



# **LGBT+ Inclusive Leeds 2024-2029**

# 1. Forward by Cllr. Hannah Bithell Leeds City Council LGBT+ Champion

I am the LGBT+ member champion for Leeds City Council. My role is to champion the needs and rights of the entire LGBT+ community in all the work the council does.

I am really pleased that the LGBT+ Inclusive plan is being refreshed for the next five years. The original LGBT+ Inclusive Leeds was a valuable tool to capture the breadth of work taking place across the city to support the LGBT+ community. Reflecting back on the progress a significant amount of work has taken place over the last five years to support the LGBT+ community by Council directorates in their service delivery, by our partners in statutory organisations and by third sector partners. This document reflects on some of those successful pieces of work and initiatives.

There is still so much work to be done of course for LGBT+ rights across Leeds. Right now, parts of our community are under attack and it is imperative that any champion in our community busies themselves advocating for and amplifying the voices of our trans community, I am always willing to stand up and do this.

I am grateful for all the contributions to this refreshed LGBT+ Inclusive Leeds. The plan sets out how we can make Leeds more LGBT+ Inclusive by outlining current work and planned actions over the next five years as well as the gaps in support and how these will be addressed.

For me, being part of the LGBT+ community is a gift, it gives you community, love and friendship and I am grateful to be surrounded by so many wonderful people. I am so pleased to be able to do this work and am hopeful for our future, if you think there is something that the Council should be working on in addition to the contents of this plan or if there anything specific that you need as a member of the LGBT+ community, please get in touch via [leedslgbt@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:leedslgbt@leeds.gov.uk).

## Introduction

### **2018-2023 LGBT+ Inclusive Leeds**

In 2018 the LGBT+ Inclusive Leeds plan set out the work at the time by Leeds City Council and partners to make Leeds an LGBT+ Inclusive City. It also identified support to the LGBT+ Hub in developing and maintaining a forward work programme. The progress made on the actions outlined in the 2018-2023 report is summarised in this refreshed LGBT+ Inclusive Leeds.

### **Government LGBT Action Plan**

In July 2018 the Government launched the National LGBT Action plan to advance the rights of LGBT people both at home and abroad, and improve the way that public services work for them. Their vision is for everyone, regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity or sex characteristics, to be able to live safe, happy and healthy lives where they can be themselves without fear of discrimination. The Action plan hasn't been reviewed annually by government as originally envisaged and its status is unclear but it has provided a framework for us to produce this refreshed LGBT+ Inclusive Leeds.

### **2024-2029 LGBT+ Inclusive Leeds**

The 2024-2029 LGBT+ Inclusive Leeds plan includes sections on key areas where the LGBT+ community engage such as Community Safety, Active Leeds, Housing, Adults and Health including some of the challenges, current work and actions for the next five years.

### **LGBT+ Hub**

The Councils LGBT+ Hub is part of the Equality Assembly, made up of Hubs representing each of the equality 'characteristics' protected by the Equality Act 2010. The LGBT+ Hub aims to providing a challenge forum for the LGBT+ community to speak to, hear from and provide feedback to Council services, partners in the statutory and voluntary sectors and the Business sector about how they shape their services, their policies and employment practices. The Hub is supported by the Councils Equality Team. LGBT+ Inclusive Leeds 2024-2029 and consultation of it with the LGBT+ community will enable the Hub to develop a future work programme.

### **LGBT+ Staff Network**

The Equality team and the LGBT+ Hub work closely with Leeds City Council's LGBT+ staff network. The network is a supportive and inclusive group open to all staff. They promote the LGBT+ community within the council, across Leeds and connect with other LGBT+ networks and organisations in the city. They welcome members who identify as LGBT+, representing the spectrum of identities, and our straight allies. The staff network takes action as a collective and support each other, Leeds City Council, and the city as a whole in our ambition to be not only inclusive, but anti-discriminatory. The network represents staff interests and acts as a consultative body, supporting decision making on council policy and procedure.,

## **Resource Challenges**

The council is operating in the context of significant financial challenge currently which means services are seeking ways to work smarter for the LGBT+ community and do more with less people and finance resources over the next five years. Collaboration with partners is essential to ensure that we can continue to move forward in delivering for LGBT+ people.

## **Governance**

The progress on this refreshed LGBT+ inclusive will be reported on annually as part of the Equality Annual Report starting in 2025.

## **Support for International Days and Annual LGBT+ Events**

A key work stream of the Equality team at Leeds City Council is supporting International Days and annual LGBT+ events such as the following:

### **Leeds Pride**

The Council has a longstanding relationship with the organisers of Leeds Pride, one of the largest city centre events which brings over 40,000 people into the city centre as well as millions of pounds of economic benefit to the city. It is also the largest free Pride in the Country with no charges for entry.

The Council provides Leeds Pride with support to assist in the holding of the annual parade through the donated activities of services including Highways, Street Cleansing, City Centre Management, Events Team and Childrens and Family Services. However most of the funding comes from private sector sponsorship, the LGBT+ venues and the LGBT+ community themselves.

In addition, the Council supports the delivery of Leeds Pride via a high level steering group of relevant services and partners such as Highways, City Centre Management and West Yorkshire Police.

The Council take part in Leeds Pride via two open topped buses for LGBT+ staff, allies and partners, by holding a marketplace of stalls of relevant services at the City Museum on the day before the parade and by assisting, via the LGBT+ Hub, with promoting the community grants that the Pride Organisers give out to support the widest possible involvement in Pride across the diversity of the community and city.

### **Bi Visibility Day**

This takes place each September and is supported by a small grant from the LGBT+ Hub to raise aware awareness of Bi issues as well as a social events for Bi people.

## **International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia and Pride Month.**

This day in May each year sees the Angels of Freedom supported by the council and other partners hold street stalls in the city centre to raise awareness of ongoing discrimination against LGBT+ people. Other events take place across the city organised by a range of organisations in the public and third sectors. Pride Month in June is increasingly celebrated in the UK and is supported by a range of activities across many organisations.

## **Trans Day of Remembrance**

An annual remembrance event takes place, supported by the LGBT+ Hub and Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust. In 2023 this involved a memorial event followed by an outdoor candlelight vigil in the grounds outside the Age UK building. The event is organised by the Trans community for the Trans community and allies with Trans Leeds, Non Binary Leeds and other Trans Groups collaborating to ensure it happens.

## **Trans Day of Visibility**

The Council financially supports the cities event to mark Trans Pride. Hundreds of people from the community take part in a city centre parade/demonstration for Trans equality as well as a range of workshops, cultural and social events across a two week period. Trans Pride is organised by the Trans/Non Binary community and was the first of its kind in the area when it was established originally in 2018. The council supports the activities of the community via an annual grant.

## **LGBT+ History Month**

For the last few years the Council has supported a range of events for LGBT+ History Month with a working group made up of staff and partner volunteers supporting and promoting events across the city and supported by a small grant.

## **World Aids Day and National Testing Week**

The Council promotes WAD and NTW via its social media, across the Hub membership and in partnership with Yorkshire Mesmac and Skyline. HIV/Aids is an issue of importance to the LGBT+ community due to its disproportionate impact on LGBT+ people, especially men, since the early 1980s and the stigma and discrimination which stills exists around it. The council supports an annual commemoration event at Leeds Civic Hall with funding and civic buildings are lit in red. The council has also signed up to the UK governments 'Towards Zero' HIV Action Plan to end HIV transmissions by 2023.

## Progress on LGBT+ Inclusive Leeds 2018-2023

### Adults and Health

#### Training to staff and external partners

- Following the 2018 report, LGBTQ+ Allies training was developed by Adults and Health staff in collaboration with the Human Resources and Organisational Development Teams. This training was delivered across Adults and Health and other directorates.
- In partnership with Yorkshire MESMAC, training was delivered to care homes on LGBTQ+ awareness. This was a very successful piece of work that unfortunately ended during the pandemic as training had to stop and funding within Organisational Development is no longer available.
- The Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) Team has provided Pathfinder Sites with Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training, guidance and support to ensure the ABCD Community Builders they employ offer an inclusive approach to community development.

#### Equality monitoring

- There is now a standardised process for recording sexual orientation on the Client Information System (CIS) within some areas. The field is not currently mandatory in CIS so recording is not consistent. There has been an improvement in the recording of sexual orientation within CIS but there is still further work required to improve this data gathering. Data from 2018 is not available so a comparison of the recording of sexual orientation within CIS has been carried out between 2021 and 2024. In 2021, of 9790 service users, 17.1% had sexuality recorded, 5.3% preferred not to say or refused, and 77.6% were not recorded. In 2024, of 9737 service users, 32.9% had sexuality recorded, 14.6% preferred not to say or refused, and 52.6% were not recorded.

