the current climate.

"I think in the future we need to be more political," said Drew.

"Pride has become all about concerts and having fun and we need to return to what Pride was originally about."

Drew will be gathering a panel of experts drawn from a range of backgrounds to discuss how Pride needs to be shaped in the future.

For his second talk, Drew turns back to the past for what promises to be an uncomfortable but absorbing evening.

The Men in the Pink Triangle recounts the forgotten story of the gay men who were victims of the Nazis and were put in concentration camps purely because of their sexuality.

"There's very little documentation of their stories," said Drew.

"Part of the reason for that was there were very few survivors and those that did were still subject to Germany's Paragraph 175, which was about the imprisonment of gay men.

"They were liberated from the camps but because this law still existed, many of them were sent straight back to prison. It wasn't until the 1960s this law was finally repealed.

"Many of those men were ashamed and didn't want to tell their stories so

only a handful of them ever came to light.

"We all thought 'never again' in terms of what happened in Nazi Germany, but then we see what is happening to gay men in Chechnya.

"We are all in a precarious position. We are all just one step away from a General Election and what that can mean.

"We went from the liberal Berlin of the 1930s, where anything went, to the rise of the Nazis and everything that came with it."

The final talk in the series will look at the current state of play across the world, with the discussion What is Happening to LGBTQI+ Rights Across the Globe?

"We're going to look at the current state of the world and how we seem to have entered a time of disconnected social bonds," said Drew.

"We've seen a rise in populist leaders, which is always worrying because they say the things people supposedly want to hear but with no real solutions.

"Look at what's happening in Russia under Putin and what could happen with China."

Along with hosting these talks, Drew is also keen to campaign for "people to learn and understand democracy on a national and international level."

"It's something that nobody is really taught and it is an issue which really needs addressing," he said.

Summer of Pride Talks are free to attend but you will need to book a ticket.

WHAT SHOULD PRIDE BECOME?

Tuesday 2nd June | 1pm to 2pm

Sunderland University

THE MEN IN THE PINK TRIANGLE

Tuesday 9th June | 1pm to 2pm

The Word, South Shields

WHAT IS HAPPENING TO LGBTQI+ RIGHTS ACROSS THE GLOBE?

Tuesday 16th June | 7pm to 8:30pm

The ONE Centre, Gateshead

Visit
outnortheast.org.uk
or scan the QR code



CAMERA, ACTION— PRIDE

From a rousing story of resistance to a life-affirming musical with a strong North East connection, to a lookback at the 80s from a unique perspective - welcome to this year's Summer of Pride free film festival, where we've put together an eclectic collection of must-see movies and documentaries.

We've hand-picked a selection of big screen specials which are free and open to everyone, stories to make you laugh, cry and question.

So grab that popcorn and settle in your seat as the main feature begins...

EVERYONE IS TALKING ABOUT JAMIE

TUESDAY 1 JUNE — DOORS OPEN AT 6PM, FILM STARTS AT 6:30PM

Venue – The David Puttnam Media Centre, Room 207, Sunderland, SR6 0DD

In partnership with Sunderland University. | Cert 12A



Who'd have thought a documentary made 15 years ago would continue to resonate and become a national phenomenon?

The original true tale of Bishop Auckland teenager, Jamie Campbell, and his determination to attend his school prom in drag became the powerful Jamie: Drag Queen at 16 documentary.

The story inspired the hit musical, where the action may have been moved to Sheffield but the sentiment remained true to its roots, with Jamie determined to go the very special coming of age event as his drag persona, Fifi La True.

In 2021 the movie version of Everyone Is Talking About Jamie was released, premiering at the Frameline Line Film Festival as part of San Francisco Pride.

It won wide acclaim, nominated for a whole range of awards including a BAFTA for Outstanding British Film.

Join us for a celebration of this amazing movie, which will be followed by a short Q&A session, including input from Sunderland academics who will talk about the making of the film and the lives and stories which inspired it.



This no-holds barred documentary turns the clock back to the 80s and 90s, to a time of Thatcher, of protest and what happened when punk met feminism.

Through animation, archive footage and interviews, Rebel Dykes tells the fascinating story of a group of women who met at Greenham Common peace camp and their experience of being gay during that time.

The unapologetic participants talk about the setting up of the S & M club Chain Reaction and the protests

against the introduction of Section 28 which led to acts of defiance such as the lesbian invasion of the BBC and abseiling into the House of Lords.

It turns the spotlight on the impact of AIDS on the LGBTQ+ community at the time and the homophobia which went hand in hand with it.

It is a hard hitting yet nostalgic look at a world which has now gone, brought back to life by those who lived through it and who were part of a tight knit and supportive community who were not afraid to speak out.

REBEL DYKES

TUESDAY 9 JUNE — FILM STARTS AT 7PM

Venue – The Customs House, Mill Dam, South Shields

In partnership with The Customs House | Cert 18



SCREAMING QUEENS: THE RIOT AT COMPTON'S CAFETERIA

MONDAY 15 JUNE — FILM STARTS AT 7PM

Venue – The ONE Centre, Unit 2B, Stonehills, Gateshead

In partnership with Gateshead Council | Cert 15



The Stonewall Riots need no explanation – the landmark 1969 New York uprising when drag queens, the transgender community and many young, homeless gay men fought back against a police raid on the Stonewall Inn in Greenwich Village.

After constant targeting, resistance erupted into a riot, marking a turning point for the LGBTQ+ community.

Less well known is that three years earlier, in San Francisco's impoverished Tenderloin district, a similar event took place, also blazing a trail for the transgender community.

We are delighted to screen Screaming Queens: The Riot at Compton's Cafeteria, an Emmy Award-winning documentary telling the story of the first act of violent resistance by the queer community.

The Tenderloin, home to the city's transgender scene, was frequently subjected to police harassment. Many gathered at Compton's Cafeteria, which police sought to close at midnight.

In summer 1966, a drag queen threw coffee at an officer attempting to arrest her without cause, sparking a riot.

Screaming Queens introduces viewers to street queens, police and civil rights activists, painting a vivid portrait of 1960s San Francisco. It also connects the event to wider themes of urban renewal, anti-war activism, civil rights and sexual liberation through archive footage and music.

The screening will end with a Q&A on the impact of LGBTQ+ protest.



LASHES, LAUGHS AND LEGENDS:

THE STORY BEHIND OPHELIA BALLS

She's the queen of the airwaves who gets Pride Radio listeners out of bed every morning. Now, it's time to meet the man behind the lashes.



