



# **The Wales LGBTQ+ Timeline Collection**

Castell-nedd Port Talbot /  
Neath Port Talbot Edition

# Introduction

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In 2021 the Welsh Government commissioned training in LGBTQ+ Language and History for local museums, libraries and archives to encourage the celebration of local stories of sexual orientation and gender identity.

This is part of the work being done on raising awareness and understanding of the diverse population of Wales and compliments the Welsh Government Action Plan which aims to:

- tackle inequalities experienced by LGBTQ+ communities;
- challenge discrimination;
- create a society where LGBTQ+ people are safe to live and love authentically, openly and freely as themselves.

The training provided effective learning points and practical tools to enable staff and volunteers to move forward with a fully inclusive programme resulting in an expansion beyond the organisation to the general public, such as family historians, local historians and community groups. Allowing the promotion of historic material in ways not realised before and enhancing work with partner organisations in not only in making LGBTQ+ material accessible to the public, but also in collecting and preserving this heritage.

An outcome of the LGBTQ+ Language and History training is the construction of timelines

for each of the 22 counties of Wales. This provides a means by which local people, allies and events can be celebrated instead of replicating mainstream narratives and celebrities.

A baseline of highlighted moments from history was constructed by Norena Shopland from her Welsh historic material collection on sexual orientations and gender identities, and from that contributed to the Hanes LHDT+ Cymru / LGBTQ+ Research Group Wales established to encourage and promote research into Welsh LGBTQ+ history. Their website, LGBTQ Cymru is funded by Swansea University to record as much information as possible on this history.

<https://lgbtqcymru.swansea.ac.uk/>

People are encouraged to add to and keep expanding the timelines to make them as comprehensive as possible.



# 14<sup>th</sup> CENTURY >

## 1327

King Edward II (1284–1327) was born at Caernarfon, the first of two English Princes of Wales to be born in Wales (the other was Henry of Monmouth (1386–1422)).

He was a disinterested king and controversially relied heavily on his 'close companion,' Piers Gaveston (c.1284–1312) and many have argued over the precise nature of their relationship. Regardless of whether they did, or did not, have sex or were in a romantic relationship, their closeness puts them outside heteronormativity.

Edward had relationships with women, and fathered at least one illegitimate son, and five children with his wife Isabella, so he should be regarded as sexually fluid.

Piers was assassinated in 1312 and some years later, Edward became controversially close to another man, Hugh Despenser (c.1287/1289–1326).

As Edward's reign began to deteriorate, Isabella (c.1295–1358), brought an invasion force in from France in 1326, forcing Edward and Hugh to flee. They escaped into south Wales, much of which was owned by Hugh, probably to get to Ireland but were delayed due to bad weather. Having sought refuge at Caerphilly castle, they moved to Margam Abbey and then to Neath Abby arriving on 6 November.

They left the Abby on the 10th, and there varying accounts of what happened to them. Some argue

they were caught at Pant-y-brad (Hollow of Treason) close to Tonyrefail but others, that they were arrested at Neath Abbey.

Isabella had Hugh hanged, drawn and quartered and Edward imprisoned and the official record is that he died the following year and was buried at Gloucester Abbey.

The story of his being killed by having a red-hot poker inserted into the anus as a sign of his sodomy, is now dismissed by historians.

There is also controversy as to when Edward died, some citing an account of Edward III's meeting with a man called William the Welshman in Antwerp in 1338, who claimed to be Edward II.

**Sources:** Wikipedia; Norena Shopland, *Forbidden Lives: LGBT stories from Wales* (Seren Books, 2017)



Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons; Public Domain.

> 1327

# 19<sup>th</sup> CENTURY >

## 1861

The death penalty for buggery was abolished when the Offences Against the Person Act 1828 was replaced with the Offences Against the Person Act 1861.

A total of 8921 men had been prosecuted since 1806 for sodomy with 404 sentenced to death and 56 executed. Homosexuality remained illegal until partially decriminalised in 1967 in England and Wales, and 1980 in Scotland.