#### Mental Health

- Following on from the LGBTQ+ Mapping project, Mind received a one-year grant from The Leeds Fund which they used to fund peer support groups looking at Mental Health. The feedback from these was very positive agreeing that this project successfully helped to raise awareness of these issues especially for the LGBTQ+ community. It was agreed that the groups helped to increase confidence and resilience for attendees and reduced isolation. There was slow take-up to the peer support groups but they did successfully engage with 67 people.
- The Health Partnerships Team has supported the development of an inclusive Mental Health Strategy for Leeds which has a focus on overall inclusion of mental health in Leeds as a 'mentally healthy city'. Specific focus in the strategy has been

made to inclusion of groups who may experience specific exclusion / isolation. The team has an ongoing role in Mental Health Community Transformation, particularly in ensuring accessible estates for more community focused, strengths based mental health responses.

- The ABCD team has funded Leeds Older People's Forum to deliver 'Hey Neighbour', a project providing micro grants to grass roots community groups to alleviate the impact on mental health during the recovery phase of the pandemic. The focus of the project was to support neighbourliness, enabling human, rather than digital, connections. One of the projects whose grant applications was successful was the Leeds LGBTQ+ Community Consortium aimed at bringing the LGBTQ+ community together and enabling LGBTQ+ people in Leeds to become more connected.

### **Service Delivery**

- The Health Partnerships Team had a significant role to play in city's COVID response; on behalf of the citywide vaccine programme they pulled together a small group with representatives from LGBTQ+ organisations/staff groups to look at any potential barriers for vaccine rollout and ensuring the rollout was inclusive and sensitive to needs.
- Following the 2018 report, Learning Disability (LD) Services have carried out work to improve the recording of gender and sexual orientation on CIS and produced easy-read information on LGBTQ+ support for their service users and carers. An LGBTQ+ Champion working group was set up to implement improvements with a focus on the LGBTQ+ community within LD services, with a particular focus on supporting trans service users and linking in with third sector organisations and providing information on these services to service users within the LGBTQ+ community. The group provided information and an awareness session for staff on working with LD service users who are LGBTQ+ and compiled guidance resources to be accessed by social work staff when needed.
- Care and Repair is an organisation commissioned by Public Health; Communities, Housing and Environment; and the Integrated Care Board to deliver the Home Plus service. They are key partners in the response to the challenges around winter weather and cold homes. Care and Repair are the first organisation in Leeds to be awarded the Pride in Care Quality Standard in recognition of the quality of care and support they offer older LGBTQ+ people. The accreditation process involved Care and Repair reviewing policies, procedures, and publicity documents; looking at staff training needs; considering the experiences of people using their services; as well as working with an Open Doors ambassador to carry out an assessment of the organisation.

### **Work in the community**

- The Adults and Health Care Delivery Service (CDS) have partnered with Opening Doors, a national charity which connects LGBTQ+ people over 50 with activities,

events, support, and information and also provides accredited training to professionals, as well as conducting research and developing policy.

- Aloud and Proud – after watching a TV programme about older LGBTQ+ people and the discrimination people had experienced, the CDS day services team felt strongly that they should offer an additional safe social venue to people over 50 and would be based in one of their complex needs day services (supporting people living with dementia). A member of CDS team, contacted other LGBTQ+ groups to work with them and publicise the first meeting. The group's main aims are to support personal and professional development, build confidence, and ensure inclusive practice. The group is currently being supported by the CDS team to start with and aim to become community-led group in the future.
- The Leeds LGBTQ+ Community Consortium was set up in 2020 with support from public health when the Covid 19 lockdown increased the isolation of LGBTQ+ people who were restricted to their homes due to age, illness or disability. The Consortium works with partners to reduce social isolation amongst older, unwell, disabled or otherwise restricted members of the LGBTQ+ communities. Their key aim is to improve health and wellbeing by providing inter-generational activities, events, and information to enable LGBTQ+ people to develop new interests and become more connected. With support from a member of the public health team, the consortium managed to get funding for 2 staff members to support this group, with initial funding from the public health winter wellbeing grant and then from various subsequent grant sources.

## Housing

### Homelessness

- Consultation took place to inform the new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy with focus sessions on hidden and repeat homelessness with partners across the city. Feedback suggested that there are more people vulnerably housed or sofa surfing than was known, and qualitative data suggests that certain groups, such as the LGBTQ+ community, can be disproportionately impacted by hidden homeless and its negative impacts.
- Qualitative feedback from partners suggests that the LGBTQ+ community have been under represented in homelessness approaches. To make the homelessness more accessible, Housing Advisors have been attending the LGBTQ+ Social and Wellbeing Café that meets monthly to provide immediate housing advice, support with registering for social housing, and facilitate assessments/priority award.
- Housing have networked with partners providing gender identity support, and created referral pathways for Leeds Housing Options staff to make as part of personal housing plans.
- A new mandatory field was launched on their homelessness application recording system that captured whether sex is the same as registered at birth to support better equality data.
- Leeds Housing Options held stalls at the Leeds Pride and LGBTQ+ history month event.



## Housing

- Review and monitoring of equality data from responses to the Tenant Satisfactory Measure survey shows 3% of responses being from the LGBTQ+ community.
- Increase diversity of recruit to the Tenant Voice Panel by providing more opportunities including digital engagement. Equality information has been captured for this, showing that 3.1% of the panel residents identify as LGBTQ+.
- All housing staff are required to complete 10 hours of EDI training per year.
- Review of the equality profile of Housing Leeds workforce shows that 3.99% identify as LGBTQ+ with 25.9% not declaring their sexual orientation for equality purposes.
- For support to older people, the service has made a commitment to updating the Referral Guidance used by staff when conducting Support File reviews to ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) is considered around all protected characteristics to encourage links for residents to national/local groups, activities and social opportunities, and promoting conversations that feel safe and inclusive.

## Children and Families

C&FS and partners have undertaken a significant amount of work to support and improve the wellbeing of LGBT+ C&YP over the last six years. Examples of work include:

- C&FS has been a member of the Stonewall's Children and Young People's Services (CYPS) Champions Programme since 2019 and prior to that its Education Equality Index. In 2019 a Stonewall Task Group was established to draft the submission for the CYPS Champions award. Leeds scored 95 out of 130 against the award and was one of three local authorities from across the country to receive the Silver Award. C&FS also drafted a submission for the 2022 award. LA's have yet to receive the submission results for this award despite it being finalised by the January 2023 deadline.
- C&FS has an LGBT+ Equality Improvement Priority (EIP) which has been in place since 2018/19. This EIP was initially a corporately reported EIP but is now a directorate EIP as it remains an important area of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) in C&FS. To support the priority an LGBT+ EIP Working Group was established which has met on a regular basis over the years to progress work to deliver this priority. The EIP Working Group reports to the C&FS EDI Board.
- In September 2022 the LGBT+EIP Working Group agreed it would be a good to develop an A-Z of LGBT+ Resources for schools and learning settings be able to easily access LGBT+ information, resources and agency information in one online document. In July 2023 the LGBTQ+ A- Z of Resources was published and circulated to schools. The A-Z was later added to both the School Wellbeing and Leeds for Learning websites.

## Youth Work

The Youth Service increased its group work offer to LGBT+ young people in Leeds, with 2 additional groups started in the last 2 years. These additional youth groups provide more

safe spaces for LGBT+ young people to be themselves, meet other LGBT+ young people, receive support from experienced youth workers and generally have fun.

As part of the group work offer to LGBT+ young people, young people fed back that they would like an opportunity to mix with people from the different young groups and celebrate being LGBT+. To facilitate this in August 2022 a 'Mini-Pride' was event held at West Leeds Activity centre.

### **Gender Recording**

Since 2018 considerable work has been done to raise the issue of recording the gender of those C&YP who consider themselves to be trans, gender questioning or simply don't believe themselves to be the gender they were registered at birth.

In late 2022 CFLT agreed to the development of a 'Position Statement' to support staff with recording the gender of young people on the different software applications used across the directorate. To do this a Gender Recording Task and Finish Group was established made of colleagues from different services. After significant amount of work a Position Statement on Trans and Non Binary Children and Young People was produced and adopted by CFLT in December 2022.

