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Welcome to our second issue of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) newsletter! February is Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) History Month. Here we focus on some of the initiatives, events and people at Brookes who are part of making our commitment to LGBT+ equality a reality. Take a look at the [programme](#).

The Brookes LGBT+ Forum, Brookes Union and our EDI team have collaborated in promoting our activities for LGBT History Month, and we welcome colleagues to get involved to widen our network of contacts, role models and allies for LGBT+ equality. At Brookes we have adopted the acronym LGBT+ to show awareness and inclusion of all expressions of sexuality and gender identity within our communities of staff and students. Contact hr-lgbtplus@brookes.ac.uk for more information on the Brookes LGBT+ Forum.

The EDI newsletter aims to share information and encourage engagement in the wide range of activities going on across the University to promote a diverse and inclusive community of study and work. Please get in touch if you have ideas, feedback or want to contribute topics to share in future newsletters. Contact: EDI@BROOKES

Confidence

Connectedness

LGBT History Month at Oxford Brookes



February is LGBT History Month which aims to increase the visibility of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people, and encourage activities to highlight their history, lives and experiences

in the curriculum and culture of educational and other institutions and the wider community. This focus raises awareness, and helps promote the welfare of LGBT people to benefit individuals and the whole of society. The theme for the UK LGBT History Month 2016 is Religion, Belief and Philosophy.

For Oxford Brookes this is our first celebration of LGBT History Month promoting a diverse programme taking place both at Brookes and in the wider Oxford area.



To coincide with this year's theme of religion, belief and philosophy, our **open lecture** on 10 February at 6.00pm 'Of Ouija Boards and the Fourth Dimension: queer American poetry and the world beyond', is delivered by Dr Niall

Munro. The lecture explores the life and work of four gay American poets, their fascination with forms of belief and looks at what this tells us about the relationship between belief and sexuality today. The event is introduced by Professor Anne-Marie Kilday, as part of supporting the Brookes' programme to recognise achievements, promote understanding and shape future initiatives.

Brookes activities include film screenings and discussions, networking and informal Coffee Mornings on Mondays at each campus.

On 5 February Brookes Chaplaincy hosted a conversation with the Rev. Elder Cecilia Eggleston and Maryam Din, on 'What can we learn from LGBT+ people of faith?'



As a **Stonewall** Diversity Champion, Brookes is working with Stonewall as our key partner in the development of our work on LGBT equality. Stonewall has an

extensive range of research, practical guidance and resources to support workplace equality and inclusive service delivery.

The Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) is our specialist higher education equality partner, and in conjunction with our Athena SWAN Charter commitment, ECU also supports our work on LGBT equality and gender identity to create a more inclusive environment for LGBT staff and students.

- **Information from the ECU on support for LGB people in Higher Education Institutions**
- **Information from the ECU on support for Transgender People in Higher Education Institutions**

A wide range of resources and information is also available on the **LGBT History Month website** along with details of conferences, festivals and events being hosted by universities, colleges and organisations across the UK.

Read the UK LGBT History Month 2016 magazine **here**.



All staff and students are encouraged to take part in celebrating the contributions of people who identify as lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender, raising awareness of the diversity of sexual orientations and gender identities, and promoting inclusion of LGBT people within the university and the wider community.

The Brookes LGBT+ Forum, Brookes Union and our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion team have collaborated in promoting our activities for LGBT History Month and we welcome colleagues to get involved to widen our networks of contacts, role models and allies for LGBT equality.

Follow the link for the Brookes **LGBT History Month programme**.

If you are aware of other events and initiatives to share and promote to colleagues at Brookes then please get in touch at **hr-lgbtplus@brookes.ac.uk**.