## 1885

The British Parliament enacted Criminal Law Amendment Act 1885, section 11 of which, known as the Labouchere Amendment, prohibited gross indecency between males.

It thus became possible to prosecute homosexuals for engaging in sexual acts where buggery or attempted buggery could not be proven.

The Labouchere Amendment became known as the Blackmailers Charter because it was so easy to accuse men, regardless if it was true or not, of being homosexual.



## 1895

## 1895

Oscar Wilde, tried for gross indecency over a relationship with Lord Alfred Douglas, was sentenced to two years in prison with hard labour.



# 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY >

## 1914

The First World War broke out in August 1914. Army historian A.D. Harvey writes that “at least 230 soldiers were court-martialled, convicted and sentenced to terms of imprisonment for homosexual offences” during World War I.

## 1916

Considerable controversy is nowadays on the question whether the woman should wear male dungaree attire when doing men’s work on the land.

The girls who are working on the Home Farm, Margam Park, are cited by some in the general charge against all workers who adopt masculine clothing on the ground that it is indecorous. Some faddists may think so, the girls don’t—at any rate that is the impression our representative had when he visited the farm the other day. The girls are not conscious that their costume is in any way open to comment. A number of journalists have visited the farm, and though the girls knew they were being subjected to criticism, they were in no way embarrassed. No girl, said one, would be so indecorous as to attire herself in masculine clothes for the fun of the thing, and not feel uncomfortable when speaking to gentlemen, who were quite aware that she was a girl. The position of these girls, is this: They have given up their feminine occupations to take up men’s work. For instance, our representative knows that they do very heavy

The Wearing of Male Attire.—A Visit to Margam.

## > 1916

work on the farm, i.e., filling manure, etc. Now the work is not always pleasant, but after all they grin and hear it. They have been actuated by purely patriotic motives. This high motive stands them in good stead when they are being subjected to insult and slur. To do the work well they believe, and from experience they know, that it is easier to do the work in trousers than in skirts. Their first consideration has been, “get on with the work,” and in this they have not considered petty-fogging sentimental prejudice which connects “woman and skirt” by association of ideas to stand in the way. Or, as they rather irritably put it, “We find them all right, more convenient for work, and, in any case, what has it to do with them?” It has been stated that the girls are fond of coming into the town in their dungarees. This is not wholly correct. That some have done so on occasion is quite true, but recently the girls were in town attired as other girls are. Some time ago, when there was a campaign for obtaining recruits for this work, the girls came into Port Talbot on a wagon attired in their dungarees. On the occasions on which they have visited the town in the evening in their farm dress, they have many excellent reasons for doing

so. The farm on which they are employed now, and on which the classes were held, is situated 4½ miles from Port Talbot.

No sort of conveyance can be got there to convey them to town, unless by lucky chance one of the farm hands has business in town. The girls leave off work at 6 p.m and if they have to walk the 4½ miles they certainly can spare no time to decorate themselves in feminine attire. Hence it is that the girls have occasionally come to town in male clothing. Their opinion of the criticisms of their conduct can be summed in in the phrase, “We do our work: let others mind their own business.” The girls are doing their bit. Let those who criticise do their little bit too.

Sources: *Cambrian Daily Leader*, 2 September 1916





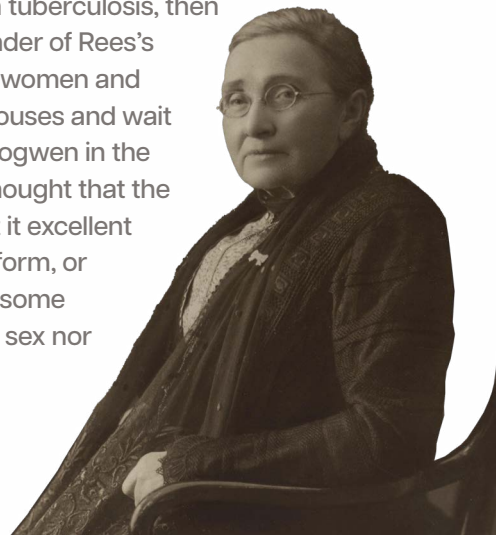
## 1921

The Criminal Law Amendment Act was revised in the House of Commons to include a section making sexual “acts of gross indecency” between women illegal. While the Act was passed by the Commons, it was defeated by the House of Lords.