Once the approach to gender recording had been agreed, work began to support the impending upgrade of Mosaic, the social care case recording system, that would allow for the recording of gender identity in addition to sex registered at birth. To aid staff to record a young person's gender and guide them through the complexities of this area of work, the CYP Gender Identity Recording and Best Practice Guidance was produced in April 2023.

Training has been delivered to staff on the issues affecting LGBT+ young people and how best to support them. Examples of training provided include Stonewall Train the Trainer sessions, Healthy Self Esteem training for professionals to support young people, free training by Barnardo's on tackling Homophobic, Biphobic and Transphobic Bullying. In 2021, the LGBT+ Staff Network delivered LGBT+ Awareness and Gender Identity training for practitioners.

### **School Hate Crime/Incident Reporting**

Schools have been able to report the hate incident their pupils experience since 2014 initially through the Hate Incident Reporting Scheme, and from November 2022 through Stop Hate UK. Performance reports analysing the findings of the reported incidents have consistently shown that sexual identity and gender identity are the second and third most reported cause of the incident after ethnicity/ race. Hence supporting LGBT+ and gender questioning C&YP continues to be a key EDI priority for C&FS.

Celebrating its 10th birthday in 2022, Child Friendly Leeds (CFL) Team used the findings of a breadth of consultation activity to update and develop the 12 CFL wishes. CFL Wish 4 focuses on celebrating diversity and addressing bullying and discrimination. This wish includes all types of bullying and discrimination including that experienced by LGBT and gender questioning C&YP.

## Museums and Galleries

Over the last five years, Leeds Museums & Galleries (LMG) has continued to work with and share stories of LGBT+ communities in Leeds through public events, displays, exhibitions and adding to the city's collections to increase representation. This work is both very focused on LGBT+ communities specifically and also recognises intersectionality with other groups and protected characteristics. Some specific examples during 2018-2023 include:

- LGBT+ History Month – February 2019 was the first OUTing the Past conference at Leeds City Museum. OUTing the Past has continued in different forms during this period. Also in 2019, there was an event co-curated with West Yorkshire Queer Stories, which included craft stalls, information stalls, talks and oral history recordings. Over 2,000 people came to the event at Leeds City Museum.
- On 30 March 2019 LMG hosted a landmark event for the service, supporting the team's first Leeds Trans Pride event. The day included talks, stalls and craft activities with approximately 300 people attended. This connection has continued.
- Display of '36point7' from February to March 2019 at Leeds City Museum. This light art project by artist Stuart Langley aimed to raise awareness and ensure the visibility of the 36.7million people worldwide living with HIV/AIDS as part of the service's LGBT+ history month 2019 programme as there is a higher rate of HIV and AIDS diagnosis in LGBT+ and migrant communities.
- In summer 2022, LMG hosted a display of photographs of people with rainbow flags around the world in collaboration with the Gilbert Baker Foundation. The display was installed in the Community Corridor as part of Leeds Pride celebrations.
- In May 2019 five groups of objects from Trans Pride Leeds, West Yorkshire Queer Stories and Outing the Past – each presented at the LMG Collections Development meeting by community collaborators – were acquired for the collections. This was an important moment in making the collection more representative and working with individuals and organisations in the community to do so. It continued in January 2020 when more objects were acquired through the West Yorkshire Queer Stories project and in February 2020, LMG were able to acquire clothing to represent an individual's journey to identifying as non-binary and they were able to personally share this in the meeting. In 2023/24 LMG have acquired more objects as a legacy of the Overlooked exhibition (see below). Within the fine art collection, LMG have recently acquired work by artists Ro Robertson, Claye Bowler and 2024 Turner Prize-winner, Jesse Darling, who identify as LGBT+.
- Having material in the collection has created momentum – for example since 2020/21 loaning some objects to the Thackray Museum of Medicine; the collection being better documented on the collections database through a Project Placement opportunity and sharing objects online via Google Arts & Culture website. In October 2022, LMG collaborated on an event with an academic from the University of Leeds about gender identity. In 2023, 600 records relating to LGBT+ community on collections database were reviewed with 398 records amended for accuracy.
- Representing LGBT+ stories within wider thematic exhibitions eg 'A City and its Welcome: Three Centuries of Migrating to Leeds' June 2019- January 2020 in the temporary exhibition gallery at Leeds City Museum included those from people who had sought asylum in the UK because of homosexuality being illegal in their home

country. In 'Overlooked' from February to June 2023, LMG featured the story of Angela Morley (1924-2009), the Leeds-born composer, arranger and conductor who was the first openly trans person to be nominated for an Academy Award and winner of three Emmy Awards. Angela's story was alongside those of others from Leeds who have also been overlooked previously, curated by the Preservative Party, our young curators' group based at Leeds City Museum. Gender identity was featured in a display on mental health also curated by the Preservative Party, called Open Minds, which ran in the Community Cases from September 2020 to June 2022.

## **Employment and Skills**

The following pieces of work were undertaken and over the reporting period across all elements of service delivery and partnership working the service received no complaints and no specific requests in relation to or from the LGBT+ community.

### **Providing dedicated sessions for young Trans and Non-Binary people to find out about Apprenticeships and other opportunities**

- The service developed their links with Trans and Non-Binary groups and organisations to consider how they can better connect with the wider Trans and Non-Binary community to support young people at different points in their transition.
- The E&S service delivers a range of careers information advice and guidance (CEIAG) advice and resources for secondary schools, FE and 6th form colleges including apprenticeship awareness information sessions.
- No schools have requested separate information sessions specifically for trans and non-binary students. All CEIAG resources are inclusive and representative

### **Building specific links within DWP to better join up our support offer**

- The service has had discussions with the Department for Work and Pensions to understand and learn from their approach to conversations with business and promoting training resources.
- DWP are very keen to continue to develop this relationship as they see the work being proposed in Leeds as providing a benchmark for best practice elsewhere.

### **Providing mentoring support for those looking for work**

- This included employability and jobsearch, signposting to enterprise support etc.

### **Raising the awareness of businesses as part of conversations around promoting inclusive recruitment**

- The service recognises that as part of its role in promoting best practice in employment to other businesses in the city, it needs to be a best practice employer for Trans and Gender Non-Binary people itself.

- The E&S service is promoting the recently launched Fair Work Charter to employers through their business support work programme

### **Prioritising places on the Pop-Up Business School opportunity (now called Rebel Business school)**

- The service negotiated priority places for anyone interested in self-employment/enterprise; the funding for this contract has now come to an end.

### **Active Leeds**

Reflecting over the past five years several members of the Active Leeds team have played a part in driving progress, supporting members of the LGBT+ community to access and take part in sport and physical activity. However it must also be acknowledged that everyone has been through trying times throughout the years of the pandemic. This had a profound impact of the development and progress that Active Leeds were initially making.

Andrew Frazer founded the Frontrunners found Run Leeds (RL) online and proposed his idea of setting up the LFR in the similar vein of the MCR frontrunners. Active Leeds worked with the group to setup the organisation aspects of becoming a social run group independent and a part of the Run Leeds project. Over the 3-years of the first phase of the RL project Active Leeds trained between 5-10 LGBT+ volunteers as run leaders with the LiRF coaching qualification. The group contributed to the wider running community through events like the first ever Pride parkrun takeover.

Active Leeds supported volunteers in running their own events like this one as well as sharing personal stories like Mandy's trans experience and how running helped her transition <https://runleeds.co.uk/article/my-frontrunner-experience/>.

Active Leeds currently have LGBT+ Run Leeds Ambassadors - an established volunteer program help and support several running events and initiatives across Leeds.

On International Women's Day through the Leeds Girls Can initiative the team delivered a motivational and yoga relaxation event aimed specifically at women from the LGBT+ community. This was delivered this in addition to the regular IWD event to ensure anyone from the LGBT+ community would feel this was a safe space.

Children and Young Peoples officer delivers a mentoring program for students identified as facing difficulties in the school setting. Since June 2022 the staff have been supporting two of the students identify as non-binary. They are given 121 support and have recently moved to the group sessions. The need for this kind of support has widened with another young person joining the group sessions. Active Leeds envisions the need for this work widening as the young people identify the safe and confidential space they are providing. The mentoring involves facilitating conversations with young people around issues they may be facing combined with workshops to support them with coping strategies, mindfulness, and social skills. The mentoring allows the students to express and be themselves.

