

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

Celebrate Pride Edinburgh 2022 with us in style!

Happy Pride Month 2022!

To celebrate, the Staff Pride Network is offering a limited number of t-shirts for free to network members.

We've got seven variations of the SPN logo available, representing a number of pride flags.

Check out the t-shirt designs (image file on SharePoint)

UPDATE 6 JUNE

Please note that the following logo variations are no longer available in June 2022 due to high demand:

Rainbow; Philadelphia; Bisexual

If you select one of the above variations, we will record this as an expression of interest for when we can next order a batch of t-shirts.

We hope to see you wearing your colours loud and proud on Saturday 25 June at the Pride Edinburgh march! We welcome you to join the Staff Pride Network marching troupe ☐

Complete this short form to request a t-shirt

Logo flag variation options available in June 2022:

Lesbian / Non-Binary / Trans / Intersex

We recognise that the sexualities and identities of all our

network members are not represented by these flags – apologies that we can't print more variations on this occasion!

With huge thanks to our colleague Gill Kidd who created this version of the t-shirt design! Logo designs are by Kael Onion Oakley.

- We have a limited number of t-shirts and size options, and will therefore respond to requests on a first-come-first served basis. Please expect to receive an email confirming the availability of your preferred t-shirt.
- If we run out of your preferred design and size, we can retain your details for when we can next order more t-shirts. We can't guarantee that the next batch of t-shirts can be made available for free (sorry).
- We kindly ask that anyone who gets a t-shirt considers making a one-off donation of £5 – £15 (or whatever you can manage) to Pride Edinburgh. You can do so at the Pride Edinburgh march on Saturday 25 June – card machines will be available.
- If you are unable to attend the Pride Edinburgh march but would still like to make a donation, let us know via email.

Any questions about the t-shirts or the request form? Get in touch: staffpridenetwork@ed.ac.uk

bulletin-magazine: Reflecting

on an unusual Pride month

The past few months have seen us have to wave goodbye to a number of events, instead finding ways to celebrate them separately and behind closed doors. Despite this, our Staff Pride Network still gathered (virtually) to mark Pride month, and to support each other during this strange time. Here, Jonathan MacBride, Co-Convenor of the Network, chats to bulletin about adapting their Pride plans to a digital environment.

What has it been like organising the celebration of Pride during lockdown?

We've been glad to have the resources to host a virtual, Prideful, event to bring community members together to reflect, commemorate and celebrate.

Have you managed to take everything online successfully? Has it felt the same hosting events virtually?

There have certainly been varying levels of success and hiccups but we have continued our regular social events and increased our online offering with alternating weekly yoga and Qi Gong (Body Clock Flow). Weekly Wednesday online lunchtime catch-ups for all members have replaced monthly lunchtime events held at different campuses on the 2nd, 3rd and 4th Wednesdays. Our monthly Evening Social on the 1st Friday has moved online and drinks are much cheaper! Where conversations would have bounced around in person at these social events, people online want to contribute to the conversation but will often find themselves starting to talk just as someone else does. It's different, it's learning how to make it work, and that's ok. Rather than fight it, we've embraced it and even organised an Animal Crossing event for IDAHOBT (International day against Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia) where some members joined in on their Nintendo Switch and others watched

on Twitch.

How has the Network managed to successfully connect and support each other when they're unable to meet face to face?

Everyone on the committee and the entire volunteer team have continued to work together to deliver fantastic events, maintain an active social media presence and create interesting communications, while members have responded with generous event feedback, and liking, sharing and retweeting our communications. It motivates us to keep working with the University, attending strategy meetings and organising ever more for our LGBT+ colleagues and allies.

Can you expand a bit more of some of the events you had to alter to fit these lockdown circumstances?

Our Diversifying Wikipedia event on the 25th anniversary of Pride marches in Scotland changed from face-to-face training in a WRB University room to Collaborate for the training, Collaborate side rooms for extra help, and a Discord for other support and questions for our special guests. I'd never heard of Discord before this and now I organise activism on one Discord and chat to friends while experimenting with acrylic paint on another! Event participants created new Wikipedia pages for LGBT+ authors, publishers, and historic and current Scottish LGBT+ bookshops (Lavender Menace Bookshop and Category Is Books, if you want to look up their handiwork!). The AGM in August (date TBC) will be online for the first time too!

Will you be continuing with any of these once things are back to normal?

What's normal? I expect we'll maintain a fully inclusive approach, making events accessible in-person and online. We'll adapt and do our best.

Anything else you'd like to mention?

