

# Alphabet Soup

The official online magazine of OutREACH Cumbria

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## A Note From OutREACH Cumbria

We are delighted to see the first issue of Alphabet Soup be released and are excited to see what comes in future issues. We would like to thank all of the contributors for their hard work on this issue. OutReach have been working with the LGBT+ community in Cumbria for over 20 years, but this is the first magazine we have ever produced and it's down to the hard work of the volunteers. We hope that Alphabet Soup will continue to grow, and we think this is a fantastic first issue.

Big thanks especially to our editor and volunteer co-ordinator, Louise who has put so much work into getting this off the ground. We'd love to hear what you think of the magazine, so email or tweet us and let us know. We would also love to hear from anyone who would like to contribute to future issues, or volunteer with us, so do get in touch if you're interested.

-The OutREACH Cumbria Committee

## A Note From Alphabet Soup

Alphabet Soup is a digital magazine, created by LGBT+ GSRD charity OutREACH Cumbria, to help everybody in the community come together as one. Each issue is released bi-monthly and aims to empower and give a platform to those in the LGBT+ community. We also aim to challenge discrimination and prejudice against LGBT+ individuals across Cumbria. We would like to thank all the editors that helped bring the magazine together, as well as the individuals that submitted their stories and projects. We hope you enjoy this issue and will continue to read our magazine and support us as a charity. Thank you for reading!

-The Alphabet Soup Team



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# Local Events Calendar

February is LGBT+ History Month. There are a number of events taking place around Cumbria to celebrate. For more information on LGBT+ history in Cumbria visit [www.celebratecumbria.co.uk](http://www.celebratecumbria.co.uk)

## CLUB NIGHT EVENTS

- **Club 135 Grand Opening** -Club 135, Whitehaven, 31st Jan (18+), 6pm
- **Sax Guy & Beats by Tom** -Club 135, Whitehaven, 1st Feb (18+), 8pm
- **RnB Night** - Club 135, Whitehaven, 2nd Feb (18+), 8pm
- **Disco Made Me Do It** -Club 135, Whitehaven, 8th Feb (18+), 8pm
- **Club XS- Yellow and White** - Insomnia Carlisle, 2nd Mar (18+), 10pm-3am
- **Fascino Presents Back Into the Groove** - The Halston Apart Hotel, Carlisle, 2nd Mar (18+), 9pm-1am
- **Underground UK** - Insomnia, Carlisle, 30th Mar (18+), 9pm-3am

## COMEDY EVENTS

- **Matt Richardson**- Old Fire Station, Carlisle, 9th Feb (14+), 7:30pm-10pm
- **Stephen Bailey: Our Kid**- Old Fire Station, Carlisle, 28th Mar (16+), 7:30pm-4am
- **Ed Gamble: Blizzard**- Old Fire Station, Carlisle 30th March (14+), 8pm-10pm

## UOC EVENTS

- **LGBT+ history month is being celebrated across all University of Cumbria campuses throughout February.**
- **Sock It To Eating Disorders**- Fusehill Campus, 25th of February, asking people to wear a fun pair of socks and to donate what you can to Beat

## OUTREACH EVENTS

- **Cocktail Night**- Eaten by Monsters, Carlisle, 7th Feb (18+), 7pm
- **Family Bowling**- AMF Bowling, Carlisle, 22nd Feb (all ages welcome), 2pm
- To book either of these events please visit our facebook page /Outreachcumbria

## LGBT+ EVENTS

- **Transgender Family Support Group** -Pennine Way Community Development Centre, Harraby, Last Saturday of every month, 1pm-3pm
- To find out more information please contact [transfamilycarlisle@outlook.co.uk](mailto:transfamilycarlisle@outlook.co.uk)
- **LGBT+ Movie Night: Always Another Way** -The Beacon, Whitehaven, 23rd and 24th Feb, 10am-4pm
- **Connect - Mental Health Drop In: Always Another Way** - Whitehaven Library, Mondays, 1pm-3pm
- **LGBT+ Youth Group: Always Another Way**- for ages 8-24 years, Saturdays, 12pm-4pm
- To find out more information please contact always another way via their website [www.alwaysanotherway.co.uk](http://www.alwaysanotherway.co.uk)
- **She's A Good Boy** (a play about a non-binary person based on a true story) - Rosehill Theatre, Whitehaven, 16th Feb, 8pm

## 1993

The health authority in Carlisle integrated the existing Gay Switchboard into a new sexual health project, as a public health response to the HIV & AIDS crisis.