For the Active Through Football project the team support Angels of freedom Leeds – LGBT+ Community Group. They meet weekly at goals and hold an open training session. Sports Coaching is provided along with football equipment from the programme and have had connections with the Active Leeds team.

An Inclusive football tournament has been co-produced for anyone that identifies as female. Active Leeds have liaised throughout to ensure its inclusive and suitable for all participants. Share best practice amongst the rest of the team ensuring Active Leeds stay in contact so that new members can receive free kit should they require it.

Through the LGC initiative Active Leeds have delivered Menopause education and yoga session at The Peoples Gym which is fully inclusive gym that is designed with the LGBT+ community in mind.

Active Leeds were able to educate and deliver a mindfulness session to a group of people that identified as women or non-binary. In a safe and welcoming space.

Through the Kit Donation Scheme, Active Leeds have provided Football kit (boots, socks, shorts, training tops and woolly hats) to a new LGBT+ asylum seekers community football team.

Active Leeds continue to support anyone from the LGBT+ community to set up and thrive through community sport. The service are currently supporting Mayne Star Cheerleaders to access and establish a base for their club to train (potentially Fearnville LC). Bad Mittens are a well-established LGBT+ Badminton club based from Armley LC.

The Active Leeds Equality, Diversity, cohesion, and Integration working group meets monthly and involves a cross section of the service. EDCI working group discusses, drives, and disseminates all equality related updates, topics and work areas across the respective teams across the service. Active Leeds continue to expand the make-up of the group with new interested colleagues.

Research delivered as part of The Get Set Leeds conversations in 2019 - and the follow up to this. LGBT groups were highlighted within the results of this evaluation (with Leeds Beckett) as facing more barriers to inactivity. There is also some additional research relating to the LGBT community that was gathered by LBU as part of the Rapid literature reviews they carried out after COVID - again highlighting the greater number of barriers this group faces in being physically active.

## **Safer and Stronger Communities**

### **British Transport Police**

Officers have engaged with the BHA for equality group prior to Leeds Pride 2023 to highlight the measures in place on the railway to prevent hate crime and the means of reporting this when they attend the railway. The officers discussed how to remain safe when travelling on the railway and how to be an active bystander. BTP are in contact with the charity to arrange a similar input in 2024.

Officers still patrol the sparkle trains between Leeds and Manchester during Pride events which aim to ensure safer and more visibility of officers on the railway particularly during pride events. Officers have also increased the patrols around the nighttime economy, including more patrols down Buttons Yard, which is a darker area between the station and the nightclubs.

Officers have conducted a stand on Pride days raising hate crime awareness.

Officers are working on a safe space within the station which will be run by multi-agencies as a safe and secure zone for members of the community to attend when they feel vulnerable.

## **Domestic Violence**

Priority Action 1: Increase awareness and understanding about domestic violence and abuse in LGBT+ communities. Completed work by the team includes:

- Ensured that the Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board – the board responsible for supporting the delivery of the domestic abuse statutory duties in Leeds – has a strong understanding of DVA in LGBT+ relationships, including access to local intelligence, knowledge of the key challenges, and more recently, direct feedback from LGBT+ victims-survivors via the Voices Project.
- Delivered specific training to frontline practitioners on DVA in LGBT+ relationships, and ensured that LGBT+ victims-survivors experiences of domestic abuse are embedded in all other training, including recognising the barriers they face in reporting/seeking support/accessing services.
- Supported the UK's first (and subsequent) LGBT Domestic Abuse Awareness Day through awareness raising and promoting support available for LGBT+ victims-survivors.
- As a result of increasing awareness and developing this understanding, the operational responses at the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference/Daily Risk Assessment Meeting has improved, enabling more robust risk management across agencies when discussing LGBT+ cases.

Priority Action 2: Commitment from senior leadership teams within organisations to improve responses for the LGBT+ community when accessing DVA services. Work carried out by the team includes:

- The new Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board was established in 2020, replacing its predecessor (the Leeds Domestic Violence Board), and in preparation for the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. The DALPB has representation from senior leaders across a number of organisations in the city, working together with the common vision to put an end to domestic violence and abuse in Leeds. In the new DVA strategy for Leeds, the DALPB recognises that services must continue to improve to be responsive to victims-survivors of DVA from the LGBT+ community.
- Organisations which apply for the Leeds DVA Quality Mark are required to demonstrate an understanding of, and appropriate response to, victims-survivors who

may face additional barriers to disclosing DVA including those within the LGBT+ community.

Priority Action 3: Commitment to increase awareness about DVA services for the LGBT+ community. Work carried out by the team includes:

- Developed campaign materials which have a specific focus on DVA in LGBT+ relationships and recognise how gender identity and sexuality can be both a barrier to reporting/seeking support, and used as a means for perpetrators to control victims-survivors
- Worked with organisations including Leeds Domestic Violence Service, Yorkshire MESMAC, Angels of Freedom and Leeds Pride to promote the support that is available for anybody in the LGBT+ community experiencing domestic violence and abuse e.g. through social media campaigning, stalls at the Leeds Pride marketplace and pop up information at venues in the Freedom Quarter.
- Widely promoted the inclusive support available for people of all genders and sexualities from Leeds Domestic Violence Service, in addition to Galop, the UK's LGBT+ anti-abuse strategy e.g. during 16 Days of Activism, at Leeds Pride, via social media and the Angels of Freedom.

Priority Action 4: Increased reporting of DVA incidents in Leeds. Work carried out by the team includes:

- Encouraging victims-survivors to report DVA in Leeds in a wide range of ways. Many of the service's campaign materials which encourage victims to report/seek support include the rainbow/pride flag to encourage LGBT+ victims-survivors to feel safer to report or seek support.

Priority Action 5: Increased confidence and satisfaction for the LGBT+ community when accessing domestic violence and abuse services. Work carried by the team includes:

- Funded diverse organisations to deliver the Sanctuary Support Scheme (a scheme which provides support for DVA victims to remain safely in their own homes), including organisations with specialist experience of working with the LGBT+ community.
- Clear information is provided on the Leeds Domestic Violence Service website, under the visible "Equality and Diversity" tab which seeks to provide reassurance that LDVS is a service for people of all genders and sexualities and responds to some FAQs including "Are all your services inclusive to people of all genders?".

## **Hate Crime**

The launch event for Hate Crime Awareness Week in 2023 had a focus on LGBT+ related hate with key speakers from organisations such as Galop, West Yorkshire Police and Stop Hate UK as well as presentations from people with lived experience of being a victim of hate. The Safer Stronger Communities team have also partnered up with Angels of Freedom for public engagement during the 2023 and previous National Hate Crime Awareness week campaigns at Leeds Train Station.



# LGBT+ Inclusive Leeds proposals for 2024-2029

## Adults and Health

### Key issues in supporting the LGBT+ community

One of the key issues faced is consistent recording of equality characteristics within the Client Information System. Though there has been an improvement over the past 5 years, this requires further improvement to better capture the equality information of our client groups in order to better understand the individual needs of each service user.

Public Health was involved in a research project funded by Alcohol Change UK as part of the New Horizons programme, a joint project between Sheffield Hallam University, ARC Research, and Leeds, Hull, Doncaster and North Lincolnshire local authorities along with delivery organisations in Doncaster and Kirklees which seeks to achieve a greater understanding of groups, communities and alcohol harm. The research explored the complex role that communities play in alcohol harm and recovery, including the LGBTQ+ community. The overwhelming message from nearly all participants was that they would not access services to help with their drinking. Shame and stigma were clearly identified as barriers along with the fear of labelling. But the process of acquiring access was also seen as prohibitive, where participants would go to seek help was from friends and members of the community. Support from friends was not always successful. One recommendation from this research project was to provide support to friends, family, and carers to enable them to better help people to access support and understand the services available to them.

### Current work to ensure services are accessible to the LGBT+ community

The Asset Based Community Development team regularly have conversations with their Community Builders and Pathfinder Sites. They have hosted a learning collective for new and existing Community Builders and Pathfinder Sites. One theme within this learning collective was Equality, Diversity, Cohesion, and Integration; discussing how best to ensure people are engaging with a range of communities with diversity in mind.

The Health Partnerships Team supports the 'How Does it Feel for Me' programme which includes direct video experiences of people using health and care services in the context of their lives. The series has included LGBTQ+ experiences. The videos are played to senior leaders and clinicians to broker change and improvement in services.

