

# Network Rail celebrates LGBT Pride Month with Rail Pride Fest event

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Network Rail is marking LGBT Pride Month by hosting its second annual Pride Fest event across two weeks in June, following the success of the inaugural event last year.

Rail industry presents: Pride festival will run from 14-25 June, bringing employees from across the rail sector together, generating discussion around LGBT+ issues and driving progress around inclusion to make the railway a more welcoming place for all passengers and staff.

The festival – led by Network Rail’s Archway employee network – will feature a series of events, including panel debates, a guest appearance from LGBT+ activist Peter Tatchell, and drag queen bingo. All events will be held virtually and are free to attend for anyone in the rail industry.

The number of organisations participating has almost doubled from last year’s event, with Great Western Railway, Abellio Group and Transport for London among the 32 companies taking part this time around.

The festival is fundraising for, and raising awareness of Terrence Higgins Trust (THT) – the UK’s leading HIV and AIDS charity.

Shane Andrews MBE, who leads Network Rail's Archway employee network, said: "Our Archway employee network is always thinking of ways we can mark LGBT Pride Month, and this year is definitely our busiest yet."

"With over 1,000 members across the rail industry, Archway plays a vital role in promoting diversity, inclusion and equality. This year's festival will be another opportunity for us to come together and influence positive change for the LGBT+ community."

Network Rail has also launched a new thought-provoking film - entitled *Do I offend you?* - which celebrates the contributions of seven LGBT+ employees to the rail industry. The film is designed to show what Pride means to our employees, and stresses how important it is that they are their whole selves at work as part of the railway family.

Harry Levey, an internal communications manager at Network Rail who is organising Pride Fest, and who appears in the film, said: "I wanted to be involved in the film as it's so important that we show visibility and show others that they should be proud of who they are."

"Network Rail is an amazing place to work if you're LGBT+, and Archway has played a massive role in making that happen. I'm proud that we're leading the way in bringing the rail industry together by organising Rail Pride Fest to make it a more inclusive place for colleagues and passengers."

*Photo and credit: Network Rail*