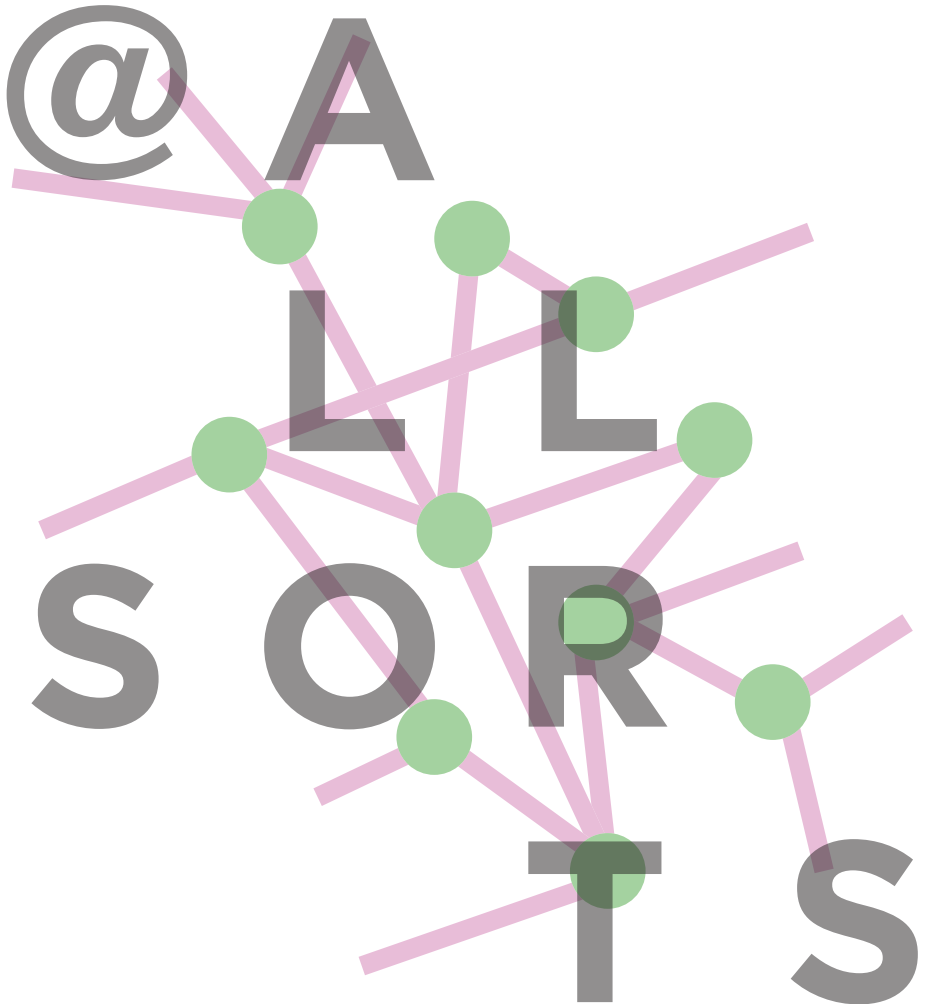


Supporting Each Other Locally



**Social Media @Allsorts**

Allsorts Youth Project and Olu Jenzen

**SOCIAL MEDIA @ALLSORTS**



*Credit: Allsorts.*



This person is standing up in the fight against  
**HOMOPHOBIC, BIPHOBIC  
AND TRANSPHOBIC  
BULLYING**



**This week is Anti-Bullying Week. Please share to stamp out LGBT Bullying**

Check out our website: [www.allsortsyouth.org.uk](http://www.allsortsyouth.org.uk) Become a fan: [www.facebook.com/AllsortsYouth](https://www.facebook.com/AllsortsYouth)

*Example of an Allsorts-designed Facebook widget that people can add to their profile picture. Credit: Allsorts.*



*Allsorts youth dressed up and ready for the Brighton Pride parade.  
Credit: Allsorts.*

# Social Media @ Allsorts

Allsorts Youth  
Project, Brighton.

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## **Digital Tools Used**

Facebook,  
Twitter,  
Tumblr,  
YouTube.

**Social Media @ Allsorts is a LGBTU (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and unsure) youth engagement project, exploring and using digital and social media to inform, campaign and reflect on the issues LGBTU young people face.**

## **About**

Allsorts wanted to use social media to complement and support their 'traditional' on-site youth support work, which they have provided at the LGBTU young people's centre in Brighton since it began in 1999. With support from the Tudor Trust, the Social Media@Allsorts project explores using digital and social media as the main method of engaging LGBTU young people and to inform and campaign around the issues they face.

Instead of creating a purpose-built website to offer online mental wellbeing support, the project makes the most of available mainstream social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr and YouTube, which are already popular amongst this group. Allsorts use social media to publicise their activities, to collaborate on campaigns, to foster peer support and to provide one-to-one support from youth workers. They can use the same social media platform to communicate with different audiences—service users, volunteers, other relevant service providers, potential or existing sponsors—and with a wider audience looking for information about being young and LGBTU. Using the same platform, they can choose to share some information and conversations just between Allsorts staff, whilst allowing others to appear more publicly on the organisation's Facebook page. This is an efficient way for Allsorts staff to manage their different types of communication, and as they share one profile, the staff workload is equally distributed.

### **What is the impact of the project?**

The use of social media for outreach work contributes to the sustainability of the charity. It has also raised wider awareness about the organisation and its work. For example, in 2013 the website visits increased by over 1,500. The Facebook fan page 'likes' went up by 200, with a single campaign getting just under 500 likes on its own. And on Twitter the organisation gained over 600 new followers. The project has empowered both staff and young volunteers. Staff with little experience in using social media have learned about its usefulness. Young volunteers have found themselves taking the lead on social media campaigns, and the experience of building a momentum around their activities and campaigns using social media has encouraged them to do further work.

Allsorts have worked with the University of Brighton to create a 'social media toolkit and e-policy document' to share all of this learning with other small charities looking to utilise social and digital media in their work.

### **How did digital media make a difference?**

Social media allows Allsorts to communicate effectively with multiple audiences, publicise their services easily, campaign, engage potential sponsors, create peer networks, as well as communicate directly with existing and new members. It also offers opportunities to engage with young people who may not, for various reasons, be able to travel to attend a drop in session at the Centre, or, in some cases, are not able to speak on the phone.

### **What next?**

Going forward, Allsorts is looking to explore the potential of e-mentoring and are also working to adapt some of their social media tools for their work with the under 16s and hard to reach youths.

# What Others Can Learn

## Knowledge exchange

Reflecting on and sharing your experiences of using social media can contribute to knowledge exchange between organisations and small charities. Whether you work in different contexts or address different audiences, sharing practical knowledge about the different communication strategies your organisation uses will be beneficial for you as well as for other organisations.

## Understand the medium

Social media is not designed with the purpose of doing outreach work in mind, nor does it typically allow for much diversity in terms of gender and sexuality in its set up. It's good to be aware of this but don't be deterred, there are ways of working around these drawbacks and plenty of reasons for using the social networking services that your target audience are already using. One great feature, for example, is the timed post. It allows staff to compose a message at any time convenient for them, but for it to be released and appear on followers' timeline at the time they are most likely to read it, for example after school has finished for the day.

## Prepare to change

Be prepared to change setup. The way people use social media and the sites they prefer to use change all the time, and with young people they can change quite fast. Don't invest in too rigorous a structure as you may find you have to change, or even abandon them.