



**FESTIVAL
2023**

**GAY
VILLAGE
PARTY**

ACCESSIBILITY POLICY

INTRODUCTION

In 2022, Manchester Pride published our Pride In Our Future report. This included a commitment that the main party element of our Pride celebrations will be focused around the Gay Village Party. Part of that commitment has been for us to address the accessibility concerns relating to the Festival, therefore we have been working with stakeholders to co-design a new Accessibility Policy for the Gay Village Party.

The Accessibility Policy has been created in collaboration with key stakeholders such as members of the LGBTQ+ community who participated in focus groups. Quiplash, who are a disabled and queer-led disability consultancy group, are going to help us find creative solutions to execute what is outlined in the Accessibility Policy.

Promoting an accessible event is not just the responsibility of Manchester Pride, but the responsibility and duty of all stakeholders and partners we work alongside to create the Festival.

WHAT ARE THE REASONS FOR THE ACCESSIBILITY POLICY

- **Accessibility was a key theme from the Pride in our Future report:** We are committed to delivering what our communities have asked of us and so reassessing the accessibility provision of Manchester Pride events was indicated as a priority in our Pride In Our Future report.
- **We have a responsibility to make Manchester Pride events as accessible as we can:** It is our duty to provide the community with celebrations that are as accessible as possible. This starts with implementing new measures that improve the experience of community members who have accessibility requirements.
- **There is always room for improvement in regards to accessibility:** Manchester Pride's accessibility strategy is ever evolving, we want to show our commitment to continuous improvement by adapting the Accessibility Policy as required.
- **We want to co-design and consult:** Our communities have outlined that they want a say in how we operate so we have created a range of opportunities for collaboration. We have spent the last few months co-designing this new policy with key stakeholders and members from the communities we serve.

WHAT ARE THE OBJECTIVES OF THIS ACCESSIBILITY POLICY?

- Contribute to our endeavours to support all LGBTQ+ people, and improve the lives of a wider variety of LGBTQ+ people in Greater Manchester.
- Strengthen our relationships with the local LGBTQ+ community, especially disabled and neurodivergent LGBTQ+ people.
- Use our platform to encourage better accessibility and inclusion.
- Diversify offers of support to external organisations and community groups.

WHAT ARE THE KEY PILLARS OF THE ACCESSIBILITY POLICY?

- **Internal training:** Manchester Pride staff will take both inclusivity and accessibility/ disability training, and will develop and implement measurable action plans as a result of this training.
- **External communications:** Manchester Pride will meet with a variety of accessibility experts including both those with professional and/or lived experience, to consult on Manchester Pride's event and engagement procedures. Knowledge gained from these consultants will influence a variety of changes to Manchester Pride's policies and procedures.
- **Internal procedures:** Manchester Pride's policies and procedures will be reviewed for their inclusivity and inclusion and will be updated accordingly. Manchester Pride will also develop and implement specific accessibility procedures to ensure all events and venues are as accessible as is reasonably possible.
- **External signposting:** Manchester Pride will create resources for Village businesses and other key stakeholders, signposting them to knowledge, training and services that will support with improving inclusion and accessibility for Greater Manchester's LGBTQ+ community.