Ophelia Balls is a genuine drag legend, a sequin loving, wig wearing, quick witted diva known across the region and far beyond. Behind the glamour, however, is her creator and partner in crime, Gary Short, a much loved figure on the scene in his own right.

Like many performers, Gary's journey began with a simple dream. Across the world, countless youngsters have stood in front of the bathroom mirror, hairbrush in hand, belting out their favourite pop hits. For Gary, that dream started early and never really left.

His urge to entertain was clear from childhood. At just 12, he played an ugly sister in a youth club panto ("drag seemed to appeal even then," he admits), before continuing to camp it up in school productions. Entertainment, it seems, was always in his blood.

Fast forward to today, and it's been more than 40 years since Gary first donned a frock, although as any lady would insist, we'll politely skip over Ophelia's date of birth. What is firmly on record, however, are the decades of joy and laughter she has brought to audiences across the country.

"I always had an interest in music," Gary says. "My mum had all these great LPs, Shirley Bassey, Judy Garland, Doris Day, Ella Fitzgerald, which I absolutely loved. And I adored performers like Danny La Rue, Dick Emery and Stanley Baxter."

Looking back, those early opportunities to dress up for school and youth club productions gave him a way into drag, even if he didn't realise it at the time. It wasn't until later that he got his first real taste of performing in front of a live audience.

Alongside a friend, he performed at a birthday party for the owner of the iconic Newcastle gay club Rockshots. Under the name 2 Darn Hot, the duo

delivered a routine that brought the house down and sparked a lifelong love of performing.

"We were always being asked to put something on," Gary recalls. "I remember going to a house party and being asked to do a number, so we made a costume on the spot out of bin bags."

The double act didn't last long after his partner moved to France, but it prompted Gary to strike out solo. First came Gracie Le Glitz, and then the evolution into Ophelia Balls.

What followed were the glory days, with bookings across clubs and bars nationwide.

"It was a time when there were clubs and venues everywhere," Gary says. "I'd be travelling to Edinburgh, Sheffield, Derby, then back every Friday for my residency at The Black Garter in Newcastle, which I've now done for over 25 years."

Ophelia also became a hugely popular host for Ladies Nights, bringing both energy and authority to lively all women events.

"I always loved doing those," he laughs, "even if they could get a bit out of hand."

When RuPaul's Drag Race arrived in the UK, bringing drag firmly into the mainstream, Ophelia was invited to host events across the country. Along the way, she formed friendships with performers who would go on to become household names, including Baga Chipz and the late The Vivienne.

At the mention of The Vivienne, Gary becomes visibly emotional.

"She once said to me that it was drag queens like Ophelia who paved



the way for the next generation," he reflects. "It was such a terrible loss, something I don't think we'll ever fully get over."

For the past 15 years, Ophelia has also been one of the voices of Pride Radio, sharing her wit, wisdom and musical taste with an adoring audience each morning.

Gary is delighted to see how far drag has come and how accessible it is now compared to when he first started.

"In the early days, good quality lashes and make up were only found in London or Manchester," he says. "You either travelled down or waited weeks for things to arrive by post. There was no internet, and most dresses came from charity shops. I always went to Whitley Bay rather than Newcastle, it seemed to have a lot more sparkle!"

These days, sparkle is certainly not in short supply. At home, an "Ophelia Room" houses a dazzling collection of frocks, wigs, boas and jewellery and is now "in serious danger of spilling into a second bedroom."

Despite decades in the business, and with the support of his partner Keith, who has helped create costumes, run PA systems and acted as chauffeur and confidante, Gary has no plans to hang up Ophelia's heels any time soon.

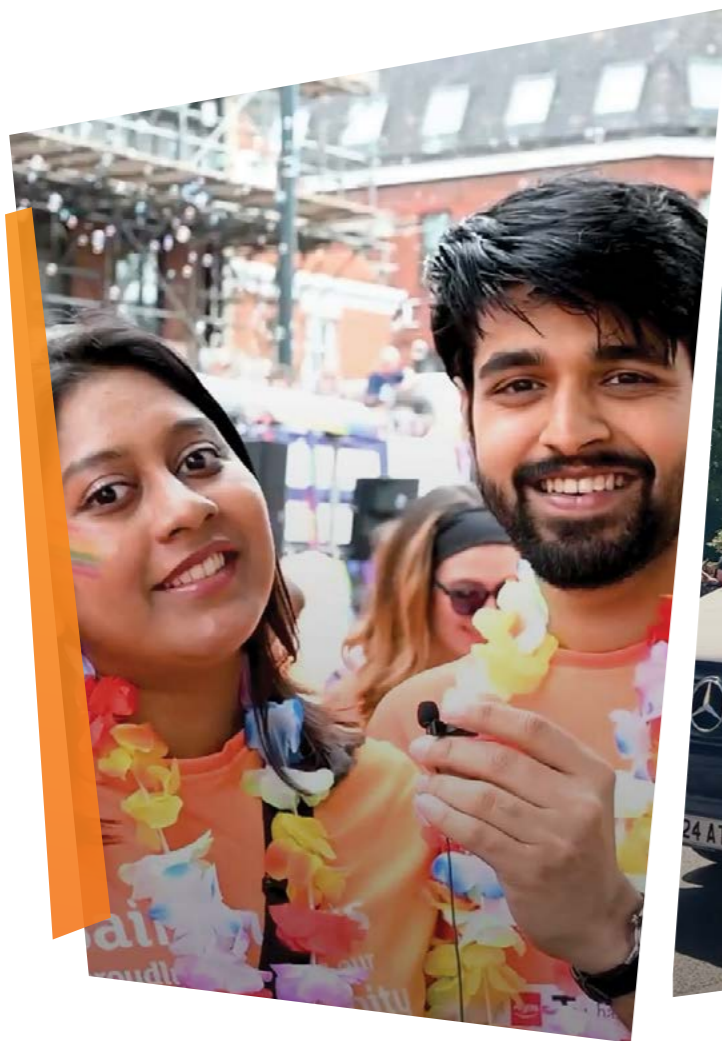
"Drag has come so much into the mainstream," he says. "Everyone knows how to do a slut drop or a death drop. But it's not just about dressing up, it's about making people smile and most of all, being kind."

Why not let the diva wake you up?

