

5. January 2026

Recommendations for Digital Prevention Actions in Reykjavík

Recommendations based on the Safer Queer Workshop held on 29 October 2025 and the report 'Understanding Online Safety for LGBTQ+ Individuals in Reykjavík', produced by Nordic Safe Cities as part of the Safer Queer City program.

Introduction

Over the past year, Nordic Safe Cities and Reykjavík Municipality have worked closely to strengthen the shared understanding of online threats and harassment affecting LGBTQ+ people in the city, and to identify practical prevention measures that can make Reykjavík safer and more inclusive in digital spaces.

The Safer Queer Cities Program aims to enhance the safety and resilience of LGBTQ+ individuals by equipping the municipality and relevant organisations in Reykjavík with up-to-date knowledge, tools, and collaborative approaches to counter online (and related offline) threats, harassment, and discrimination.

On 29 October 2025, Reykjavík hosted a seminar to present key findings from the report and discuss potential paths forward. The event was organised under Safer Queer Cities, funded by NIKK – the Nordic LGBTI Fund, and hosted in collaboration with Nordic Safe Cities.

We have now consolidated learning and best practice from local actors and leaders in Reykjavík, as well as ongoing prevention efforts across Nordic Safe Cities member cities.

On this basis, we recommend four priority action areas for Reykjavík Municipality:

1. Build a “digital bystander” initiative to mobilise supportive voices
2. Strengthen municipal moderation as a democratic safeguard
3. Increase parental capacity through structured digital outreach
4. Add a digital safety component to the Rainbow Certification program

While the project has focused specifically on LGBTQ+ communities, many of the recommended measures should be implemented in a way that also strengthens broader prevention efforts—protecting minorities and residents more generally from hate, threats, and exclusion online.

1. Build a “digital bystander” initiative to mobilise supportive voices

Being targeted by hate and threats is harmful in itself, and the harm intensifies when it appears that “no one steps in.” Online harassment can feel particularly isolating, and the workshop highlighted the value of structured bystander approaches that make supportive intervention easier, safer, and more coordinated.

Reykjavík Municipality could invest in mobilising what is described as the “quiet majority” online—people who do not agree with hateful content, but often do not intervene.

A practical next step could be to launch or strengthen a coordinated digital bystander initiative on platforms where harassment is most visible for local residents (typically Facebook and Instagram).

This can build on Nordic Safe Cities’ experience with the Danish and Swedish bystander movements (#ViErHer / #Jagärhär / “WeAreHere”), adapting the model to the Reykjavík context and to the specific harms documented in the local report.

The core objective should be to reduce the impact and visibility of hateful content by increasing constructive, supportive counter-speech and by improving the tone and safety of comment fields for readers and participants.

The municipality should not run this as an informal campaign alone. Experience from Denmark and Sweden suggests that broad coalitions can strengthen legitimacy, participation, and sustainability, while still allowing targeted support when a specific group is under acute pressure. Hence, the project can be designed to support multiple minority groups over time, not only one community.

If there is already a local group (for example a community “watch” initiative such as “Fordomsvakten” or similar), Reykjavík should look to this and investigate how to formalise collaboration.

2. Strengthen municipal moderation as a democratic safeguard

Public debate has increasingly moved to social platforms, where residents engage with politics, municipal services, and local issues. This shift has benefits, but it also exposes residents to threats and hate, which discourages participation and can push targeted communities away from public dialogue.

The Safer Queer City report reinforces this concern by documenting that nearly one in ten comments about LGBTQ+ topics contains hate, highlighting the scale of harmful discourse and the need for active responses.

A solid starting point could be Reykjavík’s own channels. The municipality could develop a concise set of commenting guidelines that set clear boundaries for unacceptable content (including hate, threats, harassment, and degrading language), explain what actions moderators may take, and signpost where residents can seek help or report serious incidents.

These guidelines would be visible on every relevant municipal Facebook page and platform profile (for example in the “About” section and via pinned posts), and moderators should refer back to them consistently when intervening.

A visible and consistent moderator presence typically helps set norms and reduces the likelihood that hateful voices dominate. The municipality could also consider offering practical support and guidance to local political actors and, where appropriate, civil society partners—because harassment often spreads across municipal and political pages, and common standards can reduce spillover effects.

Nordic Safe Cities can draw on extensive Nordic experience in this field, including municipal moderation guidance developed in other cities, such as the city of Oslo, but also Nordic Safe Cities own program Edda-moderation.

3. Increase parental capacity through structured digital outreach

Across the Nordic region, a consistent pattern emerges: young people report that they miss competent adults in digital spaces, while parents and guardians report that they lack the knowledge and tools to respond effectively to what their children encounter online. The workshop reinforced the need for Reykjavík to address this gap in a more systematic way.

Reykjavík Municipality could work to strengthen parents’ ability to guide and support children and teenagers online, because harmful online experiences often translate into offline consequences for wellbeing, safety, and trust in democratic institutions.

Reykjavík can do this by establishing a strategic framework for parental digital competence, with practical and repeatable formats. The municipality could create clear communication channels that help parents understand what is trending locally online, what risks are emerging, and how to have supportive conversations with their children about unwanted, conflict-seeking, or directly harmful content.

This work could include concrete guidance on what to do when a young person is targeted by harassment or hate, how to document incidents, and when to seek help from schools, youth services, platform reporting tools, or the police.

Several Nordic municipalities offer similar models Reykjavík can adapt. Some cities run digital parent meetings and social media workshops in formats that mirror where young people spend time online (for example, sessions hosted on platforms young people use). Others produce monthly “what’s happening online” briefings for parents with local relevance and clear action advice. These experiences can be drawn upon in the development of Reykjavík’s strategy.

4. Add a digital safety component to the Rainbow Certification program

LGBTQ+ inclusion is no longer only about physical spaces and in-person behaviour; it also concerns how employees, service users, students, and communities are treated and protected in digital spaces connected to the organisation.

A digital module could include: basic understanding of online hate and threats targeting LGBTQ+ people; practical procedures for handling harassment when it affects staff or service users; guidance for responsible social media use in an organisational context; and simple steps for support, documentation, and referrals. Reykjavík could design this component so it is integrated into the Rainbow Certificate program.

(This section can be finalised by Reykjavík Municipality; the paragraph above provides a suggested direction and framing.)

Ending remarks: the way forward

Nordic Safe Cities recommends that Reykjavík Municipality continues this work beyond the Safer Queer Cities process and considers broadening it into a more strategic and systematic approach to digital prevention. The workshop and report point to a clear opportunity: to strengthen municipal capacity so Reykjavík can respond earlier, coordinate better across sectors (municipality, schools, police, and civil society), and build a safer and more inclusive “digital city” over time.

This direction is already being advanced through Nordic Safe Cities’ Safe Digital City program, where ten Nordic cities participate in analysing local digital environments and developing new initiatives for online safety. The program has delivered 22 local analyses mapping polarisation, hate, and harmful online environments (using AI-supported methods, OSINT, and digital ethnography) and has supported the launch of 16 preventive measures and five digital action plans.

Practical models include municipal digital teams that connect the municipality, police, and schools (for example in Aalborg, Odense, and Kristiansand), and digital youth outreach that engages young people directly on platforms such as Discord, Snapchat, and Telegram.

Reykjavík is invited to join this group of cities and continue the work in a structured way. Several Nordic municipalities have already made politically anchored commitments to strengthen digital democracy, and measures such as Bodø’s digital parent initiative and Kristiansand’s digital team are increasingly referenced as models beyond the region.