## 1994

OutREACH Cumbria was established and Richard Kavanagh was employed as full-time manager to help run a gay men's support group and do sexual health sessions across the county. For the next 10 years Richard ran one-to-one sessions, worked with professionals, organisations, such as the local authorities, educational institutions and the police force, to tackle the lack of understanding of Lesbian and Gay issues and the impact of discrimination. Richard then ran OutREACH as a consultation organisation, giving advice on Lesbian and Gay equality in the workplace. A few years later, the Bisexual label was adopted into the scope of what OutREACH covered.

## 1999

OutREACH started working with young people aged 14 – 25 through youth groups and from this, Pride in North Cumbria (PiNC) was born.

## 2008

OutREACH joined forces with a couple of other organisations to create the Cumbria Equality Resource Centre (CERC). This ran for 3 years on funds from the Big Lottery Fund

## 2010

The Equality Act came in that OutREACH turned into a full LGBT help and advice organisation. Richard got together with PiNC to set up the first ever Cumbria Pride at Fusehill Street Campus in Carlisle.

# OutREACH Cumbria and 25 Years of History

## 2012

OutREACH became a registered charity and a telephone helpline began which is now being re-branded and relaunched in 2019.

## 2015

At this point Richard stepped down and Ben Vollans took the reins. For the last 4 years Ben has over seen projects such as the Celebrate - LGBT History in Cumbria, In the Community - HIV Prevention, conferences on Trans issues, drop in services covering such things as police advice, parental support, trans support, sexual health, mental health and much more.

## 2015

OutREACH Cumbria became an official Stonewall Training Partner and this helped access a lot more schools to deliver specific training on the language used around LGBT issues. OutREACH and Gay Older Brothers and Sisters (GOBS), a mentoring scheme to help people come out and deal with sexuality and gender issues, joined forces. As part of this, OutREACH took over as one of the partners in the Queer Pathways into Diversity (QuPiD), a pan-European project that was a mixture of 5 different countries focusing on how adult learning and the sharing of best practice across Europe could help tackle LGBT rights and discrimination. This saw members of OutREACH head over to Germany, Poland, Lithuania and Malta to meet up with the partners there.

## 2019

OutREACH Cumbria is set to bring back a number of these services and more with a dedicated committee behind its doors and a group of volunteers who are full of drive, passion and fresh ideas. This magazine is a perfect example of that and a great way to keep up to date with the happenings in Cumbria. Follow OutREACH on social media to keep even more up to date on what new services, training, socials and more we have on offer!



# An LGBT+ History of Cumbria

By Maggie Duguid

With LGBT+ history month just around the corner, we would like to give you a brief walk through Cumbria's LGBT+ history.

When humans arrived in Cumbria about 13,000 years ago, there were probably people among them who we would today describe as LGBT+. The society around us may have changed beyond recognition, and the words we use to describe our experiences might not be the same, but people like us have always been part of history! The stories of those who loved the same genders and explored their gender identities can be hard to trace, but their legacy is all around us. This is true in Cumbria, too: even our Hadrian's Wall is named after a man famous for the devotion he showed his male lover! To celebrate the upcoming LGBT+ History Month, let's take a look at how life has changed for LGBT+ Cumbrians through the years.

LGBT+ Cumbrians have faced many social, political and legal problems. For example, until 1967 any sexual contact between men was illegal. In 1958, 13 men from Kendal were tried in Appleby on charges of indecency. Most of them were released, but they spent weeks in police custody and lost their jobs. In 1966, six men and a teenager faced prosecution in the Carlisle Indecency Trial. All were at risk of further danger, as their full names and addresses were published in local newspapers. After 1967, sex acts between men over 21 became legal, yet so much stigma remained that convictions of gay and bisexual men increased 400%!

In 1964, two men accused of murdering John West, a bachelor living in Seaton, became the last two people to be hanged in the UK. Court records suggest that West had been intimate with one of the men, who seems to have approached him for either blackmail or sex work right before the murder. However, the solicitors, concerned for the dead man's reputation, deliberately avoided this topic, so it was never revealed which man actually killed West. Perhaps unjustly, both were sentenced to death. LGBT+ concerns of all kinds were shrouded in shame and fear, but things were about to change.

