

# LGBTQ+ Pulse Survey Report Draft

Introductory Foreword – Fiona Hnatow, HR Director and Chair of the Staff EDI Board

I am delighted to give my full support to this hugely important staff pulse survey report, commissioned by our LGBTQ+ Staff Network Group. With a significant number of St Mary's staff contributing it is clear that as a community we acknowledge that we not only have a long journey ahead of us but can also celebrate real progress in our ambition to say with honesty that we are a fully inclusive employer.

As we all know the very best staff recognise the value in taking proactive steps to create inclusive workplace environments and the findings within this report will help us shape our continued action planning. Sadly, we can see that in some cases our LGBTQ+ employees are still facing barriers at work and I would like to thank those who have come forward to share their own experiences.

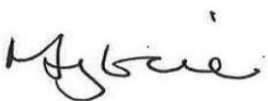
For all of us it is vital that we, as a community, show visible support and a commitment to ensure we have the right policies in place and work harder to create a culture where staff can come forward with confidence to report bullying or poor behaviour, and know they will be listened to and real action will be taken.

This report has made clear that we cannot underestimate the impact of not feeling supported and included, and if anyone is experiencing discrimination at work then we must take immediate action as this is totally unacceptable and goes against our core values and all we stand for.

The way forward to ensuring real cultural change takes place in education, language and behaviour, driven from all those in senior positions, who must not only role model exemplary leadership but must ensure that the message is loud and clear that all our staff must be treated with dignity, respect and kindness.

I would like to personally thank both the Chair and Members of the LGBTQ+ Staff Network group and wider community for their work, all undertaken in their own time, in not only driving forward and raising the profile of this hugely important agenda, but in working with allies to ensure we create an open and supportive working environment.

Thank you for taking the time to read this and to consider the report.



Fiona Hnatow  
Director of Human Resources and Chair of the Staff EDI Board

Introductory Foreword – Djuna Tree, former LGBTQ+ Staff Network Chair + Lis Barlow, Rob Johnson & Simon Hampton, current LGBTQ+ Staff Network Co-Chairs.

For the first time in this institution's 171-year history, staff have been formally consulted about their experience and satisfaction at work in the context of a range of LGBTQ+ specific themes. This report aims to highlight how some LGBTQ+ staff at St Mary's are thriving, with help from their supportive colleagues – as well as bringing attention to the significant challenges that remain. The topic most frequently raised by respondents was Discrimination and Reporting. More needs to be done to address their concerns.

The University continues to grow and improve through the work of a diverse community of talented and passionate colleagues. We each have a duty to take part in the process. In particular we have identified the following recommendations:

#### Partnerships

- The University should join the Stonewall Diversity Champions programme by January 2022 and Commit to beginning work on a submission to the Stonewall UK Workplace Equality Index by January 2023 [for an October 2023 submission deadline].
- Additional EDI resource should be committed to facilitate this [in the same manner as has been adopted for the Race Equalities Charter and Athena Swan].

#### Place

- Murals and displays around campus should feature EDI themes, including LGBTQ+ themes, in the same manner as sporting or academic excellence.
- A Progress Pride Flag should be flown from the University flagpole for at least one week in both February and June.  
The Progress Pride Flag is an evolution of the rainbow LBGHT Pride flag which adds to the six-stripe rainbow design a chevron of black, brown, light blue, pink, and white stripes to represent marginalized people of colour, trans individuals, and those living with HIV/AIDS.
- A Progress Pride Flag should be permanently displayed somewhere on main campus – this could be on a new (second) flagpole at the University or elsewhere.

#### People

- The University should create a discrimination reporting service, distinct from the grievance procedure, offering support and guidance to all staff.
- The University should adopt a Trans Equality Policy, giving transgender and non-binary staff clear expectations of excellent conditions for work.
- Our Employee Assistance Programme and staff wellbeing initiatives should be reviewed to assess their perceived ability to meet the needs of LGBTQ+ staff.

#### Growth

- Additional staff resources for EDI projects, training, staff wellbeing, and student outreach.

Finally, we would like to personally thank all of our 81 respondents for taking part in the survey, and for continuing to support the LGBTQ+ Staff Network.