## 1932

Rev. D. J. Jones of Pontardawe publishes a biography *Cofiant Cranogwen*, about Sarah Jane Rees (1839–1916) better known by her bardic name, Cranogwen. She was a Welsh teacher, poet, editor, master mariner and temperance campaigner and had two romantic friendships with women, first with Fanny Rees, until her death from tuberculosis, then with Jane Thomas for most of the remainder of Rees’s life. In his biography, Jones recalled “that women and wives were things to be kept shut up in houses and wait upon the menfolk ... When they saw Cranogwen in the pulpit addressing a crowd of men, they thought that the end of the world had come. They thought it excellent to suggest that she was a man in female form, or woman in masculine form, and we heard some suggest that she belonged to neither one sex nor the other.”

Source: Rev. David Glanaman Jones, *Cofiant Cranogwen*, Caernarfon, 1932



## 1954

## 1945

World War II ends. Following the war, moral attitudes to homosexuality changed.

## 1946

Michael Dillon has one of the first sex reassignment surgeries from female to male.

## 1951

Roberta Cowell, a former World War II Spitfire pilot, becomes the first transgender woman to undergo male-to-female confirmation surgery.

## 1954

Alan Turing, an English mathematician, logician, cryptanalyst and computer scientist, influential in the development of computer science, committed suicide.

He had been given a course of female hormones (chemical castration) by doctors as an alternative to prison after being prosecuted by the police because of his homosexuality.



Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons  
File:Alan-Turing-Rephtography.jpg

## 1957

The Wolfenden Committee is formed. When it concludes in 1957 it recommends a partial decriminalisation for male homosexuality. When these recommendations are not followed by the government the Homosexual Law Reform Society is formed to campaign for the recommendations to be enacted.

## 1965

Lord Arran put a bill through Parliament asking for the Wolfenden Report of 1957 be enacted. The Report, which recommended a partial decriminalisation of male homosexuality was received positively by many, but there were those who objected, such as T. G. Thomas of Belgan who wrote, 'It makes me shudder to read in your report that the House of Lords should cheer their majority vote of 45 on the Earl of Arran's motion to allow homosexuality between consenting adult males in private. In my opinion, any matter that impairs the moral fibre of our nation is not a thing to be cheered at in the House of Lords. No evil of this nature can possibly be exaggerated, as is suggested by Lord Arron, and the necessity of a bill proves it to be true. May God save us and the politics of this country.'

Source: *South Wales Echo*, 3 June 1965



## 1967

## 1967

Suzy Eddie Izzard and family move to Skewen when Suzy is aged five and in later life, as Eddie Izzard, Suzy becomes a well-known stand-up comedian, actor, and activist and later identifies as genderfluid who knew from the age of four. 'Some boy on my estate was wearing a dress and I thought, "Oh that's something I'd be into."' At 15 Suzy was arrested for shoplifting lipstick from Boots in Bexhill-on-Sea, an event that also found its way on stage: "I had it under some brown bread. I was walking out, kind of casual, and I was caught immediately," but tried to pretend it was for a friend. "I was 15, so they let me off with a warning. And the warning was: "That lipstick's never going to work with that eye shadow, is it?"

In March 2023, she announced that she would begin using the name Suzy in addition to Eddie, saying that she is "going to be Suzy Eddie Izzard." Explaining that she had wanted to use the name Suzy since she was 10 years old, adding that people "can choose" which name they want to use to refer to her, and that she would keep using Eddie Izzard as her public name since it is more widely recognised.