Pride Month is a time where our community comes together to celebrate the progress we have made towards being included and accepted and ending discrimination. We must acknowledge that the Pride movement is built on the shoulders of Black trans women activists like Marsha P Johnson and we are still fighting today to end racist, homophobic, biphobic and transphobic oppression.

BY CHARLOTTE DAVIDSON

How have you been celebrating Pride month this year? Let bulletin-magazine know in their comments here: <https://blogs.ed.ac.uk/bulletin-magazine/2020/06/30/reflecting-on-an-unusual-pride-month/>

Article from bulletin-magazine:
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Lesbian Visibility: What does being visible mean to you?

Pictured: Anna Smith, Staff Pride Network Bookclub Coordinator

What does being visible as a lesbian mean to you?

In lieu of any formal events to celebrate Lesbian Visibility Week, one of our co-chairs and bi-rep, Katie, and our book

group coordinator, Anna have had a virtual discussion (over email, fitting in between their busy work schedules!) about what it means to Anna to be visible as a lesbian.

Katie: The big question: what does being visible as a lesbian mean to you?

Anna: As a teenager coming to terms with my sexuality, I found the label 'lesbian' a useful one. It helped explain me, first and foremost to myself. Others had felt what I was feeling, had made sense of it and were out living their lives. My sexuality and gender presentation – things that marked me as different from my family and most of my friends at the time – also connected me into a wider community of people, existing in the past, present and future. Seeing lesbians in public life reinforced the idea that my identity was legitimate and not something to be ashamed of. As an adult I now try to be visible wherever appropriate, both to signal to lesbians who may be struggling to come out (either to themselves or others) that they're not alone, and to signal to society in general that we're a normal part of their world, too. I also hope that this visibility will help me to use my privilege as a relatively well-represented identity within the LGBTQ+ spectrum to be an ally to and advocate for others whose identities are not yet recognised or celebrated.

Katie: Thank you so much for sharing that, I was wondering if you could expand on a few things for me? You refer to seeing lesbians in public life as important – was this generally or was it specific, perhaps well-known, figures that were helpful?

Anna: When I was a teenager it was generally people in the arts such as the author Sarah Waters and the musicians Tegan and Sara Quinn who were particularly helpful to me. These women were open about their sexuality, successful in their fields and were creating work that featured characters and narratives that resonated with me. Lesbian pop-culture websites such as AfterEllen (and later Autostraddle) also helped me feel part of a cultural conversation on lesbian and LGBTQ+ issues at a time when I had very few people in my offline life who I felt I could discuss these things with.

Katie: It just goes to show how important representation is. You also mentioned earlier that being a lesbian is a 'well represented identity' could you clarify this a little – do you mean, the average person may know that lesbians exist more so than other LGBT+ identities? Is this related to the fact there are now some quite famous lesbians in public life, politicians and celebrities etc...?

Anna: Yes, I think 'lesbian' is an identity that the average non-LGBTQ+ person will have at least heard of and that many people will understand. For example, I would not expect to have to educate my colleagues, my boss or my GP on the basics of what being a lesbian means. I think this is partly down to the visibility of lesbians in public life, and in particular lesbians working on the creative side of the media in which we are depicted, for example lesbian film-makers, television writers etc. Other folks in the LGBTQ+ community don't have that luxury because there are always more barriers in place for trans, pansexual or non-binary people (for example) trying to get a platform from which to tell their stories than for gay or lesbian people. Sadly, prejudice from the gay and lesbian communities towards more marginalised sexual and gender identities often contributes to this

problem.

Katie: Do you have anything else to add?

Anna: Representation of lesbians has come a long way in recent years due to the work of activists both in and outside the public eye. However, there's still some way to go, particularly in terms of increasing visibility for lesbians with other intersecting identities such as race, class and disability. I'm hopeful that in the future lesbians (and indeed any LGBTQ+ person), regardless of their situation or background, can see themselves accurately represented in society.

Lesbian Visibility: Shining a Light on Lesbian Authors



by Anna Smith, Coordinator of the Staff Pride Network Book Club

As part of Lesbian Visibility week I thought I would compile a list of books by lesbian authors, with lesbian characters, or both. This list is by no means exhaustive or representative of the objectively 'most notable' works around; it's simply a collection of authors whose work I get excited about. A note of caution – often an author's work may feature queer women but there is no record of the author's sexuality, which is fair enough because that's absolutely their business, but I'm hesitant to apply a label of 'lesbian' to these works given how often bisexual and otherwise queer-identified women are erased in LGBTQ spaces and dialogues. I've tried to stick to works where either there's some public record that the author self-identifies as a lesbian, and/or the character in the work only has relationships with female-identified people. Please accept my apologies for (and let me know about) any errors! Furthermore, while I've attempted to make the list as diverse as possible I recognise that as a cis, white woman my reading (and therefore my recommendations) will probably have a cis- and white-centric bias, and I would encourage readers to seek out works by and featuring lesbians from the trans, BME,

disabled and neurodiverse communities.

