

Celebrating Diversity: Showcasing the LGBTQ+ Photo Bank at the University of Edinburgh

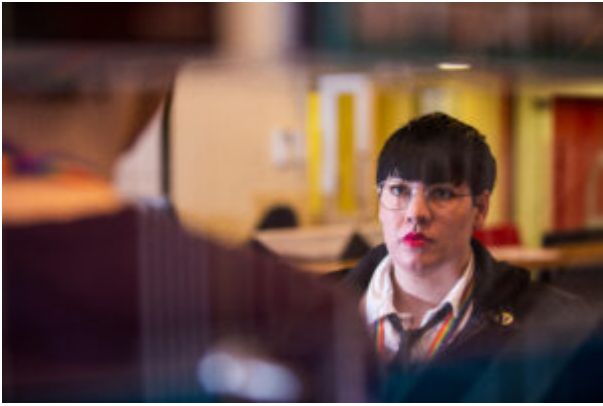
The University of Edinburgh has always been committed to promoting diversity and inclusion. Back in 2018, a special photo shoot led by Gina Gwenffrewi was organised to create a collection of images representing the LGBTQ+ community within our university, including trans and non-binary individuals. These images deserve greater publicity and can be viewed at the LGBTQ+ Students and Staff Image Gallery (Password: edinburghgallery).

This photo bank captures various aspects of staff and student life, highlighting how LGBTQ+ individuals contribute significantly to the university community. As Kat Deuchars, a fellow staff member, remarked, “they demonstrate how LGBTQ+ people look just like straight cis people.”

We are currently working on an exciting new project to update these images and feature the inclusive Progress Pride Rainbow Lanyards. If you're interested in helping with this project, please contact us at staffpridenetwork@ed.ac.uk.

We value your feedback on the existing images and how they can be improved. Please share your thoughts with us to help us create better representations of our diverse community and secure funding for more photos. [Provide a link for feedback here]

Thank you for supporting our efforts to foster a more inclusive environment at the University of Edinburgh.





Note: The images included in the blog post are just a few examples and can be downloaded full size from the gallery mentioned above, featuring a mix of close-ups, group photos, and various activities that demonstrate the diversity and contributions of the LGBTQ+ community within the university, including trans and non-binary individuals.

International Asexuality Day 2023

Today is International Asexuality Day. To our asexual members we wish you a Happy International Asexuality Day and to the rest of our members today is a day to learn, to share knowledge, and to be the best allies you can be to our asexual friends. Feel free to raise awareness with our asexual flag Staff Pride Network logo design (credit to Gill Kidd, SPN graphic design volunteer).

<https://internationalasexualityday.org/en/>

<https://www.stonewall.org.uk/about-us/news/six-ways-be-ally-asexual-people>

Allyship in Informatics

by Jonathan MacBride (he/him) IGS Administrative Assistant

Today (Monday the 27th March 2023) the School of Informatics emphasised their allyship of trans and non-binary people at the University of Edinburgh. It's not often as a cis gay man that I see inclusion at a high level. Today I felt that little bit more valued, motivated, inspired, more proud to work in Informatics. Allyship is usually seen where individuals want to make a difference in ways they can achieve. Today the

School of Informatics quarterly School General Meeting featured the Director of People & Culture Chris Heunen presenting the School Values, announcing a new family fund grant and then giving time for a former Staff Pride Network Trans & Non-Binary Rep to share insights about being a good ally to LGBT+ people. Dr Gina Gwenffrewi shared some of her personal story, comparing her life as an undergrad at Cardiff University 20 years ago, unable to be her true self, unable to achieve her full potential, to now at the University of Edinburgh where she has achieved her PhD, currently teaching Introduction to Trans Studies to UoE undergrads. It's quite a turnaround which she puts down to being able to live and study as Gina, focussing only on what she's here for. Gina highlighted that if we can all show respect and care to trans and non-binary colleagues and students that they will be more successful in their research and work, happier, healthier, more creative, instinctive.

How do we do that? Baby steps are a start. A Rainbow Lanyard shows others that you are a safe person to approach. Hang one from your pocket or on your office wall if you don't tend to wear it round your neck. Ask someone which pronouns they use and respect their answer. Add your own pronouns to your e-signature. Many people aren't familiar with gendered names of cultures around the world so not only does it highlight your understanding of inclusion, it helps others know who they're replying to. After all, here in Edinburgh a 'Chris' could use he/him, she/her or they/them.

A non-binary Informatics PhD student explains how the world around them impacts their day-to-day life:

"In most scenarios, I am the first non-binary person my colleagues will have encountered. Maybe English is not their first language, and they have never learned that it is grammatically acceptable and correct to use "They/Them" for a single person. Maybe English is their first language and they have just never had to think in this way before. There is

nothing wrong with learning, and making mistakes. However, there is a huge mental load on being everyone's first learning experience, that could be reduced by faculty members and staff simply by showing support in their actions and using the right etiquette.

