

pride



Campaigning Guide

n u s | g b t



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This briefing contains ideas of what you can do to campaign around pride, tips on how to organise a pride, case studies of campaigns and events that have been run at prides, model motions that you can put to your LGBT Groups or students' union councils to support Pride and a list of useful contacts and links for further information and support.

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Introduction

The History of Pride

Pride started as a protest. The parades and marches that we see now come from the protest marches of the first prides. LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans) people and their friends marched because it was commonplace for people to think that LGBT people shouldn't openly walk down the street, so in protest against this, they did!

The first prides were held as commemorations of the Stonewall Riots that happened in 1969, in New York. Prides are commemorations of those Riots, which helped create an LGBT movement.

The first Pride in the UK was 1972, in London. Since then, prides have grown in number and size. But it's not all good. The politics has disappeared from many prides, protests have become parades and rallies have become parties. Some prides charge groups to join in pride marches, and at some prides the main events are fenced off and charge entry.

Prides Internationally

Whilst some international prides are still going strong, in others the case is different. Moscow Pride has been banned on numerous occasions and a number of prides within Europe have been protested against and/or attacked by homophobic groups.

Why does NUS LGBT Campaign about Pride?

The NUS LGBT Campaign believe that politics still has a place in Pride, and we want to see prides continue to play a vital role in the campaigns ran to support the LGBT community. We also believe that pride should be community-led and accessible to the whole community. We believe that whilst Pride should be a celebration and fun, this shouldn't be at the cost of the politics and community. We believe Pride should be able to combine the two by enabling people to both celebrate and demonstrate.

Our policy on Pride can be found in the NUS LGBT Policy Document on our website:

http://www.nusconnect.org.uk/pageassets/about/policy/LGBTPolicy_2006_10.pdf



What should a good modern pride look like?

The checklist

Celebrating:

Prides should be fun and it should celebrate everything our movement has achieved.

Political:

Prides should be political. This could be in the form of making political demands, highlighting any campaigns to raise awareness or create change for LGBT People, standing in solidarity with movements and prides internationally, or challenging homophobia in the community - or you can do all of them!

Community led:

A really good pride event won't just be aimed at the community, it will be led by the community as well, with anyone being able to input ideas on how the pride is run and organised.

Accessible:

Prides should be accessible to everyone, and by 'accessible' that doesn't just mean making prides accessible to people who are disabled, but also making it free (or large parts of it free) so that people with little or no money can still be a part of pride. It also means creating a family-friendly environment, so that families and parents can come with their children and enjoy pride too.

March:

Prides were started and built around marches, and it's still important to have them. By marching through the streets we reclaim that space. Make sure the march is open to all people who wish to join and has space for the community and politics – a pride march needs to be more than an advertising parade for businesses and local gay bars!

Charity fundraising:

Prides can also be a good opportunity to try and raise money for local charities or international causes, if you have the ability to.

Social events/entertainment:

A pride should always be fun and there is nothing wrong with having large social events at a pride. Pride isn't just about the protest, it's also about providing a safe space for LGBT people to have fun and be themselves.



How can we campaign on Pride?

The first thing to do is to figure out what the pride in your area is like (if you have one in your area). How does it match what an ideal pride should look like? If there are things missing, that's where campaigning and organising can come in. So, for example, if you have a good pride where there is no march, you could organise a march to go alongside the other events. If your pride charges people to be in the main area and has no free space, you can campaign for it to be free. If you have a pride which is missing some politics, you can campaign for a political theme for the next pride and/or organise a political event yourselves.

Organising an event

You could organise a talk, panel debate, workshop, film showing, a picnic, a fundraising event – there are loads of possibilities!

Depending on what your pride is like, you may want to have it as an alternative event or within the pride itself. If you want to do the latter, you could contact the organisers of the pride and offer to 'host' an event.

Here are examples to give you an idea of what some places have done, some tips on how you could adopt these ideas and an opportunity for you to think about what you could do in your area.

Enter into a pride march

If your pride has a march already, enter into it, get all the student groups in the area together and march. Get some banners and/or placards, dress up, or have a theme.

Look at what students at Birmingham and Leeds prides have done.

Case Study: Birmingham: Reclaim Hurst Street (2009)

Birmingham LGBT students organised a march as an entry into the parade with placards, banners and chants, to show that Pride is a protest. The LGBT student groups then teamed up with arts student groups on running a stall in the community area where they offered materials and information and ran activities for people to participate in, such as face-painting.

In the evening, they organised a Love Music Hate Homophobia club night, which raised money for Unite Against Fascism to use on LGBT specific anti BNP/Fascist campaigning. Tickets were available at an affordable price.

Case Study: Leeds: Student March entry at Leeds Pride (2009)

The students from the Leeds and Leeds Metropolitan Universities worked together to organise an entry into the march, complete with banners and chants. However, the best bit was a political milk float – the 'Harvey Milk float' - which was decorated with slogans and placards.



Organising a pride march

This may seem like hard work, but it doesn't have to be. Students at Birmingham pulled it off brilliantly!