Lesbian authors whose work I am familiar with:

Becky Chambers

Chambers' science fiction series, which starts with *The Long Way to a Small Angry Planet*, imagines a far-future society in which humans have left Earth, met up with aliens, and are now trying to make their way in intergalactic society. Chambers' novels often feature multiple queer characters and put questions of friendship, identity and cross-cultural co-operation and understanding front and centre. Plus, y'know, spaceships! What more do you want!?

Emma Donoghue

Most famous for the contemporary novel *Room*, Donoghue has written many novels set in different time periods. I am a particular fan of *Life Mask*, a work of historical fiction which follows the life of sculptor Anne Damer in the Georgian period. It focuses on Damer's life burgeoning friendship with – and feelings for – a well-known actress of the time. Donoghue has also written lesbian characters in her short story collections *Astray* and *Touchy Subjects*.

Jackie Kay

Jackie Kay is a Scottish poet, playwright and novelist who I was first introduced to when I read her memoir *Red Dust Road*, which interweaves reflections on her experiences of being adopted by a white family with the story of how she sought and met with her biological parents as an adult. *Red Dust Road* is a powerful exploration of identity and the concept of belonging.

Carmen Maria Machado

I read Carmen Maria Machado's short story collection *Her Body and Other Parties* on the recommendation of a friend and was absolutely blown away. Often featuring lesbian or queer women, the stories have a way of drilling right down to the bones (sometimes literally, given the often horror-inflected nature of the narratives) of their chosen themes. Despite all being set in worlds which are recognisably present or near-future, there's a broad spectrum here in terms of the degree to which the fantastical is allowed to manifest, and Machado wields the tools of magical realism with precision and wit.

Tamsyn Muir

I first heard about Muir at Worldcon last year, and have gleefully devoured her short stories *Union* and *The Deepwater Bride*, which are wonderfully creepy works of science fiction featuring lesbian characters. Her debut novel *Gideon the Ninth* has been described by the author as "just a collection of swordfights and people leaning in doorways" but by many other people as a thrilling adventure featuring lesbian necromancers in space. IN SPACE! I am, alas, waiting for it to come out in paperback so haven't yet had the pleasure of reading it.

Sarah Waters

Queen of lesbian historical fiction, has written several novels with lesbian protagonists. I'd personally recommend *Fingersmith* as a starting point, a gothic romance set in Victorian England, in which a thief plots to con a reclusive heiress out of her inheritance by posing as a ladies' maid.

Waters' other works include *Tipping the Velvet*, *Night Watch* and *The Paying Guests*.

Jeanette Winterson

I think most people probably know who Jeanette Winterson is, right? She's best known for *Oranges are Not the Only Fruit*, a novel based on her own childhood and adolescence coming to terms with her sexuality as an adopted child of very religious parents. She's incredibly prolific and everyone who reads her work probably has their own favourites, but I love *The Passion*, a fantastical story following two protagonists (one a queer woman) across France and Italy during the Napoleonic wars.

Interesting-sounding books with lesbian authors or characters which I haven't read:

The Labyrinth's Archivist by Day Al-Mohamed

A Two-Spirit Journey (non-fiction) by Ma-Nee Chacaby

The Confessions of Frannie Langton by Sara Collins

A Safe Girl to Love (short story collection) by Casey Plett

The Seep by Chana Porter

Laura Dean Keeps Breaking Up With Me (graphic novel) by Mariko Tamaki & Rosemary Valero-O'Connell

Shout out to the Lesbrary and Tor Publishing's Queering SF series are other good sources for recommendations.

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_injecti) if it is an option for you: https://wiki.queercare.network/index.php?title=IM_injecti

on_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.

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.

Visibility (or lack of)

Having decided to go to the event at the Parliament on 10th September to mark 50 years after the Stonewall riots, I was pleased to be asked to be one of the people to pass around the mics for the Q&A sessions. We had two main speakers, Nicola Sturgeon and Sir Stephen Wall. Both gave fascinating talks, and both fully included trans people in what they were saying. This is great but stirred up a few issues for me as a trans person. I was very visible when I transitioned. Now I am not. In many ways it is a privilege to have the relative safety that comes from this. And yet.....is what people see who I am?

