



December 2025

Queertopia Consortium CIC Impact Report 2024-2025



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This report reviews the impact that Queertopia Consortium CIC has had since it started in May 2024 until December 2025.

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I'm proud to share Queertopia's first impact report a reflection of what becomes possible when community is centred, voices are trusted, and belonging is treated as essential, not optional. Queertopia was created from lived experience. As a Black British queer woman, a first-generation Windrush descendant, and someone who has navigated systems that were not built with me in mind, I know how isolating it can feel when services don't see the whole of who you are. Queertopia exists to change that – to build spaces where LGBTQIA+ people, particularly those from the global majority, can show up fully and feel held, valued, and connected.

This report captures more than numbers. It tells the story of people finding chosen family, of partnerships breaking down silos, and of safe, trauma-informed spaces where joy, healing, and honest conversation can exist side by side. It reflects the power of community-led work shaped with people, not for them and the ripple effect this has across individuals, services, and systems.

None of this has been achieved alone. Everything in this report is the result of collaboration: with community members who trusted us, partners who shared our values, and supporters who believed in a different way of working. I'm deeply grateful to everyone who has walked alongside Queertopia so far.

As you read on, I invite you to see this report as both a celebration and a commitment a snapshot of impact to date, and a foundation for the future we are continuing to build together.

Joanne English, Co-founder and CEO



Our vision

Queertopia is a movement. We're creating healing, empowering, and joyful spaces for LGBTQIA+ people from the global majority to connect, organise, and lead. We believe in community-designed change, where inclusion isn't an afterthought — it's the foundation.

Our mission

Building
belonging

Bridging
access

- 🌈 To create safer spaces for LGBTQIA+ people to thrive
- ♥️ To support the global majority and intersectional identities
- 🌈 To empower organisations through inclusive education and mentorship



Who are we



Launched in May 2024 and based in Hackney, East London, Queertopia Consortium CIC is:

- 🌈 **Community-led LGBTQIA+ organisation**
- ♥️ **Rooted in lived experience**

Queertopia is queer and black-led. We build inclusive, trauma-informed, culturally responsive spaces for LGBTQIA+ people including black and global majority.

We run events, support spaces, peer-led groups, business forums, community advocacy, and deliver training.



The problem

There are no national services led by Black or global majority LGBTQIA+ people in the UK delivering culturally trauma-informed and inclusive support, despite decades of progress.

"We need a space to talk about parenting from our perspective. This doesn't exist anywhere else."

The gaps are urgent and visible:

- 3 in 5 LGBTQIA+ people experience discrimination in health and social care
- 64% of Black LGBTQIA+ people feel unsafe accessing services (Black Thrive, 2024)
- There is a lack of health outcome data for LGBTQIA+ people across many areas
- Staff lack confidence and knowledge around language, inclusion, and trauma
- There is inadequate cultural parenting support for global majority queer families
- There is no sustained infrastructure for Black trans and non-binary people
- There aren't enough regular, peer-led global majority and inclusive spaces of connection beyond annual events like UK Black Pride

We are changing this with our offer.

Our offer

Community forums	Co-designed with residents to address gaps, reduce isolation, build purpose and amplify voices from global majority LGBTQIA+, trans, and refugee communities.
Business & Partners Forum	Engaging 300+ businesses to improve workplace inclusion, LGBTQIA+ offers and extend community networks for our beneficiaries through forums and networking.
Direct Community Support	Safe, welcoming spaces for 700+ LGBTQIA+ residents, building healthy lifestyles and psychosocial support, improving wellbeing and fostering belonging and good health.
Advocacy & representation	Partnering with Hackney Council and statutory bodies, including hosting forums on HMRC issues, giving LGBTQIA+ residents a voice in decisions affecting them and services available to them.
Training & consultancy support	Equipping organisations to remove cultural barriers, use inclusive language, and improve access to care for LGTBQIA+ residents, including those who are neurodiverse, have disabilities, have families and are refugees or asylum seekers.

Our Achievements

- Over 900 LGBTQIA+ and ally beneficiaries have participated in Queertopia offers, and are part of our growing community network and mailing list
- Over 300 Businesses and Services registered, with monthly forums including Hackney ward councillors and NHS teams.
- We estimate we have helped over 4000 people including through promoted and improved services and building connections for beneficiaries and partners.
- Runner-up for Startup of the Year and Equality, Diversity & Inclusion at the Business Women's Awards 2024
- Delivered forums supporting creativity and self-expression through storytelling, zine making, learning how to crochet and more.
- Monthly LGBTQIA+ forums bringing together services, funders, and residents enabling partnerships, shared resources and increasing referral pathways.
- Marched in London Pride with over 40 LGBTQIA+ people and allies including Samba Sisters.
- Platform for feedback, networking, referrals, and commissioning conversations
- Recognised across Hackney and East London for building partnerships rooted in equity including co-chairing Hackney Council's shared space project, and partnering with East London Foundation Trust on their Integrated Substance Use and Mental Health Service.
- Visitors travelling from Birmingham, Kent, Luton and beyond to access our London-based events
- Won funding from the National Lottery, Hatch, London Borough of Hackney, and donations from beneficiaries and local businesses coming to over £38,000.

87% agreed that 'Attending Queertopia made me feel less isolated and more connected to others'.