Things you need to do

1. Get permission

You will need to get permission from the police if you wish to march. As a part of this, you will probably need to organise some stewards (volunteers who will help keep the march together, moving and on route).

2. Get the community on board

For a pride march, you need to get lots of people involved, not just on the day, but in organising it as well. Try having open organising meetings. Publicise the meetings and invite trade unions and community groups along to them.

3. Banners/placards/costumes

Placards and banners are easy, cheap and fun to make. Organise a placard and banner-making event and invite lots of people to it. It's a good way to get people involved and will also help build for the march.

4. Have a theme

This isn't essential, but it can be good. Birmingham pride had a theme one year of a timeline of the gay rights movement, so near the front there was an entry dressed up like the rioters and police of the stonewall riots, and another was themed around civil partnerships. If you have a theme the important thing is to keep it political and relevant.

5. Think about where and how it will end

If there is a current event for your pride, march to that event. Whether you march or not, it is a good idea to try and end the event with some speeches.

6. Have fun!

Remember, keeping it political doesn't mean it can't be fun!


Case Study: Birmingham: Pride is a Protest (2008)

In 2008, the parade at Birmingham Pride was cancelled. Students from University of Birmingham Guild of Students LGBT decided to organise a march themselves. Under the banner of 'Pride is a Protest' over 300 people marched through the streets of the city centre of Birmingham, making it clear that Pride IS a Protest.

Organising a pride

The main thing to remember about setting up a pride is that size isn't everything. A good pride should be judged on what it does, not its size.

If you think you can organise a march, then why not organise one? You can have a main event that can be anything: a picnic, music outside, stalls, etc. Just remember, it should be accessible and free. You will probably need to cover your costs. The best way to do this is to ask for donations, that way people who cannot afford entry cost can still be a part of it, and those who can will probably give some money. You can have a suggested donation for waged,



low-waged and concessions, making sure you're suggesting people pay what they can afford. Look at what Reclaim the Scene did for some ideas (Pages 8-9).

If you organise a brand new pride, it's most likely going to be on a small scale at first (which is by no means a bad thing!).

Things to think about:

1. Where and when

Think about what other events are on nationally and locally. You should try not to clash with anything you think people that you want to come to your pride will be likely to go to in large numbers.

2. Organising

You are going to need a group of people who are willing to devote time and energy into organising the event. From preparation to media coverage, make sure you have a good core group that can devote a lot of time, whilst also getting lots of others involved who can help out when and where they can.

3. Funding

There will no doubt be costs. Think about how you can raise the funds to cover costs. You may be able to apply for funds from your students' union, institution or local authority. It is also worth asking trade unions and local community organisations for support.

There is also direct fundraising, such as organising a raffle, or doing some cake bakes/sales, or even a fundraising comedy night or gig, the latter being a good way to build up attention for the pride itself. You can also try and make some money back on the day by asking for donations on the day.

Also, see what you can get for free. If you're having food, some local shops and allotments might be willing to provide you with some. You might also be able to get other materials donated to you.

4. Community support

Community support is essential. Not only would it be extremely difficult to organise a pride without some support from the LGBT community, it would also not be completely in the spirit of what pride is about. Make sure you talk to LGBT community figures, trade unions, youth groups, charities, LGBT venues, the local council, etc.

When you start planning, it would be a good idea to make sure you have a few community people on board. You can advertise an open public meeting to organise the planning of your pride. That way, anyone in the community can be involved, whether they are a member of an organisation or not.

5. Press

You will obviously want as much press attention as possible. Get some press releases/articles written and send them out to all local and some national media before the event. Check out the guides on writing a press release on the NUS Connect Website. Remember to take lots of photos and videos of anything you organise, so you can use them to publicise what you have done afterwards.

6. Don't be afraid to ask for help!

Organising a pride is no small challenge, so don't be afraid to ask for help. The officers and committee of the NUS LGBT Campaign will be more than happy to help you plan, organise and give advice on what you are planning.



Case Study: London: Hackney Pride (2010)

Hackney Pride was set up in response to a number of homophobic incidents in the area. It was community-led and political. It was organised solely by volunteers from the community. Planning started in the kitchens and back yards of squatters and sex workers, who ended up liaising with police over the route and other procedural areas.

It featured a Pride protest march through Hackney, ending in a rally and speeches. Around 800 people attended.

Case Study: Oldham: Oldham Pride

Oldham Pride has been going for 6 years. It is a smaller pride, with community focused events. It starts with some speeches, followed by a march through Oldham town centre and ending in a community space with events, stalls, entertainment and a children's area. And it is all **completely free**.

Challenging homophobia at pride

Prides have a large focus, and sometimes that attracts those who oppose the LGBT movement. At some prides, homophobic groups picket and demonstrate at the marches and/or the parade. It's important that we don't let such homophobic groups go unchallenged.

Case Study: Manchester: Reclaim the Scene – Angel Action (2010)

In 2010, the activists of Reclaim the Scene ran similar events to the previous year. In addition, they organised direct action against a homophobic Christian group that picket Manchester Pride every year. They worked with Quakers, who were also planning to challenge the group.