## Executive Summary

The anonymous survey, led by the LGBTQ+ Staff Network, welcomed responses from all members of staff whether or not they identified as LGBTQ+. The survey included a series of quantitative questions with open text boxes to allow respondents to expand upon their answers with qualitative feedback. Questions focused on personal experience at work and interactions with colleagues, with many of the questions modelled on questions asked in Stonewall & YouGov's 2018 [LGBT in Britain Work Report](#). Remaining questions were modelled on questions asked in St Mary's March 2020 Staff Pulse Survey.

The network was grateful to receive 81 responses from St Mary's staff members. The sexual orientation of the respondents was as follows:

	Survey Participants
Straight	58%
Lesbian	6%
Gay	11%
Bisexual	9%
Queer	4%
Prefer not to say	12%
Total	100%

95% of respondents identified with the gender they were assigned at birth, while 2.5% of respondents did not. This second group have been described as "transgender or non-binary" when interpreting results. 2.5% of respondents preferred not to answer.

### Key Themes: Quantitative Analysis

\*% Agree by question refers to respondents who have selected 'Agree' or 'Tend to Agree'

\*\*LGBQ+ refers to respondents who identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or queer

% Agree by Question*	LGBQ+**	Straight	Difference
<b>I would recommend St Mary's to a friend as a good place to work</b>	58%	77%	<b>-19%</b>
<b>I often think about leaving the University</b>	42%	26%	<b>+16%</b>

The gaps displayed in these two questions between respondents identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or queer (LGBQ+) and those identifying as straight are significant. Such discrepancies between these groups of colleagues have implications on staff turnover rates and the University's aspiration to be an Employer of Choice amongst other London universities.

% Agree by Question	LGBQ+	Straight	Difference
<b>I have seen or experienced LGBTQ-related discrimination at work</b>	37%	17%	<b>+20%</b>
<b>I would feel confident reporting LGBTQ-related discrimination to my employer</b>	54%	81%	<b>-27%</b>

These questions reinforce findings from the [LGBT in Britain Work Report](#) (2018) – which found that 18% of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) workers in the UK had been the target of negative comments or conduct at work in the previous year because they were LGBT.

Only half of LGBTQ+ respondents would feel confident reporting LGBTQ-related discrimination to St Mary’s, as compared to 88% of employed LGBT respondents in the nationwide [LGBT in Britain Work Report](#). It is clear in this regard that St Mary’s falls short, not only of the higher education sector, but of the rest of the UK.

\* Cisgender refers to respondents who are not trans or non-binary.

% Agree by Question	Trans or non-binary	Cisgender*	Difference
<b>My colleagues always refer to me with the correct gender pronouns</b>	50%	95%	<b>-55%</b>
<b>I feel confident that my colleagues always refer to transgender staff and students with the correct gender pronouns</b>	0%	35%	<b>-35%</b>

Only half of trans or non-binary respondents agree that their colleagues always refer to them with the correct gender pronouns – a stark difference from colleagues who aren’t trans.

Perhaps of even graver concern is respondents’ lack of confidence in their colleagues’ ability to refer to transgender staff and students with the correct gender pronouns. Not only do 0% of trans respondents have such confidence, but only a third of all respondents are confident of it happening at St Mary’s.

Further quantitative data can be found in the appendix below; it is particularly of note that we could not find a single result showing success – the red highlights show areas where LGBTQ+ respondents answered less positively than their colleagues.

***Please see Appendix A for more detailed quantitative data analysis.***

### Key Themes: Qualitative Analysis

When analysing the qualitative data from the open response fields provided at several key points in the survey, several overarching themes emerged:

- Being Out
- Pronouns
- Bi-erasure and Assumptions about Identity
- Fear and Worry
- Discrimination and Reporting
- Education and Awareness
- Management and Leadership
- Catholic Ethos
- Terminology and Methodology
- Progress

Major subthemes for each theme were as follows:

**Being out:** impact of inclusive line managers/teams on feelings of comfortability being out at work; experiences of being out at work in some contexts but not others (influenced by acceptance or lack thereof

amongst certain colleagues); choosing not to be out at work due to non-inclusive behaviours/comments from colleagues and senior managers.

