

MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

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Pride in Trafford announces 2026 festival celebrating LGBTQ+ artists, stories and communities

Tue 12 – Sun 17 May 2026 | prideintrafford.org

Now in its eighth year, Pride in Trafford returns this May with an ambitious, jam-packed six-day programme, uniting artists, performers and audiences for a dynamic celebration of LGBTQ+ arts, creativity and community.

Taking place across Waterside in Sale, Trafford, the six-day festival **running from Tuesday 12 – Sunday 17 May**, brings together an exciting line-up of performances, exhibitions and events that explore identity, creativity and belonging. From powerful theatre and cabaret to family celebrations and community gatherings, Pride in Trafford continues to champion queer voices while creating welcoming spaces for everyone to celebrate Pride together.

The official festival launch for **Pride in Trafford** will take place on Waterside Plaza on Tuesday 12 May with speeches, poetry and song as the Pride Flag is raised to mark the beginning of Pride in Trafford 2026.

Youth Pride on Wednesday 13 May is a creative celebration for young people from across Trafford to take part in activities designed to amplify youth voices and create welcoming spaces for connection and expression.

The festival's performance programme celebrates both local talent and nationally recognised artists. Acclaimed performer **Jonny Woo** brings **Suburbia**, an electrifying performance combining spoken word, storytelling and rave culture. Other performances include **Love Me Like a Chai Tea Latte**, a powerful one-person theatre show exploring themes of racism, love and family; **Hasbian**, a sharp and funny queer coming-of-age comedy and **Copla: A Spanish Cabaret** - drama, humour and musical flair combine to present a celebration of Spain's iconic song tradition.

HomoGrown brings together an exciting showcase of LGBTQ+ performers from Greater Manchester, creating a platform for homegrown artists to share their work and celebrate the creativity within the region's queer communities. Artists performing at HomoGrown will be: **Aisha Akram, Bay Bryan, AJ LeRoy, SEZBENNY, Lauren Temple, Tom Wills, ZOLATEC** and hosted by comedian **Ciara O'Connor**.

Also returning to Pride in Trafford is **A Northern Tr*nnny Hootenanny** by **Hunter King**, a Waterside Arts & Creative Industries Trafford commission. This uplifting queer parody musical invites audiences on Hunter's gender journey of self-discovery through humour, music and storytelling.

Queer and autistic author, **Anna Zoe Quirke**, will be talking about their book **Something to be Proud Of** in Sale Library on Thursday 14 May. They write about mental health, disability, and everything LGBTQ+. Their debut novel, *Something to be Proud Of*, was published with Little Tiger in 2024 and nominated for the Carnegie Award in 2025.

Alongside performances, Pride in Trafford provides opportunities for creatives and communities to connect. The **Queer Arts North Open Forum** on Friday 15 May invites artists, organisations and audiences to join conversations about LGBTQ+ arts and culture across the region, with panellists **Maz Hedgehog** and **Ben Saunders**.

For those looking to take part themselves, the festival will host a **Queer Diary Open Mic** night, inviting audiences to step up and share their voices in a supportive and celebratory environment, while the **Adult Open Level Dance Workshop** led by the incredible **Night People** will encourage participants to celebrate Pride through movement and dance.

The festival's much-loved **Block Party** returns on Saturday 16 May for a full day of free outdoor and indoor celebrations in the heart of Sale. The event will feature live music performances on the **Village Green** including **Queen Bayard**, **The Cequin Circus**, **Claire Pilling** and **Ruth Welch**; **Mini Pride** for LGBTQ+ families; **Lip Sync Brawl** - an unforgettable competition combining the spectacle of live music with the fun of lip sync performance; as well as **The Village** - packed with charities, organisations and community groups supporting LGBTQ+ people across Trafford and Greater Manchester.

Inside, a **Drag King Workshop** will invite participants to learn the fundamentals of drag king performance, exploring character creation, movement and confidence on stage in a fun and supportive environment; **zine-making workshops** offer the chance to take part in something creative inspired by Pride, identity and community; and the **Manchester Queer Art Market** will showcase stalls from talented queer artists and makers.

The Saturday festivities will conclude with a celebratory club night, **The Stretford Wives Club** - a vibrant party celebrating lesbian culture across generations and featuring **Gay*Gs** and **Saturday Night Diva** as well as DJs **Sequinella** and **Susan Kerr**.

In an exciting addition to Pride in Trafford will be a new collaboration with **The Northern Lights Cinema** to present special film screenings of **Departures** and **The Adventures of Priscilla Queen of the Desert** at their cinemas in Sale and Stretford on Friday 15, Saturday 16 and Sunday 17 May.

Throughout the festival, visitors can also experience a programme of exhibitions exploring LGBTQ+ history, activism and identity, including **Before We Were Proud**, highlighting the personal histories of LGBTQ+ people before decriminalisation; **The Pansy Project**, documenting acts of resistance against homophobic and transphobic abuse; and **Transitions in Thread**, an exhibition celebrating trans identity through textile art.

