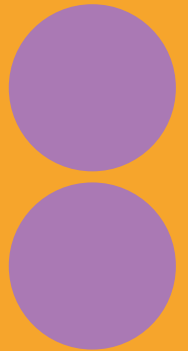




OVERVIEW

OCTOBER 2023



Mission

Proud 2 b Parents is dedicated to enhancing the health and well-being of LGBTQ+ parents/carers and their children while actively working to reduce health disparities. Through the provision of effective social and support services, we champion social change and advocate for the community's needs both locally and nationally.

Vision

We envision a society where LGBTQ+ families across Greater Manchester and beyond are embraced, empowered, and fully integrated. We strive to offer comprehensive services that cater to the unique needs and challenges of LGBTQ+ families, creating equity and belonging.

What we do

"Proud 2 b Parents addresses the pressing challenges faced by LGBTQ+ families, offering inclusive support, social connectedness, cultural awareness, education, and resources in a society where acceptance and understanding are often lacking." **Founder and Managing Director Matt Taylor-Roberts**

Goals:

- **Improved Health and Well-being:** We aim to enhance the physical and mental health of LGBTQ+ parents/carers and their children, ensuring they have access to healthcare services and support networks.
- **Improved Social Connectedness:** We work towards creating strong social connections within the LGBTQ+ community, reducing isolation, and promoting a sense of belonging and camaraderie.
- **Safer and More Equal Communities:** We advocate for safer spaces where LGBTQ+ families can live without fear of discrimination. By promoting equality, we contribute to the creation of inclusive communities.
- **Improved Service Provision by Other Agencies:** We collaborate with various organizations and agencies, encouraging them to provide inclusive services that cater to the needs of LGBTQ+ families, creating an environment of understanding and acceptance.
- **Improved Policy-making by Other Agencies:** Through advocacy and awareness initiatives, we strive to influence policy-making processes, ensuring that policies are inclusive, respectful, and supportive of LGBTQ+ families' rights and needs.

At Proud 2 b Parents, we are committed to our mission and vision. By working towards equity, reducing discrimination, and empowering LGBTQ+ families, we believe in creating a world where every family is celebrated, respected, and supported, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity. Through collaboration, education, and support, we work tirelessly towards achieving our goals and making a positive impact in the lives of LGBTQ+ families.



Specifications

Proud 2 b Parents is dedicated to providing inclusive and comprehensive support services for all routes to parenthood within the LGBTQ+ community. Our organisation operates with a clear set of specifications to fulfill our mission effectively:

Inclusivity:	Proud 2 b Parents is an inclusive organisation that welcomes individuals and families from all backgrounds, supporting various paths to parenthood. We embrace diversity and ensure our services are accessible and affirming for everyone.
Target Audience:	We cater to LGBT+ parents/carers to be, current LGBT+ parents/carers, and their children residing in Greater Manchester. We therefore address

	the unique challenges and needs faced by families within our local community.
Combatting Isolation:	A primary objective of Proud 2 b Parents is to alleviate the sense of isolation often experienced by LGBT+ families. Through our programs and initiatives, we create safe spaces where families can connect, share experiences, and build supportive relationships with others who understand their journey.
Visibility and Awareness:	Proud 2 b Parents actively works to increase the visibility of LGBT+ families within society. We advocate for awareness and understanding of the challenges faced by our community, striving for equity
Education and Advocacy:	We are committed to educating both the LGBT+ community and the broader society about routes to parenthood and the specific needs and issues faced by LGBT+ parents/carers and their children. Through advocacy efforts, we aim to influence positive change in policies, attitudes, and services, ensuring equal rights and opportunities for all.
Community Engagement:	Proud 2 b Parents actively engages with the Greater Manchester community through outreach programs, events, and collaborations. By creating connections with local organisations from the LGBT+ sector and family-based services as well as businesses, and individuals, we strengthen our impact and create a more inclusive environment for LGBT+ families.

At Proud 2 b Parents, our specifications guide our efforts to create a supportive and empowering community for LGBT+ parents, carers, and their children. Through our inclusive approach and targeted initiatives, we strive to make a meaningful difference in the lives of the families we serve.

Service delivery

Proud 2 b Parents is dedicated to delivering a wide range of services designed to empower, support, and enhance the well-being of LGBTQ+ families in Greater Manchester. Our service delivery model is rooted in inclusivity, community engagement, and collaboration, ensuring that the unique needs of our community are met effectively.

