

Vocal

VCSE forums facilitated by
Salford CVS

**VOCAL Equalities, Diversity
& Inclusion Forum**



Date: Monday 5th June 2023

Time: 10.00am – 12.00pm

Venue: Pendleton Gateway

Number of people registered: 14

Speakers

Lee Bowditch (Salford Pride)
Christopher Owen (Manchester Pride)
Chris Rice (Salford City Council)

Salford CVS staff present

Anne-Marie Marshall (chair)
Helen Johnson (minutes)

The theme for this forum meeting: Pride

Anne-Marie Marshall welcomed everyone and asked the attendees to introduce themselves.

Lee Bowditch shared a presentation on Salford Pride.



Lee has been involved with Pride events for 25 years and was the founder of the GM Pride Network as well as co-chairing UK Pride Organisers Network (UKPON).

The Pink Picnic was launched in 2011 and is Salford Pride's main project, which has grown year on year. The event originally began as a LGBT+ focus group alongside Salix Homes and a need for a grass roots pride for the local community was identified. This would be an event for the whole family and could be attended by children. Lee wanted to create something which wasn't available for him growing up.

The next Pink Picnic will take place on 17th-18th June and Salford Pride are currently

selling 400 tickets a day.

<https://www.pinkpicnic.org.uk/>

Work on the Pink Picnic is done throughout the entire year, but Salford Pride also run other projects including:

- Love & Pride – a project partnered with Salford University
- Big Pink Weekend – a fundraiser at the village in Manchester
- Pride Matters – an online vlog around issues and hot topics
- Pinked – club nights
- Chit Chat – online chatting space which was set up in lockdown
- Digital Pride – just under 50,000 people attended

Salford has the second largest population of LGBT+ in Greater Manchester but there are limited charities and organisations aimed at LGBT+ and a lack of representation of LGBT+ people in Salford. Salford Pride's team is made up of 7 workers, a board of trustees, business associates including Salford City Council and the University of Salford. It became a charity in January 2020.

There are future plans for Salford Pride to sponsor a LGBT+ football team, set up a regular night at Salford's new LGBT+ venues, teaming up with Talk About It Mate trialling an in person peer support group which moves around the city and linking up with the University of Salford to give local people opportunities to gain new skills.

Salford Pride do this work because:

- Homophobic hate crimes more than doubled in five years - (10,003 in 2016-17 to 26,824 in 2021-22)
- Transphobic hate crimes increased by 240% in five years - (1,292 reports in 2016-17 to 4,399 in 2021-22)
- Greater Manchester Police received 2,159 reports in 2021-22, which was a 48% increase compared to the previous year

Organisations can support LGBT+ people by:

- getting involved with local pride events
- collaborate on projects with LGBT+ charities
- promote volunteer opportunities with LGBT+ charities to increase projects
- raise awareness, champion and amplify the LGBT+ voice
- use social media platforms to challenge LGBT+ issues and show allyship
- promote inclusion and equality in the workplace for employees
- become a Stonewall member

<https://salfordpride.org.uk/>

Parvin from Yaran NW said that she has little knowledge and information and wasn't sure where to start to support LGBT+ in Iranian communities. It was suggested that Parvin could link in with LGBT Foundation who offer counselling services.

Issues and Challenges faced by the LGBT+ community

Christopher Owen, Inclusivity Development Manager at Manchester Pride spoke about issues and challenges for the LGBT+ community.



Christopher explained that people need to feel like they're making the world a better place for future generations and that it feels like there's always more that can be done. There is a need to be the hero who saves the day but it is easy to forget that none of the heroes that people look up to work alone, there is always a team of people working alongside them. The world is constantly changing at there are new problems every day. It is a collective endeavour but as an individual you can contribute and work together to work on the issues.

One quarter of Trans people have experienced homelessness and one quarter of them are young people. A majority of LGBT+ have experienced issues in the health care system, people of colour suffer, hate crimes are on the rise, especially within the trans community which has seen the highest spike recorded for any demographic. The UK used to be number one for LGBT rights in Europe, it is now at number seventeen. What can be done about it?

Christopher stated that more needs to be done than just putting up a rainbow flag in June and walking in a parade to complete a tick box exercise. There needs to be real contribution, help with resources, re-educating and supporting the good endeavours out there.

The All Equals Charter is Manchester Pride's programme to help businesses and organisations understand, recognise and challenge any form of discrimination in the workplace. The Charter aims to make the workplace inclusive, diverse and equal for marginalised people.

<https://www.manchesterpride.com/all-equals-charter>

Christopher suggested that the All Equals Charter can be added to organisation and

look at what it's doing along with other organisations, society, culture and relationships with the local community. Linking with the All Equals Charter will help ensure that policies and procedures are inclusive. Organisations can link into their communities by providing funding, having conversations with sectors, industries and local reps within the community. Manchester Pride can support organisations with this work.

Anne-Marie from Salford CVS asked what problems should people be watching out for in the community. Christopher said to pay attention to the government, look for equality and human rights in communities, challenge conversations in communities, start petitions, write to the local MP and look at your organisation to see who they are connected to. Christopher encouraged organisations to go into spaces that the organisation already occupy and create systematic changes. Workers from LGBT Foundation added to challenge anything that is preventing communities from building relationships and identify the part of your identity which is being used against and think about how trans rights are not a threat to your own rights, which is what is being pushed as an issue currently with such things as women's rights. Ensure to be dispelling any myths in your own community, it is important and powerful. Christopher added to look into trade union congress and to promote their guidance to organisation employers and communities and look at the legal threats that trans people are up against.