Stonewall Surveys on LGBT equality

In 2015 more than 60,000 staff from across the 400 organisations in the Stonewall Equality Index took part in an anonymous survey about their employers' attitudes towards workplace culture, diversity and inclusion. Responses reveal that:

- **Only 27 per cent of lesbian, gay and bi people feel comfortable disclosing their sexual orientation to all colleagues and customers.** Figures were lower for lesbians (23 per cent) than gay men (33 per cent), and considerably lower for bi individuals (12 per cent).
- **People who are out as LGB at work experience better job satisfaction and have a higher sense of achievement,** according to 67 per cent of lesbian, gay and bi people.
- **We need to see more visible LGBT role models.** Just 11 per cent of respondents believe there are bi role models at work; 19 per cent see trans role models, 42 per cent see lesbian role models and 53 per cent see gay role models at work.
- **Senior leaders are showing more commitment to lesbian, gay and bi equality now** (63 per cent) than in the previous year (53 per cent).
- **Just 42 per cent of trans respondents** said that senior leaders demonstrate a visible commitment to trans equality at work.

Stonewall further highlights issues for trans people:

More than half (55 per cent) of trans people have experienced negative comments or behaviour at work because of being trans. (FRA LGBT Survey 2012, sample size = 813)

One in four trans people report having been discriminated against at work. (FRA LGBT Survey 2012, sample size = 813)

More than two in five (44 per cent) trans people have never disclosed to anyone at work that they are trans. (FRA LGBT Survey 2012, sample size= 813)

In November 2015, linked to Anti-bullying Week, Stonewall released new research by YouGov showing that **offensive comments are frequently made about lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people,** but that **very few people step in to challenge these slurs.**

Over 60 per cent of those surveyed **admit to not intervening when they heard derogatory comments in the past year,** 31 per cent said they did intervene, but just 3 per cent offered assistance to the person targeted.

- **One in five people admit to making offensive remarks about LGBT people,** while almost half had heard abuse in the past year.
- **Research shows women twice as likely to confront someone** they hear making offensive comments. 27 percent of women and 13 percent of men.

Ruth Hunt, Stonewall's Chief Executive, said:

“Every one of us has the power to make change and if we each commit to call out abuse and bullying, together we can create a world where everyone is accepted without exception.”

Brookes LGBT+ Forum

The Oxford Brookes LGBT+ Forum has been set up to support staff and promote greater awareness of issues related to sexual orientation and gender identity in the workplace. The Forum is a social group which also acts as a sounding board for developing university policy. This approach allows staff to get together socially on different sites and enables staff to get involved with the university's development work linked to our Stonewall membership.



Sebastian Blake

(Environmental Specialist) says: “Please get in contact if you

are interested in either aspect or both. At present the group has had a series of lunches and after work drinks on different sites. We will be continuing these gatherings throughout the year and welcome suggestions for any new events.”

Existing links with the **Oxford Area Higher Education Staff LGBT network** are promoted through the Brookes Forum.

Email hr-lgbtplus@brookes.ac.uk for more information on the Brookes LGBT+ Forum.

Being Yourself: The Importance of Role Models



Elaine Dagnall, HR Business Partnership Manager

I attended the Stonewall Role Model Programme for LGBT staff in September 2015. The aim of the programme is to develop an understanding of what it means to be yourself in the workplace and the impact that has on those around you. Stonewall’s definition of a role model is someone who **“is aware of their potential to influence others and intentionally exercises that influence for the purpose of helping to create a more inclusive workplace”**.

A number of points of interest came out of the day:

- LGBT people are as diverse as the rest of the population. People on the programme came from all walks of life and all sorts of professions or employers.
- Everyone on the programme could point to one or more role models who had made a difference to them (whether the person realised they were a role model or not!).
- People’s personal stories are powerful and can give strong messages.

“Seeing visible lesbian, gay and bisexual role models living a range of successful and interesting professional lives demonstrates the value of authenticity to all staff, heterosexual or gay” writes Jo Bostock¹, in the Stonewall Guide on Role Models. Jo goes on to say that “when [LGBT staff] are unable to be open about their sexual orientation they put unnecessary energy into maintaining an exhausting fiction of

heterosexuality... [LGBT] staff report that they would prefer to direct all their energy to productive use by focusing on their performance, completing tasks or enhancing their working relationships.”