The group took inspiration from a bit of peaceful direct action that was used against the Westboro Church in America. That stunt involved activists wearing angel costumes, using large sheet 'wings' that blocked out the signs and placards carried by members of the Westboro Church. At Manchester Reclaim the Scene, they made similar costumes and stood in front of the protesters to block out their homophobic signs from the view of the pride marchers and onlookers.

Challenging de-politicisation and commercialisation of Pride

Many of the tactics and ideas above are good options for engaging in Pride and trying to make it more political. Some prides are very heavily commercialised and need to be directly challenged on how they operate and on what political focus is.

Case Study: Manchester: Reclaim the Scene (2009)

Reclaim the Scene was a group that was set up by students in Salford and Manchester, as well as NUS LGBT Campaign committee members. Those involved in Reclaim the Scene were students, youth groups, trade unionists and independent activists. They were campaigning to change how Manchester Pride was organised.



What they campaigned for: The group had long-term aims of making pride more political, for it to be free and accessible and for more community control. They later made some short-term aims to try and win on, whilst continuing to fight for their long-term objectives.

Leaflets: Reclaim the scene teamed up with UNISON to create and distribute 10,000 leaflets, which discussed the problems with pride and what people could do about it.

March: There was an entry into the pride parade under the title of Reclaim the Scene – Pride is a Protest. A secondary theme was the Stonewall Riots, to mark the anniversary of the event. Students and allies marched with placards and banners and chanted slogans.

Picnic: A large picnic with free food and entertainment took place on the day. Between 200-300 people attended. The picnic had poetry, live music, film showings, stalls for political and community groups, political talks and discussions, a bar and a DJ. The picnic also collected money, fundraising for LGBT safe houses in Iraq.

Ideas for new prides

When we discussed prides at our NUS LGBT Campaign Activist Days, here are some of the ideas people came up with.

Pride at the beach - an idea for a potential pride for Aberystwyth was to have the main pride events on the beach.

Timeline march - similar to what has happened in the past at Birmingham Pride, delegates came up with the idea of a pride march that visually represented a timeline of the LGBT movement's history.

Ideas for campaigning at current prides

Workshops - Organising workshops to go alongside or be a part of the main pride itself, to introduce more politics into the event. From looking at the History of Pride, to exploring why Pride should be a protest, to looking at the rise and history of the LGBT Movement, there are many options as to what your workshop could be about.

Organising a March - At one pride, which was large and still free but had no march, people came up with the idea of organising their own march to complement the pride.

Campaigning for more family events - At another pride it was felt that there were not enough activities and events for families and those with caring responsibilities. As this was identified as an issue, it was an area to lobby the pride organizers on to change and make the event more accessible.

Campaigning to keep a pride free - Some delegates from prides which were free of charge said that they had heard rumours of charges being brought in for the future. Campaigning to keep those prides free is a very good action to take.



Model motions

Model One: Reclaiming Pride (or) Pride is a Protest

This union/council believes

- 1.) That pride is at its core a protest; prides were originally founded as protests for LGBT and Queer liberation.
- 2.) Prides should be accessible and be community led, their agenda should be political and supportive, not profit making.

This union/council further believes

- 1.) That many prides are becoming increasingly de-politicised.
- 2.) Some prides now charge groups to join the march/parade.
- 3.) Many prides in the UK have become commercialised and are dominated by businesses. Some prides have little input, accountability or control from the LGBT community at large.

This union/council resolves

- 1.) To oppose any current or planned charging for entry into pride marches/parades.
- 2.) To campaign against the commercialisation of prides, and campaign for prides to be accessible and be community-led.
- 3.) To support our local prides where they exist even if we campaign against how they are organised, and support LGBT students to mobilise and engage at Pride festivals.

Model Two: March with Pride

This union/council believes

- 1.) That the (insert name of area here) Pride march takes place each year.
- 2.) That students play a key role in many LGBT campaigns.

This union/council further believes

- 1.) That political slogans need to be raised at Pride marches.
- 2.) That it is important for the Students Union to show support for LGBT students and the LGBT community and movement.

This union/council resolves

- 1.) To join the (name of area) Pride march with a Students' Union entry in the march with the Students' Union banner.
- 2.) For this to be led by LGBT students with the full support of the Students' Union.
- 3.) To include political slogans and/or placards in the march entry.



Contact details and links

NUS LGBT

NUS LGBT Campaign

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w: www.nusconnect.org.uk/campaigns/lgbt/

facebook: www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=2220291418

twitter: www.twitter.com/NUS_LGBT

Reclaim the Scene

t: 07919 323 936 e: team@reclaimthescene.com

w: www.reclaimthescene.com/

facebook: www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=83253503506

Hackney Pride

t: 07587 584 989 e: hello@outeast.org.uk

w: www.outeast.org.uk

facebook: www.facebook.com/pages/OUT-EAST/128457773840337

Oldham Pride

Oldham Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans Forum

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w: www.oldhampride2009.blogspot.com/

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TUC

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