Start your day the fabulous way with Ophelia Balls on Balls at Breakfast, Monday to Friday, 7am to 10am, only on Pride Radio. Tune in on 89.2FM, DAB, via your smart speaker, or listen on the go with the free Pride Radio app.



You can't make a rainbow without orange.



Sainsbury's

Mosaic

Support for individuals within both the Dementia and LGBTQ+ communities, as well as their carers and families.

A new community initiative will create a vital space in the North East where people can truly be themselves. Mosaic, an LGBTQ+ dementia group delivered in partnership with OUT North East and Silverline Memories, will provide a welcoming environment for people living with dementia, as well as their carers and families.

Meeting weekly at the ONE Centre, the group will be built on a simple but powerful idea: everyone deserves to feel safe, seen and valued. For many LGBTQ+ people, especially older generations, there can be a fear of judgment or having to hide who they are. When combined with the challenges of dementia, that sense of vulnerability can deepen. Mosaic will aim to change that by creating a space rooted in dignity, respect and understanding.

The sessions will offer a relaxed, friendly space where people can connect over coffee, cake and conversation. More than just a social gathering, the group will encourage open discussion, shared experiences and mutual understanding. Friendly faces and peer support will help build

confidence and reduce isolation, reminding attendees that they are not alone and that support is always within reach.

At its heart, Mosaic will be about belonging. It will create a community where identity is respected and celebrated, and where people can express themselves freely, whether that's through conversation, activities or simply being present. The group will also offer gentle, inclusive activities designed to support wellbeing and spark meaningful connections.

The group will meet every Wednesday from 10:30am to 12 noon, with the first drop in taking place on Wednesday 8th July. Everyone is welcome to come along and be part of this supportive and empowering new community.



Mosaic meets at the ONE Centre, Unit 2B, Stonehills, Pelaw, NE10 0HW. Visit www.outnortheast.org.uk for more details



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Pride

WIGS, WIT AND WEARSIDE: SMOGGIE QUEENS ARE BACK, PET!



The outrageous Smoggie Queens return with more drama, laughs and dazzling chaos, bringing Middlesbrough's campest comedy back to our screens.

“ OUTRAGEOUS CHARACTERS, OVER-THE-TOP COSTUMES AND SOME HILARIOUS SITUATIONS. ”

The North East is a hotbed of artistic and creative talent which is now being recognised nationally and internationally – from the proposed Crown Works Studios in Sunderland to the Northern Film and TV Studios which have been used for productions ranging from Avengers Endgame and Harry Potter.

The region's impact on the small screen is just as impressive and its great news that a Middlesbrough-based queer comedy is back for a second outing.

The new series of the RTS award-winning Smoggie Queens, which focusses on a trio of drag queens and their friends navigating life in Middlesbrough, is picking up where series one left off, so you can expect outrageous characters, over-the-top costumes and some hilarious situations.

We sat down with the cast over a coffee and a sticky bun to find out more...



PHIL DUNNING (DICKIE)

How does it feel to be back for series two? Does it feel different approaching the series following series one's hit success?

It feels amazing to be back with the Smoggie Queens family. Coming into the second series, there's definitely a different vibe. With series one, so much of the process was about discovery: figuring out the tone, learning who the characters are, and developing the Smoggie world. The nice thing about coming into series two is that we all knew the tone of our characters, so it felt like there was more time for playing about with the comedy.

What has the response been like to Smoggie Queens so far?

The response has been so joyful. The show and the characters really seemed to have connected with people in the best way. I've been overwhelmed by the lovely messages people have sent.

You were nominated for three BAFTAs for series one, can you tell us what that meant to you?

It meant the world to get that recognition. It was an out of body experience when I found out about the nominations. There's no way in a million years that I expected it, and I still can't really believe it happened to be honest.



Where do we find Dickie at the start of series two?

We find Dickie pretty much where we left off. He's still a bitter old queen towards Stewart but has come to terms with him being in the friendship group. He's also still dealing with his fluctuating emotions towards his ex-boyfriend, Harrison.

Dickie's search for love continues this series, how would Dickie describe himself on his dating profile?

"Gorgeous and sexy, mid to late 20's gay lad looking for equally sexy men for dates".

“IT MEANT THE WORLD TO GET THAT RECOGNITION. IT WAS AN OUT OF BODY EXPERIENCE.”

What was the writing process like for the characters this time, did you already know where you were going to take them?

I had a rough idea of where the characters journeys would take them, but nothing was concrete. Before I started writing the scripts, myself and my Series Producer, Chris, sat in a room together and worked out the plot and outline for each episode. It's difficult trying to narrow it down to 6, 30-minute episodes as I feel like there are so many directions and situations that we could explore. It felt slightly easier and less lonely when I started putting pen to paper for series 2 as I could really hear the characters voices in my head.

Do you have a favourite moment or scene that you've shot in the series?

I love a camp movie genre pastiche and episode 5 is all very film noir which gave us the excuse to be completely over the top and melodramatic. So all of the dramatic scenes from episode 5 would probably be my favourite moments.

Viewers can expect to see some incredible costumes again this series, do you have a favourite look from series two?

Detective Sexy returns for series 2 and I love that costume. But in episode 3 we have a Wizard of Oz theme in which I play a slutty Tin Man and I think this costume might take the top prize.

MARK BENTON (MAM)

How does it feel to be back for series two? Does it feel different approaching the series following series one's hit success?

I am so thrilled to be back doing a second series. Coming back was a joy. The show feels like it's moved up a gear, and we are doing even more wild and wonderful stuff. Phil's writing is so much fun and now he knows everyone and their characters so well, he writes

specific things for us.

Where do we find Mam at the start of series two?

Well in series one we discovered that Mam has a son that she's never told anyone about and we meet another major figure from her past in this series...her ex-wife, played by Monica Dolan.

Tell us about filming those scenes with Monica Dolan.

Monica Dolan as well as being a dear friend of mine is also one of the best actors in the world in my opinion. When you work with a

close friend you immediately have a shorthand. Monica is so easy to work with and a very intelligent and thoughtful actor who is also very funny. What more could you ask for!



“WHEN I PUT THE NAILS ON, I SUDDENLY START TO MOVE LIKE MAM AND EVEN THINK LIKE HER.”

How do you get into character as Mam?

Well, it might sound strange but it's

the nails. I spend a couple of hours in make-up and then costume which is transformative but when I put the nails on, I suddenly start to move like Mam and even think like her!