Producer for Pride in Trafford and Venue Manager, Waterside, **Darren Adams** comments:

“Supporting LGBTQ+ artists and providing platforms for queer stories has always been at the heart of Pride in Trafford. Eight years of queer joy, eight years of LGBTQ+ creativity, and eight years of putting artists at the centre of everything we do have shaped the festival into what it is today. Each year, we bring together an inspiring mix of performances, creative activity and community celebration that reflects the richness and diversity of LGBTQ+ culture.”

Councillor Eve Parker, Trafford Council’s Executive Member for Leisure, Arts, Culture & Heritage adds:

“Pride in Trafford is a powerful celebration of our borough’s diversity, creativity and community spirit. I am proud to support a festival that not only champions LGBTQ+ voices and talent but also brings people together in a shared message of inclusion, respect and joy. At a time when visibility and allyship matter more than ever, Pride in Trafford plays a vital role in creating a welcoming space for everyone, and I encourage residents and visitors alike to be part of this vibrant programme.”

Pride in Trafford runs from Tuesday 12 May until Sunday 17 May 2026.

Tickets and full programme details are available at prideintrafford.org

PR:

For further information or images please contact:

Claire Saville / Emily Lyons marketing@watersidearts.org or 0161 912 5616

Images: [Pride in Trafford 2026 - Google Drive](#)

LISTINGS – see separate document

ABOUT PRIDE IN TRAFFORD

Pride in Trafford explores and celebrates both identity and LGBTQ+ life in Trafford. The work aims to challenge and entertain, taking a queer art focus over a more traditional pride format.



WATERSIDE

The inaugural Pride in Trafford took place in 2019, with a strong commitment to diversity, telling stories and celebrating artists many of which are often under-represented and has since grown and developed into an important festival for Trafford and Greater Manchester attracting over 4000 people annually.

The festival has become a driver for the creation of new work by LGBTQ+ artists and has supported artists such as Sam Danson's *BI-TOPIA*, Hunter King's *A Northern Tr*nnny Hootenanny* and Holly Redford-Jones' *I Was Dancing in the Lesbian Bar*, Violet Blonde and Cheddar Gorgeous.

Our Vision

A place where LGBTQ+ people are visible, celebrated and able to live with pride, belonging and equality.

Our Mission

To bring communities together through Pride events, creative programmes and public celebration that amplify LGBTQ+ voices, support artists and present work that challenges, provokes and affects change, while creating welcoming spaces where everyone feels safe, seen and valued.

Our Manifesto

We are one, powerful community of LGBTQ+ people who unite in solidarity and create a safe space to celebrate and thrive.

We champion LGBTQ+ arts as a powerful vehicle for expression, representation and social change.

We stand together and provide a platform for artists and creatives to share their lived experience, stories and creative expressions.

We welcome EVERYONE to celebrate with us, to be part of our vibrant, resilient and inclusive community; in return, we ask for respect and courtesy. Be an ally and stand by and stand up!

We cannot celebrate full equality until our whole community is able to live freely without fear of prejudice and discrimination.

So join together and celebrate the richness of our EPIC LGBTQ+ community here in Trafford, by being your true unique self.

ABOUT WATERSIDE

Waterside is an award-winning, vibrant destination for performance, culture and events in the heart of Sale in Trafford, Greater Manchester.

Waterside opened in 2004 and has built a strong reputation for delivering high quality and engaging work, ranging from family theatre, interactive arts activity, performance, live music and regular comedy as well as high profile visual arts exhibitions.

With an important role to play in the local community, the venue welcomes over 100,000 visitors per year, stages the annual ten-day Refract Festival and the cultural LGBTQ+ celebration Pride in Trafford; and engages with over 7000 residents through the established participation programme.

The space houses a main auditorium (the Robert Bolt Theatre), a versatile conference and studio performance space (the Chambers), three exhibition spaces and a number of studios, meeting and workshop spaces, all used by a variety of different groups.



WATERSIDE

The Lauriston Gallery is open to the public six days a week and is free to visit. The venue is funded by Trafford Council and supported by Arts Council England, the Heritage Lottery Fund and Esmée Fairbairn Foundation.

ABOUT CREATIVE INDUSTRIES TRAFFORD

Artist development at Waterside is delivered through Creative Industries Trafford (CIT).

CIT is committed to providing innovative support, training, mentoring and opportunities for artists and creatives in Greater Manchester and beyond. Featuring a year-round professional development programme, CIT covers a number of fields including literature, visual arts, contemporary design, theatre-making and animation.

The objectives are to increase artistic quality and to help artists build sustainable creative careers.

Activities include the Cosgrove Hall Films Archive, celebrating the legacy of the renowned animation studio, and curating the gallery spaces at Waterside which focus on photography, contemporary design, animation and the moving image.

CIT runs the Northern Lights Writers Conference, the Puppet Masters Animation Conference; plus, a very successful theatre development programme that has supported a number of theatre-makers and helped to create touring work.

Also acting as creative producers, CIT created theatre and audio commissions for the National Trust on the Live at Lyme Project.