



## Press Release

14<sup>th</sup> February 2022

### **The LTA's National Tennis Centre hosts Pride in Tennis launch Event**

- Pride in Tennis is the LGBTQ+ network for British Tennis
- The event saw 50 attendees from the LGBTQ+ communities and staff from the LTA including members of the Board, Executive Team, Councillors, and Colleagues
  - Tennis Wales CEO Simon Johnson formed part of the event's panel

The LTA's National Tennis Centre in Roehampton hosted the launch event on Saturday (12 February) for Pride in Tennis, the LGBTQ+ network for Tennis in Britain.

Staged in conjunction with the LTA and timed to coincide with February's LGBT History Month, the launch was an opportunity to celebrate inclusion in tennis and show that it is a sport for all and can be accessed by anyone regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

The event welcomed 50 attendees from across tennis and sport. It marked a significant moment on the journey to delivering the ambition of both Pride in Tennis and the LTA, to make tennis in Britain a safe, welcoming, and inclusive environment for all LGBTQ+ players, coaches, volunteers, officials, and fans, allowing them to feel comfortable, be authentic, and be free from prejudice.

The launch event opened with a panel discussion chaired by Lou Englefield (Pride in Sports). The panel included Simon Johnson (CEO Tennis Wales), Shiv Paul (LTA Councillor and Vice President of External Affairs, Federation of Gay Games), Ryan Watson (Pride In Tennis representative and London Smashers Founder) and Amazin LeThi (LGBTQ+ Athlete and Federation of Gay Games Ambassador) discussing the key areas around LGBTQ+ inclusion in tennis.

Breakout group sessions followed allowing members of the LGBTQ+ communities to share their lived experiences and thoughts on the future next steps, with all comments and opinions captured for a research piece to help further inform the LTA's drive for everyday inclusion in tennis.

After lunch there was the opportunity for everyone to get on court to play tennis, with Padel taster sessions also on offer. The event finished with the Pride in Tennis AGM.

**Vicky Williams, LTA People Director and Executive Lead on Inclusion, said:** "It was fantastic to welcome Pride in Tennis to the National Tennis Centre on Saturday, and we'd like to thank all attendees for making the day such a great occasion.

"One of our commitments in the inclusion strategy for tennis in Britain we published last year was to improve our understanding of how people from the LGBTQ+ communities feel about inclusion in tennis as this was the area we had the least data on.

"The launch event was therefore a great opportunity for us to deepen our ties with the LGBTQ+ communities and capture some great insight from the breakout sessions which will be used for a larger research piece.

"This event was just the start and we're really looking forward to continuing to work closely with Pride in Tennis as they move forward and grow their network."

**Ian Pearson-Brown, Founder of Pride in Tennis, said:** "It has been a long journey to get to this point, but we are delighted to have this opportunity at the National Tennis Centre. We look forward to working with the LTA to stimulate greater dialogue on LGBTQ+ inclusion in tennis, drive increased participation among LGBTQ+ people, and collaborate on ways to increase visibility for our communities in the sport."

**Viveen Taylor, Director of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion at Sport England said:** "It's so important that we take the time as we have today to hear the experiences, challenges and barriers facing LGBTQ+ communities as they seek to play and enjoy tennis.

“I was really pleased to see the LTA committing to the collaboration with Pride in Tennis; demonstrating their pledge to doing things differently and helping to make tennis inclusive as standard. Really positive day, well done to everyone involved!”

For more information about Pride In Tennis, please register your [details](#) for future email updates as well as follow their social media channels:

- Facebook, @prideintennis
- Instagram, @prideintennis
- Twitter, @pride\_tennis

To find out more about the LTA’s Inclusion Strategy and how it supports the LTA’s overall vision to open tennis up, visit [www.lta.org.uk/inclusion](http://www.lta.org.uk/inclusion).

**- ENDS -**

**NOTES TO EDITORS:**

**Please credit all attached photos ‘LTA’**

**ABOUT THE LTA:**

The LTA is the National Governing Body of tennis for Great Britain. We are here to govern and grow tennis, from grassroots participation through to the professional game. Our vision is “Tennis Opened Up” and we’re on a mission to grow tennis by making it relevant, accessible, welcoming and enjoyable. We work with schools, with volunteers, with coaches and with venues across the whole country. We also represent the interests of over 685,000 Members, men and women, girls and boys, playing on more than 23,000 courts. The LTA runs and supports a network of 11,500 approved tournaments for players of all ages, the four corner-stones of which are the premier grass-court events leading up to The Championships, Wimbledon: the Viking Open Nottingham, the Viking Classic Birmingham, the cinch Championships (at The Queen’s Club, London) and the Viking International Eastbourne. For further information about the LTA and tennis in Britain, visit [www.lta.org.uk](http://www.lta.org.uk) or follow us on Twitter @the\_LTA.