This was highlighted after the event when it was discussed that the two mic handlers were not very diverse, being two white men. Yes, we are and yet that is not all I am, and it would be wrong for me to make any assumptions in that regard about my colleague. But that is what the world saw. There is a constant strangeness in that part of my life.

This means I tend to out myself at times. My gender identity is relatively male, but my experience of life is very much non binary. It is certainly not the same as cis men of my age. If I am getting to know people well, then I do mention being trans as my history is part of who I am. But I have also disclosed for safety. That sounds bizarre, doesn't it? Why would it be safer? Well, if it's not known I am trans then I do not have the protection of the Equality Act. I have found times of discrimination when I have realised someone who is a factor in that does know about my trans history and therefore it could be relevant to the problems.

Coincidentally, the day after the parliament event two trans male friends were chatting online about how they are both seen

at work as cis allies – and the feelings this stirs up for them. We are at a point when society's attitudes to trans people are becoming increasingly polarised. Sometimes people need to remember we are not 'freaks', just people getting on with our lives. We can even be the boring, middle-aged white bloke passing round the mic at an event.

Cameron Waddell

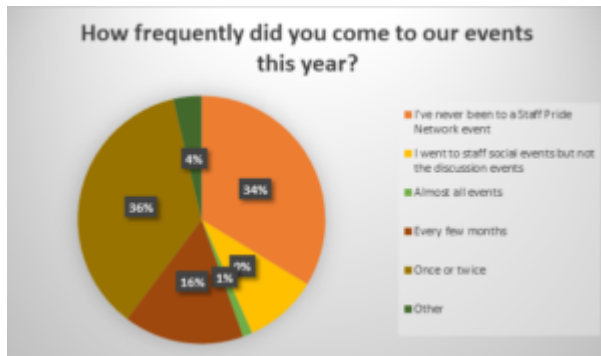
Staff Pride Network Survey Report 2019

The Staff Pride Network undertook this survey with the aim of improving our organisation and future events. Thank you for helping us learn by completing it.

80 people responded to the survey and answered 16 questions that touched upon attendance to events, the reasons why you find this network important, communication, approachability, and representation. You can find a copy of this report in SharePoint (you will find the graphics are easier to read there). A further more detailed report will be published later in the year.

Attendance to events

Although some of the respondents (35%) expressed they have not attended any events organised by the network, some explained that it is important that the network exists. One of the respondents wrote: 'It makes me feel secure and welcomed in the University that this network exists, so I want to support it and participate when I can'.



The reasons for not attending the events organised by the network were varied:

'I act as the departmental lead/rep for this, but am not part of the LGBTQ+ community, so don't feel the events are for me.'

'Wasn't aware of events.'

At the moment, 85% of you would feel able to approach us if you had an issue you wanted to discuss. These responses are very useful to us and will help us to improve our communications so you all feel welcome to attend and get notice of the events.

Representation

A theme of concern was that 5% of the respondents expressed they did not feel comfortable/included and 2.5% didn't like the sound of the events. We understand that people prefer to engage in different ways and, therefore, we are working to react and improve to ensure that people feel included and comfortable.



The survey showed our membership is diverse in many ways, but we have much to do to increase BME representation.



We are pleased to see that 19% of our respondents are allies. It is important to acknowledge that our network is a diverse group and the LGBT+ umbrella does not capture the richness of our identities, as your responses showed us: '[I am] Asexual! But I fit that under "queer"' and 'I've been committed to a straight relationship forever, but feel that in another universe things could have been different. I'm happy though. But I don't really know how to label that. Operationally straight/theoretically pan?'

The importance of the Staff Pride Network



In response to this question, some of our members answered in ways that were reassuring and heart-warming. Quotes include:

'I am impressed by the many efforts the LGBT+ staff group puts into its work, and I know that this is widely appreciated.'

'I want to use Staff Pride to make the university more welcoming, to challenge prejudice, and effect meaningful change.'

'It inspires me how to teach my kids about valuing diversity'.

'I had a difficult time to come out to myself, the SPN started exactly at that point and it helped me very much to know that some LGBT+ colleagues were there, visible. I could not do it, I am not comfortable enough to share my sexual orientation with others, but I am so thankful that you guys are here! And maybe someday I will do it too.'

We were overwhelmed with the positivity and love for what we are doing. You brought joyous tears to our eyes and gave us lots to think about for where to improve our work, events, and activities. Thank you.