In higher education, we are in a privileged position of being able to act as role models to scores of students as well as other colleagues (whether we are aware of it or not). Coming to university or starting a new job may be a significant step for many people and can be an important part of their own self-discovery. People are encouraged by seeing and meeting others like themselves in all different roles and at different levels in an organisation. Jo Bostock also says: “The best employers recognise that they have to proactively create a workplace culture which naturally enables role models to emerge”. Oxford Brookes is keen to ensure that all staff and students feel valued, are respected and can reach their potential. We have a number of LGBT colleagues working successfully and openly throughout the University. However, we will be working with Stonewall to see how we can encourage more LGBT people to take the risk to be open about themselves to the benefit of the whole university.

Oxford Brookes is signed up as a **Stonewall Diversity Champion** and Stonewall has a wide range of resources and information to support knowledge and awareness of LGBT issues. Stonewall extended their remit to **embrace transgender equality** in 2015, and Brookes is working with Stonewall as we develop our inclusive approach to sexual orientation and gender identity. More information on Stonewall’s **Role Models** and **Allies** programmes is available here.

We encourage colleagues to share your stories and examples of those who inspire you and support LGBT+ identities and issues.

1 Jo runs Pause Consultancy, a leadership development business that advises global organisations, top teams and senior individuals on how to achieve diverse and inclusive workplaces. Jo is also co-founder of the Women’s Sport Trust, a charity that encourages gender equality through sport.

Perspectives on faith, sexuality and gender identity



Rev. Kate Harford, Ecumenical Chaplain

There are many ways we present and describe ourselves to the world. How we dress, what we say, and who we are seen with all say a lot about us. Sometimes it's second nature (your own choice of work clothes, perhaps, or the choice to wear a wedding ring) but for some people, choosing which aspects of their identity to present, and to whom, is a challenge.

For people of faith who are lesbian, gay, bi, trans, queer or genderqueer, coming out may be a very difficult choice to make. Often faith and family are closely aligned and there remains a real risk that someone could be cast out of a conservative community if they live publicly in the fullness of their identity. On the other hand, there is a perception in the world that coming out is, 'no big deal', and that tension between the broad narrative and individual experience can also be very disorienting.

It is important not to make too many assumptions, either. For some people their faith, sexual orientation, and gender identity are comfortably aligned without stigma from their community. As more and more faith communities and leaders are 'coming out' as allies, the narrative is beginning to shift. This LGBT+ History Month, I wanted to focus on the ways in which sexuality, gender identity and faith can each be a blessing, and so the subject of the Chaplaincy conversation this month was, **'What can we learn from LGBT+ people of faith?'**.

At the Chaplaincy LGBT History Month event, we were in conversation with Rev. Elder Cecilia Eggleston of the Metropolitan Community Churches (MCC) and Maryam Din. Cecilia has been working for LGBT rights for over 30 years, and led MCC in Europe for many years. She is currently serving

as the Pastor of Northern Lights MCC, Newcastle. Maryam is a postgraduate student, defining as a queer feminist Muslim, who has blogged about her experiences, actively seeks good interfaith relations and works to change perceptions of queer people of faith. Chaired by Sebastian Blake, staff, students and community participants shared perspectives on how we who identify as LGBT+ people of faith grow into our identities, and how our experiences may be enriching. This was an insightful, open and challenging discussion covering themes of fear of rejection, and belonging and creating safe spaces. My hope is that all those who attended found a space to think more deeply about their own identity and faith, whatever it may be.

All are welcome in the Chaplaincy, however you experience gender and sexuality. If you have any questions or want to talk to a chaplain, email chaplaincy@brookes.ac.uk and I will be in touch. Our website is www.brookes.ac.uk/chaplaincy.

Have a blessed LGBT+ History Month.



Rev. Kate Harford, Ecumenical Chaplain
kate.harford@brookes.ac.uk

Gender Identity and transgender equality: Moving forward on the equality frontier

Katie Hannam, HR Intern and Jane Butcher, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Adviser

Over the past months there has been significant coverage in the media of transgender issues, ranging from the positive debut of Caitlyn Jenner in Vanity Fair, to Eddie Redmayne's portrayal of Lili Elbe in the film, The Danish Girl. So was 2015 the year trans* identities became mainstream?

