



PRESS RELEASE

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## DMU steps in with major funding to ensure Leicester Pride goes ahead in 2017

Leicester Pride, one of the major cultural highlights in the city's festival calendar, will go ahead this year after De Montfort University (DMU) stepped in with £10,000 of funding.

There had been major concerns that the annual festival, which celebrates and promotes the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) community in the city and county, would have to be cancelled for 2017 due to a lack of funds.

But Leicester Pride's plight was spotted in the media by a DMU student who copied a link to university Vice-Chancellor Professor Dominic Shellard. The #DMUlocal team, which uses the knowledge of academics and students to make a difference within the Leicester community, then stepped in and offered to help.

It means the annual procession through the city of around 2,000 people and subsequent celebration in Victoria Park, which attracts around 10,000 people, can now go ahead on Saturday 2 September.

Leicester Pride has been led by Martyn Parker and Craig Thorpe for the last eight years and they are delighted DMU has stepped in to save the day.

Martyn said: "We are all absolutely thrilled that De Montfort University has come to the rescue with this funding. We really could see no way this year's event could have gone on without their generosity. The entire committee and, I'm sure, the LGBT community as a whole, will be so grateful.

"Leicester is such a diverse and cultured city, it would have been so sad if we had had to cancel Pride this year. It is going to be a very busy few months now as we have a lot to sort out, but everyone is up for the challenge and we promise to make this year's festival bigger and better than ever.

"Once again from all the Leicester Pride Committee thank you De Montfort University and we look forward to seeing you all on September 2 at Victoria Park."

Amy White, Deputy Head of Public Engagement for DMU, said: "A student saw the Leicester Mercury story on Twitter saying that the festival needed a sponsor or it could be cancelled and copied in the Vice-Chancellor who then let us know. We immediately wanted to help.

"DMU is all about inclusivity and celebrating people's right to be who they are. Leicester Pride is a great event for the city and there's a real sense of celebration. We're happy to help and look forward to September!"

Leicester Pride is free to attend and celebrates equality and diversity in the community. It is a family event which includes a parade through the city followed by live music, DJs, food and drink and fairground rides in Victoria Park. The event takes place in September each year.

It has grown over the last eight years from a small gathering to a full scale festival now enjoyed by thousands of people.

In exchange for the £10,000 funding provided, DMU will receive sponsorship rights, as well as having a presence at the festival to showcase the community work undertaken by its students and academics through #DMUlocal.

DMU is proud of its work with the LGBT community and this year leapt 19 places to 39<sup>th</sup> in the annual Stonewall Top 100 Employers table.

The table shows the best performing public, private and third sector organisations in Stonewall's annual audit of workplace culture for lesbian, gay, bi and trans staff, which celebrates the pioneering efforts of leading organisations in the UK to create an inclusive workplace.

DMU was well within the top 10 per cent of applicants for the first time – and was one of the best performing universities in the UK finishing above business giants such as HSBC and BP as well as The Army.

DMU staff's LGBT group, called the LGBTQ and Allies Network, was also highly commended by Stonewall for the support it provides.

To find out more about #DMUlocal visit [www.dmulocal.dmu.ac.uk](http://www.dmulocal.dmu.ac.uk)

To see more on the Leicester Pride festival visit [www.leicesterpride.com](http://www.leicesterpride.com) or visit their Facebook page Leicester Pride.

More than 430 employers submitted entries to Stonewall's 2017 audit, putting DMU well within the top 10 per cent of applicants for the first time – and making it one of the best performing universities in the UK. DMU was the third highest placed university and finished above business giants such as HSBC and BP as well as The Army.

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