Sources: Wikipedia; *The Observer*, 27 May 2001



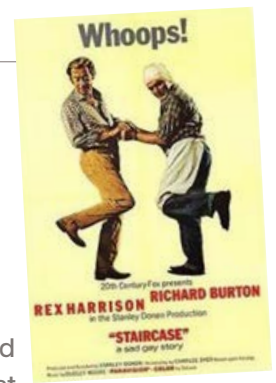
## 1967

Ten years after the Wolfenden Report, Cardiffian MP Leo Abse introduced the Sexual Offences Bill 1967 supported by Labour MP Roy Jenkins, then the Labour Home Secretary.

## 1969

Welsh actor Richard Burton (1925–1984) was born at 2 Dan-y-bont in Pontrhydyfen. He starred alongside Rex Harrison in the comedy-drama film, *Staircase*, about an ageing gay couple who own a barber shop in the East End of London. They discuss their loving but often volatile past together and ponder their possible future without each other, as Charles is about to go on trial for dressing as a woman in public. It received poor reviews, with Charles Champlin of the Los Angeles Times writing, “We cannot will ourselves to forget that these are Harrison and Burton playing at being homosexuals. These are performances and even if they are good (as they are) and for the most part quite restrained (as they are), we still look at the craft and not into the tortured soul.” Penelope Gilliatt of *The New Yorker* wrote, “it could have been a love story, and it could have been wonderful. Instead of that, it comes out like some total-immersion course in Camp banter, conceived in a way that keeps signalling the heroes’ freakishness. The lack of affection for them makes the film depressing ... Only Burton’s acting runs deep and true and comic.”

Source: Wikipedia



## 1977

## 1970

Gay Liberation Front (GLF) was established.



## 1974

Labour MP Maureen Colquhoun comes out as the first lesbian MP.

## 1977

Kenneth James, 41, of London Road, Neath was fined £30 for gross indecency in the public toilets in Maes-yr-Haf. The case had previously been adjourned for three weeks for social and psychiatric reports. The use of public toilets as meeting places is often referred to as cottaging. Due to the lack of privacy and places to meet, many men would use public places to meet/and or have sex.

Source: *Port Talbot Guardian*, 10 November 1977



## 1982

Welshman Terry Higgins dies of AIDS in St Thomas' Hospital London. His partner Rupert Whitaker and friend Martyn Butler set up the Terry Higgins Trust (which became the Terrence Higgins Trust), the first UK AIDS charity.



## 1984

MP Chris Smith is elected making him the first openly out homosexual politician in the UK parliament.

## 1984

Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners, a campaign of LGBT+ support for striking workers in the miners' strike of 1984 and 1985, is launched. The film *Pride* covers their story. See 2014.



## 1988

## 1984

Controversy surrounded The Talk of the Abbey nightclub (now The Arch Bar) in Commercial St when the licence was up for renewal.

The police objected to the renewal due to the high number of fights and thefts, but Superintendent Colin Jones was also 'concerned at the number of homosexual people whose acts had appeared to be preparatory to further acts of an illegal homosexual nature in public.' Police objections were supported by local residents, one saying that in the streets around the club 'scenes of a homosexual nature frequently took place.'

Source: *South Wales Evening Post*, 29 February 1984

## 1988

Section 28 of the Local Government Act 1988 enacted as an amendment to the United Kingdom's Local Government Act 1986, on 24 May 1988 stated that a local authority "shall not intentionally promote homosexuality or publish material with the intention of promoting homosexuality" or "promote the teaching in any maintained school of the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship".

There was not a single prosecution under Section 28 because nobody knew what 'promote' meant or what a 'pretended family relationship' was supposed to be.

# 21<sup>st</sup> CENTURY >

## 2000

The UK Labour government stops banning homosexuals from the armed forces after the European Court of Human Rights rules it unlawful.