Alongside increased social and workplace awareness, and some positive media representations, there remain very real inequalities for trans* people that have yet to be addressed.

On 27 July 2015 the Women and Equalities Committee launched its first inquiry to gather evidence on the equality issues affecting trans* people. The inquiry covered the operation of current legislation, transphobia and hate crime, the NHS, education, employment and the workplace, the criminal justice system and issues affecting trans* youth.

The inquiry found that there is still a long way to go to ensure equality for transgender people and calls for a new cross-departmental strategy to be agreed. The report highlights that in UK surveys of trans* people about half of young people and a third of adults have attempted suicide. Their report draws attention to the recent deaths in custody of trans* women placed in men's prisons, ongoing difficulty for trans* people in accessing general NHS services and prevalence of transphobic bullying. Submissions were heard from members of the trans* community describing the current gender recognition process as: **“It's humiliating to have your gender assessed by someone else. You are the only person who can come to that realisation, not a panel.”**

The **full report** of the Transgender Equality Inquiry was published on 14 January 2016 and calls for a Government response within six months.

Key areas of the recommendations include:

- changing the protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010 to “gender identity” to cover the wider trans* community
- recognition of non-binary and non-gendered identities
- calling for the Gender Recognition Act 2004 to be updated in line with the principle of gender self-declaration, to de-pathologise transgender identities and move away from the perception of diverse gender identity as a disorder. This would enable quicker, more transparent and accessible procedures for gender reassignment, based on self-identification.



Trans equality recommendations for Higher Education – Update from the Equality Challenge Unit

Women and equalities committee calls for greater equality for trans people

The Women and equalities select committee made 30 recommendations based upon the findings of their inquiry into trans equality. These include changing the protected characteristic in the Equality Act 2010 from ‘gender reassignment’ to ‘gender identity’, introducing a legal category for people with a non-binary gender identity, and combatting transphobia.

The report acknowledges the bullying and harassment experienced by trans students in higher education and recommends university staff receive gender identity awareness training and take proactive steps to promote trans equality, including through a ‘transgender champion’ scheme for non-trans staff. **The Equality Challenge Unit responded to this** select committee inquiry and will be releasing new guidance on supporting trans staff and students later this year.

Local perspectives were reported in the **Oxford Mail** on 26 January 2016.

A recent report by the Fawcett Society Sex and Equality 2016: State of the Nation also highlighted that almost half (44%) of the UK population now believe that gender is not binary, but can be expressed as a range of identities.

Gender Identity and Transgender Inclusion: Policy and Resources

Along with other institutions in the sector, Oxford Brookes is working to make our commitment and approach to transgender inclusion more visible. This is reflected in the scope of the new Athena SWAN Charter and supported by the [Equality Challenge Unit guidance](#) and our [Stonewall membership](#).

We are developing policy and guidance to increase awareness and inclusion of diverse expressions of gender identity, to ensure support for trans* staff and students and those who transition to affirm their [gender identity](#) during their time at Brookes.

The recent report and recommendations from the [Transgender Equality Inquiry](#) also highlights the wider context for how the university aligns its approach with current public policy development and good practice adopted in the sector.

Areas for engagement with stakeholders are in relation to how Brookes:

- adopts a broad and inclusive definition of gender identity and encourages use of positive language about gender identity affirmation
- supports the principle of self-declaration and simplifies the process for change of name and gender marker on records wherever possible
- recognises the spectrum of gender identities and that staff and students may identify as non-binary and non-gendered
- Ensures a zero-tolerance approach to transphobic harassment and bullying
- supports staff and students who declare a change to their gender identity in navigating their personal transition in terms of chosen timescale, formality and communication, recognising that this journey is unique for each individual and may or may not involve medical intervention.

For staff, Brookes already includes optional monitoring of gender identity and transgender status, along with sexual orientation for job applicants during the recruitment process. Encouraging disclosure for existing staff is part of our ongoing work to promote confidence in the benefits of gathering and analysing equality monitoring data. Engagement with students and colleagues with responsibility for the Student Experience will be a next step, to understand what support is needed, the issues for raising awareness and the approach to wider equality monitoring for students.