Public Health is in year 3 of the 3-year Age Friendly Leeds Strategy. The Age Friendly Leeds Strategy and Action Plan sets out outcomes and tangible actions based on the World Health Organisation Age Friendly domains, informed by local evidence, insight from engagement with people aged 50+ and several Leeds strategies. Within this work there is a key focus on

inequalities and equality as cross-cutting priorities to ensure the continued consideration of the intersectionality between age and other protected characteristics such as sexual orientation and gender identity.

The Local Government Association (LGA) have developed a 'Diverse by Design guide' which aims to support local governments to embed fair values, systems, and behaviours within their organisations. The Adults & Health directorate is undertaking a project to identify how the LGA Diverse by Design Principles can be adapted and embedded in Adult Social Care through using the newly devised Diverse by Design Toolkit. The Diverse by Design toolkit seeks to embed the LGA principles within Adult Social Care with a focus across both the workforce and the community.

The Adults & Health Care Delivery Service (CDS) is supporting their service users to access the LGBTQ+ Wellbeing and Social Café. The CDS service is collaborating with the LGBTQ+ community consortium to reduce social isolation amongst older, unwell, disabled, or otherwise restricted members of the LGBTQ+ community.

### **Gaps in Services and means of addressing these over 2024-2029**

The EDI Board has previously completed deep dives into specific service areas to review the EDI standards being met within each area. It has been identified that a focus on protected characteristics may be more beneficial and they are looking to amend their processes to deep dive into individual protected characteristics rather than service areas. This will allow the EDI board to have an individual focus on LGBTQ+ community and identify actions relating to this as a board.

There is a consensus across Adults & Health services that there is a real need to improve the monitoring of equality information as it is currently difficult to fully identify the gaps in service need if the data is not available. If monitoring and recording of equality information were improved, this would improve the directorate's ability to identify service gaps and target specific needs.

## Housing

### Key issues in supporting the LGBTQ+ community

A barrier the Housing service believes the LGBTQ+ may face when needing to access homelessness assistance is the availability of accommodation and the settings in which temporary accommodation could be provided in. For young people, self contained accommodation in the private sector can be unaffordable, so support can often be in a shared setting. Feedback from the LGBTQ+ community has been these shared settings can be difficult if sharing with others not from the LGBTQ+ community. As there is not specific LGBTQ+ temporary accommodation provision in Leeds, placements are made into existing provisions for singles or families in the city. Some feedback of this experience, particularly for single LGBTQ+ community, suggests the community would avoid being placed in temporary accommodation which could be an initial barrier to approaching the service.

Attendance at the LGBTQ+ Social and Wellbeing Café has highlighted that there are people in the community who are asylum seeking and have been waiting long periods of time for an immigration decision. Speaking with these customers, they have left their countries due to their identity or sexual orientation. These customers face a challenge in accessing housing but cannot access services like Leeds Housing Options due to not having recourse to public funds.

Tenancy Satisfaction Measures are representative in terms of the proportion of LGBTQ+ customers taking part in the survey to the known customer profile of the LGBTQ+ in LCC housing. However, the Service do have too many unknown in terms of their customer profile related to sexuality which impacts awareness of key issues the community may face. There is also 40% of customers who 'prefer not to say'.

### Current work to ensure services are accessible to the LGBTQ+ community

To develop and deliver an EDI / Race equality action plan which is aligned with corporate priorities.

Delivery of the Step 4/5 of the Leeds City Council Be Your Best EDI programme.

Understand equality profile of their workforce and use this to seek to achieve a workforce that is representative of our communities.

The service are approaching 1 year of data captured in homelessness applications with the new 'is your sex the same as registered at birth' field. They will review the data and consider it against the latest census information and hold roundtable exercises on how the Service can improve service design at the citywide Homelessness Prevention Forum.

To continue attending the LGBTQ+ Social and Wellbeing Café in which the service will focus on capturing lived experience and feedback on housing/homelessness services in the city to feed into service improvement plans.

Over the coming year, identify LBGT+ Youth Organisations in the city, and set up a 'duty to refer' model into Leeds Housing Options so that housing assistance can be provided to those who need it.

The current number of existing LGBTQ+ tenants taking part in our quarterly satisfaction programme is broadly representative of our known tenant profile. However, there is a data gap in terms of recorded sexuality, with 30% of all tenants sexuality currently unknown. Improving the quality and completeness of our customer profiling information as a whole will help us to understand the experiences of LGBTQ+ customers better. During 2024/25 the service are seeking to improve data quality by

- Delivering on the recommendations set out in the Housing Ombudsman's 'Knowledge and Information Spotlight Report – this includes implementing a knowledge information strategy and additional staff training.
- Improving our overall customer profiling practices so that more information is collected and can be used to ensure fairer outcomes (in line with the Regulator for Social Housing's Transparency, Influence and Accountability Consumer Standard)

In March 2025, the Tenancy Satisfaction Measures will be carried out again in the same format. Once this data is collected, it will provide a more accurate LGBTQ+ aggregate result for a 2 year period and may enable the service to better understand the feedback on services from the LGBTQ+ community.

### **Gaps in Services and means of addressing these over 2024-2029**

The service need to review our new data and continue to listen to feedback from members of the LGBTQ+ community and partners to identify gaps. The learning during the consultation period of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy was helpful but did indicate that some of the community may be hidden from services.

The service need to ensure there is clear communication and advice on assistance available within the community and partners working with young people and the LGBTQ+ community.

## Children and Families

### Key issues in supporting the LGBT+ community

Broader issues facing the LGBT Community identified by key practitioners across Children and Families Services include:

- The social conditioning of children and young people is a very significant obstacle for schools and services. Children and young people hear and learn information and views from their families and local communities. Challenging some of these often bigoted, racist, homophobic, misogynist, etc., views and beliefs can be very difficult.
- Addressing the impact of social media – in terms of safety; security; mistruths – keeping C&YP safe, dispelling myths and combating the hate and discrimination targeted at LGBT+ and gender questioning C&YP, whilst also recognising the benefits social media can bring for young people in expanding their friendship groups and communities.
- There are likely to be C&YP that may be LGBT+ or questioning their gender identity, not attending school or on a school roll. These young people aren't able to access or benefit from relevant information and learning via the school curriculum, support a school and partners could offer, or support from LGBT+ peers within a school.
- Effectively addressing the impact hate and discrimination has on LGBT+ C&YP. In addition, there is limited understanding on what some LGBT+ C&YP are having to do to keep themselves safe – e.g., not attending school, not going out or having a social life and the impact this has on them, particularly their health and wellbeing, but also their educational outcomes and relationships with other people.
- There remains no England guidance for schools despite many years of delays and promises other than the very recent draft guidance from the DfE entitled 'Gender Questioning Children' that was produced in late December 2023 for consultation. The Equality and Human Rights Commission strongly criticised this draft guidance during the consultation period, stating that it was not in line with the Equality Act (2010), and so the future of this draft guidance is unclear.

### Current work to ensure services are accessible to the LGBT+ community

CFL Wish 4 - celebrating diversity and addressing bullying and discrimination. Various different work is being undertaken to deliver on this wish including:

- The creation of a Child Friendly Leeds Wish 4 blog page to raise awareness and promote this wish and all the other 12 Child Friendly Leeds Wishes. An article on the Wish 4 blog page was written and posted on the Leeds for Learning website on 17th January 2024 to inform schools about the blog and the work being done specifically to deliver on Wish 4. This blog page is regularly promoted by Child Friendly Leeds and other partners.
- An anti-bullying survey is currently being undertaken with schools to find out about the work they are doing to address bullying and discrimination. The survey closes on 28th March 2024. The findings from the survey will be used by the Wish 4 planning

and working groups within the council to inform the next steps to be taken in tackling bullying and discrimination for children and young people across Leeds

- A new anti-bullying and anti-discrimination webpage has been created and set up on the School Wellbeing website. The webpage has been developed to be a hub of support and resources and includes information and resources on mental health, the latest bullying data from My Health, My School Survey as well provides links to resources. The audience for this is school teachers and school staff.

### **Support to schools to enable them to effectively support LGBT+ and gender questioning C&YP**

- Resources - work is being done to ensure the LGBTQ+ A-Z resources remains up to date. An A-Z of Mental Health services was also created in 2023 which is aimed at people working in educational settings (up to age 18) in Leeds. It explains the services that offer direct support to children and young people who have social, emotional and mental health needs. This resource is also being reviewed on a regular basis to ensure it includes the latest information available.
- Schools and educational settings continue to be encouraged to report the hate related incidents that children and young people experience, including homophobic, transphobic or any incidents relating to a young person questioning their gender identity. The intention is to provide schools with regular updates on how the incidents they report are being used to address bullying and discrimination.