"I feel like there is a community that I can relate to and ask for help if needed"

"Really exciting and useful to hear what's on offer that will enrich my support with young people. A fantastic space where questions and discussions are encouraged."

"I travelled from Luton just to feel safe for one day—and I did."

"There's no other space like this. It's not just inclusive – it's made for us."

"Being around older gay and lesbian elders and their families has made me realise I have a future too"



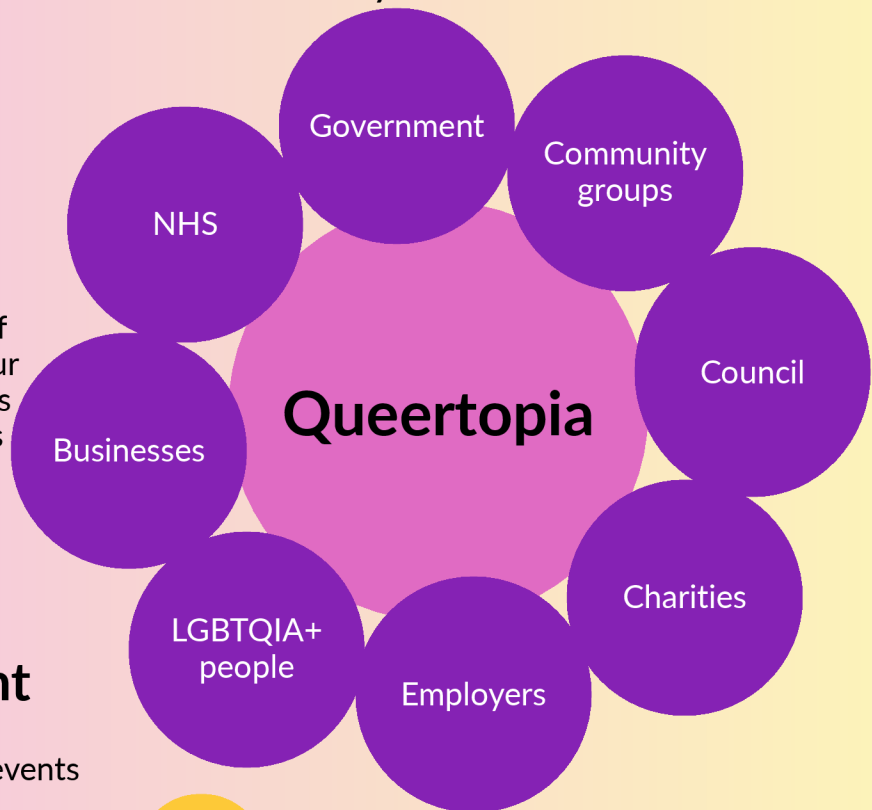
The Queertopia Ecosystem

Queertopia Consortium is an LGBTQIA+ anchor organisation, systematically creating an LGBTQIA+ inclusive ecosystem. The ecosystem we create is not static or top-down; it is continual and community-centred, and reaches people, institutions and organisations that we interact with on a daily basis and further beyond. Creating an inclusive ecosystem means our beneficiaries live in a safer environment, changing systems for the better. It means that with our partners, we can support the LGBTQIA+ people who need us most. We work to bring more members into the ecosystem and build their capacity to be LGBTQIA+ and culturally inclusive, through our offer, building relationships and being a valuable partner. The diagrams below demonstrate the process of how we build our ecosystem.

1

Queertopia partners and members

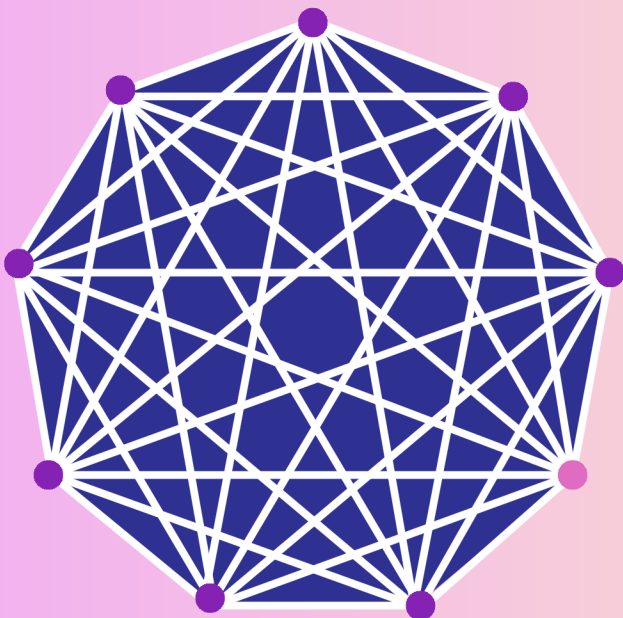
Our programmes, events, community and business and partners forums are a key part of building our local LGBTQIA+ ecosystem. At our events, we welcome queer people and allies as well as businesses, public sector organisations and more, and support them to build connections with each other. This diagram on the right shows our typical partners.