Community and Support Programs:	We offer diverse individual and group support programs both in-person and online. These programs are meticulously tailored to promote mental and emotional well-being, strive for personal development, and combat social isolation. By responding directly to community needs, our programs emphasise peer support and shared lived experiences, creating a nurturing environment where individuals and families can connect and grow.
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Education Initiatives:	<p>Proud 2 b Parents provides enriching opportunities for children and young people within our community. We create safe, authentic, and inclusive spaces where children can play and learn. Our programs focus on themes that resonate with a child's life, family, experiences, and culture. By facilitating these experiences, we help children understand themselves and their community better, developing a sense of belonging and acceptance.</p>
Community Involvement and Participation:	<p>As a community-led organisation, we prioritise the active involvement of our service beneficiaries. Their voices are integral to shaping our services, guiding program development, and ensuring effective delivery. We encourage and support individuals to participate as community members, volunteers, committee members, and even as members of our board of directors. Their active participation strengthens the fabric of our organisation.</p>
Strategic Partnerships:	<p>Proud 2 b Parents actively cultivates partnerships with a diverse array of individuals, organisations, and institutions within the LGBT+ community and the broader third and statutory sectors. Through these partnerships, we collaboratively deliver programs, advocate for equity and inclusion, and work together to reduce health inequalities. These alliances amplify our impact and promote a more supportive environment for LGBT+ families.</p>
Policy and Influencing:	<p>Leveraging our expertise in the issues faced by LGBT+ parents/carers and their children, along with evidence and insights gathered from our community engagement, we actively contribute to mainstream service delivery and policy development. Our CPD-accredited training programs serve as a platform for disseminating knowledge, enabling us to influence policies positively and ensure that the concerns of our community are integrated into wider societal frameworks.</p>

Our service delivery approach is characterised by collaboration, empathy, and a deep commitment to creating a more inclusive and supportive environment for LGBTQ+ families. Through our multifaceted initiatives, we aim to uplift our community, reduce disparities, and foster a sense of belonging and acceptance for all.

Community Knowledge: Understanding the Challenges Faced by LGBTQ+ Parents/Carers



At Proud 2 b Parents, we are acutely aware of the substantial hurdles faced by LGBTQ+ parents and carers as they navigate various systems, including healthcare, education, and social care assessments, to realise their dreams of parenthood. The landscape is riddled with discrimination, microaggressions and oppression, creating significant barriers for individuals pursuing their chosen routes to parenthood. While data on so-called “sexual minority families” is limited, the UK’s Office for National Statistics recorded 212,000 same-sex families in the UK in 2019, a 40% rise since 2015. This data only encompasses same-gendered individuals who are in a civil partnership or marriage and have children with a birth or adoption certificate. Therefore we know the number of families to be a lot greater.

Impact of Trauma on LGBTQ+ Parents and Carers:

The LGBTQ+ community has historically endured a disproportionate amount of trauma, leading to higher rates of mental and physical health issues, discrimination, and distress. Sadly, the community faces higher levels of suicide, depression, anxiety, PTSD, and substance misuse, exacerbating the challenges experienced by LGBTQ+ parents and carers. We recognise that past trauma can profoundly influence an individual's parenting style, carrying its impact into future generations, underscoring the importance of trauma-informed support.

Perinatal Mental Health Challenges:

Perinatal mental health conditions, such as postnatal depression (PND) and post-placement depression (PAD), are not limited to birthing persons or main caregivers. We acknowledge that these conditions affect more than 1 in every 10 women within the first year following birth, and fathers and partners are equally affected. Hormonal changes, situational factors, lack of sleep, increased responsibilities, and various environmental and psychological stressors contribute to these challenges, emphasizing the need for holistic support systems, as they profoundly influence the mental well-being of parents and carers, irrespective of their gender or sexual orientation.

Unique Challenges in Adoption/Fostering:

Post-placement depression (PAD) in adoptive and foster parents shares characteristics with postnatal depression. Despite the absence of hormonal triggers, PAD is a real and impactful experience for adoptive and foster parents. We acknowledge the unique challenges faced by these parents, including the adjustment period after adoption or fostering placements, emphasizing the need for tailored support programs.

In summary, our organisation recognises the multifaceted challenges encountered by LGBTQ+ parents and carers, including the impact of trauma, perinatal mental health struggles, and the unique aspects of adoption and fostering journeys. Through our understanding of these challenges, we are committed to providing comprehensive, inclusive, and trauma-informed support services to ensure that LGBTQ+ parents and carers receive the assistance they need to navigate their parenting journeys with resilience and strength.