Do you have a favourite moment or scene that you've shot in the series?

It's hard to pick a favourite moment because when we're all together filming is the most wonderful, joyous, riotous thing. If I had to

pick, I would say playing a football manager and speaking Spanish in episode 4, or the introduction of Inspector Voluptuous in episode 5.

Viewers can expect to see some incredible costumes again this series, do you have a favourite look from series two?

I think Ryan our costume designer has excelled this series. I think my favourite costume would be Inspector Voluptuous with her tiny pipe.

ELIJAH YOUNG (STEWART)

How does it feel to be back for series two? Does it feel different approaching the series following series one's hit success?

Getting to film series two felt like returning to summer camp. Literally spending seven weeks with your mates just laughing and occasionally dressing up. I think we were all super excited about the idea of making series two bigger and better. Phil's writing continues to be hilarious and heartfelt but also epic, straight out the gate. Every part of the show is elevated, and you could feel that even from filming.

Where do we find Stewart at the start of series two?

Stewart is now fully out and proud, living with Mam and still working shifts at the wonderful Keith's World of Carpets. After the journey he went on leading to him finally coming out at the end of series one, he's now ready for what his new life, as his



authentic self, has in store.

How do you think Stewart has changed from series one?

He has definitely built in confidence and finally feels comfortable to be himself. I'd say he's now in what a lot of queer people refer to as the second puberty - there's subtle things like his frosted tips or his fashion sense that really show his personal growth and how he's exploring his queerness. In terms of his relationship to the gang, I think before he was seen as the newbie in the group but now he's the younger sibling in this chosen family.

Do you have a favourite moment or scene that you've shot in the series?

I remember filming a scene early on in the shoot and it was the first time the full gang were in a scene together for series two and it took forever to film because we were having too much fun, we kept messing up the props and we were probably a bit giddy. After the first take, Mark turned to us all and said, "Now it feels like we're back."

This scene definitely has the best outtakes, hands down.

Viewers can expect to see some incredible costumes again this series, do you have a favourite look from series two?

Dickie's "Tin Woman" costume in episode three is my winner and I think it'll be a fan favourite for series two. It was hard to take your eyes off, the general public in Middlesbrough town centre definitely struggled to. But there's truly some brilliant looks in every episode of the new series. I always loved getting in the car and heading to set with all the gang on a Monday and getting to see what new look everyone had for that week.

“EVERY PART OF THE SHOW IS ELEVATED, AND YOU COULD FEEL THAT EVEN FROM FILMING.”

Smoggie Queens is on BBC iPlayer and BBC Three.

FACING UP TO LGBT PHOBIA

OUT North East has published a powerful new report shining a light on the reality of LGBTphobia across the region, sparked by a troubling surge in online abuse during its 2024 Pride Festival. After receiving more than 2,000 hate messages, the organisation took action, launching a regional survey in partnership with the Northumbria Police and Crime Commissioner, with support from The William Leech Charity.

Designed to put lived experience at its heart, the survey ran throughout the Summer of Pride Festival between June and September 2025, reaching communities across Sunderland, Gateshead and South Tyneside. In total, 312 people took part, sharing honest reflections on safety, inclusion and the challenges they face in everyday life.

Susan Dungworth, Northumbria Police and Crime Commissioner, welcomed the report, saying it "highlights the real experiences of LGBTQ+ people across our region and the findings make clear we still have work to do," and thanked OUT North East for "giving a voice to our communities and driving real change."

The findings are stark. Many respondents reported a rise in LGBTphobia both online and in public spaces, with a growing sense of vulnerability. Perhaps most concerning is the gap between experience and action. Incidents often go unreported due to fear, stigma or a lack of confidence in what

will happen next. The report does not just highlight a problem, it calls for a shift in how communities respond.

"The LGBTphobia survey highlights a clear gap between lived experience and reported hate crimes," said Peter Darrant, CEO of OUT North East.

"Working alongside the Northumbria Police and Crime Commissioner, Northumbria Police, and our partners, we are committed to supporting those affected by hate crime. I'm delighted that the ONE Centre is now a Safe Reporting Centre, making it easier and safer for people to come forward and report incidents."

That commitment is already being put into action. At the ONE Centre in Gateshead, a new series of monthly hate crime drop in sessions is offering something simple but powerful: a safe place to talk. Held every third Monday between 10am and 1pm, the sessions bring together Northumbria Police, Connected Voice and OUT North East, to provide confidential, face to face support.

For many, this kind of environment can make all the difference. Away from more formal settings, people can ask questions, explore their options and speak directly with trained officers and support workers in a welcoming, non judgemental space. It is about building trust, especially for those who may have felt unsure about reporting in the past.

The sessions also aim to break down barriers around reporting, helping people understand their rights and the support available to them. By listening to community feedback and creating more accessible opportunities for engagement, partners hope to encourage more people to come forward.

While the report paints a difficult picture, it also points towards change, driven by collaboration, compassion and a shared determination to ensure that hate crime is challenged and never accepted.

Change begins with listening and this is only the start of that conversation.

KEY FINDINGS AT A GLANCE

56.4%

Of all LGBTQ+ people surveyed in the North East **have experienced LGBTphobia in the past 12 months**

32%

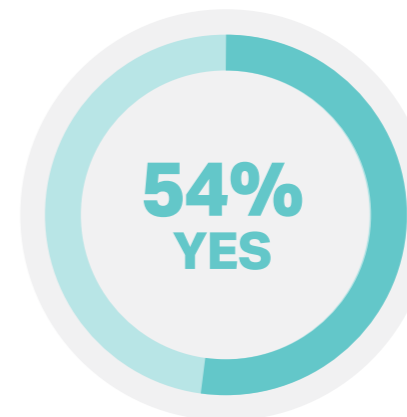
Of all LGBTQ+ people surveyed perceive that the **general climate for LGBTQ+ people is worsening** in the North East region (compared to 28% of LGBTQ+ people who think this is worsening across the rest of the UK)



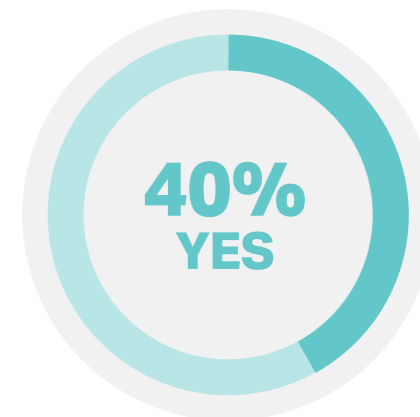
Over a quarter (26%) of LGBTQ+ people in the North East felt unsafe because of who they are, compared to only 20% of LGBTQ+ people in the region who felt safe