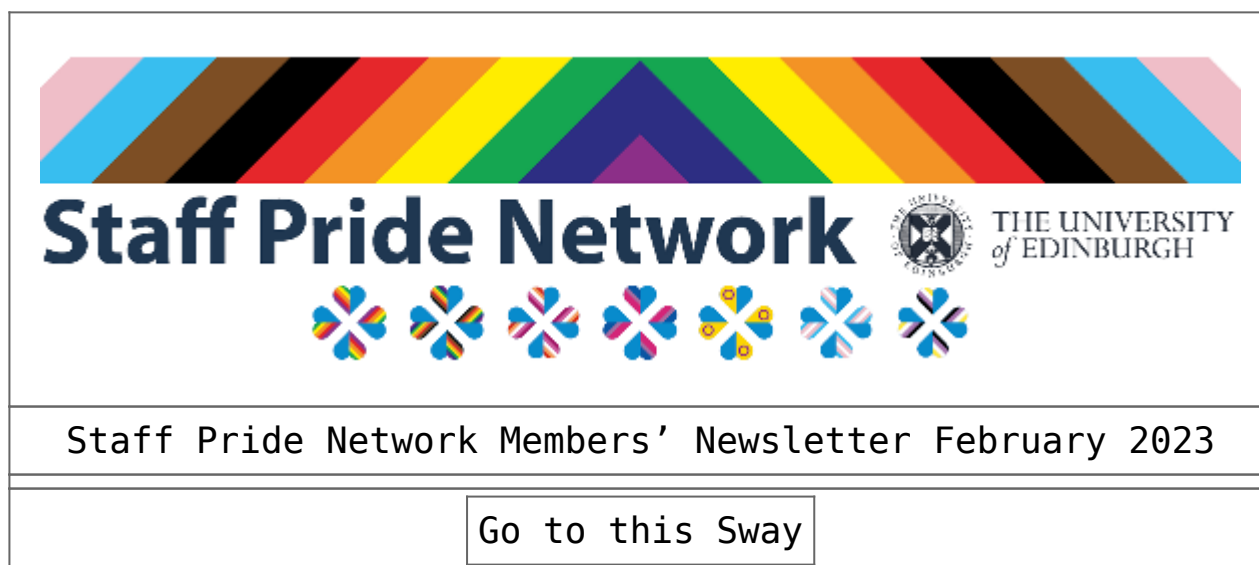
It takes a significant amount of energy (and quite honestly courage) to persevere through conversations where someone is knowingly and consistently using the wrong pronouns for me. All anyone needs to do is ask if they forget, and correct themselves and others when they make a mistake."

▪ Persie Rolley-Parnell, RAS PhD

What do I hope was achieved today? Perhaps a few people hearing a trans woman speak in person for the first time, personalising a message which they have only heard in the media. Maybe a message they haven't heard before, particular to their role in the School, relating it to how they teach, how they interact. A fellow trans and/or non-binary staff member or student could have been sitting there feeling hope, that things in life will get better. Or simply that one person tells another that a trans woman spoke at their School General Meeting. Visibility makes a difference. Personalisation of an issue.

The Informatics Forum reception has a small stock of the latest design of UoE Rainbow Lanyards, featuring a more inclusive Progress Pride flag. Anyone with a staff card can also get them free from Card Services at the Main Library. They are available to everyone from the Visitor Shop who sell them with a card holder for £2.

Staff Pride Network Members' Newsletter February 2023



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[Go to this Sway](#)

Celebrate Drag Queen Story Time with Edinburgh International Book Festival

A staff member was asking Jonathan yesterday about the controversy with 'Drag Queen Story Time' and telling him about their family's positive experience, taking his daughter to Celebrate Pride With Mama G! at the Edinburgh International Book Festival. Jonathan asked him if he would put it in an email for us to share with members and he has, below!

I just wanted to let you know that I thoroughly enjoyed a recent trip to the Edinburgh Book Festival with my daughter Tilly and some of her wee friends. On Saturday 27th Aug we went to 'Celebrate Pride with Mama G!' which was a 2 hour event on the main stage at the book festival with music and

stories all centred around LGBTQ+. Tilly really enjoyed the hour or so we were there. Mama G was great with the kids (Tilly was very enamoured with her outfit) and gave a nice, interactive, history of Stonewall that Tilly enjoyed singing along with , “Love is love is love is love”! . The two stories we were able to listen to were great and it was nice to hear stories (read by Juno Dawson and Jodie Lancet-Grant) that were more inclusive than Tilly is usually exposed to, mainly as that is what is generally available in mainstream kids’ books.

Gender Neutral Toilets

Gender neutral toilets are bathrooms which can be used by anyone, regardless of gender.

