

PR 4739

14 May 2010

For immediate release

Flag to fly in support of International Day against Homophobia

*****Photo opportunity: 2pm, Monday, May 17. Joe Orson will raise the
Rainbow Flag at County Hall, Leicester Road, Glenfield, Leicester, LE3
8RA*****

The Rainbow flag will be unfurled at County Hall on Monday, May 17 in support of International Day against Homophobia (IDAHO).

The flying of the flag is reflective of Leicestershire County Council's pledge to stand up in the international fight against prejudice towards people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender.

The council has a number of initiatives designed to tackle homophobia including its hate incident monitoring project *Report Hate*, which enables people to report related incidents via a caseworker, based at Victim support, who is able to offer support.

Cabinet Support Member for Community Safety at Leicestershire County Council, Joe Orson, will be raising the Rainbow Flag on Monday which symbolises gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender pride.

He said: "It is totally unacceptable that people are still discriminated against, and in some cases treated very badly, simply as a result of whether they are gay, lesbian or bisexual.

"We are committed to tackling such discrimination and ensuring that Leicestershire is a place where all people can live without fear of harm to themselves or others.

"We would encourage anyone who has experienced or witnessed homophobic incidents or attacks to come forward and report them."

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The council's Youth Service and Anti-bullying team have also worked to reduce incidents of homophobia.

Research shows almost two thirds of lesbian, gay or bisexual people experience homophobic bullying at school. In response to this, the council has developed an anti-bullying strategy which has achieved considerable success and is seen nationally (and internationally) as an example of good practice.

The strategy covers all forms of bullying, including racist and homophobic motivated bullying. The 'R-Time' programme (a relationship programme helping school pupils develop social and communication skills) is now used in over 175 primary schools, and research has concluded that it has a positive effect on relationships and social inclusion.

Council employees who feel that homophobia is affecting them are also able to access support from the council's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Workers Group which works to support employees and the council to ensure that work practices are gay friendly.

To report Hate Incidents call 0116 305 8263 or complete an on-line reporting form – or download a copy – by visiting www.leics.gov.uk/repothate

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