**Pronouns:** concerns of being misgendered (referred to by incorrect pronouns) by colleagues and of students routinely being misgendered; varying levels of confidants about colleagues' use of correct gender pronouns; instances of staff ignoring/making fun of transgender students and their pronouns.

**Bi-erasure and Assumptions about Identity:** experiences of discrimination against bisexual staff members; comments from colleagues assuming staff members are heterosexual; discomfort discussing personal relationships or family with colleagues who are not heterosexual.

**Fear and Worry:** fear of being out at work, whether because of Catholic ethos or fear of being discriminated against/excluded because of their sexual orientation/gender identity; concern when joining about whether the University would be an inclusive environment; fear that 'micro' discrimination or comments from colleagues would not be seen as explicit or important enough if reported.

**Discrimination and Reporting:** fear of being discriminated against if out at work; prevalence of homophobic, biphobic, and/or transphobic comments/jokes by colleagues; comfort reporting instances more so by non-LGBTQ+ respondents than LGBTQ+ respondents, who would not feel comfortable for fear of reports not taken seriously/being seen as important enough to address

**Education and Awareness:** need to increase education and awareness of LGBTQ+ understanding and allyship, particularly in relation to pronoun use and bystander training.

**Management and Leadership:** positive impact individual line managers can have on a staff member's perception of organisational inclusivity; comparing good behaviour of current line managers from poor/discriminatory behaviour from previous line managers; experiences of discriminatory comments made by senior members of staff, in some cases leading to fear of being out or increased homophobia amongst other team members; questions of senior leadership's commitment to LGBTQ+ inclusion as compared to other areas of equality, diversity, and inclusion.

**Catholic Ethos:** perceived tension between the University's Catholic identity and LGBTQ+ inclusion; lack of formalised support services for LGBTQ+ students – support instead coming from LGBTQ+ staff members.

**Terminology and Methodology:** good practice for collecting data relevant to LGBTQ+ colleagues; fear and hesitancy of non-LGBTQ+ staff in using correct terminology/pronouns when conversing with LGBTQ+ colleagues.

**Progress:** positive progress at St Mary's in supporting the LGBTQ+ community; little progress at St Mary's as compared to other higher education institutions (HEIs).

***Please see Appendix B for more detailed qualitative data analysis.***

## Appendix A – Detailed Quantitative Data

\*% Agree by question refers to respondents who have selected 'Agree' or 'Tend to Agree'

\*\*LGBQ+ refers to respondents who identified as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, or Queer

% Agree by Question*	LGBQ+**	Straight	Difference
<b>I feel valued by St Mary's</b>	54%	75%	<b>-21%</b>
<b>I would recommend St Mary's as a good place to work</b>	58%	77%	<b>-19%</b>
<b>My line manager respects and values me</b>	79%	85%	<b>-6%</b>
<b>Generally I am happy at work</b>	71%	81%	<b>-10%</b>
<b>I often think about leaving the university</b>	42%	26%	<b>+14%</b>
<b>I am comfortable talking with work colleagues about my partner and dating</b>	33%	70%	<b>-37%</b>
<b>I have seen or experienced LGBTQ-related discrimination at work</b>	37%	17%	<b>+20%</b>
<b>I would feel confident reporting LGBTQ-related discrimination to my employer</b>	54%	81%	<b>-27%</b>
<b>My colleagues always refer to me with the correct gender pronouns</b>	92%	96%	<b>-4%</b>
<b>I feel confident that my colleagues always refer to transgender staff and students with the correct gender pronouns</b>	29%	40%	<b>-11%</b>

% Agree by Question	Trans or non-binary	Cisgender	Difference
<b>My colleagues always refer to me with the correct gender pronouns</b>	50%	95%	<b>-45%</b>
<b>I feel confident that my colleagues always refer to transgender staff and students with the correct gender pronouns</b>	0%	35%	<b>-35%</b>

