

The Hillingdon LGBTQ+ Initiative is intended to support staff, residents and service users to be heard, validated and supported in the workplace, at home and in the community. It is underpinned by three key objectives:

- To inform and educate staff in all services about the LGBTQ+ community
- To support the organisation in the development of LGBTQ+ policies and inclusivity in practice
- To strengthen community relations to support the LGBTQ+ community in the Hillingdon borough

The people with protected characteristics most affected by the initiative are:

- Older Adults
- Adults
- Children
- People with mental health difficulties
- People with learning disabilities
- Carers/Care givers

Introduction / Background

The Hillingdon LGBTQ+ Initiative is an umbrella term for all ongoing work taking place inside and outside of the local authority to support LGBTQ+ Community staff and residents (including allies).

What was the equality issue?

- No staff network for LGBTQ+ employees (and allies) to connect
- No face-to-face training specifically around the LGBTQ+ community
- No representation during annual LGBTQ+ celebration months (i.e. history month and pride month)
- No networking events geared towards LGBTQ+ safety in the community
- A lack of safe spaces in-borough for the LGBTQ+ community (and allies) to access information, advice and support

How was this addressed?

The Hillingdon LGBTQ+ Initiative have addressed the above issues in the following ways:

- Hillingdon LGBTQ+ Staff Group
- Hillingdon LGBTQ+ Borough Network
- Hillingdon LGBTQ+ Police Walk, Talk & Do community events
- LGBTQ+ Awareness Sessions in Adult Social Care
- LGBTQ+ Awareness Sessions for External Organisations
- Annual "Flying the Flag" during LGBTQ+ Pride Month (June)

- Academic teaching at New Buckinghamshire University for social work apprentices
- Representation in Proud London Councils monthly meetings
- Pride Hub Hillingdon (Free Information and Advice Service)

What was the outcome?

Hillingdon LGBTQ+ Staff Group

Founded during the coronavirus pandemic, this was the first staff group to be launched within the local authority. The initial aim of the group was to educate and inform staff around LGBTQ+ issues by hosting group sessions with speakers from charities and people with lived in experiences. The groups have since evolved since 2020, the staff group have in total 43 members (3 of which are Mental Health First Aiders), with 10 core group members that meet every month to network and share ideas on how the local authority can be a more inclusive workplace where employees can bring their most authentic selves to work.

Through the LGBTQ+ staff group the standard rainbow flag representing the LGBTQ+ community has flown for 4 consecutive years outside of the civic centre, a photo opportunity with the Leader of the council and the Chief Executive takes place every year. In 2025, the flag will be flown for a full week to commemorate Pride Month, this year the staff group have arranged a coffee and cake event in the Oasis café to continue the celebrations. The staff group has also been involved in updating the local authority's Special Leave Policy. The staff group in the past have held events for LGBTQ+ history month.

Hillingdon LGBTQ+ Borough Network

The borough network consists of 18 members across different organisations within the borough e.g. NHS, Children's targeted programmes, libraries, Brunel University, police etc. The aim of the group is to strengthen community networks to support the LGBTQ+ community on a local level. Through this network there have been events set up for Pride Month and an opportunity to share ideas to collaboratively work together to host future LGBTQ+ events.

Hillingdon LGBTQ+ Police Walk, Talk & Do Community Events

Working jointly with police, the local authority has arranged 4 LGBTQ+ walk, talk & do events within the community at different venues. The aim of the events is to give residents the opportunity to meet with police officers to discuss issues facing the LGBTQ+ community and to provide information and resources around hate crime and general community safety.

LGBTQ+ Awareness Sessions in Adult Social Care

Training has been provided to the Sustained Support Service in adult social care during a monthly all service meeting. An LGBTQ+ bitesize session has also been arranged on 05/08/2025. The aim of these sessions is to develop social worker's skills and knowledge when working with vulnerable adults who identify as part of the LGBTQ+ community.

LGBTQ+ Awareness Sessions for External Organisations

The Hillingdon LGBTQ+ Initiative gives external providers the opportunity to have LGBTQ+ awareness training. In 2025, training has been provided to the Ability Floating Support Service and the NHS England Social Prescribing Service will receive their training on 28/07/2025. This will give the opportunity for external providers to learn how to support their LGBTQ+ service users when providing care and support.

Academic teaching at New Buckinghamshire University for social work apprentices

The university has agreed for annual LGBTQ+ learning to social work apprentices in their third year of teaching. This provides social work apprentices working in the local authority the chance to learn about the LGBTQ+ community in an academic setting in addition to on-the-job training.

Pride Hub Hillingdon (Free Information and Advice Service)

Pride Hub Hillingdon is a safe space that offers free face-to-face sessions to talk about everything and anything in relation to the LGBTQ+ Community. Pride Hub Hillingdon is open to anyone from the LGBTQ+ Community and also available to allies (family, friends, caregivers etc.). Pride Hub Hillingdon aims to provide resources, advice and signposting to relevant services across Hillingdon and surrounding London areas. All face-to-face sessions are currently taking place one Saturday per month in local libraries across the Hillingdon borough. F2F sessions will take place from 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM with an opportunity for walk ins from 2:00 - 3:00 PM (depending on availability).