

# THE YOUTH RESPONSE

## CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF UK PRIDE

As the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the UK's first Pride march is coming up, we asked 16-24 year olds who identify as LGBTQIA+ to tell us their thoughts on the movement and how they think brands can better engage with LGBTQIA+ issues

### LGBTQIA+ EQUALITY HAS **COME ON LEAPS AND BOUNDS...**

LGBTQIA+ 16-24 year olds acknowledge that a significant amount of **progress** has been made in the past 50 years within the UK regarding LGBTQIA+ rights:



**Legalisation of gay marriage and adoption/IVF:** this means that LGBTQIA+ families have more structural recognition (and rights) in the eyes of the law



**Inclusive media:** TV, film and advertising now includes more LGBTQIA+ individuals with better depth to their character, moving away from traditional stereotypes



These changes feed into a wider **societal acceptance** and understanding of people of all identities, enabling their movement through society to be smoother and less fraught by discrimination

### ...BUT THE FIGHT FOR RIGHTS HAS **A LONG WAY TO GO**

#### **Global acceptance is far from a reality**

Conversion therapy is still legal in some countries, being gay is illegal, and so is gay marriage

#### **Intersectionality impacts experience**

Trans and ethnic minorities can face increased discrimination from wider society and erasure from the rest of the community

#### **Discrimination still exists**

1 in 5 LGBT+ people have experienced a hate crime in the last year due to their identity; this rises among trans people\*

### PRIDE HAS BEEN INSTRUMENTAL IN THE **PROGRESSING OF LGBTQIA+ RIGHTS** OVER THE PAST 50 YEARS...

#### **PRIDE'S HISTORY**

LGBTQIA+ 16-24 year olds understand that Pride is the result of protests against discrimination and are appreciative of those who struggled before them. Most are not aware that 2022 marks Pride's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary



Due to the progress, most now do not view it as an essential event to defend their rights

Pride is seen as an **empowering movement**, it is a place of **acceptance** to people of all identities:

#### **A SAFE SPACE:**

Pride events represent a safe space where those who identify as LGBTQIA+ can be themselves without fear of judgement

#### **COMMUNITY:**

Pride exemplifies the coming together of those with a common experience, and allies alike, to connect with each other

#### **EMPOWERMENT:**

Pride empowers young people to feel proud of their identity and pushes them to truly express themselves

#### **CELEBRATION:**

Pride is ultimately a celebration of all things LGBTQIA+, honouring the experience and marking those who came before

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### BRANDS ENGAGEMENT WITH PRIDE:

Upon seeing Pride related comms, many research the brand further to find out what the brand is doing to support the community. It is therefore felt important by them, that brands authentically engage with LGBTQIA+ issues.

### HOW DO THEY FEEL THAT BRANDS CAN AUTHENTICALLY ENGAGE?



**EDUCATION:** they would like to see brands use their large platforms to educate the public and spread awareness around LGBTQIA+ issues



**DIVERSE HIRING PRACTICES:** structurally, they'd like corporations to ensure that hiring practices are transparent and inclusive to guarantee diversity across all levels of the organisation – particularly at board level



**DONATIONS:** they'd like to see brands donate to relevant charities to demonstrate support and understanding for LGBTQIA+ issues and make a practical and tangible difference



**365 DAYS A YEAR:** Most importantly to them, they'd like to see brands actively supporting LGBTQIA+ causes **all year round**

### BRANDS THEY FEEL ARE GETTING IT RIGHT



Calvin Klein

ASOS

**Starbucks, Nike, Puma:** all have made donations to LGBTQIA+ charities

**Calvin Klein:** launched a Pride collection celebrating diverse identities including the representation of trans models

**Apple:** launches a yearly Pride Apple watch which, most recently, has woven in colours symbolising identities in the LGBTQIA+ community as well as making sizable donations to charities

**ASOS:** sells gender fluid/unisex clothing, helping to dissolve gender boundaries for people of all identities



*It is difficult for many to name brands who are engaging with LGBTQIA+ issues*

### SOME 16-24 YEAR OLDS WHO IDENTIFY AS LGBTQIA+ ARE SKEPTICAL ABOUT SOME BRANDS' COMMITMENT TO LGBTQIA+ ISSUES

They express concerns that some brands may engage in a specific activity to tick a box, and worry that some are **rainbow washing\*** in order to **capitalise** during Pride month.

Some spoke about how if genuine action isn't taken by brands and they only use Pride month to add pride colours to their website/logo/social media page, this can negatively impact how they feel towards that brand.



*Brands should stop jumping on Pride as a means to sell, in a performative way that is inauthentic. Slapping a rainbow on a product and calling it pride is not useful or helpful, and is lazy. They should start making sure they have **LGBTQIA+ representation in their company**, through to senior board level. They need to ensure they're being actually **supportive of communities all year round** and if they want to do a Pride product then make the **proceeds go to charity** rather than to them*  
– female, lesbian