2

Network development

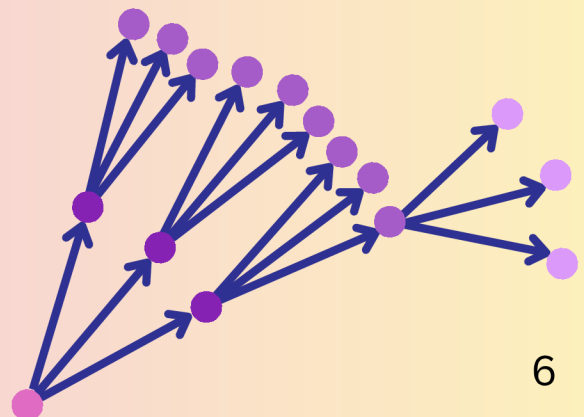
Queertopia beneficiaries meet each other at events they attend. This builds a network of credible voices together; people with lived experience, leaders, experts in their field, creating a knowledgeable, supportive environment for queer residents and business owners to develop and deliver excellent and inclusive services, policy and strategies. This diagram shows how many connections can be created through one event attended by 10 people.



3

Ripple effect of impact

Queertopia members can continue to grow and develop their impact outside of the Queertopia led events, for example sharing information about another queer friendly service that they learnt about or delivering a more inclusive offer. This diagram shows the ripple effect of impact, how Queertopia ecosystem multiplies support for the LGBTQIA+ population, from one person attending, to sharing the message with three people, who then share it with three further people etcetera.



Programmes & Events: Making a Difference

Queertopia Summer Socials– June and August 2025

Queertopia held two large-scale community celebrations in Haggerston Park welcoming 300 attendees ranging from 4 months to 75 years old. It was a family-friendly space full of joy, belonging, and cultural pride.

We played games including rounders and egg and spoon race.

"It was the best day of my life."

"My child saw queer Black joy in real life. You gave us that."

"We need this more than once a year – why should we only feel seen at UK Black Pride?"



Under your nose - June 2025



This Hackney Council-funded event explored the suppressed history of Black queer resistance. Feedback highlighted how rare it is to attend events for us, by us centring our narratives.

"This was my first queer event that didn't centre white voices"

Hackney Activism - February 2025



Hackney Deputy Speaker welcomed Queertopia members and LGBTQIA+ London Borough of Hackney staff to Hackney Town Hall to celebrate queer activism.

Scan the QR code to watch our film!



Programmes & Events: Making a Difference

Queertopia at London Pride

We marched at London Pride with over 40 members and partners, including our partner The Samba Sisters.

We danced, sang and laughed along the route, and gave out over 4000 leaflets.

"Pride - one of the highlights of my year, and part of me learning (still learning!) how to be an effective ally."

"It was so much fun to dance, as part of the parade, soaking up the energy, and be loud with the Samba Sisters! We made a statement and laughed too"



Queertopia's Community Festive Brunch: Home is where we gather



We welcomed 90 LGBTQIA+ and ally beneficiaries to a festive brunch on a December afternoon.

We had DJ and community performances, festive games including pass the parcel, calm connection spaces to chat, reflect, and meet new people, a Caribbean inspired meal and danced to the soul train!



Outreach

Our approach to outreach is broad reaching, meeting people where they are. We are part of multiple local Whatsapp groups for queer people, ensuring they know about relevant events and workshops coming up. We have also attended over 30 events this year speaking to over 1000 people to raise awareness of Queertopia Consortium and make sure the people who need us most, can find us. Some of the events we attended and organisations we visited are shown below.

4 Steps to Justice Windrush Day



Hackney Population Health Social Connections



London Metropolitan University

We have visited multiple colleges and universities to talk to young people about Queertopia, to develop relationships with and create opportunities to be involved with Queertopia as a placement.

DIVA

The world's leading magazine for
LGBTQIA women and non-binary
people



CONSORTIUM

for stronger lgbt+ communities

Black Pride



Queer Britain museum



Community forums and working groups

We run monthly community forums and working groups which are co-designed with residents to address gaps, reduce isolation, build purpose and amplify voices from global majority LGBTQIA+, trans, and refugee communities. The community forums and working groups are a key part of our LGBTQIA+ ecosystem, as they are a space to bring together queer people, entrepreneurs, and more. Each month we have a different focus aiming to build community, knowledge share, talked about lived experiences, and express ourselves creatively.



Community forums and working groups are a core part of our organisational governance: decisions about programming, support pathways, outreach methods and partnership priorities originate from beneficiaries themselves.

Discussions at forums have directly led to Queertopia delivering; new working groups, the development of sober social spaces, improved sensory considerations for neurodiverse beneficiaries, and bespoke interventions such as tailored support for refugees and queer families. Our activities are always run to meet beneficiaries in places they already feel safe libraries, cafés, colleges, community events, WhatsApp groups and digital spaces. By choosing safe venues, we remove a major barrier that mainstream provision often overlooks.



"Connection, care, understanding"

"Feel happy and also make me light from any bad energy around me"

Creative writing

7TH AUGUST 2025

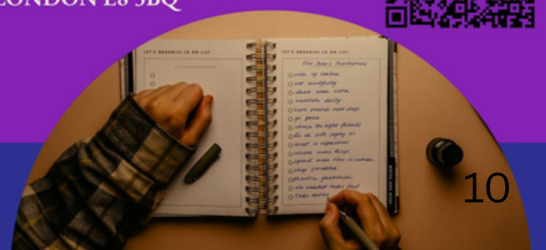
6PM-7:30PM

QUEERTOPIA COMMUNITY FORUM

CREATIVE WRITING Workshop

HOSTED BY BLU

DALSTON SQUARE
LONDON E8 3BQ



Building bridges and belonging

Queertopia provides inclusive, holistic and wrap around support to beneficiaries, including help with mental health, isolation, practical support through in depth one to one care. It is culturally trauma informed and by-us for-us, meaning we can provide targetted and appropriate support.