The government also introduces legislation to repeal Section 28 in England and Wales – Conservative MPs oppose the move. The bill is defeated by bishops and Conservatives in the House of Lords.

Scotland abolished Clause 2a (Section 28) of the Local Government Act in October though it remains in place in England and Wales.

## 2003

Section 28, which banned councils and schools from intentionally promoting homosexuality, is repealed in England and Wales and Northern Ireland. Employment Equality Regulations made it illegal to discriminate against lesbians, gays or bisexuals at work.



## 2004

## 2004

Kevin Marks and Jeff Clarke were officially the first same-sex couple in South Wales. The Cadoxton couple, who met 14 years ago, run the popular Kajo Hair Studio in Broad Street. Thirty-one-year-old Kevin said: "We were very apprehensive that the ceremony would go well.

We were worried some people might protest outside but the support was great. On the day there were people cheering us on and everything went without a hitch. Our dress code was black tie and evening wear which people kept to. I don't feel that different but the day was a great occasion for Jeff and I to show our commitment to each other." He added: "It is a day we shall remember for the rest of our lives."

Source: *Barry & District News*, 15 April 2004

## 2004

The Civil Partnership Act 2004 is passed by the Labour Government, giving same-sex couples the same rights and responsibilities as married heterosexual couples in England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales.

The Gender Recognition Act 2004 is passed by the Labour Government. The Act gives transsexual people legal recognition as members of the sex appropriate to their gender (male or female) allowing them to acquire a new birth certificate, affording them full recognition of their acquired sex in law for all purposes, including marriage.

## 2008

Angela Eagle becomes the first female MP to enter into a civil partnership (with partner Maria Exall).

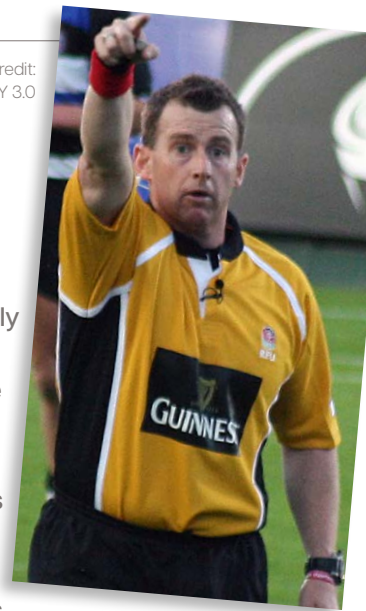
## 2009

Welsh rugby star Gareth Thomas becomes the first known top-level professional male athlete in a team sport to come out while still active in professional sport.

## 2010

Gay rugby referee, Nigel Owens, calls police over homophobic abuse at a Welsh premiership game between Llanelli and Neath at Parc y Scarlets when a fan allegedly began shouting anti-gay abuse. Mr Owens told the South Wales Post: "It's the first time it's happened when I have heard it so loud, the stadium was fairly empty and everyone there must have heard it, I know the players did. The reason something needs to be done about it, and why I took it to the police, however, is I recently spent six hours talking to a young rugby player who was contemplating taking his own life because he felt that he couldn't deal with coming out. I have been through it myself and was telling him people would understand. Then a few days later you get an idiot like that shouting homophobic abuse. It's really not on."

Source: *Pink News*, 16 December 2010



## 2014

## 2010

The Equality Act 2010 makes discrimination against lesbians and gay men in the provision of goods and services illegal.

## 2014

Same-sex marriage becomes legal in England and Wales on 29 March under the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013.

## 2014

The highly popular film *Pride* appears. Set in Onllwyn it is based on a true story, and depicts a group of lesbian and gay activists who raised money to help families affected by the British miners' strike in 1984, at the outset of what would become the Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners (LGSM) campaign.

