



Safety and Wellness Policy for Gay Village Party

May 2022

Introduction

Manchester Pride committed to our communities in our Pride in our Future report that we would refocus our efforts back to the Gay Village Party where the roots of the Festival began. Part of that commitment has been for us to address the safety concerns relating to the Gay Village Party and so we have been working with our stakeholders to co-design a new Safety Policy for the Gay Village Party.

In line with our commitment to be more transparent, in April 2022, we released a detailed breakdown of how the cost of a Pledge Band for the Gay Village Party is spent. A fixed donation of £2.50 from every ticket will go directly to the Manchester Pride Community Fund to support LGBTQ+ good causes and projects in Greater Manchester. The remainder of the Pledge Band is spent on covering the costs of putting on the Festival only. Whilst we encourage the purchase of Pledge Bands to support our communities and deliver a safe Gay Village Party, Manchester Pride will honour people's right to access the site and expect everyone to adhere to this safety policy.

The safety of our communities is paramount. We have looked at many different areas and considered the current climate as well as changes to legislation and what we feel are appropriate measures and responses.

The Safety Policy has been created in collaboration with not just the Gay Village venues, but also Manchester City Council, Greater Manchester Police and other responsible authorities and this will form part of the Safety Advisory Group process.

The Safety Advisory Group comprises representatives across all of the responsible authorities and they have oversight across all major events that are held in the city. There is a significant level of collaboration and scrutiny of all of our planning and we have worked successfully with this group for many years as we plan the Manchester Pride Festival over many months.

Promoting a safe event is not just the responsibility of Manchester Pride but it is the responsibility and duty of all stakeholders and partners who we work alongside to create the Festival.

We also acknowledge that this new policy does not just address the physical safety of our communities but also looks to support psychological safety so people can feel free to be their authentic selves.

What are the reasons for a new Safety Policy?

- **Safety 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 safety of the Gay Village Party was indicated as a priority in our Pride in our Future consultation.
- **The safety model was created in 2003 and needs updating:** The current model that we use was formulated to create a safe environment for EuroPride 2003. After 20 years, this model needs to be reviewed with today's safety considerations in mind.
- **Safety stakeholders agree that we need to look at a new safety policy:** Whilst we have kept people safe for 20 years with the previous model, it is not only our communities that have asked us to take a look at the model. Manchester Pride and all of our safety stakeholders identified the need to address the safety model.
- **We want to co-design and consult:** Our communities have outlined that they want a say in how we operate and we committed to this in our Pride in our Future report. We have spent the last few months co-designing this new policy with representatives from the communities we serve.

What have we been doing to create this new Safety Policy?

- **Co-design with Gay Village venues:** We have been regularly meeting with the Gay Village venues as we have been developing this to ensure they are invested in the policy and understand their role within it. We are still working through some of the more operational elements of how the policy will be delivered on the ground but we are working closely with the Gay Village venues every step of the way;
- **Co-design with responsible authorities:** We have been in regular contact and meeting with representatives from Manchester City Council including those from the Events Unit, Licensing and Highways to ensure that all departments are fully involved in the process and they have been giving feedback along the way;
- **Consult with Gay Village residents:** Residents who live and work in the Gay Village as well as anyone who may be impacted have been consulted and given the chance to feedback via Zoom sessions and in-person drop-in sessions;
- **LGBTQ+ community feedback:** We have been discussing plans with representatives from our communities to ensure that the policy is fit for purpose;
- **Expert legal advice:** Whilst we have gotten to grips with how we want to achieve our new Safety Policy, there are some legal considerations that must be taken into account and so we have also been guided by our solicitors to ensure that our policy is in line with current legislation;
- **Expert crowd management advice:** The Festival takes place within a busy city centre site and a lot of planning goes into ensuring the crowds are moving around the site safely. We are taking specialist advice from leading crowd science experts to formulate the crowd management plans;
- **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 modelled the event site and taken all these factors into consideration when formatting the new plan.
- **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.
- **Up-to-date legislation and industry insight:** Some of the team that work on the event are industry leaders in their field and so we should not underestimate the level of expertise and knowledge that is held internally. In addition to this, the team are abreast of new legislation, new industry trends and up to date guidance from sources such as the Events Industry's The Purple Guide.

What are the external considerations for the new Safety Policy?