Mental health and isolation support

We provide support in an accessible and holistic way where beneficiaries are seen and welcomed as their whole selves. This has included families who can come together, and as they are and we will seek to support them, beneficiaries with neurodiverse needs, disabled people, hearing impaired people and asylum seekers and refugees. Autistic beneficiaries particularly value our neurodiverse-informed approach; we provide buddy support so individuals can attend events safely and at their own pace, often beginning with quiet one-to-one meetings in community hotspots such as cafés and Hackney libraries and providing quieter breakout spaces and new pacing for events to minimise sensory overload.

We also welcome volunteers from the community supporting them to build purpose and sense of community.

"Joy is what makes us feel good and each time we leave the space it's a joy to witness so many smiling faces and laughter with all so I would say it's a lovely space to be apart of"

"Being in a safe space with fellow black queers"

One-to-one support

We provide some beneficiaries more in depth and intensive one-to-one support. These beneficiaries usually present with complex, intersecting needs including trauma, unsafe housing, mental health challenges, discrimination, long-term isolation, immigration issues, food poverty and difficulties navigating statutory systems. The work is deep, relational and specialist. Our model prioritises quality and safety over volume, ensuring people experiencing the most entrenched inequalities receive meaningful and consistent support. We provide support to LGBTQIA+ refugee and asylum seekers, queer families, young adults, older people and others who need support.

"Thanks 4 sorting that out. Much appreciated. Say Thank You...from me. How exciting."

"Queertopia allows me to channel my passion for change and desire to help people into something that feels tangible while giving me the opportunity to challenge myself and grow my skillset in the months I've been with Queertopia I think it has been a really necessary service and I can't wait to see it grow even more and be a part of that growth. Definitely helped me expand my professional skills like using programs like excel, and helped me to take account of my mental health and treat my mental health as a priority"

Mal Signore, Volunteer

"... the space was very welcoming to every one it was safe that people felt open to sharing their experiences and stories without fear and being judged. Everyone was so warm to those who opened up about their life experiences and it was such as joy to hear and see each persons compassion and respect for each other . It was very touching . More spaces like this is very important so we need more"

Queer family planning and family support

Queer family planning workshop

In October we hosted 14 partners and community members to talk about queer family planning. We also welcomed a sign language translator to ensure the workshop was accessible.

Kyia, an Equity and Inclusion Midwife at Homerton Hospital, talked and shared resources about understanding the different pathways to pregnancy for queer families, navigating maternity care systems with confidence, infant feeding, sharing knowledge and community support. We covered birth preferences looking at a queer body map and about inclusive and preferred language to build confidence in communication.

The group were engaged in learning together, and afterwards decided they wanted to keep supporting each other.

We helped the group create a peer support network where queer people could communicate about their family planning journeys with other people going through similar experiences.



“Connection, care, understanding”, “It has reinspired me to go through the process, reminded me there are others like me finding their way through. Which is a lovely feeling” and ‘It was very special, thank you”.

“Super helpful. Thank you so much!”.

Queer families

46% of young queer people say that they are estranged from at least one family member (Just like us, 2023). This issue is common amongst queer people and is one reason why families and chosen family support are so important for LGBTQIA+ people.

Responding to feedback and insights from community members that there are a lack of places for queer families to meet and socialise, we have provided multiple queer family friendly spaces welcoming and supporting network building of over 20 queer families.

Learning from queer families about childcare barriers led us to integrate SEN-friendly children’s activities into all large events including providing suitable and expert activities, as well as sharing information about relevant offers in a queer family Whatsapp group.



Connecting online

Over the past year we have built an online presence aiming to raise awareness of our organisation, of the activities we are offering, and to show the essence of how we work visually. Using Instagram, TikTok, LinkedIn and Whatsapp, we have reached over 30,000 people with numbers jumping high through videos that have gone viral. We also have a bi-monthly newsletter and run peer support Whatsapp groups.

We have a targeted marketing strategy which appeals to LGBTQIA+ people, including black queer people using a form of storytelling therefore we have a lot of success and engagement through our videos which ask beneficiaries who have just attended an activity 'How did you find today's event'. This method of marketing is 'by-us for-us', asking people who are representative of our events and community shown talking about their experiences, and building trust and bringing more people into the Queertopia space. Click here to link to our social medias and watch some videos here:



We have a bimonthly newsletter, sharing information about our events, any relevant resources and profiling different partner organisations and platforming events run.