MANCHESTER PRIDE'S COMMITMENT TO YOU

- **PA Ticketing Scheme:** We are continuing to refine our PA ticketing scheme to ensure all community members who have accessibility requirements and require a Personal Assistant are able to apply for (a) free Personal Assistant ticket(s) to attend the Manchester Pride Festival.
- **BSL Interpreters:** BSL Interpreters will be on site at all Manchester Pride operated staged areas that require interpreting.
- **Accessibility Viewing Platform:** An Accessibility Viewing Platform (AVP) will be available in our main staged area in Sackville Gardens.
- **Designated Accessibility Manager, Assistant, and Volunteer Team:** A dedicated group of experts and volunteers will be on site to assist any individuals who have accessibility requirements throughout the entirety of the Manchester Pride Festival.
- **Gender neutral accessible toilets:** All toilets in the staged areas of the Manchester Pride Festival are gender neutral, and accessible toilets will be available at the MancUnity Stage, Alan Turing Stage, and Cabaret Stage.
- **Checklist for bars, restaurants, and shops in Manchester's Gay Village:** We have created and distributed an Accessibility Checklist for all establishments in the Gay Village to complete. This self-audit checklist exists to help share levels of accessibility information with members of our community. All information Manchester Pride receives from these establishments will be included in the Accessibility Site Map.
- **Streaming access to the Candlelit Vigil:** Manchester Pride will continue to stream the Candlelit Vigil to ensure members of the community who may not be able to physically attend can still take part in the event.
- **New technologies:** We are exploring new technologies that will improve the experience for attendees. For example, this includes the creation of Braille menus at Manchester Pride operated bars.
- **New infrastructure:** We are exploring new infrastructure options to support members of the community with accessibility requirements, and will also continue using drop curbs where necessary.

MANCHESTER PRIDE STAFF TRAINING AND CONSULTING

This year Manchester Pride is working with Quiplash, the UK's only queer disability consulting group. Together, we will review and critically assess our event plans and structures so the Manchester Pride Festival can be as accessibility-inclusive as reasonably possible.

Topics covered in Quiplash's Disability Awareness Training, which will be attended by all Manchester Pride team members, include (but are not limited to):

- Disability awareness and disability justice
- Blind awareness
- Queer Audio Description
- Integrated and Creative Audio Description
- Working with access providers
- Hosting an event in a blind and VI friendly way
- Accessible marketing and social media (covering language and the social media landscape for access)
- Disability awareness for front of house, customer service workers
- Workshop creating a plan for future access goals/creating an access-first workflow/culture

Quiplash hosted two consultation sessions with the Manchester Pride events team to discuss practical solutions to making the Manchester Pride Festival more accessible.

WHAT HAVE WE BEEN DOING TO CREATE THIS ACCESSIBILITY POLICY?

Co-design with members of the LGBTQ+ community: Our Engagement Team facilitated a series of focus groups, several of which centred around better understanding the needs of members of our community who have access requirements;

- **Co-design with external groups:** We have also been in regular contact and meeting with the Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People's Network, and Quiplash;
- **LGBTQ+ community feedback:** We have been discussing plans with representatives from our communities to ensure that the policy is fit for purpose;
- **Internal research:** Manchester Pride's Inclusivity Development Manager has been regularly reviewing our progress and ensuring the data collected from our focus groups and external stakeholders is relevant and appropriate;
- **External research:** The Manchester Pride events team and Inclusivity Development Manager have also been meeting with external groups such as Para-Pride and the BBC to share ideas and discuss how those organisations are making their events and internal processes more accessible.
- **Assessing the Gay Village site plan:** The Gay Village site changes every year with new venues, residencies, apartment buildings, hotels and bars as well as building works all taking place within the site footprint. We have been working with these businesses and organisations to assist them in improving their accessibility;
- **Previous Festival data analysis:** Manchester Pride has been successfully producing the Gay Village Party for many years and every year we undertake an extensive and significant debrief, and analysis project after the event with a view to improving the event year on year. We have used our years of experience and data taken from this analysis as the basis of the model.

WHAT CAN EVERYONE DO?

It is important that accessibility become a priority for all members of the LGBTQ+ community. We have gathered a list of resources that have helped us shape our Accessibility Policy and would encourage you to read and share them:

[Five things to know about being disabled and LGBTQ+](#)

[Guidance and tools for digital accessibility](#)

[Disability awareness and planning for accessibility](#)

[Accessible events toolkit](#)

[Make Your Event Accessible and Inclusive](#)

[Make your social media accessible](#)

[Accessible Marketing Guide](#)

[Accessibility Resource](#)

If you have any questions, feedback, or suggestions about our Accessibility Policy, please do not hesitate to get in touch. You can reach a member of the Accessibility Team at accessibility@manchesterpride.com

Additionally, if you are a community group who would like any year-round support in making your events or organisation more accessible, please feel free to contact a member of our Accessibility Team at accessibility@manchesterpride.com



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