A Queer Perspective on Critical Management Studies and the Business School

Dr Nick Wylie, Senior Lecturer in HRM and Organisational Behaviour, Faculty of Business

In November 2015, Professor Nick Rumens (Middlesex University and Visiting Professor at Oxford Brookes) delivered a fascinating insight into the potential for [Queer Theory](#) to advance research into management and organisation studies. In a wide ranging discussion, Nick spoke about the need for Business schools to be more open to the role of diverse gendered identities in exploring organisations. He argued that Queer Theory provides a coherent framework for this exploration given its emphasis on challenging traditional and conventional modes of thinking. The seminar was very well attended by staff and students and there was a fascinating discussion about how Nick's arguments could be applied. Anyone interested in finding out more information about Nick's work might like to read a collection he has recently edited 'Sexual orientation at work: international issues and perspectives' (Routledge, 2014).

Nick is internationally recognized as a significant figure in the area of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT) sexualities and genders in the workplace, he has published widely on topics such as gay and bi men's workplace friendships, sexuality and professionalism, the working lives of older LGBT employees and gay men employed in the police and performing arts. Nick's publications are listed [here](#). Nick is closely involved in establishing the Critical Management Research Group in the Faculty of Business.

Upcoming key dates and events

Date	Focus	What	Where
10 February, 6pm	LGBT History Month	Lecture: Of Ouija Boards and the fourth dimension: queer American poetry and the world beyond Niall Munro, Senior Lecturer in American Literature and Director of the Poetry Centre at Oxford Brookes	JHB Lecture Theatre, Headington Campus
8, 15, 22 and 29 February	LGBT History Month	Coffee Mornings	Ferndale, Headington, Wheatley, Marston Rd
21 February, 7pm	LGBT History Month	Sunday Night Cinema: Pride	Union Hall, JHBB, Headington Campus
23 February, 6pm	LGBT History Month	Oxford University LGBT Lecture - A great unrecorded history: LGBTQ heritage in world cultures	Mathematical Institute, Oxford OX2 6GG
25 February, 7pm	LGBT History Month	OBU Documentary Club: The Case against 8	JHBB Lecture Theatre,
8 March	International Women's Day	Watch out for news on events	Web and social media
8 March, 11.30am - 1pm JHBB 128, Executive Suite	Advancing Women in Technology Design and Environment	TDE Faculty Invite Event - to showcase women role models and engage staff and students in Athena SWAN development	TDE Athena SWAN webpages
4 - 14 March	Oxford International Women's Festival	Theme Women, Austerity, Creativity, Challenge and Transgression	Various locations around Oxford
7 - 11 March	One World Week	One World Week (OWW) is a week of internationally-themed events organised by societies and university departments. The aim of this project is to celebrate the diversity and uniqueness of the many cultures and people that we have at Brookes.	Brookes Union and other locations oneworldweek@brookes.ac.uk
6 April, 6pm	Lecture	Why should anyone be led by you? Dame Helen Ghosh, Director of the National Trust	JHB Lecture Theatre
11 May, 6pm	Lecture	Reflections on Nursing, Leadership and a fabulous working life. Professor, June Girvin, Pro Vice-Chancellor and Dean of the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences	JHB Lecture Theatre
16 - 22 May	Mental Health Awareness Week	Raising awareness of mental health and wellbeing issues - 2016 focus on relationships #mhaw16	Look out for news and events
15 June, 6pm	Brookes Athena SWAN Lecture	Biodiversity conservation in the 21st century: what plants should we conserve and where? Professor Kathy Willis, Director of Science Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew	JHB Lecture Theatre

Getting in touch and feedback

We welcome your views and feedback on any of the topics covered in this update or the overall approach to EDI@BROOKES. We are keen to hear from colleagues involved in equality, diversity and inclusion groups and initiatives or undertaking related research.

Contact: EDI@BROOKES