### **Youth Service**

- Work will shortly commence to prepare for the 2024 Mini Pride Event for the LGBT+ Youth Groups that will take place in July 2024 at Herd Farm following the success of the mini pride events held in 2022 and 2023. In addition, the Young People's Guide to Pride – an information leaflet developed by young LGBT+ people for Leeds Pride including information on how young people can keep themselves safe – will also be produced and distributed for this year's Pride.
- LGBT+ Youth Group are involved in the recruitment of youth workers for the city centre youth work team and will shortly be involved in the recruitment of a post within the team.

### **Fostering & Adoption**

- Foster 4 Leeds have an ongoing Fostering with Pride campaign, to encourage LGBT+ people to consider fostering or offering supported lodgings with Leeds City Council. Foster4Leeds is a member of the UK LGBT+ fostering and adoption charity New Family Social; approved LGBT+ foster families are entitled to free individual Gold Membership post approval and Bronze Membership pre-approval.
- One Adoption West Yorkshire (OAWY) work closely with New Family Social, who provide training/ workshops for OAWY and membership for their LGBTQ+ adopters. OAWY use written guidance from CoramBaaf on assessing LGBTQ+ adopters (who make up one in five of their adoptions) and the majority of staff have attended written training. OAWY have a small number of trans adopters and have accessed training on

inclusion for trans adopters, and they recognise this as an area they need to grow. Adoption panel members are offered training, which includes a focus on inclusion amongst other areas of practice.

### **Gaps in Services and means of addressing these over 2024-2029**

Gaps/ areas for further development:

- There are opportunities for better joined up working between the local authority and schools to support LGBT+ children and young people across the city.
- There are also further opportunities to strengthen how the voices of LGBT+ C&YP are heard by providing them opportunity to input into strategic plans and strategies. Creating safe spaces for LGBT+ C&YP to provide their views and experiences is key to achieving this.
- Additionally, there are opportunities to better collaboratively use the data recorded on the support given to LGBT+ C&YP and families. Also, to ensure using the information and data C&YP do have is used more effectively to track the progress being made on addressing the issues identified by LGBT+ C&YP and Families.

### **Actions for next five years:**

- Development of Action Plan to continue to support schools and services to address the bullying and discrimination C&YP, including LGBT+ C&YP using the findings of analysis as outlined under the CFL Wish 4 work. Once developed the plan should be shared with all relevant partners, e.g., CFLT; Hate Crime Strategic Board (HCSB); and health partners, etc., to obtain approval and support.
- Strengthen partnership approach with schools to both provide regular feedback and progress updates on how C&YP use the information they provide, e.g., reporting hate incidents and pupil involvement in consultation activity and consult with school staff, headteachers and governors to hear their views on the issues schools are facing with regard to supporting LGBT+ and gender questioning C&YP. Also encourage schools to share good practice and strategies that have been effective at supporting LGBT+ C&YP.
- Continue to regularly consult with all C&YP, including LGBT+ C&YP, to gain their views on the key issues affecting them, what could be done to address these issues and what additional support they would like to be able to access. Use young people's voice to influence change.
- Raise awareness of how heteronormative ways of working (e.g., referring to mums and dads, having separate support offers for mums and dads) can exclude LGBT+ parents. Examples of work that could be done include conducting audits of language, terminology and service delivery, as well as consulting with LGBT+ parents, to improve accessibility.
- Continuing to explore more accurate gender recording options for our service software systems to bring them in line with the gender recording options available.
- Continue to review and promote the both the A-Z's for LGBT+ Resources and the A-Z of Mental Health Support and Resources for Schools so they can help to support LGBT+ and questioning C&YP

## Museum and Galleries

### Key issues in supporting the LGBT+ community

The challenges are around capacity and resource – this is the same across LMG work with communities in the current period of financial challenge. LMG are not aware of any specific issues the LGBT+ community is having accessing our service.

### Current work to ensure services are accessible to the LGBT+ community

LMG continue to work across public events, displays, exhibitions and adding new objects to the city's collections to increase representation.

For example, in March 2024 LMG hosted an event at Leeds City Museum to mark the 50th Anniversary of the First National Trans Conference in the UK, which happened in Leeds. In March 2024 LMG also hosted the National Day of Trans Collecting with the Museum of Transology, which LMG is a partner in. The Collector's Cabinet gallery at Leeds City Museum is currently hosting a display case looking at Yorkshire's transgender history.

### Gaps in Services and means of addressing these over 2024-2029

A lot of the LMG programme develops organically through connections with community partners. All the activity that took place over the course of the original LGBT+ Inclusive Leeds approach was not necessarily known about at the start of the five-year period. New opportunities will arise that LMG are not yet aware of in the next five years. This may include something which is then identified as a gap. The LMG strategic plan (2022-2027), Deepening Connections, Widening Impact sets a clear basis for the service's work. The mission is to:

'We work with communities to share stories from our past and present to shape a better future for the people of Leeds.' We want to ensure for example, that our collections, built heritage assets and the stories we tell are representative of, and relevant to, the communities of Leeds and beyond.



## Employment and Skills

### Key issues in supporting the LGBT+ community

Employment outcomes for Trans and Gender Non-Binary people should be better and there are specific challenges which impact their potential to access and sustain employment such as Employer discrimination, High levels of mental ill health, Workplace bullying and Extended work absences for those transitioning. The most common issues in supporting LGBT+ people into work, training, apprenticeships and Adult Education include:

- Previous negative experience of LGBT+ people in the workplace or educational establishment – negative comments, lack of diversity on interview panels, harassment/abuse and feeling excluded
- Negative experience in roles that are customer facing
- Ethnically diverse LGBT+ people at higher risk of physical assault
- LGBT+ staff losing their jobs due to being LGBT+
- LGBT+ people not feeling they can be their true selves in the workplace
- Fear of being 'outed'
- Little or no confidence in reporting abuse
- Not being addressed by their preferred name or pronoun
- Challenges in jobs that require uniforms
- Issues with toilets/changing rooms
- LGBT+ policies not put into practice by managers and complaints not being taken seriously

LGBT+ people can be wary of using Employment Support services due to concerns about disclosure, inappropriate questions, and being pushed into job roles that they don't feel comfortable with.

### Current work to ensure services are accessible to the LGBT+ community

The Employment & Skills Service is committed to raising the bar on inclusive recruitment, better jobs, and healthy workplaces through delivery of the [Future Talent Plan](#) and to supporting partners to utilise the [Fair Work Charter](#) to improve outcomes for all staff

All Adult Learning classes cover Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and Safeguarding in the first session which includes learning around British Values, tolerance and respect. Discussion helps learners to understand discrimination, how to be respectful of all others and how to use appropriate language.

The IAG and Wellbeing Service (part of Adult & Community Learning) offer support for mental health issues faced by LGBT+ people as a result of negative experiences in work or education.

Adult Learning staff have access to a pamphlet which contains information and links to organisations supporting LGBT+ people as well as mental health and wellbeing issues.

All staff across Employment and Skills have completed mandatory EDI training and all managers have attended the 'Be your best' EDI workshop and 5 steps approach. EDI goals have been set for all staff in appraisals. Managers have been encouraged to attend Unconscious Bias training and particularly apply this thinking in the recruitment process. Staff are all fully trained on Safeguarding procedures and how to report hate incidents.

Jobs fairs/other events are promoted and delivered in a way which encourages inclusivity and LGBT+ participation. Opportunities are made available via inclusion of LGBT+ organisations/charities on distribution lists.

The Service contributes to the development of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion dashboard across the Anchors Inclusive Network which will enable improved monitoring of equality and diversity data across all protected characteristics including LGBT+

Employment and Skills staff have had a presence at Leeds Pride, handed out service flyers and had conversations with LGBT+ people to explain the services they offer.

Employment and Skills staff operate from safe and welcoming buildings to ensure LGBT+ customers feel safe with the staff working there and fellow customers. Meetings are arranged in a room which allows for confidential disclosure or if a meeting takes place in a public place, there will be rooms available that can be used for confidential discussions.

Staff are aware through Insite of specific events and dates in relation to the LGBT+ community. Staff can consult the LGBT+ staff network for advice and guidance to support LGBT customers and/or the LGBT+ community and are welcome to participate as per all staff networks.