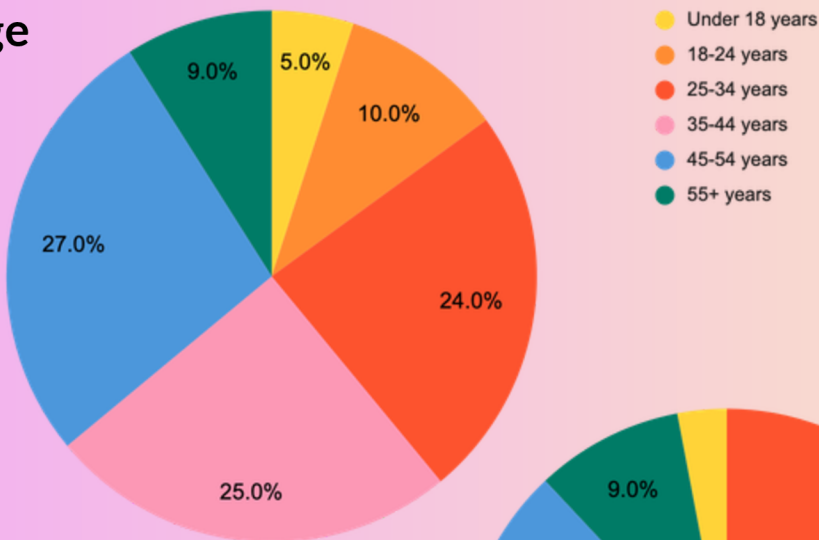
We are building our community to support each other, during their day to day lives. We have set up Whatsapp groups to help support this, where members can share resources, challenges, and opportunities, to provide peer support for people with similar experiences who will understand.

Who we have supported

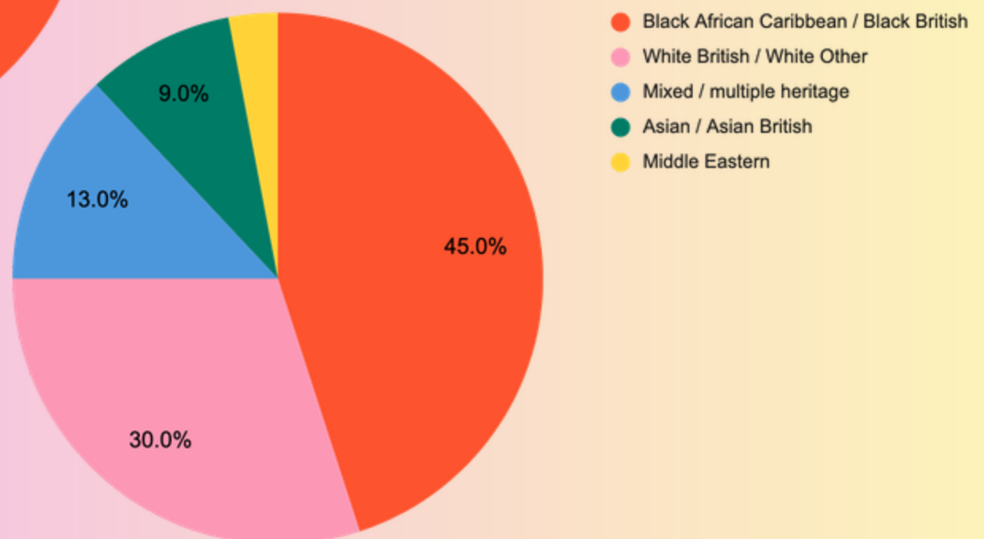
We have served over 700 LGBTQIA+ residents in Hackney, with a particular focus on queer people of colour, the Windrush community, trans people, disabled residents, refugees, and queer families, many of whom face entrenched systemic exclusion leading to health inequalities, and social isolation. Below is a sample of beneficiaries from our summer socials.

300 people came to our summer socials from 4 months to 75 years old, including 16 queer families. Here is how they identified:

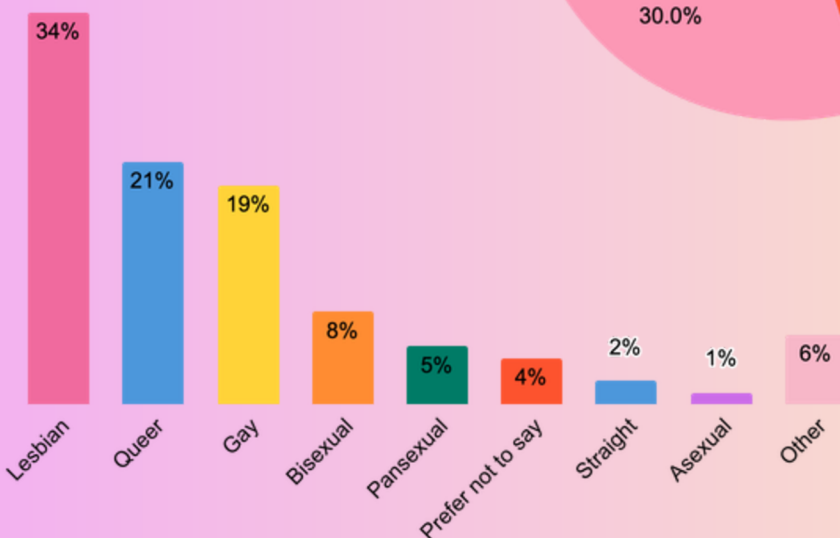
Age



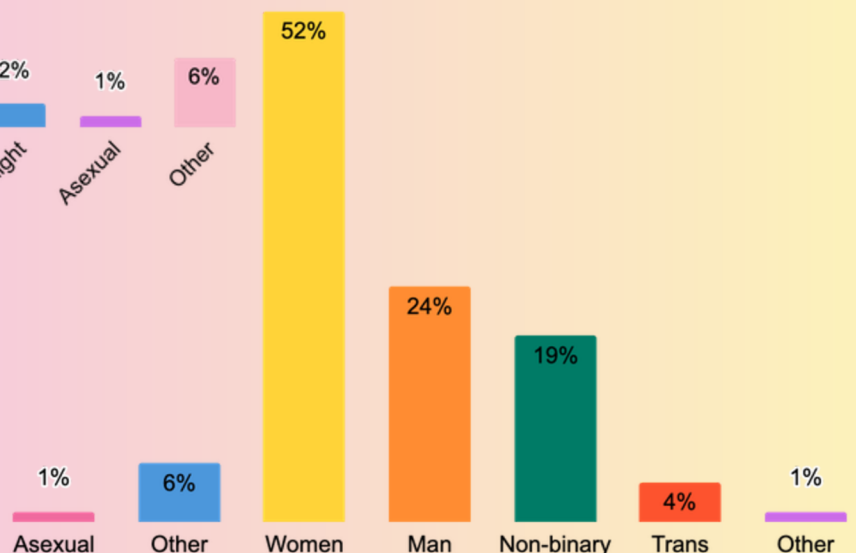
Ethnicity



Sexuality



Gender



Community stories

On the next two pages we have shared stories from people in our community who we have worked with and supported.

Alex

Alex is a 27-year-old trans person of colour, had avoided healthcare due to discrimination and fear of being misgendered. She wanted to find out about legal statuses and where to access medication, and speak to other queer-trans people of colour. Through Queertopia's community forum and wrap around support, we signposted to trusted health agencies included Irie Mind, providing safe spaces, and connections to services and funding partners Alex accessed guidance on health, legal, and mental health support. We linked Alex to a trans-femmes whatsapp group to support her building community. Within months, Alex reported that her wellbeing had improved, had reduced anxiety, and a strong sense of belonging in Hackney's LGBTQIA+ community.

"Today I built on my chosen family"



Amina

Amina is a 26 year old Black British lesbian, neurodiverse, and living with a long-term health condition. Before connecting with Queertopia, she described feeling "shut out" of many mainstream services and anxious and isolated because of dismissive attitudes from staff who didn't understand her intersecting identities as both LGBTQIA+ and a woman from the global majority. Amina first came to Queertopia, through a community forum, where residents were co-designing services for queer people of colour. She later attended a summer picnic. Amina told us that this was the first time she felt truly able to "just be herself in Hackney without fear or judgement." Amina began attending our monthly forums regularly, contributing her lived experiences to discussions on healthcare access including for LGBTQIA+ people with disabilities. She has built new friendships, reducing her isolation and developed the confidence to take part in public speaking at a local Business & Partners Forum, sharing her perspective with service providers and businesses about the barriers faced by neurodiverse queer residents, shaping our community and offer. Amina reported that Queertopia's spaces made her feel "included, valued, and listened to," and that it's improved her mental health.



Community stories



Blu, Steppers Women of Colour Walking Football Club

“My name is Blu-. I am 59 and a resident of Hackney. I identify as a black lesbian woman. I am Founder and Coach of Steppers Women of Colour Walking Football Club for women of colour over the age of 40.

Steppers Women of Colour Walking Football Club, founded in April 2021, was created to support women of colour affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond. The club promotes inclusion, fitness, fun, and wellbeing through walking football, addressing underrepresentation in the sport.

I have attended a number of workshops hosted by Queertopia at the Community Forum, and as a local resident, this has given me the opportunity to meet new people in a relaxed and safe environment.

The workshops are always engaging and diverse, ranging from creative activities and film screenings to guest speakers and discussions on topics of community interest. The venue is easily accessible, and the team are always hospitable and welcoming, providing light refreshments that add to the friendly atmosphere.

The Community Forum has also been of great benefit to members of our club, several of whom have attended workshops and even been invited to facilitate sessions. It continues to be a valuable community resource that promotes connection, learning, and inclusion. I have also had the opportunity to volunteer at several Queertopia community events, which has allowed me to support and give back to the community in new and rewarding ways.

I have also attended the Queertopia Business and Partner Forum, which I found extremely informative. It provided valuable insight into the range of organisations, services, and support available within the community such as Positive East and Aillia Impact. Through these sessions, I had the opportunity to network, exchange ideas, and share information with my team members.

More recently, I participated in the Allia Impact / Hackney Impact ‘Start Strong’ six-week programme, which covered key areas such as project management, governance, financial modelling, and relationship and data management. The programme has been highly beneficial to Steppers’ ongoing growth, sustainability, and future development.”



Business and partners forum

One of the key ways we build an LGBTQIA+ ecosystem, is through our monthly business and partners forum, bringing together queer entrepreneurs, corporate and independent businesses, public sector organisations, community organisations and more.

Engaging over 300 local LGBTQIA+ and inclusive businesses, our business and partner forum strengthens networks, supports businesses to connect and share resources, and ensures community insights influence wider systems, services and offers. We also help services collaborate on joint funding applications and bids, reducing duplication of services and ensuring more effective, coordinated support across Hackney and further afield. Our forum prioritises needs from the global majority ensuring their needs shape our programme and we advocate for anti-racist practice among partner organisations and challenges and barriers faced by people of colour accessing services. These connections have helped residents access healthcare, legal advice, social support, and other vital services.

Below are a selection of forums, quotes from attendees and a case study from a core Queertopia partner that we are proud of!

Sexual health services

We welcomed 10 partners, and talked about HIV awareness, community-based sexual health support offers and flyers commissioner came to speak about exploring queer needs, and we talked about what we can offer which included opportunity to shape local strategies, links to wider networks, information on PReP, as well as what we needed, including venues to do HIV tests, social media support and collaborators.