In public spaces in the North East, over a third (31%) of LGBTQ+ people felt unsafe, versus only 18% of LGBTQ+ people in the region who felt safe overall



54% of LGBTQ+ people in the North East of England felt confident to report a hate crime



60% of LGBTQ+ people did not know how to report LGBTPhobia outside of police mechanisms

59%

Of LGBTQ+ people would feel safe to report a hate crime. However, the favoured methods used to report hate crimes varies between age groups, and so mixed approaches to doing this would be recommended



You can download a copy of the report by scanning the QR code



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THE BEAUTIFUL NORTH

KNOW YOUR HISTORY

LGBTQ+ people have always been part of history, shaping culture, challenging norms, and driving change across every era and society.

Far from being a modern phenomenon, diverse identities and relationships have existed for centuries, often hidden, sometimes celebrated, but always present.

From artists and activists to leaders, performers, and pioneers, LGBTQ+ individuals have helped influence the world we live in today.

This collection of icons highlights just a few of those stories, people who lived authentically, broke barriers, and created space for others to do the same. Some fought openly for rights and recognition, while others expressed themselves through creativity, resilience, and quiet courage at times when acceptance was rare.

Learning about LGBTQ+ history helps us better understand the richness and diversity of human experience, while recognising the struggles that have shaped today's progress. It reminds us that visibility matters and that change is built over time by individuals willing to stand out.

If you visit the ONE Centre, you can discover more about these inspiring figures and many others who have left a lasting mark on LGBTQ+ history.



April Ashley

April Ashley

April Ashley was a British model, actress, and pioneering transgender woman who transformed public understanding of transgender identity. Born in Liverpool in 1935, she became one of the first British people to undergo gender affirming surgery and later worked for Vogue. Despite being outed publicly in 1961, Ashley remained a resilient LGBTQ+ trailblazer for equality.



Albert Cashier

Albert Cashier

Albert Cashier, born in Ireland in 1843, lived as a man and is recognised as one of the earliest known transgender figures in American history. After emigrating to the United States, he served in the Union Army during the Civil War. Cashier's life challenged gender norms and remains a symbol of transgender resilience and authenticity.



Wanda Sykes

Wanda Sykes is a comedian and actor known for her fearless humour and visibility as an openly lesbian Black woman. She came out publicly in 2008 while advocating for LGBTQ+ rights. Her work blends comedy with activism and representation.

Stormé DeLarverie

Stormé DeLarverie was a butch lesbian performer and activist, often linked to the start of the Stonewall uprising. A drag king and community protector, she challenged gender norms decades ahead of her time. She remains a symbol of resistance, courage, and LGBTQ+ pride.

Virginia Woolf

Virginia Woolf was a pioneering writer whose work explored identity, gender, and inner life. Her relationship with Vita Sackville-West inspired *Orlando*, a landmark queer novel. She remains a key figure in feminist and LGBTQ+ literary history.

Sandi Toksvig

Sandi Toksvig is a comedian, broadcaster, and LGBTQ+ activist known for championing equality. After coming out in the 1990s, she faced discrimination but continued to thrive in media. She remains a leading voice for inclusion and women's rights.

Marlene Dietrich

Marlene Dietrich was a Hollywood icon who challenged gender norms with her androgynous style. Openly involved with both men and women, she is celebrated as a bisexual pioneer. Her legacy continues to influence LGBTQ+ culture and expression.

Jodie Foster

Jodie Foster is an award-winning actor and director who publicly came out as a lesbian in 2013. Long respected for her talent and privacy, she later embraced openness on her own terms. She stands as a powerful example of authenticity and visibility.

Michael Cashman

Lord Michael Cashman, CBE, is a British actor, politician, and LGBTQ+ activist. He made history in *EastEnders* with one of the UK's first same-sex kisses and co-founded Stonewall in 1989. As an MEP, he campaigned for equality across Europe and remains a key figure in LGBTQ+ rights and representation.

Gilbert Baker

Gilbert Baker was an American artist and LGBTQ+ activist who created the rainbow Pride flag. Active in San Francisco's gay rights movement, he designed the first flag in 1978, with each colour holding meaning. His work became a global symbol of LGBTQ+ visibility, unity, and pride.

Chaz Bono

Chaz Bono is an American writer, actor, and LGBTQ+ advocate known for his visibility as a transgender man. He documented his transition in *Becoming Chaz*, helping raise awareness of trans experiences. Through media and advocacy, he promotes trans rights and representation.

Marsha P. Johnson

Marsha P. Johnson was a Black LGBTQ+ activist, drag performer, and key figure in queer rights. Present at the 1969 Stonewall uprising, she co-founded STAR, supporting homeless queer and trans youth. A transgender woman and community leader, she championed trans rights and care, and remains a symbol of courage and liberation.

Liz Carr

Liz Carr is a British actress, comedian, and disability rights activist who is openly lesbian. A wheelchair user since childhood, she uses humour to challenge stereotypes. Known for *Silent Witness*, she has helped bring disabled and LGBTQ+ representation to mainstream TV. Her work champions visibility, equality, and inclusion.

Frida Kahlo

Frida Kahlo was a Mexican painter and LGBTQ+ figure known for exploring identity, gender, and sexuality. Born in 1907, she channelled illness and injury into striking self-portraits. She defied norms, embraced her bisexuality, and had relationships across genders. Today, she is celebrated as a feminist and LGBTQ+ icon of authenticity.



Justin Fashanu

Justin Fashanu was a pioneering Black British footballer and the first professional male player to come out as gay. After being outed in 1990, he faced intense homophobia that impacted his career. He died by suicide in 1998. His courage remains historic, highlighting the challenges LGBTQ+ athletes face in professional sport.

Emperor Hadrian

Emperor Hadrian, builder of the famous wall, was a Roman ruler known for his relationship with Antinous, a young Greek man. After Antinous's death, he deified him and founded the city of Antinopolis in his honour. His story endures as a rare example of same-sex love in ancient history.