- **Protect Duty (Martyn's Law):** Protect Duty is an incoming piece of legislation which will set out standards to protect the general public from terrorist attacks when in crowded spaces. It will apply to all publicly accessible locations. For example, pubs, shopping centres, music venues, parks, places of worship and (importantly for the Gay Village Party) any other place where gatherings of people occur. The legislation evolved from a campaign by Figen Murray, the mother of Martyn Hett – one of the 22 victims of the 2017 Manchester Arena bombings and proud member of Manchester's LGBTQ+ community – who has since been lobbying for stronger security measures at venues and events to keep the public safe. Whilst Protect Duty is not currently in law, Manchester City Council and Greater Manchester Police are pleased to see that Manchester Pride are taking an early adopter approach to this legislation as we want to create an industry-leading safety policy.
- **Crowd management:** Manchester's world famous Gay Village has changed a lot over the last 20 years and there are many new venues and bars that are involved in creating an incredible celebration over August Bank Holiday Weekend. In addition to the venues operated by Manchester Pride (Alan Turing Stage, MancUnity Stage, Cabaret Stage, Marketplace), the existing Gay Village venues host their own events and activities including stages, bars and performances outside their venues on the streets and this adds to the amazing atmosphere of the festival. However, when it comes to crowd management, we must consider how this affects people moving around the site and so we have considered temporary measures that we can use if required to ensure safe capacities in areas.
- **Entry protocols:** We hope that everyone wants to come and enjoy everything that the Festival has to offer which includes access to all the staged areas and all the venues. However, we're aware that some people wish to get from A to B and that may mean that they need to move through the Gay Village site. Whilst we do not wish to impede anyone, we would encourage all visitors to the Gay Village to follow our safety policy which includes adhering to our entry protocol on entry to the site. This protocol is supported by all our stakeholders with a view to keeping everyone at the event safe.
- **Creating a more welcoming environment:** The research showed mixed views in relation to the Gay Village being gated during the Festival and we hear that our communities do not want to feel like they are hiding away. LGBTQ+ people wish to feel more visible and the large fencing around the Gay Village is a barrier to that, both physically and psychologically. Therefore, we are addressing these physical barriers and changing the look and feel of the entrance to the event. This change will not be done in isolation but safety will be achieved with all the other elements discussed in the Safety Policy too which will add to a much more welcoming environment to the Gay Village Party.

What are the key pillars of the new Safety Policy?

- **Introduction of a 'Community Safety Task Force':** We must all understand that safety is not just a consideration for Manchester Pride but all our communities should be invested in the wellbeing of everyone. So we wanted to give our community members the ability to inform and action the safety policy. We have been working with representatives from our communities to create an official Community Safety Taskforce that will feed into this policy, from planning to delivery on the ground. The Task Force will meet regularly in the lead up to the Festival and input into how we deliver a safe event. More details on the task force will be outlined below but we want to build this initiative with the community themselves so the specific actions will be outlined as we empower the task force itself with what this looks like.
- **Improving Communications:** Manchester Pride have committed to working closer with the Gay Village venues to establish this new policy and we will maintain an open channel of communication throughout the planning process and across the Festival. The Gay Village venues are one of the biggest stakeholders in the event and they are also committed to sharing plans and actions to feed into the larger planning process. Protect Duty (Martyn's Law) outlines a duty for all stakeholders of an event to work together to a shared common goal and we are committed to this wholly. This improved line of communication will extend to the event itself where we will improve communications between Manchester Pride management team and Gay Village venue management team so that any issues can be dealt with swiftly and effectively and we are not working in isolation.
- **Changing the 'Welcome' at the Gates:** Respondents to our Pride in our Future consultation tasked us to make our communities more visible and create a safer, less daunting and imposing welcome to the Gay Village Party. Therefore we are changing the imposing steelshield fencing which surrounds the site to lower level fencing and barriers. Our Community Safety Task Force including the LGBT Foundation's Village Angels will be on hand to welcome people as they arrive at the event. The stewards will remain at the gates to ensure safety is still paramount and we will encourage all visitors to submit to a bag search on entry. We will be doing everything we can to protect our visitors and now under our duties of Protect Duty, bag searches on the gates are a key component to this. With the removal of the large fences, lower level barriers and entry lanes will be implemented to ensure that people will still be able to enter the event swiftly.
- **Improving safety on the streets:** There are areas within the Gay Village Party that we have identified as needing more attention when it comes to crowd management and safety. These areas are the streets that connect our staged arenas, bars and venues, which host our world famous street parties. We want our customers to feel as comfortable as possible and to be safe when enjoying the street parties and so we will be introducing the ability to implement these three controls.
 1. Stopping access to areas in the event of an emergency.
 2. Temporarily restricting access to relieve overcrowding.
 3. Searching large bags and items.

What this may look like is a gate or barrier across a street and a steward directing you to a different route. We will not want to hold anyone for any longer than we have to so we ask for your patience if you're asked to take an alternative route. Whilst an area may not look immediately busy to you, there may be another area across the site that needs addressing which has a knock-on effect and we always have the wider site management in mind. We will reopen areas as soon as we are safely able to do so.

Community Safety Task Force

The Community Safety Task Force will play a key role in delivering the new Safety Policy.

What will the Community Safety Task Force do?