After New York's 1969 Stonewall Riots, many UK organisations formed with the goals of increasing LGBT+ visibility and fighting for equality. From 1973, the Campaign for Homosexual Equality (CHE) ran 4 gay and lesbian social groups based around the Borders, Carlisle, Barrow and South Cumbria. They shared newsletters and organised events including weekends away, wine making, and even a penpal scheme for elderly and disabled lesbians! In November 1980, Cumbria's first Gay Switchboard opened, eventually becoming OutREACH Cumbria in 1993.



Carlisle town hall flies the LGBT+ flag at pride 2016

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Cumbria's first case of HIV/AIDS was diagnosed in 1988 - the same year that Margaret Thatcher introduced Section 28, banning local authorities from "promoting homosexuality" or "pretended family relationships". This meant that schools could not discuss LGBT+ issues or offer funding or support to LGBT+ children, a ruling which was only repealed 15 years later.

In 1992, the Ulverston Operatic Society decided to stage *La Cage Aux Folles*, but protesters argued that their performance would be in breach of Section 28 - though South Lakes District Council allowed them to perform the musical in the end. From the 90's onward, gay bars and club nights started to appear in Cumbria, starting with the Steam Packet in Workington. Despite the legislation, LGBT+ Cumbrians were finding places where they could find social and medical support, meet like-minded people, and have fun expressing themselves.

In the new millennium, LGBT+ people gained far greater legal and social security. We obtained the right to civil partnerships and then marriage, an equal age of consent, the right of trans people to birth certificates stating their correct gender, and of same sex couples to be legal parents to the same child. The first civil partnerships in Cumbria took place in December 2005, and the first same sex marriage was held at Rydal Mount in 2014. Many new organisations formed, including Translakes in 2009, which organises social events and walks in the lakes for the trans community, and Pride in North Cumbria (PiNC), who organised Cumbria's first Pride in Carlisle in 2010. In 2016, OutREACH Cumbria worked with Tullie House to launch "CELEBRATE", the first project to explore and record Cumbrian LGBT+ history. And LGBT+ Cumbrians continue to break ground, such as trans soldier Chloe Allen, the first woman to serve on the British Army front line, and the team behind Silloth's first ever Pride this year. We can't wait to see how our community continues to make history in 2019!



OutREACH worked with Tullie House to launch "CELEBRATE"



# Book Review

By Sam Dawson

The Art Of Being Normal is about two people finding love and friendships, and how relationships can change, develop, and bring confidence into their lives.

Daniel feels as if he is trapped in the wrong body, but his two friends are the only people that know. He is funny and quirky but is quite insecure of his secret until he meets tough guy, Leo. Leo is the exact opposite of David, however something occurs where the two will have to stick together as friends. When someone calls him by a different name, Leo starts to reveal that he also has a secret. This leads to Daniel and Leo finding out that maybe they do have something in common after all.

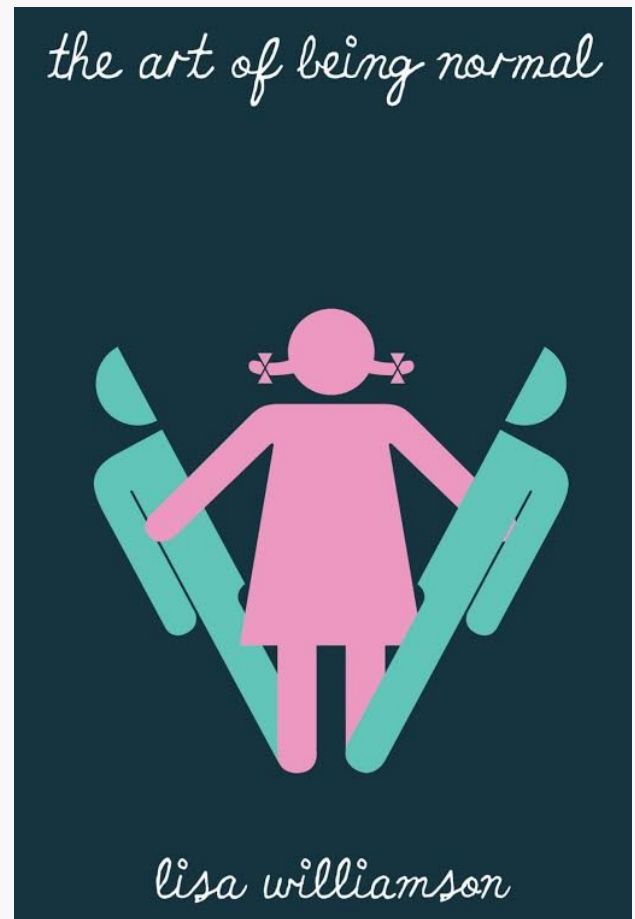
I personally believe this book is helpful for people who are trying to find out who they truly are and gives an important example of people overcoming bullying and harsh words. Throughout the book, characters develop into either lovable, cute people who the reader can empathise with, or ones that we as readers begin to loathe. Part of this is to do with the fact that both Daniel and Leo are bullied throughout the story, and them overcoming these struggles creates a stark contrast in how we see the characters of the book.