The film has generated a wave of interest in the story and it has been examined from diverse angles including that by Gianmaria Colpani from Utrecht University who looked at the lack of 'lesbians and gays of color within LGSM' and that the group failed to connect with the 'Black Delegation to the Mining Communities (BDMC), which included black feminist and lesbian activists such as Pragna Patel of Southall Black Sisters and Wilmette Brown of Black Women for Wages for Housework.' During the debate on black and lesbian involvement in LGSM, Ray Goodspeed, a founder member, argued: "We should make links... but let's not go overboard. Women and blacks are not our main allies... the working class and the labour movement is." To which Polly Vittorini replied, "Ray implies blacks and women aren't part of the working class."

Source: Gianmaria Colpani, 'A Missed Encounter: Stuart Hall and Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners (LGSM),' *Coils of the Serpent*, Issue 10 (2022), available online.





## 2015

Two groups whose activities during the miners' strike inspired the hit film *Pride* reunited for the first time in three decades. Lesbian and Gays Support the Miners' Group members and the Neath, Dulais and Swansea Valley Miners' Support Group held a 30th anniversary reunion and hundreds gathered at the Onllwyn Miners Welfare Hall in the Dulais Valley. The event raised £4,000 for the Mark Ashton Trust, an HIV charity.

Source: [BBC, 15 March 2015](#)

## 2017

Channel 4 produced a documentary *Underage and Gay* talking to young people who have been bullied. The one-off programme, made by Yeti production company, featured a transgender teen. Alex, 17, lived in Neath after moving away from his family and "was born a girl but is now living life as a male." Alex, who is 'living in social housing, joined a Swansea youth group with the hope of making friends and developing a support system. "I've always had a really bad relationships with my parents and there was an incident involving physical abuse," he says. "Social services moved me to Neath. I just wanted to cut myself off from people who put me through that pain and start again. "It's difficult for anyone at any age to survive on their own and for a teenager it's difficult because they are used to having a family.'

Source: [Kathryn Williams, 'Underage and Gay documentary on Channel 4 shares stories of teenagers bullied for sexuality,' Daily Mirror, 10 March 2015](#)



# 2017

## 2016

Hannah Blythyn, Jeremy Miles, and Adam Price became the first openly gay members of the Welsh Assembly.



## 2017

Neath Port Talbot Council publishes a report on 'Gender Reassignment Policy' in which they outline how "transgender/transsexual employees have the right to equal treatment and protection from discrimination at work." The 12-page report outlines the responsibilities of employers and the full document can be read on the Council's website.

Source: [Neath Port Talbot Council website](#)

# 2019

West Glamorgan Safeguarding Boards, Transgender Guidance for Schools, And Other Youth Settings is published by their Policy, Practice & Procedure Management Group. "In West Glamorgan, we want all of our children and young people to feel safe and happy. Learning can only take place when young people feel that their needs are being met. This Transgender Guidance will strengthen the existing initiatives and policies in place to tackle bullying and enable schools to further embed the good work they are doing in this area." The 27-page document is available online.