1. Welcome customers to the Gay Village Party by being at the entrances to the event;
2. Signposting and wayfinding for visitors who arrive at the end and distributing information;
3. Offer welfare and advice to support to visitors and directing them to our Welfare or First Aiders if required;
4. Provide on-the-ground community feedback to the event management team during the event;
5. Attend Multi-agency planning meetings in the lead up to the Festival to feed into the Safety Policy and operations; and
6. Promote a sense of well-being and psychological safety by having community members be a part of the planning and delivery of the Safety Policy.

Who will be on the Community Safety Task Force?

We will be curating the membership of the Task Force with the community themselves and whilst we will be inviting some members to be part of it, we will also be taking feedback from the group as we develop it so that new members may join if we feel they could add value to the group.

The Community Safety Task Force membership will include:

- **Manchester Pride**
- **LGBT Foundation**
- **Village Angels**
- **St John Ambulance**
- **MANchester DRug Analysis & Knowledge Exchange (MANDRAKE)**
- **Gay Village Business Association Representative**
- **Stewarding and Security Contractor - Security Manager**
- **Stewarding and Security Contractor - Gates Supervisor**
- **Other community member representatives**

What can you do?

Safety should be everyone's responsibility. We've outlined some tips to help you keep safe and keep others safe.

- **Remember COVID-19 is still a risk:** Whilst the threat of COVID-19 is now less impactful, we ask people to treat others with respect as people make their own choices and we return to normal life. Our events will be very busy so please consider this if you are anxious in crowded spaces. If you would like to wear a mask anywhere at our events, then please do so. Bring hand sanitizer and wash your hands as often as you can. If you are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 or feeling sick, please stay home to keep others safe.
- **Party responsibly:** If you're drinking and partying all day or over many days, consider your limits regarding alcohol and drug use. Make sure to stay hydrated and drink plenty of water. Don't drive if you have been drinking or taking drugs. If you feel unwell, let event staff know or head to see the medics or welfare tent.
- **Practise safe sex:** If you have any questions relating to safer sex, please speak to our friends at LGBT Foundation.
- **Get consent:** Consent is an agreement to engage in activity. Consent should be clearly and freely communicated. A verbal and affirmative expression of consent must be given. Consent cannot be given by individuals who are underage, intoxicated or incapacitated by drugs or alcohol, or asleep or unconscious.
- **Take breaks:** Take breaks from the sun. Take breaks from loud music. Take breaks from crowded areas. Give yourself a few moments of calm every so often. Also don't forget to wear sunscreen if you're staying in the sun for long periods.
- **Report threats:** Notify event staff or stewards if you feel under threat, witness discrimination, witness violence or have been victim of violence or a hate crime or if you see something suspicious such as an unattended bag. If you are in a dangerous situation and need immediate help then you should call 999. If you can, remove yourself from situations where you feel unsafe.
- **Buddy up:** Get a 'Pride Buddy' and do not leave your buddy on their own and agree to plans and expectations beforehand about what your day will look like to avoid any issues later on.
- **Stay in contact:** Let someone know your plans for the day and let them know if your plans change. Keep your phone charged and bring extra battery packs.
- **Agree a Meeting Spot:** Make sure everyone knows where the meeting spot is in case one of you gets separated from the group.

What else are we doing?

We believe that safety and wellness does not just happen at the event but it is weaved into everything that we do and embedded in the culture of our charity.

- **Staff Wellbeing:** Wellness at Manchester Pride starts with the welfare of our staff team. We have a culture that promotes wellbeing with initiatives such as 'thriving riders', flexible working policy, regular colleague check-ins and a staff wellbeing officer.
- **ACT Training:** Manchester Pride's Events Team have all completed Action Counters Terrorism Awareness training devised by Counter Terrorism officers and security experts.
- **Safety Advisory Group:** Manchester Pride consults regularly with the responsible authorities and multi agencies during the planning stages through the Safety Advisory Group process. Membership of the Safety Advisory Group includes Greater Manchester Police, Northwest Ambulance Service, Greater Manchester Fire & Rescue Service and Manchester City Council as well as appointed contractors for medical, stewarding and health and safety.
- **World's leading expert advice:** Professor Dr. GK Still is the world's leading expert in crowd science. Professor Still will act as an advisor and scrutinise the crowd management plans for our events. In addition, Manchester Pride's Operations Director has completed Level 5 accredited Crowd Science qualification to give further insight into crowd management.
- **Back of House Substance Testing:** Manchester Pride has been working with MANchester DRug Analysis & Knowledge Exchange (MANDRAKE) in the background for many years. Drugs and substances that have been submitted into amnesty bins at event entrances or confiscated by our security staff are tested by MANDRAKE for potency. If a potentially extremely harmful substance is found, we will put out a warning on our social media channels which will be amplified by our partner channels.



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