



**Leadership Academy**

## What does Pride mean to you?

Pride is about people coming together in celebration, protest, unity and solidarity with the LGBT+ community.

As people across the country celebrate Pride Season, we've been asking staff 'What does Pride mean to you?' and we've received some fantastic responses including:

"Pride isn't just a month, it's a state of mind. It's a constant change and energy in my life to make a difference and champion inclusion; celebrating the wonderful difference that we are; sharing and learning from each other. Pride is about standing up for others when for what other reason they cannot stand up for themselves, living everyday out with honesty and boldness. Pride is about GIVING HOPE for a BETTER FUTURE."

**Kim Hope Sales, senior leadership associate, West Midlands NHS Leadership Academy**

"To me, pride is being who you are, without needing validation or approval from anyone else"

**Amy Holmes, project support officer – High Potential Scheme, national Leadership Academy**

"I love Pride – it's a really up-beat celebration and positive message of love and acceptance, whoever you are and whoever you love. It challenges and celebrates in equal measure, bring it on!"

**Paul O'Neill, director, East Midlands Leadership Academy**

"For me Pride is a chance to celebrate the achievements, successes and togetherness of the LGBT+ community. It is also an opportunity to recognise that the battle for true equality has not yet been won and there is still work to do."

**Nathan Young, business manager - Inclusion Team, national Leadership Academy**

“Pride to me means to celebrate diversity and LGBT+. It is about reinforcing equal rights for all people, accepting who you are and being proud of all you stand for. Nobody should be able to make you feel ashamed of who you are or what you stand for.”

**P:** Perseverance - progressing forward in the face of difficulty or oppression

**R:** Resilience - toughness, bouncing back from pain, and continuing to press on

**I:** Inclusion - embracing the human desire to be a part of something greater than one's self

**D:** Determination - continuing to fight unwaveringly for rights and dignity in the face of continual hatred, judgment, ignorance, and bigotry

**E:** Expression - allowing one's self to be free to live and exist as one wants

**Sumiya Khanam, leadership programme support, West Midlands Leadership Academy**

“For me, Pride is being truly accepted for who you are and who you choose to love.”

**Rebekah Wood, marketing and engagement coordinator, national Leadership Academy**

“Pride for me is time and space when and where people who may otherwise struggle to get through everyday life just being themselves can ideally celebrate without any shame, guilt, aggression, anger etc. who they truly are and shine their light accompanied by their partners, family members, best friends, allies and so on. I feel privileged and grateful to be welcomed in this community and show my support.”

**Michaela Lesayova, national OD programme coordinator, national Leadership Academy**

“Pride to me is the acceptance of every being we come into contact with, understanding that everyone is equal and having the ability to allow ourselves to feel confident, regardless of our personal preferences and the stereotypical judgements those preferences may historically carry.”

**Alex Graham, programme coordinator, East Midlands Leadership Academy**

“Pride is a celebration of freedom and love”

**Sally Scales, head of Executive Search, national leadership Academy**

“Pride means living my life authentically and openly and using my allyship to continue the fight to enable others to live their lives authentically too.”

**Catherine Fleetwood-Walker, project manager, national leadership Academy**

“Pride is my opportunity to show solidarity with my LGBT+ family, friends and fellow citizens. Those who wish to show allyship to marginalised communities need to be more proactive than ever to fight against the current political landscape of exclusion and ignorance.”

**Claire Lodge, senior engagement lead, national Leadership Academy**

“Pride to me is a celebration of equality, a reminder that love does not discriminate and a chance to embrace humanity in the most colourful of ways.”

**Liz McIntyre, communications, development and QI lead, East Midlands Leadership Academy**