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**I like to think of this book as a promise of a future.**

Lisa Williamson shows the reader through this story that even if your parents don't accept you or the teens in school call you names, you can still fight through and be exactly who you are - even if you have to go through a second 'puberty'.

I like to think of this book as a promise of a future, as it shows people can accept you even when you don't always accept yourself. The book also provides a view on how going through puberty can cause dysphoria/worsen existing dysphoria and shows how trans people can learn to fight through that dysphoria and transition happily.



# My Transgender Journey

By Daniel Chapman

I'm Dan, I'm 25, I'm from Cumbria, and I'm transgender. I've been out as trans since 2011 and I'm just shy 5 years on testosterone and 4 years post top surgery. I do want a hysterectomy at some point but it will happen when it happens.

Being trans has taught me that life gets better with time. It doesn't matter if you are gay, lesbian, bi, trans, whatever. You just have to live life for you and if people don't like that or bring negative vibes around you don't need them in your life.



*Then and now: Life hasn't always been easy but I now have an amazing support system*

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**Being trans has taught me that life gets better with time.**

Don't get me wrong, it hasn't always been easy. I've been beat up, had death threats, been spat at and been called names, but in the words of Taylor Swift - I'm doing better than I ever was!

It hasn't always been the way but I now have an amazing support system and my family now accept me for me. I have an amazing friendship group and I've started talking to someone who doesn't care that I'm trans, she just sees me for me, a nerdy tea drinker who loves documentaries and Taylor Swift! Because at the end of the day, being trans isn't my life. It's just a tiny part of it.

**-If you would like any support relating to any topics mentioned in this story please visit our website: [www.outreachcumbria.org.uk](http://www.outreachcumbria.org.uk)**

If you are interested in sharing a story in Alphabet Soup please email us at [mag@outreachcumbria.co.uk](mailto:mag@outreachcumbria.co.uk)



# LGBT+ Representation in Video Games

by Tom Burkes



**You would assume that LGBT+ representation in video games would be less of something that causes a stir.**

The reaction of the fans then was similar to the recent reaction this year: a majority of people pleased, but a vocal minority who did not like the idea of a fictional character who did not fit the video game norm of heteronormativity.

What's most frustrating with the people with these opinions is that it is undisputed how important representation in media is for members of the LGBT+ community. The sexuality, and gender identities of characters has no effect on gameplay, but can mean so much to people who can finally identify with a character in a popular video game. Especially in 'Overwatch', where out of 30 playable characters, two are (confirmed) members of the LGBT+ community, and are rubbing shoulders with healing angels, dwarven mechanics, ghostly assassins and robot tanks, one of the more believable elements of the game is some genuine diversity, something that the current video game market sorely needs.

Bullets fly through the air and chunks of masonry and gnarled metal crash around you. In the edge of your vision, you can see a huge mechanised tank firing on a spectacled gorilla. A floating robot monk throws a yellow orb over your head, and suddenly your cuts and grazes feel less painful. You turn away from the battle, hoping for backup. It arrives, in the form of a giant hamster ball, piloted by a genetically engineered hamster, with genius level intellect. But all this is not the strangest thing on the battlefield, oh no. Because in this video game, there is also, a gay man.

Once you've calmed yourself down, from all the shock, let's reflect on the recent announcement by the development team of Blizzard's 'Overwatch' that one of their title characters has been canonically confirmed as a gay man.