Trans rights in the UK

During this forum, attendees were upset and angry at the court ruling that 'sex' should be determined by sex at birth. We clarified and explained the ruling, as not everyone understood it, and we discussed financial implications for attendee's business', including spending money on changing toilets, and supporting trans people mentally, emotionally and physically.

Employment and entrepreneurship

This forum included a presentation from Hackney Impact and talked about how we can create inclusive business spaces, and LGBTQIA+ employment opportunities. We also discussed how to look after your wellbeing as an entrepreneur.

Networking, learning, celebrating

This forum created the opportunity to meet the other people in the room and build deeper relationships, identify collaboration opportunities and celebrate our successes together.

Youth services

This forum included presentations from CAHMS who spoke about LGBTQIA+ inclusive services available, and partners attending shared ideas of ways to improve the service offer to become more inclusive.

"I have broadened my personal and professional network"

"The forum has enabled us to connect with other local people, groups and organisations that we may not have encountered through traditional networking routes."

Business and partners stories: building an ecosystem

Barbara Silva and Paul Wight, Allia Impact

"The ongoing partnership between Allia Impact and Queertopia Consortium has continuously provided support and reach to organisations and individuals across the borough. QC first got in touch with Allia to receive some business support but it was clear that the relationship would be extremely valuable to Allia.



Through Queertopia Consortium we at Allia Impact have become more aware of the needs of the LGBTQ+ community, especially because the community is often left out of the council's engagement and target communities to support, but obviously the LGBTQ+ community faces a lot of challenges.

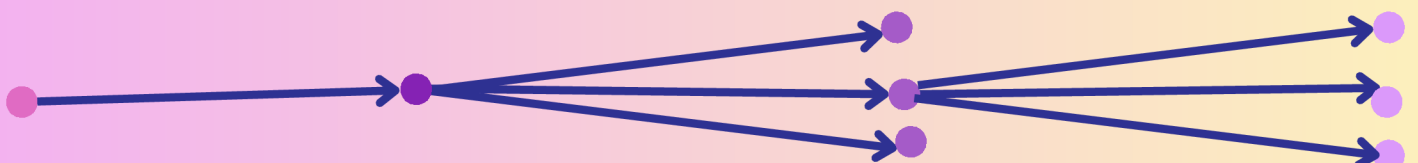
Across the UK there are significant gaps in data around queer businesses, but we obviously know that it is an underserved community and investing in the relationship with Queertopia Consortium has significantly impacted the way we interact with the queer community and how much more work we are able to do for it – whether that's signposting events, engaging businesses or being vocal to other organisations and the council about what support they need. What Allia has gained significantly from the relationship with Queertopia Consortium is the fact that we are more thoughtful as an organisation towards the LGBTQ+ community. We are better connected in Hackney and beyond to different people, organisations etc because of it."

"Queertopia is a much needed service that has bridged the gap in providing a voice and safe spaces for residence in the local community."

"I have found a different contact I was referred to, so I can run workshops for them"

"Connected with people that basically work with the same beneficiaries as myself, talked about partnering with them"

"It was incredibly comforting to be in a queer-friendly space. I hope that we can share opportunities and collaborate in the future!"



Business and partner stories: NHS

Talia Jay Children's Wellbeing Practitioner, CAHMS

"I'm a Child Wellbeing Practitioner and LGBTQIA+ Champion at First Steps, part of Children and Adult Mental Health Service (CAHMS). I first became involved with Queertopia when the Hackney Council forum moved over to their platform. I was really hoping to build relationships with other community leaders, connect with people doing similar work, and explore possible partnerships or ways to support each other.

My involvement has mainly been through attending the monthly Queertopia business forums and community picnics, and meeting with Joanne for coffee to share ideas and talk about partnership opportunities. What stands out most for me is the atmosphere. It's a genuinely warm, open and supportive space where everyone is encouraged to have a voice and share what they're working on. There's a real sense of community and shared purpose, which feels refreshing and grounding. I've also really appreciated how discussions in Queertopia are thoughtful and constructive. People share advice and feedback in a way that's kind but honest, and there's a lot of critical thinking that helps you reflect on your own work in new ways. It feels like a space where growth is encouraged rather than judged.

Being part of Queertopia has helped me develop my work within CAMHS in quite a meaningful way. I've been able to take the voices and views of the local LGBTQIA+ community back to the service and think about how we can make what we do more accessible and inclusive. One example of this has been adapting the wording of some of the information we share with other services and young people, so it feels clearer, more affirming, and easier to understand.

On a personal level, Queertopia has made me feel more connected and supported in my role as an LGBTQIA+ Champion. Sometimes doing this kind of inclusion work can feel quite lonely, but being part of Queertopia means I have a network of people who understand what that's like. It's a space to share ideas, get advice, and feel re-energised about the work.

Overall, Queertopia has created a bridge between community and service spaces. It has shown how collaboration, openness and care can make a real difference to the way we support young people."



Annabelle Burns, Homerton Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

"Making a connection with Queertopia has been beneficial for the Homerton in many ways, both for individuals and for our organisation. Conversations and workshops have enabled us to discuss issues in an honest and open way, listen to feedback about our services and consider how to make our care more inclusive. We have happily shared information about Queertopia's networking opportunities and other events with our Homerton LGBTQIA+ staff network, Homerton Rainbow, and across the organisation. It has been great to be able to contribute and collaborate in mutually beneficial ways, learning and sharing."