While anyone can use a gender neutral toilet, they are particularly important for trans and non-binary students and staff who may feel uncomfortable in or unable to use gendered bathrooms.

The map below shows the locations of gender neutral toilets across the University’s campuses.

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/estates/buildings-information/gender-neutral-toilets>

Join us at Edinburgh Pride 2022

SPN at Pride Edinburgh

We invite members, allies and students to join us for the Pride Edinburgh March on Saturday 25 June!

The SPN marching troupe will be meeting at 11:30 on the day at Levels Café on Holyrood Road. Speeches start at 12:30 and the march moves off at 13:00.

If you can't make it to Levels beforehand but still want to join in, just look for our marching banner – it will be 3 metres wide and looks like the image above!

For a quiet space after marching:

Members are invited to meet at the Informatics Forum from 14:00 – 17:00. Join us for refreshments and a marching troupe debrief! Please note that this private space is being facilitated for University of Edinburgh staff and students only. Entry will be via Robbie on the march, through the side entrance and building sign-in. Call/TXT/iMessage/WhatsApp (07905517428) or even teams message Robert (Robbie) Court to access later in the afternoon.

Note: We will keep this post up to date throughout the day and I'll try and share our location during the march.

Live updates:

Live location: <https://maps.app.goo.gl/d8d45uCRVSKGdAi67>

14:00 we're meeting by the rino head / gift shop by informatics



12:40 were by the traffic lights



10:20 myself and the banner are now in levels cafe having breakfast so feel free if you want to be fashionably early.



8:44 Prepping for meeting at levels cafe. The refreshments are all ready at the informatics forum at the end of the Parade route. The banner has poles this year so wind permitting

should be above the crowd. [fingers crossed].

A sincere thank you from Proud Scotland Awards 2022

Dear University of Edinburgh Staff Pride Network,

I am contacting you to say thank you for everything you have done over the past year to celebrate, support and promote the LGBTQ+ community.

As was stated during the awards ceremony, 2022 was probably the toughest year to select finalists and winners with over 1000 nominations being received and over 36000 votes being cast, all from the public. Although it was commiserations on the night this hopefully shows the amazing impact which you and your organisation is having within the community and how your actions have caused an individual to nominate you this year.

We strongly hope that you continue your amazing work and impact so that we will see you again at the Proud Scotland Awards 2023.

During the evening, you will be aware that we raised money to help support the delivery of Pride Edinburgh, <https://prideedinburgh.co.uk/>, and Glasgow's Pride Mardi Gla, <https://glapride.com/>, and hope that we will see you showing your Pride, at either or both of the marches and events.

Again, from myself as the Chair of the Judging panel, congratulations on being a finalist in 2022 and thank you for being amazing!

Stuart McPhail

Iona Community: Student Week this September with Mx Ashwin Africanus Thyssen

10 – 16 September: Students' Week (*title tbc*) A week for students to experience life in the community, to share laughter and stories, to explore the island and to reflect on current concerns.

This week is jointly led by Iona Community staff with staff and students from Glasgow and Edinburgh Universities and the Student Christian Movement. We are delighted that we'll be joined by Mx Ashwin Africanus Thyssen from Stellenbosch University for this week.

<https://iona.org.uk/visit-and-stay/iona-abbey-centre/iona-abbey-programme-bookings/?fbclid=IwAR2DhbgZdvhzn5GnSr1G8EA3XQfYKLbhqAXd5v12EIw07sCGzQWozghMZDU>

The Pride material “Grace Like Glitter” launch

Excerpt:

You can't get rid of glitter. It doesn't matter whether you sprinkle it like fairy dust or send it in a card; whether you glitter-bomb as a protest or decorate your face with it at a festival. It doesn't matter how the glitter got there in the first place – you can't get rid of glitter. (..)

As LGBTQ+ folk, we believe that God's grace is always there in and around and woven through our lived experiences. We exist, whether folk like it or not, and so we are sprinkled liberally with God's grace. We have noticed that resources for and by LGBTQ+ folk in a faith context often focus on suffering and sorrow. And don't get us wrong, we know there is plenty of suffering to go around, and we have experienced more than our fair share of it.

And yet, we also want to do justice to God's grace, and to the joy and euphoria that living our authentic lives as LGBTQ+ people brings. And so, whilst some of these resources contain raw glimpses of our pain, the overall tone that we are going for is one of hope, of joy, of love and, yes, of grace like glitter. We hope that these resources will help you to spread grace like glitter too, wherever and whoever you are. May it be so.

https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=pfbid0Ar8Cw8Fi2RpHtaZoftwB4SHbjAnwLGy8kxyFHtfjTnzphjAuav8SnMPoxC3b2L4cl&id=100005037420123&m_entstream_source=timeline