In 2019, you would assume (hope) that LGBT+ representation in video games would be less of something that causes a stir. But it does. In early January, Michael Chu, the lead writer for the popular first person shooter 'Overwatch' revealed via his official Twitter account that after some heavy hints in a recent online story, the grizzled, white-haired super-soldier, codenamed Soldier 76, identified as a gay man. In his tweet, Chu wrote that "Jack (Soldier 76) and Vincent were in a romantic relationship many years ago. Both identify as gay".

At the announcement, many people were thrilled. The story development of a character that had been in the game since its launch was welcomed, as was the increase in the number of playable LGBT+ characters within the mechanics of the game. The day before Christmas in 2016, Chu again was the bearer of LGBT+ related lore, announcing through an online comic that the game's cover star Tracer (an ex-RAF pilot with the ability to zip through space, and travel briefly back in time) identified as a lesbian.

If you are interested in sharing a story in Alphabet Soup please email us at [mag@outreachcumbria.co.uk](mailto:mag@outreachcumbria.co.uk)

# Considered Human

by Faye Hughes

This photographic project explores the relationship between our perceived gender and our physical body. As a photographer, I want to capture the individuality of people and document their uniqueness with regards to their gender expression going beyond the expectations of the bodies reproductive functions. This project highlights that there are many different types of people so we don't have to match what we see in the media and it is perfectly ok to not fit the proverbial mould as I believe that gender is not a category for a person to conform to.

This project highlights the things that give us the social ques towards gender and show they are essentially just props agreeing with the theory that gender is a performance based on internalize are repeated ideas of masculine and feminine. I want to create a platform that shows there is a variety of people everywhere and bring forward people who are usually not represented in media. In the words Simone De Beauvoir all of us, men as well as women, whoever we are, should be considered as human.



If you would like to be involved in this project either model or just share some experiences please get in touch with Faye Hughes at: [fayelhughes@gmail.com](mailto:fayelhughes@gmail.com)

If you are interested in sharing a story in Alphabet Soup please email us at [mag@outreachcumbria.co.uk](mailto:mag@outreachcumbria.co.uk)



# The Spotlight



Each issue we will be putting a sexuality or gender identity into The Spotlight to give it some much needed love and attention. This issue we are going to be looking at:

## PANSEXUALITY

People who identify as pansexual, or 'pan', are attracted to all genders. Some pansexual people describe their sexuality as having no boundaries, that they are attracted to people and their personalities rather than their gender and pride themselves on being "gender blind".

### Public Figure

Panic! at the Disco front man, Brendon Urie, publicly came out as pansexual during an interview for *PAPER* magazine in 2018 saying "If a person is great, then a person is great [...] I'm attracted to people"

### The Flag

The flag has three colours, pink, yellow and blue. The blue represents attraction to those who identify as male, the pink represents attraction to those who identify as female and the yellow represents attraction to those who identify as other genders such as non-binary, agender, bigender and genderfluid people.



# Have Your Work Published in Alphabet Soup!

We want to give a voice to as many **LGBT+ and GSRD** individuals in Cumbria and the surrounding areas as we can but anyone is welcome to write for Alphabet Soup.

If you have a **story** you would like to share, a **project** you are working on or a **topic** you feel passionate about then drop us an email at [mag@outreachcumbria.co.uk](mailto:mag@outreachcumbria.co.uk) and we will work with you to help get your work into the magazine.

In addition, if you are an **artist** or **photographer** we would love to showcase some of your art and even direct people to where they can find more of your work.

If this is of any interest to you then please email [mag@outreachcumbria.co.uk](mailto:mag@outreachcumbria.co.uk) and our team will guide you in getting your first piece published!

We're also looking for **businesses** that are **LGBT+ safe spaces** to add to our list of **OutREACH Partners**. Your business would be advertised in every issue of Alphabet Soup. If you own a business that is an LGBT+ safe space and would like to be added to our list then please email us for details at [mag@outreachcumbria.co.uk](mailto:mag@outreachcumbria.co.uk)

## Help Us With Our Research

Over the years, OutREACH has participated in various research, one major report was around the barriers faced by the LGBT+ community of accesses mainstream services for Sexual Abuse and Violence. This paper is readily available and can be downloaded from our website.

We have also done a lot of work around hate crime, of which we are currently seeking people to answer a short research questionnaire about experiences of LGBT+ hate crime in Cumbria. Please note that you do not have to have experienced hate crime to complete the questionnaire, we just want to hear your opinions on it!

Please visit <https://bit.ly/2PRAHP7> to help us with this research. Thank you.