Additional Challenges Faced by LGBTQ+ Parents/Carers:



Proud 2 b Parents know the multitude of specific challenges faced by LGBTQ+ parents and carers, which further exacerbate the risks to their mental health and well-being:

Secrecy and Concealment:	LGBTQ+ parents/ carers often face the distressing need to conceal their gender identity or sexual orientation, leading to internal struggles and emotional strain. This secrecy can create a significant burden on their mental health and sense of connectedness with local families or parents.
Judgment and Lack of Support	Judgments from family and friends, coupled with a lack of support, contribute to feelings of isolation and rejection. Such social pressures can profoundly impact self-esteem and mental resilience.
Exposure to LGBT	The pervasive presence of LGBT phobia in society exposes LGBTQ+

Phobia:	parents to discriminatory attitudes and behaviors, leading to constant stress and anxiety. This hostile environment hampers mental and physical well-being.
Unequal Access to Services:	LGBTQ+ parents/carers often face barriers in accessing appropriate health and social care services. Discrimination and lack of understanding from service providers can result in inadequate or inappropriate support, negatively affecting an individual well being
Professional Lack of Understanding:	Professionals' limited understanding of the unique health needs of LGBTQ+ individuals hinders the delivery of culturally sensitive care. This lack of understanding exacerbates feelings of exclusion and distress.
Absence of Local LGBTQ+ Support:	A lack of local LGBTQ+ support or community exacerbates feelings of isolation. Without a supportive community, LGBTQ+ parents/carers lack a crucial resource for coping with the challenges they face and sharing their individual lived experiences.
Body and Relationship Changes:	The fertility and pregnancy journey and the placement of a child often lead to significant physical and emotional changes. These changes can cause stress, affecting mental health and interpersonal relationships.
Traumatic Birth or Assessment Process:	Traumatic experiences during birth or assessment processes can result in post-traumatic stress and anxiety, impacting the ability to bond with the child and navigate the challenges of parenthood.
Parental Recognition:	Being separated from their baby after birth and not being recognised as the 'parent' can lead to feelings of powerlessness and alienation. This lack of recognition creates emotional distress and disrupts the parent-child relationship.



The Vital Role of Proud 2 b Parents

The demand for our services underscores the pressing need within the LGBTQ+ community for understanding, acceptance, and support. Proud 2 b Parents stands as a vital lifeline, providing a safe haven where individuals can authentically express themselves, share their lived experiences, and find

solace. Peer support forms the backbone of our organisation, offering a nurturing space for mental and physical well-being. By fostering a sense of belonging and acceptance, we empower LGBTQ+ parents and carers to navigate their journeys with resilience and authenticity.

Through our dedicated efforts, we continue to meet the unique needs of our community, ensuring that no one faces the challenges of parenthood alone. Our commitment to providing a supportive, understanding, and empowering environment remains unwavering.



Research Findings: Understanding the Landscape for LGBTQ+ Parents and Carers

Proud 2 b Parents is dedicated to creating a supportive environment based on comprehensive research findings that shed light on the unique challenges and strengths within the LGBTQ+ parenting/carer community. Here are key research findings that inform our work:

- **Demographics in Manchester:**
 - According to the national census, Manchester's local authority had 6.7% of people identifying as "LGB+", representing a significant portion of the population in need of specialised support.
- **Unequal Treatment and Discrimination:**
 - Research from LGBT in Britain: Health (2018) and Actual Trans Lives Survey (2021) revealed that 13% of LGBT people have experienced unequal treatment from staff due to their sexual orientation, while 23% witnessed discriminatory or negative remarks by healthcare staff, emphasizing the need for inclusive healthcare practices.
- **Abuse within LGBTQ+ Community:**
 - Shockingly, almost one in three LGBTQ+ people has experienced abuse, highlighting the pervasive challenges faced by individuals within the community.
- **Adoption and Parenting:**
 - In 2021, over 106,000 children were cared for in the UK, and 1 in 6 adoptions were to same-sex couples, indicating progress but also the necessity for continuous advocacy to ensure equal access to services for the community.
- **Impact of the Pandemic:**
 - A survey conducted during the pandemic revealed that 36% of LGBT+ women and non-binary people faced barriers or challenges while trying to start or grow their families, underscoring the unique challenges imposed by external factors.
- **Academic Success and Parenting:**
 - Studies from the University of Oxford and the Medical Journal of Australia found that children with gay, lesbian, and bisexual parents perform well in primary and secondary education, challenging stereotypes and emphasising the supportive environments created by LGBTQ+ families.
- **Quality Relationships and Psychological Well-being:**