*The body we are born into does not define who we are!*

Source: West Glamorgan Safeguarding Boards, 30 October 2019

# 2021

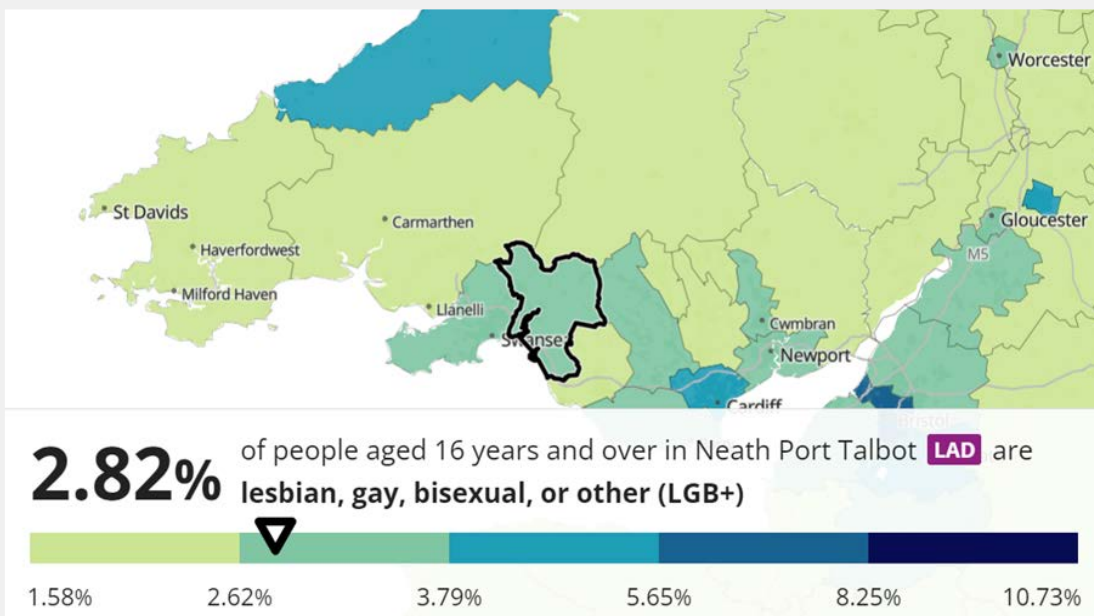
Owen J Hurcum became the world's first non-binary mayor and Wales' youngest ever elected mayor of Bangor City Council in Gwynedd, Wales.



# 2021

## 2021

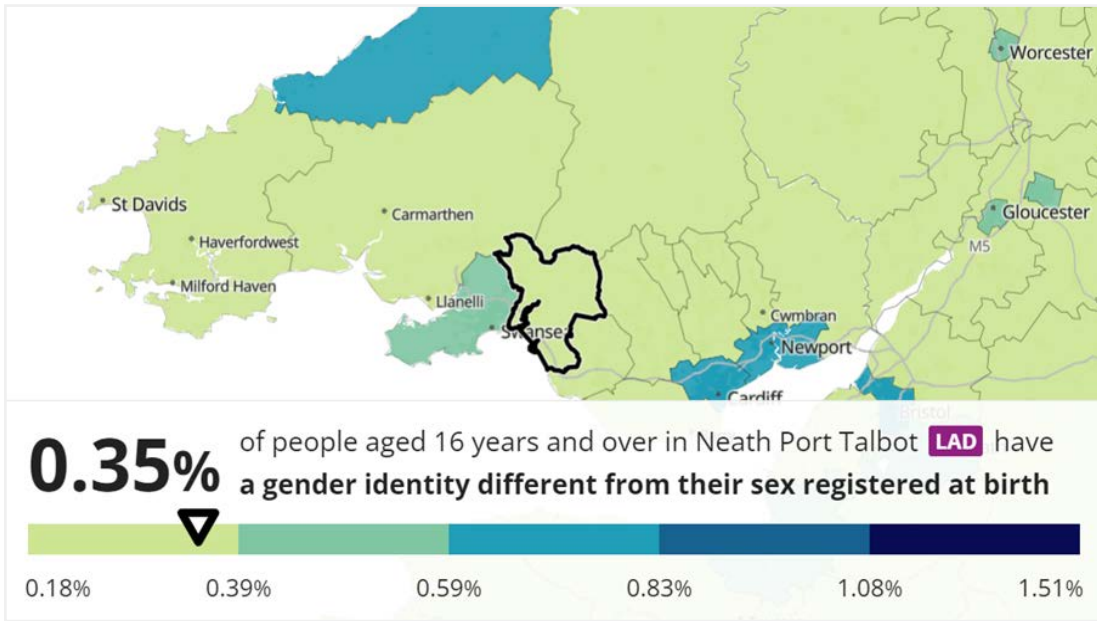
The 2021 UK Census was the first in world history to include questions on sexual orientation and gender identity. Some care should be taken over the figures as not all people answered the question.



