

## Facts About Manchester Pride - Factsheet 2016

# It's official: you have a legal right to walk to access premises (homes or businesses) during Manchester Pride 2016. Without a wristband, accreditation or a resident and visitor pass

On 22 April 2015, the Local Government Ombudsman ruled that Manchester City Council's wording of its Traffic Regulation Order for Manchester Pride 2014 was at fault.

8. The Order said that pedestrians could access premises by displaying a valid wristband, accreditation, or a resident and visitor pass. This was fault, because the Council has no legal basis in which to restrict pedestrians from accessing premises. Therefore if someone wished to access a particular premise the organisers should have allowed access even if the person did not have a wristband, accreditation, or a resident and visitor pass.

The full ruling can be read here: [www.factsmcr.com/go/010](http://www.factsmcr.com/go/010)

### What exactly can I do if I don't buy a Manchester Pride wristband?



You can walk into the gay village through the gates. Inspector Spurgeon of Greater Manchester Police has confirmed today (25 August 2016) that you do not have to stop and engage with a security guard.

A guard can ask you if you would like to buy wristband, be escorted or accept a free "walk through" wristband. You can say "no thanks" to these and just keep on walking. There is no good reason to accept a free wristband.

The Local Government Ombudsman has said that you have the right to use the public streets to walk to premises (homes and businesses).

Some businesses won't let you in, but others will. We think the pop-up bars and takeaways will serve you. You won't get into the concert areas which are on private property such as the car-park. There are also bars outside the fences such as Tribeca which has said no wristband will be required.

The bottom line is that if you fancy a wander in the gay village and are relaxed about which bars and clubs will or won't let you in, this is for you.

### What should I do if I experience a problem with a guard at the gates?

Please stay polite and calm at all times. Don't give the police any reason to take action against you.

Your first step should be to ask to speak to Peter Harrison the head of security or call him on 07496 777899. If security are no help, ask for a police officer. We think this year GMP will be more proactive in defending our rights.

Also Manchester City Council will be monitoring the situation. You can call Veronica Wong between the hours of 12-10pm on 07771 607341. Ask her to log your complaint.

The FactsMCR campaign will be running a live blog on its website throughout the weekend. Please report your experience good or bad at [factsmcr.com](http://factsmcr.com) or send an email to: [pride2016@factsmcr.com](mailto:pride2016@factsmcr.com).

And there is a pop up Facebook group: "I Love My Right to Access Premises At Manchester Pride 2016."

As well as written evidence, videos were very helpful in 2014 and 2015. So if you capture wrongdoing by guards, police or other officials we would like to see it so we can raise the issues with the appropriate authorities.

**Pride marches were started to commemorate the riots at Stonewall in 1969. They were a protest and about rights. This is also a protest - about our rights having been taken away and people being excluded from a gay village area during an event called Pride unless they paid up.**

#### FACTS ABOUT MANCHESTER PRIDE

Pride has trumpeted the £137,000 it gave to good causes in 2015. However in 1998 the charity total was £131,062 and in 2004 it was £129,426.

Recent amounts for charity are pitiful compared to income. In 2013 income was £1,058,285 and had been much the same for several years. In 2014 income jumped to £1,348,314 and to £1,657,882 in 2015.

In the years from 2003-2006, 30% of ticket money went to good causes. We think that percentage would mean at least £350,000 for causes now.

Where has all the extra money gone?

# The History Since 1998

In 1998 for the first time a wristband was needed to get into bars and clubs during Mardi Gras. 51,000 bands were sold that year and £131,062 was raised for good causes.

In 1999 the gay village was fenced off completely and a band was required to enter. Nothing at all was raised for charity that year.

The event reverted to being free once more in 2000, as GayFest, with £105,716.77 raised. It was GayFest once again in 2001 and Mardi Gras in 2002.

An official document shows that key crime was down 53% at the free GayFest 2000 compared to the fenced Mardi Gras 99 and 39% down on 1998. Manchester City Council was recorded as saying it was pleased with the reduction of crime at GayFest 2000.

Recently campaigners have been handed a copy of the minutes of a meeting which was held at Marketing Manchester (the tourist board) on 25 November 2002. It was attended by Manchester City Council, the organisers of the forthcoming Europride and the LGF. The minutes show that a representative of Greater Manchester Police told the meeting that although the roads could be closed "a charge still cannot be



made to enter an area closed off."

But somehow organisers did exactly that nine months later and every year after. During that period various gay village business and charity people were trustees and directors of the event.

Shockingly people who didn't buy a wristband experienced regular problems attending the Monday HIV/AIDS Vigil year after year. Something which



the community had been promised would always be free to attend.

Just before Manchester Pride 2013 campaigners were told that the previous year Crunch Bar had demanded that customers who didn't have wristbands should be allowed to reach its premises. That was then done because the person behind Crunch knew the legal situation.

Because Manchester Pride closes the streets for more than three days, permission must be granted by the Secretary of State For Transport. In 2014 campaigners wrote to the Department For Transport and on 21 August 2014 the DFT replied saying:

"This legislative requirement is not ambiguous. It means pedestrians wishing to access premises that can only be accessed from the restricted roads, must be granted entry to those roads."

See that letter here:  
[www.factsmcr.com/go/006](http://www.factsmcr.com/go/006)

The DFT made clear that wristband buyers could not be prioritised over those who were without. A "two-tier" system as they called it.

The new situation was brought to the attention of all concerned and the media. You may remember that in its subsequent coverage the Manchester Evening News referred to campaigners as "trespassers." Turning the truth completely on its head, as it was Pride which had been acting unlawfully for many years while campaigners had a legal right to enter.

Manchester Pride 2014 began with some people being allowed in but then

there was a change of mind. At 5pm on Saturday campaigners attempted to enter at the Sackville Street gate.

Video footage shows that police officers stood, watched and laughed as Pride's security guards unlawfully prevented access to the public street. Officers ignored requests for assistance and walked past. A considerable amount of written and video evidence was captured.

In April 2015 the Local Government Ombudsman ruled that Manchester City Council's Traffic Order was at "fault." That the public had the right to access premises via the public streets where those premises couldn't be reached by means of an alternative route outside the fences.

A letter from Greater Manchester Police details how, just before the 2015 event, Manchester Pride's security team was briefed by Inspector Spurgeon. He told them what their responsibilities and powers were and "certainly made it clear they could not restrict access and the approach was a simple appeal for people to purchase wristbands."

Many people walked into the gay village without a wristband in 2015. However there was a media blackout. The Manchester Evening News told readers that the gay village would be closed to people who did not have wristbands "as usual." The MEN didn't respond to contact about this.

In 2016 the Department For Transport published new guidance for Councils which want to close the streets, further confirming what campaigners in Manchester were told in 2014.