Business and partner stories: Local Authority

**Froeks Kamminga, Senior Public Health Specialist
Sexual and Reproductive Health, City & Hackney**



“Queertopia are an important stakeholder and trusted community partner, evidenced through membership of the quarterly Sexual and Reproductive Health Forum, and that Queertopia represents a voice that we aim to include in e.g. workshops and engagement around health literacy to help ensure our materials and approaches are appropriate and inclusive.”

Corrina Antrobus, Culture Lead, Hackney Council

“Hackney Council’s Culture team have been delighted to fund Queertopia Consortium in the 2025 Windrush Microgrant scheme.

Using creative programming, they delivered an impactful event for Hackney residents by screening Veronica McKenzie’s *Under Your Nose* documentary chronicling the fight to open the UK’s first Black Lesbian Gay Centre in the 1980s.

The story behind the film speaks to the activism that has characterised Hackney for decades - something that stood out in the grant panel process. Through the power of documentary, and an insightful Q&A, attendees were reminded of this very specific history, one that still feels vital and relevant within today’s conversations on safe spaces for underrepresented groups.

Queertopia was successful in creating a safe, welcoming space for Hackney’s LGBTQIA+ community and allies to reflect, discuss and connect on a shared experience. And to be able to provide access to inspirational figures made for a wonderful contribution to this year’s festival.

We were also delighted to support their ambition to deliver the event in a Hackney library - spaces we endeavour to extend to cultural programming and creative hubs where people can meet, make and organise. We also strive to tell the full story of the Windrush generations through our annual Windrush festival. This means supporting LGBTQIA+ stories and providing a platform for pride and acknowledgement of their contributions to our culture when done in authentic and meaningful ways. Joanne and the Queertopia team are consistent in their ability to do just that and we are thankful for their contributions to our cultural programming.”

Trauma-informed and harm prevention

We are culturally responsive and our services reach beneficiaries who rarely come forward: beneficiaries who fear judgement, have internalised stigma, or have felt unseen within white-majority LGBTQIA+ spaces.

Co-production

Feedback is gathered openly through working group discussions, as well as privately through anonymous channels, giving beneficiaries multiple safe routes to express concerns or suggest changes on an ongoing basis. We are always building trust and listening to members of our community and respond fast and with agility to ensure we are meeting need.

'since I left Africa and been in the UK, I haven't been able to find a space that works for me. This week I brought my friend for the first time and we are both so happy to be able to have a place to go.'

Co-representation

Our team is made up of people with lived experience including global majority LGBTQIA+ staff, disabled and neurodiverse volunteers, young LGBTQIA+ people and community members who have themselves experienced trauma, racism, misgendering, ableism and exclusion from mainstream services, and are sensitive to the needs of our beneficiaries. This visible representation, further affirmed by our cultural sensitivity, builds immediate trust with beneficiaries who have often been harmed, dismissed or underserved by statutory systems. For many beneficiaries, Queertopia is the first space where they feel seen, culturally understood and emotionally safe.

Supporting our team

We provide our team with an induction including trauma-informed and inclusive training for the team. This helps us reduce the risk of harm to our beneficiaries and to our team as they could have trauma triggered which could cause them harm. To support this, we have a pathway to refer staff and volunteers and beneficiaries to services supporting their emotional or psychological needs.

"Feeling of safety for participants to share experiences openly"

Meeting people where they are

We ensure our work reaches those experiencing entrenched inequalities by selecting spaces that are appropriate for LGBTQIA+ beneficiaries, particularly trans people and queer people of colour. We meet beneficiaries in places they already feel safe libraries, cafés, colleges, community events, WhatsApp groups and digital spaces. Community feedback has made it clear that many estate-based community halls, although inexpensive and available to other organisations, are unsafe for our beneficiaries. Beneficiaries have reported experiences of being shouted at, followed, or threatened when walking to or from these venues, and trans beneficiaries in particular have described incidents of harassment and being physically intimidated near some estate halls. Because safety is a foundation of trauma-informed practice, we cannot use these venues. For beneficiaries who are already anxious, isolated, neurodiverse, or managing trauma, unsafe spaces become an absolute barrier to accessing help. This is why we hold our activities in locations that are central, inclusive, and culturally competent places where beneficiaries have told us they feel able to attend without fear. By choosing safe venues, we remove a major barrier that mainstream provision often overlooks. We also use data provided to us from London metropolitan police about areas within Hackney that has less reports of hate crime. Our person-centred care listens to the needs of our community and provides reflective offers.

Sober space

Evidence suggests that rates of illicit substance use are higher amongst LGBTQIA+ than in heterosexual adults (Hackney Health and Wellbeing Profile 2019). Our events, which are sober, particularly support those navigating substance misuse or anxiety. Many beneficiaries avoid nightlife due to safety concerns, cultural pressures, or past trauma. By providing joyful, sober, intergenerational events designed with cultural humility, we offer an inclusive environment rarely found elsewhere in Hackney. This approach supports mental health, reduces isolation and challenges the assumption that LGBTQIA+ spaces must revolve around drugs and alcohol.

"Thanks so much, really appreciate it, fantastic space, inclusive, aware of intersectionality"

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