James Baldwin

James Baldwin was a gay Black writer and civil rights activist whose work explored race, sexuality, and identity. His novels, including *Giovanni's Room*, portrayed same-sex love with depth and empathy. Baldwin's writing challenged injustice and remains influential in LGBTQ+ and equality movements.

Freddie Mercury

Freddie Mercury, Queen's iconic frontman, was a bisexual artist known for his powerful voice and bold stage presence. His identity shaped his artistry during a time of widespread homophobia. His death from AIDS-related illness in 1991 raised global awareness and helped challenge stigma.

Tom of Finland

Tom of Finland (Touko Laaksonen) was an influential artist whose erotic drawings celebrated gay male desire. His work challenged stereotypes by portraying confident, hypermasculine men. Created during criminalisation, his art became a symbol of pride, shaping modern gay identity and LGBTQ+ visual culture.

Lily Savage

Lily Savage, the drag persona of Paul O'Grady, was a major force in British entertainment and LGBTQ+ visibility. Rising from 1980s gay clubs, her sharp humour challenged stereotypes. Through TV and activism, O'Grady championed LGBTQ+ rights and HIV/AIDS awareness, leaving a lasting queer cultural legacy.



Queen Anne

Queen Anne ruled Great Britain from 1702 to 1714. She formed close, possibly romantic bonds with women, including Sarah Churchill and Abigail Masham. While unconfirmed, these relationships highlight the hidden lives of LGBTQ+ people in early Britain, making Anne significant in both political and queer history.

Alla Nazimova

Alla Nazimova was a Russian-born actress and filmmaker who lived openly within LGBTQ+ circles in early Hollywood. She hosted a community of queer artists and had relationships with women. Her film *Salomé* and her influence made her a key figure in both cinema and LGBTQ+ history.

Florence Nightingale

Florence Nightingale, founder of modern nursing, formed deep emotional bonds with women and rejected marriage. While not confirmed as LGBTQ+, her relationships have led some historians to explore possible queer identity. Her life highlights how same-sex connections were expressed privately in her era.

Sappho

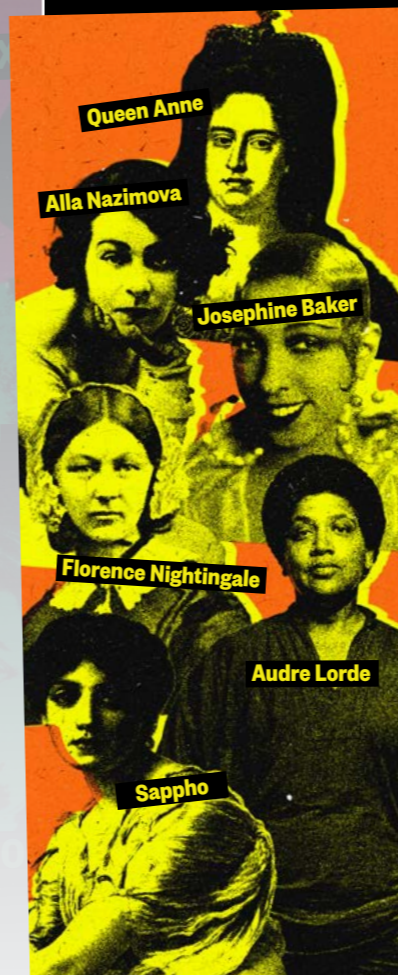
Sappho was an ancient Greek poet whose work expressed love and desire between women. Though only fragments survive, her writing shaped language, giving rise to "lesbian" and "sapphic." She remains a lasting symbol of LGBTQ+ expression, showing that same-sex love has always inspired art.

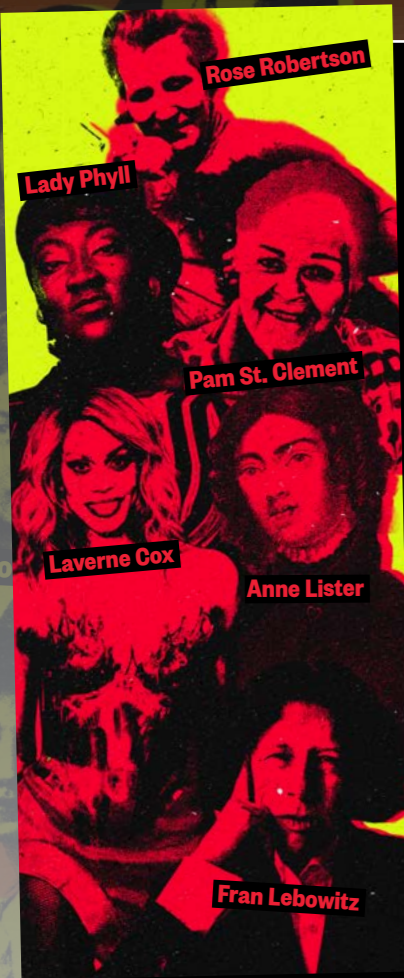
Josephine Baker

Josephine Baker was an American-born French performer, activist, and LGBTQ+ figure. She had relationships with men and women and lived openly for her time. A star in Paris, she also worked for the French Resistance and supported civil rights, symbolising queer resilience and freedom.

Audre Lorde

Audre Lorde was a Black lesbian poet and activist who explored race, gender, and sexuality. Open about her identity, she challenged injustice through works like *Sister Outsider*. Lorde empowered marginalised voices and remains a vital figure in LGBTQ+ and feminist movements.





Rose Robertson

Rose Robertson was a British LGBTQ+ activist who founded the Beaumont Society in 1966, supporting transgender people. At a time of stigma, she offered advice, community, and advocacy. Her work helped challenge discrimination and laid foundations for transgender visibility and LGBTQ+ equality in the UK.

Lady Phyll

Lady Phyll is a British lesbian activist and co-founder of UK Black Pride, Europe's largest celebration of Black LGBTQ+ people. Her work centres on intersectionality, challenging racism and homophobia. As a global advocate, she promotes equality, visibility, and safe spaces for queer people of colour.

Laverne Cox

Laverne Cox is an American actress and transgender advocate known for Orange Is the New Black. The first openly trans Emmy-nominated actor, she has advanced trans representation in media. Through activism and projects like Disclosure, she highlights inequality and champions visibility for transgender people, especially trans women of colour.

Pam St. Clement

Pam St. Clement is a British actress known for EastEnders. In her memoir, she shared she is bisexual, discussing relationships with men and women. An early Stonewall trustee, she supported LGBTQ+ equality and helped challenge stigma, showing the importance of queer visibility across generations.

