

PROUD OF PRIDE

Over the past several weeks we have listened to and engaged with individuals, community groups and allied associations who have shared with us their experiences, hurt and also support. Pride in London would like to apologise to the community and those persons who have experienced racism, bullying or any other form of discrimination whilst volunteering with us, as well as our shortfalls in acting swiftly to recognise and resolve these issues, respectfully. The Pride movement started over 50 years ago to deliver equality for all LGBT+ people. To have not done that for Black, Brown and Asian people recently, isn't good enough and falls below the standards to which we're committed to live by.

We are committed to being actively anti-racist, supported by updated practices, policies, procedures and a culture that is reflective of the rich diversity of London and its LGBT+ community. In February, after extensive community consultation we revealed new core values of **Visibility, Unity and Equality**. The leadership team takes responsibility for implementing these values in all that we do, as a volunteer led organisation.

We have begun our transformational journey and today launch the **PROUD OF PRIDE** plan – a plan which sets out clear actions to get us back to being an organisation people feel proud to support, volunteer with and work for. Something we have clearly fallen short of.

Our **PROUD OF PRIDE** plan sets out clear fundamental steps the organisation is taking, based on feedback from our volunteers (past and present) and members of the community, to ensure we do better. Before our next event in September, our aims are :

To have a leadership team that is at least 50% representative of minority and ethnic voices. This process is underway and we will be sharing some new appointments shortly.

To prioritise investment in our Unity Fund – increasing annual funding to £100,000 providing grants to grassroots organisations from across the LGBT+ community

To further support volunteers at Pride – a suite of new policies and processes which support volunteer experience including: discriminatory, complaints, disciplinary and a code of conduct with zero tolerance towards micro aggressions and will elevate minority & ethnic voices

To maintain community forums – increased number to enable greater engagement with the community

To outline our ongoing commitment to Diversity, Equity & Inclusion – through a new comprehensive strategy which will be created and implemented by our new team from May 2021

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The past few weeks have been challenging and personally painful as a member of the Black Queer community. I know that racism not only chips away at Black Lives daily in society but there is also a level of racism that exists within the wider LGBT+ community that remains a problem, and has to be addressed collectively. Picking up the mantle of leadership to deliver transformative change is no easy task but it is one I feel truly proud of and optimistic about. As Pride in London moves forward we will continue to listen and create a space that values diverse views and incorporates these into its culture, processes and decision making. The leadership team will drive the dynamics of a cultural change that uproots all forms of discrimination. I want queer people of colour to feel safe, be seen, be heard, be respected and be celebrated within the organisation.

*Christopher Joell-Deshields,
Executive Director of Pride in London*

We have been humbled by the messages and offers of support, candid advice and guidance from individuals and leaders from within the community especially from those people of colour sharing their experiences and would like to take this opportunity to say thank you and encourage others who want to be a part of our transformation to join us as a volunteer; your difference, skill and lived experience will be valued. The organisation will continue to work tirelessly with the community to drive positive, meaningful change and be part of the future of a progressive and inclusive Pride. Pride in London is only possible through the commitment and dedication of our valued volunteers, Pride in London is possible because of them and their belief in the power of protest and in the pride movement.

Our last request is that if this statement is triggering for anyone, please get in touch with us at proudfpride@prideinlondon.org and that to everyone reading this, we ask humbly you focus on helping us drive a better future together, whether that's in a comment, in person or in the media. One inclusive London community, always. Together, we will live proudly.

The Pride in London team