

Pride Month factsheet

Pride Month is an annual month-long celebration of all identities which come under the LGBTQ+ umbrella. It's about self-love, celebration of achievements, education, protest and allyship. This factsheet will answer some frequently asked questions about Pride Month and help you think about how your organisation can get involved.

What's the history of Pride Month?

The first Pride, in June 1970, marked the anniversary of the uprising at New York's Stonewall Inn, famously known as the Stonewall Riots. Its patrons were some of the poorest and most marginalised in society: drag queens, trans people, gay men, lesbians, sex workers and homeless youth. Police raids on gay bars at the time were routine but, this time in June 1969, the police lost control of the situation and the Stonewall patrons fought back, with the action lasting several nights. Although the Stonewall Riots was not the first incident in which the LGBTQ+ community had fought back against the police, it is still widely viewed as a pivotal point in the LGBTQ+ rights movement.

Who is the 'Mother of Pride'?

Brenda Howard was a bisexual activist, who is known as the 'Mother of Pride', for her role in organising 'Gay Pride Week' and the first march in 1970. Howard conceptualised and coordinated the pride rally known as the Christopher Street Liberation Day March (where the Stonewall Inn is based) which later transformed into NYC Pride. The first Pride march was later established in the UK in London in 1972. This was the origin of the celebrations which have expanded and grown into the Pride Month we know today.

How is Pride celebrated?

Pride is celebrated across the UK, in many different ways, ranging from small events and workshops to larger festivals. Most cities hold a Pride Parade which involves communities marching together, colourful floats and performers who are from, or allies of, the LGBTQ+ community. Not only is Pride a time for celebration, but many use this focus on the LGBTQ+ community as an opportunity to draw attention to ongoing rights battles, through protest and demonstrations.

I want to be an ally to the LGBTQ+ community, can I get involved?

Absolutely! Pride is for everyone, and the community always values more allies. Just make sure you're aware of the space that you're taking up, and that this month is centred around celebrating those within the community and amplifying the voices of others.

What's the difference between LGBTQ+ History Month and Pride Month?

LGBTQ+ History Month is held in February in the UK to commemorate the abolition of Section 28 in 2003. Section 28 prohibited the "promotion of homosexuality" by local authorities. This meant from 1988 to 2003, talking about the LGBTQ+ community in schools was banned. Once this ban was lifted, the focus was on **education** and sharing the history of the LGBTQ+ civil rights movements. On the other hand, the focus of Pride Month began as a **celebration** of the LGBTQ+ community. Although there is a slight difference in why they were started, both are really great opportunities for reflection, education and celebration.

What is rainbow washing?

Over the past few years, there has been an increase in public criticism of the phenomenon of 'rainbow washing'. During Pride Month, we'll often see a wave of rainbow colours and flags taking over buildings, offices, organisations, and social media. It's fantastic to see this support of the LGBTQ+ community, but what is going on behind the distraction of bright colours? It's important

we hold our organisations accountable and are doing the work behind the scenes too.

What can employers do?

- Consult your LGBTQ+ Staff Network – find out what they want to see happen in your organisation
- Spotlight and celebrate members of the LGBTQ+ community – whether that's famous icons, or those within your organisation (*with permission*)
- Get involved in your local Pride march – visibly supporting the community in your local area
- Educate colleagues on the history of Pride Month
- Check out our LGBTQ+ guides, blogs, resources and podcasts for more information and ideas

Resources

<https://www.britannica.com/video/216821/Overview-June-Pride-Month-origins-LGBTQ-activism>

<https://www.them.us/story/the-complete-history-of-pride>

<https://www.them.us/story/brenda-howard>