### **Gaps in Services and means of addressing these over 2024-2029**

Homophobic, biphobic and transphobic attitude still exist in the city – The service will encourage all staff to address homophobic, biphobic and transphobic attitudes amongst fellow staff, customers, learners, partner organisations, commissioned organisations and business across the city.

The team will encourage internal staff and staff working in partner organisations to attend LGBT+ related training as part of their CPD to avoid Staff unconscious bias. The service will provide guidance for managers on how to best support LGBT+ people in the workplace.

The team will ensure recruiting managers have completed unconscious bias training to increase inclusivity in recruitment and diversity within teams. This will include the promotion of opportunities to maximise exposure to LGBT+ community e.g. through LGBT+ staff networks, LGBT+ organisations and LGBT+ charities.

The team will support LGBT+ customers/learners who are victims of hate crime and/or harassment using training and experience to spot signs and encourage confidential discussion. The service will continue to instil British Values and safeguarding as part of all Adult Learning provision in the city, which was recently Ofsted rated as "Outstanding" in all areas.

The team will support employers in Leeds by providing information on training to support inclusion in the workplace. The service will also direct employers to organisations such as Stonewall for information about best practice. Employment and Skills will encourage employers to sign up for Mindful Employer status which acknowledges steps taken around positive in the workplace.

Employment and Skills will encourage employers to sign up to the Fair Work Charter which requires employers to ensure:

- inclusive pathways into employment including best practice inclusive recruitment practices plus career progression and flexible working arrangements available for all staff.
- the development of an employee consultation process to enable employees to have a voice within the organisation e.g. a “speak up guardian”, as well as good people management through regular one-to-one meetings.

They will encourage business Leeds to broaden their recruitment channels to seek out under-represented groups:

- Using apprenticeships, paid internships, or work experience to widen access to employment opportunities.
- Using methods such as mentoring, coaching, skills training and development to diversify the pipeline into leadership roles for current staff.
- Employment and Skills can use procurement and purchasing power to support businesses with diverse workforces or who are actively working to improve diversity. Reporting on diversity can be built into the commissioning process.

Employment and Skills will encourage managers within the service and partners/businesses in Leeds to provide access to relevant occupational health services that prevent illness and/or boost physical and mental health and provide access to training to increase awareness of how to improve physical and mental health and reduce any stigma. Active travel and/or practical action to reduce sedentary working habits will also be promoted.

Employment and Skills are a lead partner in the delivery of Financial Wellbeing sessions to city-wide employees. The team will also encourage businesses to provide resources and support to help with money management and future planning (e.g. by working with the Money and Pensions Service). They will promote and signpost employees to relevant local support services and organisations (e.g. Citizens Advice, Credit Unions) and provide other financial benefits to help with the cost of living (e.g., personal loans, cycle to work schemes, specialist financial planning advice, season ticket / travel card loans etc.).

## Active Leeds

### Key issues in supporting the LGBT+ community

At Kirkstall Leisure Centre Active Leeds had a LGBT+ swim have a regular booking in the pool on a Friday evening and due to us having male and female changing rooms and not even many cubicles within each changing room. The male for example has only two cubicles which is just a shower curtain. This was leading to complaints from the LGBT+ group due to not feeling comfortable getting changed in there and unfortunately there was a lot of complaints from customers during the swim before who were using the changing facilities at the same time.

The centre manager is looking to do more to rectify this issue and also extend the program to include fitness classes.

### Current work to ensure services are accessible to the LGBT+ community

The work Active Leeds are planning will support and education in relation to the Menopause journey linked to mindfulness and physical activity. Active Leeds will always link this work in with the LGBT+ Network to ensure they are gaining access to and are able to co-produce a product that suits the community in accessing the program.

The team are working on developing a feasibility study to research the psychosocial outcomes of strength training (ST) in perimenopausal individuals with senior lecturer Nova Deighton a Leeds Beckett University. Her involvement will ensure the women within the LGBT+ community are given the opportunity to be involved.

Active Leeds are currently looking at developing a dodgeball program aimed at younger people that identify as LGBT+. Similar to a program recently shared by Community Leisure UK ezine ([leisureopportunities.co.uk](http://leisureopportunities.co.uk)).

Through the work in the EDI working group Active Leeds ensure all guidance in relation to updates is visible by all leisure centre staff and remains fully up to date based on national legislation. Continue to review and revise the guidance on a 6 monthly basis.

Inclusive football tournament has been co-produced for anyone that identifies as female and we plan to deliver more regular tournaments that offer a place for cohesion between all people that identify as women.

The years that were affected by Covid, played a huge part in a disconnection, and led to a need go back over some of the work the service had already progressed in.

Active Leeds also found that people from all communities changed their priorities, so contacts are not all the same as they once were. There is also the issue with capacity on the team, which Active Leeds can address by sharing the work across all areas.

### Gaps in Services and means of addressing these over 2024-2029

An LGBT focus has not been taken forward as an individual priority area within the Physical Activity Ambition for the city, however this is currently being discussed within the planning

meetings. Active Leeds are looking at how they can ensure LGBT+ is embedded effectively across all the agreed priorities. Current priorities are current priorities are Get Set Leeds Local; Department of Transport; Workplace; Young Minds Get Active; and Ageing Well.

As Active Leeds are identifying more young people being referred onto the school mentoring program delivered through the "Positive Futures" they plan to create two separate group sessions where anyone receiving 121 supports can choose the LGBT+ specific group session or the generic group. Active Leeds currently only have the one group. This will be a cross council issue but must be recorded. Lack of funding and capacity will be a challenge. It is suggested to focus on one challenge or project theme at a time. Possibly a cross council theme per year. This will allow for more joint working and collaboration both internally and with external partners.

## Safer and Stronger Communities

The Equality team at Leeds City Council sits within the wider Safer Stronger Communities team. Below is an example of some of the work that Services within Safer Stronger and partners are involved to support the safety of the LGBT+ community.

### Key issues in supporting the LGBT+ community

#### Domestic Violence

National and local evidence tells us that LGBT+ victims-survivors of domestic violence and abuse (DVA) are not accessing support services, or being discussed at MARAC, at the same rate as others in the population. DVA is an under-reported crime across all population groups of victims-survivors and LGBT+ people face specific barriers to reporting to the police which are associated with gender identity and sexuality.

Services must be, and feel, inclusive to LGBT+ victims-survivors so that they can access support if they are experiencing DVA. Professionals should understand, recognise and respond appropriately to DVA in LGBT+ relationships so that victims-survivors feel comfortable to seek support/engage with services/report their experiences.

The Leeds LGBT+ Voices Project is further enhancing the DALPB's understanding of the key issues that services face in supporting LGBT+ victims-survivors of domestic violence and abuse, which will enable the partnership to continue to make improvements to strategy, policy and practice.

#### British Transport Police

BTP is the national police Service for the railway and communities. In Leeds it is on the doorstep of the LGBT+ community focused around Lower Briggate adjacent to the railway station. There is significant anecdotal evidence of under reporting of hate crime and in particular LGBT+ hate crime on the railway network.

#### West Yorkshire Police

West Yorkshire Police is determined to be an organisation representative of the communities it serves. Victims of crime come from a wide range of communities with a wide range of experiences and so it is essential officers and staff are just as diverse. WYP have a positive action programme in place which is designed to ensure they are representative of the LGBT+ community.

Engagement with communities, through external scrutiny of how West Yorkshire Police delivers its services, seeks to increase public understanding, confidence and trust in policing.

Scrutiny Panels allow members of the public to hold West Yorkshire Police to account via review of incidents, policing powers and tactics. Panel observations, feedback and recommendations facilitate continuous learning, improvement of police services and identification of best practice.

## **Hate Crime**

There is also significant under reporting of hate targeted at the LGBT+ community. As a means to encourage reporting, Hate Crime Coordinators at West Yorkshire Police have attended and presented at LGBT+ Hub meetings.

## **Trans Community Support**

The trans community are feeling particularly vulnerable and targeted in current discourse around their rights and in their feeling of safety. The Safer Stronger Communities continue to support working with the Trans community such as Trans Leeds through small grants for events around Trans Pride and Trans Day of Remembrance.

A trans awareness training session was also organised for partners by the Safer Stronger Communities team and delivered by West Yorkshire Police during Hate Crime Awareness Week.