The proportion of people identifying as "Gay or Lesbian" was highest in Cardiff (2.4%), the Vale of Glamorgan (1.7%), Neath Port Talbot and Swansea (1.6% each).

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# 2023

## 2023

Swanscene Queer Directory entries include: Aces Tennis, an LGBTQ+ tennis club at Neath Tennis is a “welcoming & inclusive group for LGBTQ+ identifying people who want to play tennis”; YMCA Neath, a “community centre hosting a fortnightly LGBTQI+ youth group, and monthly LGBTQI+ adult group.”

Source: Swanscene Queer Directory

## 2023

The LGBTQ+ G.S.A. (Gender & Sexuality Acceptance) Youth Group, Neath Port Talbot ran a consultation for the B U Ball and hope to run a Summer Ball in 2024 during Pride Month.

Source: Neath Port Talbot Council website.

## 2023

Neath Port Talbot LGBTQIA+ Group meets informally once or twice a month in various venues around Neath and Port Talbot, including restaurants, cafes and pubs. In addition, they meet monthly on 2nd Wednesday of the month in a private, safe space – again mainly just for a drink and a chat. They also sometimes have speakers, film nights and community input to these events.

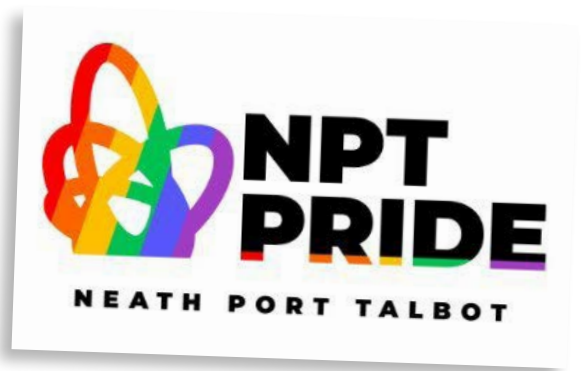
Source: Neath Port Talbot LGBTQIA+ Group website





# 2023

NPT Pride, Neath Port Talbot's first LGBTQ+ pride event was held from 29 June to 2 July. Organiser Joshua Tuck, 29, said the event started with the idea to host one film screening of the film *Pride* but has since "snowballed" into a huge celebration across the weekend. The community response has already been amazing, said Joshua, who explained that many people who grew up as gay in the eighties in Neath Port Talbot said they never thought they would see the day that Pride came to the area. 'For one dad from Aberavon, the event is a way to give back to the community that has embraced him for who he is. Owain Parfait, 35, works at the Aberavon restaurant Franco's which is hosting a Pride Party on Friday, June 30. "I used to live in Cardiff, then in Bristol. I was used to living in places with big, established Pride events. We thought it would be really lovely to have a small town equivalent," said Owain. When he first moved to Aberavon with his partner, Owain said he did not know what to expect but said they have been "embraced as a couple" since living and working in the area. "My experiences being gay in a small town have been much more positive on the whole," said Owain. As a father of a



young child, Owain said it is extremely important to him that Neath Port Talbot is a safe and welcoming place for all types of people. "These events and having this visibility are really important. Our children need that representation and safe spaces." Although he has received some negative comments on social media since posting about the Pride event, he said it has only inspired him to make the event "bigger and brighter."

Source: Katie Hoggan, 'Pride is coming to Neath Port Talbot this weekend for the first time,' *WalesOnline* 29 June 2023



# » 2023



## Thank you

These have been just a few highlights from Castell-nedd Port Talbot / Neath Port Talbot's sexual orientation and gender identity history.

If you think we've missed anything that should be included, please do let us know by using the web link below.

We will update the timeline on a regular basis.

[www.lgbtqcymru.swansea.ac.uk](http://www.lgbtqcymru.swansea.ac.uk)



**Draig Enfys**

 search **Draig Enfys**