Anne Lister

Anne Lister was a 19th-century English landowner and diarist, often called "the first modern lesbian." She recorded her relationships with women in coded diaries. In 1834, she exchanged vows with Ann Walker, one of Britain's earliest same-sex unions. Her life remains a powerful symbol of lesbian visibility.

Fran Lebowitz

Fran Lebowitz is an American writer and openly lesbian cultural critic known for sharp wit and commentary. Rising in 1970s New York, she became a prominent LGBTQ+ figure through authenticity rather than activism. Her voice and presence in queer creative circles continue to influence culture and conversation.

Sally Miller Gearhart

Sally Miller Gearhart was an American lesbian activist, writer, and educator. One of the first openly lesbian professors, she helped defeat the Briggs Initiative alongside Harvey Milk. Her work in feminism, education, and activism shaped LGBTQ+ rights and continues to influence communities and scholarship.

Laxmi Narayan Tripathi

Laxmi Narayan Tripathi is an Indian transgender activist and dancer advocating for LGBTQ+ rights. She represented Asia Pacific trans communities at the UN and helped influence India's 2014 recognition of a third gender. Through her work, she promotes dignity, visibility, and support for transgender people.

Nicola Adams

Nicola Adams is a British boxer and openly lesbian Olympic gold medallist. She made history in 2012 and 2016, challenging gender stereotypes and homophobia in sport. As a visible LGBTQ+ role model, she continues to promote equality, representation, and inclusion through advocacy and media work.

Li Tingting

Li Tingting is a Chinese feminist and openly lesbian LGBTQ+ activist. As part of the "Feminist Five," she was detained in 2015 for campaigning against harassment. Despite restrictions, she continues to challenge stigma and advocate for gender equality and LGBTQ+ rights in China.

Lisa Power

Lisa Power is a pioneering LGBTQ+ activist and co-founder of Stonewall. Active since the 1970s, she worked in HIV/AIDS advocacy and community support. She was the first openly LGBTQ+ person to speak at the UN on gay rights, focusing on equality, visibility, and amplifying marginalised voices.

Ruth Ellis

Ruth Ellis was an African American lesbian activist who created safe spaces for Black LGBTQ+ people in mid-20th-century Detroit. Openly gay from a young age, she later advocated for queer youth. Her legacy lives on through the Ruth Ellis Center, supporting LGBTQ+ young people.



Alan Turing

Alan Turing was a brilliant codebreaker whose work helped defeat Nazi Germany and shaped modern computing. Despite this, he was persecuted for being gay, convicted in 1952, and subjected to chemical castration. His legacy lives on through the "Alan Turing Law" and as an LGBTQ+ icon.

Joe Orton

Joe Orton was an openly gay British playwright whose dark comedies challenged social taboos. His works, including Loot, used sharp wit to expose hypocrisy. In 1967, he was murdered by his partner Kenneth Halliwell. Orton's bold, queer voice reshaped theatre and continues to inspire LGBTQ+ artists.

Regina Fong

Regina Fong, created by Richard DeDominici, was a key figure in British drag and LGBTQ+ cabaret. Performing in 1980s–90s London, she brought humour and audience interaction to venues like the Royal Vauxhall Tavern. Her work created joyful queer spaces and helped shape modern British drag culture.

Mark Bingham

Mark Bingham was an openly gay rugby player who became a hero on September 11, 2001. Aboard Flight 93, he helped stop hijackers, saving lives. His legacy continues through the Bingham Cup, celebrating LGBTQ+ inclusion, teamwork, and pride in sport.

Alan L. Hart

Alan L. Hart was one of the first transgender men in the United States and a pioneering doctor. Transitioning in 1917, he advanced tuberculosis detection using X-rays. Despite discrimination, he lived openly as a man. His life represents transgender resilience and lasting contributions to science.

Jan Yeong-Jin

Jang Yeong-jin is the only openly gay North Korean defector. After fleeing to South Korea, he began sharing his story to highlight hidden LGBTQ+ lives under repression. His memoir challenges silence and promotes visibility, dignity, and human rights for LGBTQ+ people worldwide.



The Vivienne

The Vivienne, born James Lee Williams, was a Welsh drag performer and winner of RuPaul's Drag Race UK (2019). Known for sharp comedy and polished drag, she championed LGBTQ+ visibility. Her death in 2025 shocked fans, but her legacy endures through her creativity and impact on queer culture.

Alexander The Great

Alexander the Great was a Macedonian ruler whose empire spanned three continents. Ancient sources describe his deep bond with Hephaestion, often seen as romantic. Though modern labels didn't exist, his story highlights same-sex relationships in history, making him significant in LGBTQ+ discussions.

Leigh Bowery

Leigh Bowery was a performance artist and fashion icon known for bold, gender-bending expression. A key figure in London's queer club scene, he challenged norms around identity and beauty. Living openly during the AIDS crisis, his work continues to influence drag, fashion, and LGBTQ+ art.

Elliot Page

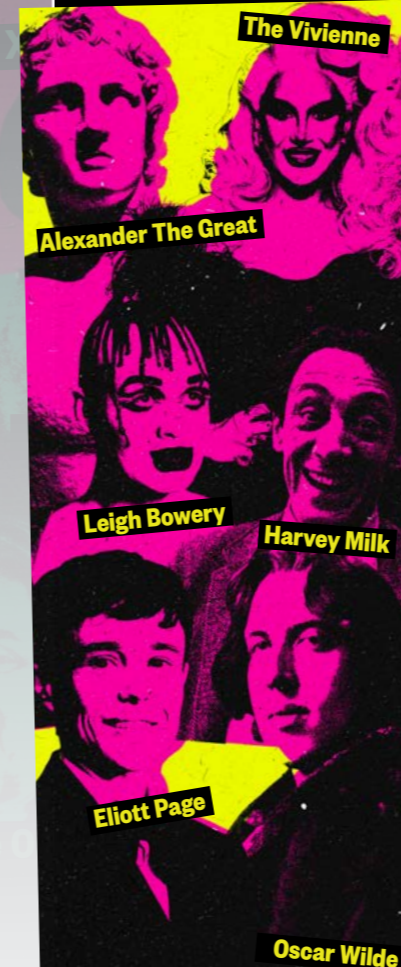
Elliot Page is a Canadian actor and transgender advocate known for Juno and The Umbrella Academy. Coming out as trans in 2020, he became a leading voice for LGBTQ+ visibility. His openness has supported others and continues to promote acceptance, representation, and self-authenticity.