## **Current work to ensure services are accessible to the LGBT+ community**

### **Domestic Violence**

The Voices Project is the mechanism for ensuring that victims-survivors of domestic violence and abuse have their voices heard, and that their experiences influence and improve service delivery in Leeds. The Voices Project has a direct link in to the Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board (DALPB), which is the board responsible for providing advice to the local authority on the delivery of its statutory duties under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. As such, the Voices Project is critical for ensuring that the voices of victims-survivors of domestic abuse have influence at a strategic level.

A number of groups operate under the Voices Project, including the Leeds LGBT+ Voices Project, which has fortnightly drop-in meetings where LGBT+ people can share their experiences of domestic abuse services in Leeds. Project workers are continually seeking to engage more people with the group to ensure that the needs and experiences of LGBT+ victims-survivors of domestic abuse are understood by the DALPB and reflected in policy and practice. The Project has been widely promoted including via gender outreach workers, Yorkshire MESMAC, Live Well Leeds, the LGBT Society at Leeds University Union and the Angels of Freedom to name a few.

### **British Transport Police**

Leeds NPT are working on a safer Hub at the station which will be accessible to all individuals who feel vulnerable at the station on entry into Leeds. BTP have secured a premises on the station and are awaiting any confirmation of funding and involved partners.

BTP have created the Guardians of the Railway App which provides another means of contacting BTP to report incidents. The app service also provides a list of contact numbers for support services for individuals who are victims and witness to crimes or may feel vulnerable when travelling on the railway.

Further to this the App provides a tracking service whereby individuals who are travelling on the railway can send an alert to a nominated family or friend who is chosen by the individual when they reach their end destination, to ensure individuals feel safer when travelling on the railway. The app also provides guidance for witnesses of incidents to be active bystanders when they witness an incident on the railway and how to safely intervene without putting themselves at risk or gather evidence so that the police can effectively identify and prosecute offenders.

Officers at the station continue to support the #westandtogether and regularly conduct engagement stands to raise awareness of this of the campaign.

Once the safe space is open at the station this will provide a safe zone for members of the LGBT+ community – this is something that is being worked on by officers now to try and open for Christmas 2024.

### **Angels of Freedom**

The Angels of Freedom are a community based organisation of volunteers brought together to provide compassionate support, tackle social isolation by promoting social engagement across our diverse communities, and reduce risk by highlighting safety initiatives to the LGBT+ communities in Leeds.

Through providing a visible presence on the Leeds LGBT+ bar scene most Friday evenings Angels of Freedom will provide a contact point for LGBT+ people to approach and seek advice on a range of issues and topics, including (but not limited to) personal safety, support agencies, social groups and signposting around the Freedom Quarter area of the city and beyond. Angels of Freedom partnership activities provide LGBT+ affirmative supported space for key partners to engage with and provide advice to community members.

Alongside this Friday activity Angels of Freedom work closely with other grassroots groups to promote social and support opportunities, and cross support opportunities and events in recognition of the diverse range of people within our communities – larger scale community participation events are hosted annually around LGBT+ History Month, IDAHOBiT, Leeds Pride and Christmas, with 2 regular monthly social & support events (social café and scene social).

Since 2022 Angels of Freedom have a significantly developing area of work in supporting LGBT+ people within the asylum process across West Yorkshire, tackling their isolation, addressing their trauma experience and supporting friendship developments with the local settled LGBT+ communities. This includes support to engage with sports and physical activities, particularly badminton with The Bad Mittens and a weekly football training session delivered in partnership with the Leeds United Foundation.

### **LGBT+ Community Safety Survey**

Work on compiling the first co-produced Leeds LGBT+ Community Safety Survey began in January 2024, with Leeds City Council Safer Leeds staff and LGBT+ community group representatives. This included looking at good practice nationally, and the work Stonewall had undertaken (pre-covid). It was designed for LGBT+ communities who live, work or visit Leeds



(city wide) and the ask was for people to answer the questions based on their personal and lived experience. The aim was to help improve understanding of what collectively Safer Stronger Communities team and partners can do or do better, to make Leeds a truly LGBTQ+ Safe and Inclusive City

The survey was published online in February 2024 and formally launched at the Angels of Freedom LGBTQ+ Market Place event and promoted widely through networks and various platforms. The survey closed at the end of March 2024 and is currently being analysed. There were 412 partial completions and 514 full completions. The initial target was 500.

### **Our Safe Places Project**

With a focus on working with and for communities in the Priority Neighbourhoods, the aim of Our\_SafeSpaces project is to improve #BeSafeFeelSafe awareness, perceptions and understanding of community safety by:

- Building on existing community-based initiatives, i.e., look to roll out schemes such as, Ask for Angela Leeds, WalkSafe app and Active Bystanders.
- Ensure safe spaces have relevant up to date information and signposting information is up to date and maintained, both in place/ premise and online.

### **West Yorkshire Police**

West Yorkshire Police is dedicated to serving all communities well and recognise there are bespoke needs in the service they provide to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender+ (LGBT+) people. WYP strive to improve their services in consultation with LGBT+ community members, police officers and police staff to make sure that when LGBT+ community members contact us they are treated with fairness, integrity and respect. To help achieve this every member of staff is doing LGBT+ training designed by LGBT+ people.

One of the initiatives WYP support is promotion and attendance at the West Yorkshire Police 'LGBT+ Hate Crime scrutiny panel' sessions, which are essentially engagement sessions facilitated by the Hate Crime coordinators of the police and open for attendance by anyone from the community. During these sessions the group review cases of reported LGBT+ Hate Crime, with the (anonymised) details of case records and actions of the police being discussed in order for constructive feedback, highlighting any concerns, discussion of police processes and suggestions of potential improvements.

### **Third Party Reporting**

Over the past year the Safer Stronger Communities team at Leeds City Council have been working in partnership with Stop Hate UK to reestablish a network of Third Party reporting centres in Leeds.

Third Party Reporting Centres provide people with an alternative way to report a hate crime or incident other than going to the Police. They give confidential advice to victims of hate, help people report hate crime to the Police on their behalf if they choose and support people in other ways such as signposting to support agencies. The relaunch of the Third Party

Reporting Centres forms a key part of the Leeds Hate Crime Strategy strand of work around improving options for reporting in the city.

Reporting centres include Citizens Advice Leeds, Unity Housing Association, Mesmac for LGBT+ related hate and United Response for disability related hate. All Leeds City Council Community Hubs and Libraries also act as Third Party Reporting centres. A full list of the reporting centres can be found here.

## Gaps in Services and means of addressing these over 2024-2029

### Domestic Violence

Nationally, there are only a small number of specialist LGBT+ domestic violence services and Leeds, like many others, does not have a specific DVA service for LGBT+ victims-survivors. Therefore, it is critical that we have an inclusive system response.

Through the Domestic Violence and Abuse and Strategy 2023-28, the team will continue to listen to the voices of LGBT+ victims-survivors through our Voices Project (and other feedback mechanisms as appropriate) and continue to improve the immediate and long-term support available to all those living with domestic violence and abuse.

In consultation with victims-survivors and many organisations that work together to respond to domestic abuse, the strategy identifies four key areas of focus, namely:

- Awareness, prevention and early intervention
- Responding to risk and harm
- People causing harm (perpetrators)
- Children and young people

### British Transport Police

BTP have not identified any new gaps in terms of providing services to the LGBT+ community, and have aimed to improve the service to the community by the introduction of the Railway Guardians App.

Once the safe space is open at the station this will provide a safe zone for members of the LGBT+ community – this is something that is being worked on by officers now to try and open for Christmas.

### LGBT+ Community Survey

The results/findings will be shared initially with the LGBT+ community with the LGBT+ Hub in May 2024 as well as at the IDAHOBIT May 2024 event, being organised by the Angels of Freedom. Members of the Task and Finish group will present and facilitate a safe space reflective conversations on the findings - this will be first and foremost with the community.

Following the IDAHoBIT event the group are looking to establish a LGBT+ Community Safety Influence & Change Board to take forward a collaborative and co-ordinated approach, with Board members being 'connectors' and 'enablers' who can inform and influence services, be

these statutory, voluntary and/ or businesses, by listening, reflecting, learning, acting & reviewing change.

In addition, this will include on going dialogue and communications as part of the Big LGBT+ Conversation during 2024/25.

### **LGBT+ Community Venue**

The establishment of a LGBT+ community venue has been a long standing aim of the LGBT+ community and a gap in services for the LGBT+ community to date. The Pride of Place organisation are currently leading on a piece of work to establish a venue. With support from the Safer Stronger Communities team and business owners in the LGBT+ community a venue has been identified with the aim that that Pride of Place will be operating from the building later in 2024.