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Trump's DEI Cuts Spark Funding Crisis for UK Pride Events

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Pride celebrations have become a vital platform for inclusivity, visibility, and community support across the UK. But this year, many organisers face a harsh reality: a significant drop in corporate sponsorship is putting several Pride events at risk of cancellation. The cause? A ripple effect from former U.S. President Donald Trump's aggressive rollback of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programs.

The UK Pride Organisers Network, which supports and represents Pride events nationwide, has sounded the alarm. They report that around 75% of Pride events in the UK have experienced a reduction in corporate funding this year. Even more concerning, about a quarter of these events have seen their sponsorships fall by over 50%. For many Pride

organisers, this shortfall isn't just a number; it's the difference between keeping their event alive or shutting it down.

So, why is a political shift in the United States hitting UK Pride events so hard? The connection lies in the influence American companies have on their international branches. Many large corporations that have been long-standing supporters of Pride events across the UK, including tech giants like Amazon and Google, are headquartered in the U.S. Since February, these companies have cut back on DEI initiatives following a series of executive orders from Trump's administration, which aimed to restrict diversity and inclusion efforts in both public and private sectors.

Dee Llewellyn, chair of the UK Pride Organisers Network and director of partnerships for London Pride, paints a vivid picture of the crisis: "Corporate funding has fallen off a cliff. Some events have had to close their doors because of this. It's heartbreaking because many brands want to support Pride, but their DEI budgets are being slashed from the U.S. headquarters, leaving their UK teams powerless."

This isn't a case of companies simply choosing to pull support out of disinterest. Rather, it's about budgets being cut at the top, affecting teams on the ground who deeply value these partnerships. Dee adds, "Brands that have withdrawn this year were devastated. But with the budget cuts coming from America, there was nothing they could do."

As corporate funding dries up, Pride organisers are turning to alternative methods to keep their events alive. Crowdfunding platforms like GoFundMe have seen an 82% increase in campaigns created by Pride organisers trying to make up the difference. While this shows the resilience and dedication of local communities, it also highlights the financial vulnerability of these events.

Gary Richardson, organiser of Worthing Pride, reflects on the situation: "It feels like the DEI conversations happening in America are slowly trickling down and affecting us here. Offices with U.S. ties seem especially impacted, which creates a real challenge for regional events."

Pride events across the UK rely heavily on corporate sponsorship—some receive up to 95% of their funding from businesses. With the growing influence of American policy on corporate budgets, many organisers fear that this trend may continue, threatening the future of Pride celebrations outside the major cities.

In a time when Pride is more important than ever for fostering inclusion and community spirit, this funding crisis presents a significant challenge. Yet, organisers and supporters alike remain hopeful. They continue to adapt, seeking new ways to keep the spirit of Pride alive in towns and cities across the UK, despite the obstacles ahead.

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