Harvey Milk

Harvey Milk was one of the first openly gay elected officials in the US, serving in San Francisco. He championed LGBTQ+ rights and visibility. In 1978, he was assassinated by former supervisor Dan White. His legacy continues to inspire movements for equality and representation.

Oscar Wilde

Oscar Wilde was an Irish writer known for his wit and works like The Importance of Being Earnest. Openly involved with men, he was convicted of "gross indecency" in 1895 and imprisoned. His story remains a powerful symbol of LGBTQ+ persecution, resilience, and cultural legacy.





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By signing the Newcastle-Gateshead Declaration, you or your organisation makes a clear, public commitment to equality, dignity, and safety for LGBTQ+ people at a time when these rights cannot be taken for granted.

Adding your name demonstrates leadership, values-driven action, and solidarity with those whose rights and lives are too often contested.

Join a growing coalition of over 200+ individuals or organisations choosing to lead with courage, compassion, and accountability. Scan the QR Code to sign the ongoing and live Declaration, below.



UK Alliance
for Global
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The Newcastle-Gateshead Declaration was developed by the UK Alliance for Global Equality (UKAGE), an alliance of over 14 U.K.-based LGBTQI+ organisations to counteract the global rollback of LGBTQI+ human rights. It was launched in October 2025 in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, U.K.

SCAN ME



NEWCASTLE-GATESHEAD
DECLARATION

**THE TRANS COMMUNITY
PLAYED A CRUCIAL ROLE
IN STANDING UP AGAINST
HOMOPHOBIA AT THE
STONEWALL RIOTS**

**THEY FOUGHT FOR
*OUR RIGHTS***

**IT'S NOW TIME WE
FIGHT FOR THEIRS**



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GET INVOLVED.

SUPPORT OUT NORTH EAST.

We hope you've enjoyed learning more about OUT North East, our Summer of Pride festival and the work we deliver across our communities.

As a charity, we rely on people who believe in connection, equality and care. Your involvement helps us continue providing vital projects, events, advice and advocacy for LGBTQIA+ communities across the North East.

There are many ways to get involved. You could donate, share your skills or professional expertise, support fundraising, or volunteer your time. However you choose to contribute, you'll help us reach more people, reduce isolation, and create safer, more inclusive spaces where communities can thrive.

SPREAD THE WORD

Help People Find Us

There are many people across the North East — it might be you or someone you know — who would benefit from our support, whether that means visiting us or simply knowing there's a safe space to be themselves and feel part of a community.

By sharing our name and website, you can help more people discover OUT North East and access the support they may need. Sometimes, simply knowing you're not alone can make all the difference.

Be part of something bigger. By supporting OUT North East, you're helping to drive lasting, positive change.

VOLUNTEER

Give Your Time. Build Community.

Volunteers are at the heart of OUT North East and the ONE Centre, helping create welcoming, supportive spaces for LGBTQIA+ communities. From coffee mornings and daily centre activity to events or specialist skills, your time makes a real difference.

Volunteering is a chance to connect, give back and be part of a caring community. Whatever you can offer, we'd love to hear from you.

FUNDRAISE

Make It Happen for OUT North East

As a charity, we rely on your support to continue our work across the North East. Host a bake sale, run the Great North Run, take on a challenge, or choose us as your charity — there are plenty of ways to get involved.

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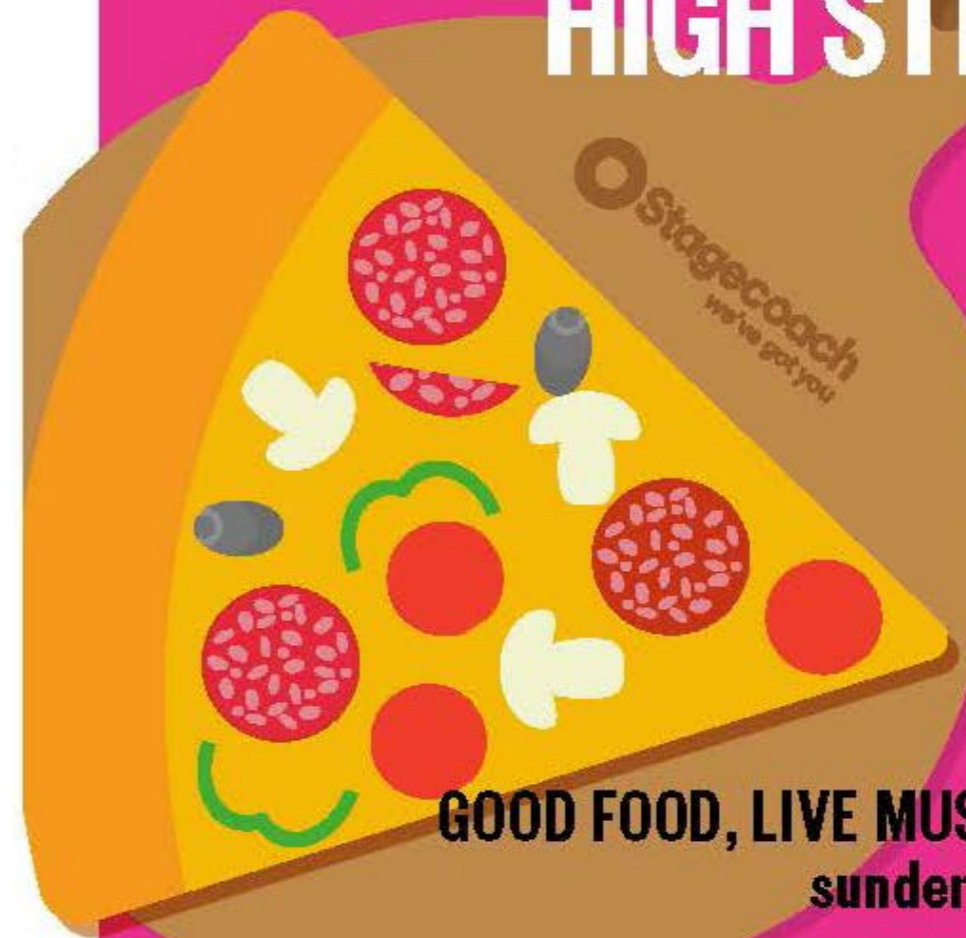


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