- Research by Imrie, Zadeh, Wylie & Golombok (2020) demonstrated that children with trans parents exhibit good quality relationships and psychological well-being, highlighting the positive family dynamics within trans households.
- **Parental Capacities:**
 - Developmental research affirms that men and women possess equal capacities for effective parenting, challenging traditional gender constructs and emphasising the diverse strengths of parenting figures. (Schoppe-Sullivan and Fagan,2020)
- **Stigma and Parental Psychological Health:**
 - While gay fathers often face stigma associated with fatherhood, nationally representative surveys in the Netherlands and the U.S have shown no difference in child psychological adjustment between children in gay father's families and heterosexual parents' families, debunking harmful stereotypes.
- **Challenges Faced by LGBTQ+ Parents/Carers:**
 - Proud 2 b Parents' own research revealed that over 50% of parents/carers are not 'out' when accessing their children's recreational activities or going on family holidays due to concerns about discrimination or prejudice, underscoring the vital need for safe spaces and understanding communities.

These research findings illuminate the diverse experiences and challenges faced by LGBTQ+ parents and carers, guiding our organisation's efforts to provide tailored, empathetic, and effective support.

Training Offerings: Empowering Inclusion of LGBTQ+ Parents/Carers and their children

In today's diverse and inclusive world, creating an inclusive workplace is paramount for the success and well-being of both employees and organisations. As part of this commitment, corporate organisations are increasingly recognising the importance of supporting and empowering their LGBTQ+ employees, especially those who are parents. The Proud 2 b Parents Training Package has been meticulously crafted to provide corporate organizations with the tools and resources necessary to cultivate an inclusive and supportive environment for LGBTQ+ parents in the workplace.

Why Choose the Proud 2 b Parents Training Package:

The Proud 2 b Parents Training Package goes beyond standard diversity and inclusion initiatives. It is specifically designed to address the unique challenges and experiences faced by LGBTQ+ parents/carers. We are committed to fostering understanding, empathy, and inclusivity in various sectors through our comprehensive training programs. Our offerings are meticulously designed, drawing from research and the authentic experiences shared by our service beneficiaries. Here's an overview of our training initiatives:

- **Including LGBTQ+ Parents/Carers and Their Children Training:**
 - Target Audience: Health care settings, service providers, corporate organisations, and family-based services.

- Focus: This specialised training program equips participants with the knowledge and skills to create safe spaces for LGBT+ parents, carers, and their children. It emphasises understanding the unique challenges faced by these families and provides practical tools for inclusive practices.
- **Including LGBT+ Adopters and Foster Carers Training:**
 - Target Audience: Adoption and fostering agencies.
 - Focus: Tailored for professionals working in adoption and fostering agencies, this training program addresses the specific needs of LGBT+ adopters and foster carers. Participants gain insights into creating supportive environments for LGBT+ individuals navigating the adoption and fostering processes.
- **Trauma-Informed Practice, Including LGBT+ Parents/Carers and Their Children Training:**
 - Target Audience: All service-providing agencies and organizations working with families and children.
 - Focus: This training delves into trauma-informed practices, emphasising the intersectionality of trauma and the LGBTQ+ community. Participants learn how to approach service delivery with sensitivity, understanding the impact of trauma on LGBT+ parents, carers, and their children, and how to create an LGBT+ affirming environment
- **Including LGBT+ Parents/Carers and Their Children in Education Training:**
 - Target Audience: Early years settings, primary schools, and secondary schools.
 - Focus: Geared towards educators, this training program explores strategies to create inclusive learning environments. Participants gain insights into addressing the unique needs of LGBT+ parents, carers, and their children within educational settings.

Our training initiatives aim to empower professionals with the confidence and competence to support LGBT+ parents, carers, and their children effectively. By fostering understanding and embracing inclusivity, we believe that these training programs are the cornerstone of building compassionate communities. We also know that when organisations invest in training, they not only demonstrate their commitment to diversity and inclusion but also cultivate a workplace culture that champions understanding, acceptance, and unity.

We know that our training builds, ***‘Confidence in working with LGBT+ clients’***, whilst providing insight and ***‘understanding of how difficult and challenging it has been for parents/carers’***.

“Inclusive is a right, not a privilege for some.” **Founder and Managing Director Matt Taylor-Roberts**

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