

International Transgender Day of Visibility

March 31st marks International Transgender Day of Visibility. Since it was founded in 2009, this day has been dedicated to celebrating transgender people and raising awareness of the discrimination faced by trans people worldwide as well as their contributions to society. In light of the current COVID-19 pandemic that we currently find ourselves in we wanted to take this opportunity to highlight some of the ways in which the trans community are being specifically impacted by this crisis.

You will have seen in the news that many non-emergent/non-urgent, routine surgeries are being postponed. For trans people, this means gender-affirming surgeries will not take place as despite the life-altering and in many cases, life-saving, nature of these surgeries the NHS still considers them non-essential. Many Gender Identity Clinics in the UK have waiting times of 18 months to 2 years to get a referral to a gender identity clinic. Indefinitely postponing surgeries will only add to the already agonising wait for essential support experienced by the trans community.

Information from the community care group Queercare indicates that many GPs are asking trans folk to do their own hormone injections at the moment. Queercare have produced guidance on this [here](https://wiki.queercare.network/index.php?title=IM_injection_protocol) if it is an option for you: https://wiki.queercare.network/index.php?title=IM_injection_protocol. The Scottish Trans Alliance has also circulated information about how to request different hormone preparations from your GP if injectables are not an option.

Many trans people are also concerned about the impact that COVID-19 will have on stock and availability of vital hormones.

There are dedicated groups who can help trans and queer people in Edinburgh in these terrible COVID-19 times – contact us for more info.

LGBT+ History Month February Events

We have 3 fantastic Staff Pride Network events lined up for LGBT+ History Month 2020 in February. Please share with your colleagues/friends and retweet/share via social media:

School LGBTQ+ Diversity Since Section 28/Clause 2a

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/school-lgbtq-diversity-since-section-28clause-2a-tickets-90635875343?aff=ebdssbdestsearch>

‘Coming In’: Share a piece of your LGBT+ History

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/coming-in-share-a-piece-of-your-lgbt-history-tickets-91064318829>

[POSTPONED DUE TO UCU STRIKES] We Are Human: Personal Stories of LGBTQ+ Identities and Intersection

Lavender Menace LGBT+ Book Archive

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/lavender-menace-lgbt-book-archive-tickets-90624697911>

- **School LGBTQ+ Diversity Since Section 28/Clause 2a**
(Thursday, 6 February at 6-8pm in Room G.159 MacLaren Stuart Room, Old College)

What has changed in 20 years since the repeal of Section 28/Clause 2a in Scotland? This joint event from University students and staff, with LGBT Youth Scotland, is being held to provide understanding of current equality law pertaining to schools, to discuss the experiences and challenges that our students and staff had in school before and after Section 28/Clause 2a's repeal, in particular young trans students' experiences, for the audience to learn about the similarities and differences of their times.

This public event is an opportunity for us all to show support for our trans staff and students and the trans community.

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/school-lgbtq-diversity-since-section-28clause-2a-tickets-90635875343?aff=ebdssbdestsearch>

- **'Coming In': Share a piece of your LGBT+ History**
(Thursday, 13 February at 5:30-7:30pm in Room 2.03, 50 George Square)

If you moved to the University of Edinburgh for study or work, this is for YOU. Staff Pride Network & PrideSoc student network have partnered with OurStory Scotland to record our stories and experiences, good or bad, of coming to Edinburgh. How did you imagine it would be, and how does the reality compare with your expectations? How different is it if you are coming from overseas or from the Highlands?

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/coming-in-share-a-piece-of-your>

-lgbt-history-tickets-91064318829

[POSTPONED DUE TO UCU STRIKES]

- **We Are Human: Personal Stories of LGBTQ+ Identities and Intersection** (~~Friday, 21 February at 8:50am-1:30pm/12:45-5:30pm in the Informatics Forum~~)

We are pleased to announce the inaugural 'We Are Human' conference organised by the Staff Pride Network and PrideSoc with funding from the Principal's office, Finance department and the colleges of CSE, CMVM/BVM & CAHSS about raising awareness and discussing issues and challenges faced by LGBTQ+ staff and students. Morning/afternoon sessions can be booked separately in case anyone can only make one session. Allies especially welcome. Lunch, tea & coffee included.

Scottish Minister for Older People & Equality Christina McKelvie MSP will officially close the event alongside the Principal, Professor Peter Mathieson.

Programme details at
<https://blogs.ed.ac.uk/staffpridenetwork/2019/12/20/we-are-human-personal-stories-of-lgbtq-identities-and-intersection>

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/we-are-human-personal-stories-of-lgbtq-identities-and-intersection-tickets-91479195737>

We Are Human Conference – Friday 21st Feb 2020 MyEd booking link

- **Lavender Menace LGBT+ Book Archive** (Thursday, 27 February at 5:30-7:30pm in Room G.06, 50 George Square)

Many of the original LGBT+ and feminist presses have closed and well-known books have been forgotten. Join us to hear

from Lavender Menace Returns on how and why they are creating an LGBT+ archive and database to ensure that our stories are not lost. They also want to include LGBT+ writing of today to form one body of work telling the story of our community – and our demand for equality and honesty. Open to all; invite your friends.