Issues and challenges faced by LGBT+ young people

Chris Rice from Salford Youth Service, Salford City Council talked about issues and challenges for LGBT+ young people.



Salford Youth Service hosts a lot of projects and work predominately with young people in year 7 at school, but also work with years 5 and 6.

There are 4-5 youth centres across the city, all of which run groups including:

- girls groups
- boys groups
- Friday night youth clubs
- DofE award
- LGBT+ groups

There was originally one LGBT+ group for the whole city but over the last 8 years this has been grown. The Proud Trust attended the service and did an independent audit. On the back of the report, some funding was obtained from Salford CCG to expand. There are now 3 LGBT+ youth group sessions in different localities and on different days in Salford. Since last year, the head of service has secured funded to employ a full time work for this project. The LGBT+ groups are aimed at young people aged 11-17 years for a relaxed and fun session.

Chris explained that youth work is about associating with others and the LGBT+ sessions encourage young people to explore themselves, express their identity, use their preferred pronouns, and wear what they want. Those that attend the group really enjoy it.

Another part of the Youth Service work is to give young people a voice and Salford Youth Service engage with other projects such as the Seldom Heard event where groups talk to city leaders about their issues. Recent issues that have been raised include toilets, access and engagement with PE in school and how PE is still gendered and stereotyped with no middle ground or conversation, including clothing, changing rooms and gendered language.

Salford Youth Service conducted an online questionnaire for their members via Instagram and received 40 responses. This was turned into a PowerPoint presentation and was presented to city leaders. From this meeting, pledges were made and Cathy Starbuck, Assistant Director of Education Children's Services at Salford Council, arranged to speak to all heads of PE. Salford Youth Service are looking to work with the head of PE at Walkden High School and Ambrose Barlow to make changes, hoping that these changes will encourage positive changes in other schools and beyond. Chris has also approached Salford Community Leisure about the issues and together have created the idea of running trans only swimming sessions. This pilot for young people will be launched next month, where the space will be inclusive and booked out for only that group with no spectators, attendees can wear what they want, use non-gendered changing rooms and the lifeguards and staff have been fully trained. If the pilot goes well then the sessions will go live across all 5 pool sites as a permanent event, and Salford Community Leisure have agreed to keep these sessions even if they made a loss.

Salford Youth Service also run a T & Toast session which is a monthly trans youth group which is run by trans staff in a space only for trans/nonbinary young people. The group provides a safe space for discussions on trans specific topics, with voice

therapy and a psychologist in attendance. At the same time, a parent session is run to support parents and carers of trans and nonbinary young people, providing a supportive space to discuss any questions or concerns with each other.

Parvin from Yaran NW asked what can be done to comfortably mix these groups of young people and not keep people in boxes with labels. Chris explained that alongside the individual groups, there are group sessions across the city which will mix the groups together. It's important that young people find a space where they feel comfortable and build relationships with those that lead the groups. The LGBT+ and trans groups are smaller groups where confidence and esteem can be built up and then they feel comfortable enough to attend the larger groups. The groups provide pathways to other projects such as the Youth Council, which is a voice led project for making change.

Anne-Marie from Salford CVS asked how services for LGBT+ people are aligned for crossing over. Chris said that young people can go to whichever group that they want to. Youth Service work is broad and there is an LGBT+ group in every locality. The project worker who attends a LGBT+ group will also work on other projects. Workers are pigeon holed into one group, they work across the different sessions.

Bev from Langworthy Cornerstone said that she is interested in developing services and projects and that Langworthy Cornerstone has rooms and spaces to use. The Community around Langworthy has changed and Bev is keen to bring access to diverse services. There currently isn't a LGBT+ service at the venue. Bev is keen to reflect the community, there is a large Nigerian demographic in the area and Bev wants to tackle the challenges in the communities. Bev stated that Langworthy is historically a white and homophobic community and she wants to change this. She asked for resources on LGBT+ groups. Chris suggested displaying information in the centre, to mark and celebrate events and make the space more accessible for different groups.



Breakout session

The attendees were split into groups and were asked to discuss:

What can we do as VCSE organisations to better support LGBTQ communities in Salford?

Group 1

- Working together, partnerships, shared knowledge
- It's okay not to have the answers or info, it shows you want to improve
- Resources
- Spaces/accessibility
- Staff training
- Visibility
- Collecting data, how to ask questions, know demographic
- Terminology
- Systems
- Where possible hire staff with greater representation
- Policy – template trans policy for schools, for specific things
- Events training

Group 2

- Building networks, collations, make it goal orientated so you have some action, networking just means talking about it rather than doing
- Different groups have different access to different resources, figure out who can offer what
- Conversations around safety and wellbeing for community members
- Making sure that marginalised voices have support
- Listening to need, rather than assuming need

Summing up and next steps

Anne-Marie summed up the session and looked at next steps. She mentioned that a starting point for her was to look at your own organisation and to look internally by doing your own housekeeping first by looking at policies, staffing etc. We cannot be advocates of change if we are not already doing the right thing within our own organisations. There should be no double standards.

Any other business

Parvin from Yaran NW shared that they will have a base in Salford from 16th June which will be at Broughton Hub. They will be offering in person one to one therapy for people in their own languages.