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/lavender-menace-lgbt-book-archive-tickets-90624697911>

There are also the monthly evening social and coffee and cake dates to look forward to in February and beyond:

- Staff Pride Network's Monthly **Evening Social** (Friday, 7 February at 6-10pm at Checkpoint)

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/staff-pride-networks-monthly-evening-social-tickets-61238984451>

- Staff Pride Network **Central** Coffee & Cake (Wednesday, 12 February at 1-2pm in Bayes Cafe)

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/staff-pride-network-central-coffee-cake-tickets-61528580641>

- Staff Pride Network **Kings Buildings** Coffee & Cake (Wednesday, 19 February at 1:15-2pm in the Upstairs Café, 7th Floor)

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/staff-pride-network-kings-buildings-coffee-cake-tickets-61779344683>

- Staff Pride Network **Western General** Coffee & Cake (Wednesday, 26 February at 3-4pm in the Nucleus Café)

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/staff-pride-network-western-general-hospital-coffee-cake-tickets-62355589246>

We hope to see you there!

HUGE thanks to our event partners and the Events Organising Team of Tracy, Dax, Cara, Siobhan and Jonathan, without whom none of these events would have happened.

Jonathan and Katie

Jonathan MacBride (he/him) and Katie Nicoll Baines (she/her)

Co-Chairs of Staff Pride Network, for LGBT+ Colleagues and Allies

Committee Statement re Schools & Gender Diversity Event

In the interest of transparency this version of the blog has been updated since the original was circulated to our members on the 13th of November and this blog was initially posted here the 14th November 2019. The updates are intended to provide clarification on some of the concerns we have cited and new information that has come to light since the time of writing.

Dear Staff Pride Network Members,

An event entitled 'Schools and Gender Diversity' has gone live. The Committee are upset and disappointed that another event featuring external guest speakers with a history of transphobia (1) will take place on our campus.

The event is advertised as a research seminar though there is no clarity from the event description what research will be presented e.g. published research referenced or acknowledgement of research in progress that is funded with ethical approval. Details of the proposed speakers can be found in the event description. We are of course interested to hear objective, fact-based, pedagogic research on how best to support young transgender people in our schools. However from what we understand of the work conducted by Transgender Trend (the organisation that one of the proposed speakers is the founder of), they produced guidance for schools in England and Wales which has been resolutely denounced by Stonewall, stating, "It is a deeply damaging document, packed with factually inaccurate content"(2). We are concerned that the speakers at this event will provide a biased viewpoint on supporting schoolchildren. Challenges to these views will most likely have to come from the audience, or be posed by the chair of the event.

University senior management invited us to meet with a view to establishing ways in which to reduce the harmful impact of this event on the trans and non-binary community here at the University. They informed us that while the University does not necessarily endorse the views of the speakers at this event, it is however permitted given the University's commitment to academic freedom and freedom of expression. They have indicated that they want to work with SPN, EUSA and PrideSoc student network to support trans and non-binary staff and students at this difficult time. Nonetheless we have made it clear that, without a statement to the opposite, the University will be seen as endorsing this event simply by hosting it on University premises and that the Staff Pride

Network sees no way to make the event not harmful. We will continue to support staff and students with informative, unbiased events.

The event organiser has told the media that the SPN were invited to participate in this research seminar. In fact, they invited us to participate in an earlier version of this event, an 'in conversation with' event on this topic which was proposed as a balanced discussion. We understand LGBT Youth Scotland and Scottish Trans Alliance were also invited to that event and that they declined to participate because they would not share a platform with speakers who do not accept trans identities as valid, putting at risk the health and wellbeing of their staff. We agree with this stance and declined to participate in any event with these speakers. The SPN believes that an event cannot be respectful when the very foundation of that event is predicated on the denial that trans identities are valid.

We met with the secretary to the University compliance committee and they advised us that without balance the 'in conversation with' event, which was intended as a professional development event, would not be approved. This research seminar approved by the compliance committee appears to be the same event, with the same speakers as the previous proposed event, but without balance. At no point were we invited to participate in the research seminar. Due to the refusal of the organiser to host a different event, we are at initial stages of planning an event to explore the imminent Scottish Government guidance, to counteract misinformation, to include speakers who affirm trans people's existence, not advocate the rolling back of hard-fought legal rights.

We believe that having external guest speakers with these beliefs at a University of Edinburgh sanctioned event contravenes the University's commitment to Dignity and Respect⁽³⁾ and Trans Equality⁽⁴⁾ and these external speakers should not be allowed this space.

It does not “create a positive culture for our trans and non-binary students and staff where they feel supported and respected to live as their true selves”. Indeed, staff and students have told us they are considering leaving the University – and have since resigned – due to management appearing to endorse speakers such as these.

Kind regards,
Staff Pride Network Committee

1 We believe it is correct to say that the activity of the proposed external guest speakers constitutes a history of transphobia because they have publicly and repeatedly misgendered and dead named trans people, and cited trans identities as equivalent to pathology (something that is simply not the case). The work of the proposed external guest speakers encourages schools to deny trans children the right to self-identify and recommends trans children be discouraged from living as their true selves.

2 <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/node/62946>

3

http://www.docs.csg.ed.ac.uk/HumanResources/Policies/Dignity_and_Respect-Policy.pdf

4

https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/trans_equality_policy.pdf

UPDATE

From event organisers via Eventbrite:

“We are sorry to inform you that the research seminar on Schools and Gender Diversity has had to be postponed. We aim to re-schedule the seminar early next year.”

The Staff Pride Network Committee are relieved the event is

not going ahead at this time and we are working with the University to provide a safe, inclusive environment for ALL staff and students to work and study.