## Appendix B – Detailed Qualitative Data Analysis

### Being out

This theme was the second most prominent amongst survey respondents – with 24 mentions in the open text comments. For respondents identifying as LGBTQ+, seven shared they are out at work, and two of those respondents spoke specifically about having inclusive line managers/teams which contributed to their feeling comfortable being out. Another respondent did note that although they are out, the more recent importance placed on faith and Catholicism by the University has made it less comfortable to be out. Two respondents shared comments that added further context to their experience being out at work:

**“I have sometimes been asked questions about my sexuality that I don't believe would be asked if I were in a heteronormative relationship, but this is due in great part to my openness and it does not offend me as I believe that it is driven by a desire to understand and learn.”**

**“That said, in the past there has been an element of "Don't ask don't tell" and a reluctance to be more publicly supportive and inclusive of the LGTQ+ community for fear of upsetting some of our (i) investors and/or (ii) target market.”**

For other respondents identifying as LGBTQ+, six described being out at work in some contexts but not in others. For example, one respondent shared that they are not “especially out” but “would not deny being gay if asked.” Another one of these respondents noted they are open with some colleagues and not others (particularly those who have made homophobic comments in the past). An additional one of these respondents shared they would be open if someone asked, but intentionally omit information when discussing their personal life. The following comments help describe three of these respondents' experience further:

**“I am not completely out at work and rarely discuss my partner although have done so on occasions when I feel comfortable. I feel much more comfortable at St Mary's compared to other work places.”**

**“I am not fully out at work. I have recently come out to a few people in the office and I experienced a bi-phobic comment from one colleague within seconds. I don't think they understood the nuance of their comment. My other colleagues have reacted fine.”**

**“I would say I do not speak about my personal life with the confidence I would if I were straight. Which is in contrast to my day-to-day and past workplaces.”**

A further three respondents who identify as LGBTQ+ shared they are **not out** at work. The first of these respondents shared they are not out because they heard of a conversation between two senior colleagues that was homophobic in nature, and subsequently realised that there is “little understanding or respect for diversity at St Mary's,” (which the respondent attributes to the Catholic identity of the institution). A second of these three respondents described being fearful of being ‘too’ out due to the Catholic focus amongst senior leadership and the anti-LGBTQ+ views of the Catholic Church. The third of these respondents is not out due to fear of discrimination and fetishisation, and spoke about other LGBTQ+ colleagues feeling the same way. Their quote can be found in the discrimination and reporting section of this report.

When asked about being out at work, several respondents who did not identify as LGBTQ+ discussed being open about their identity and feeling comfortable talking about their personal lives. One of these respondents shared that they have noticed their LGBTQ+ colleagues are less forthcoming when talking about relationships/personal lives. Another respondent who does not identify as LGBTQ+ commented on the experience of a [LGBTQ+] close friend/colleague who did not feel comfortable being out at work.

Finally, two respondents who did not share whether they identify as LGBTQ+ spoke about hesitancy to discuss relationships/their personal lives in the workplace.

## Pronouns

A significant amount of respondents referred to use of gender pronouns, such as “he” or “him”, “she” or “her”, or “they” or “them”. While this is a prominent issue in our culture at the present time, with plenty of media coverage and debate, it is important to remember that transgender and non-binary students and staff are primarily at St Mary’s for work and education, and that they are likely to see consistent use of the correct pronouns as a matter of basic dignity and respect.

**“Regarding use of pronouns, it’s not an issue for me personally. However, I think there is a lack of understanding regarding gender identities which aren’t the gender-normative binary... e.g. transgender, non-binary, intersex, gender-fluid etc. – and therefore why different pronouns are important to some people.”**

**We work with a lot of younger undergrads, and that generation are more open to identifying in such ways. We ought to improve our understanding.”**

One transgender respondent expressed concerns about being misgendered by colleagues, and of students routinely being misgendered:

**“My colleagues almost always refer to me with the correct pronouns; however, at times during my tenure two colleagues separately developed patterns of misgendering me, and no action was taken against them. I was reluctant to make a complaint due to not wanting to ‘out’ myself – but I was surprised that no one else corrected them. I often see my colleagues referring to transgender and non-binary students with the wrong pronouns.”**

Respondents expressed varying levels of confidence about colleagues’ use of pronouns:

**“I believe that in their professional capacity my colleagues would always refer to transgender people using the correct pronouns... [but not] in more private surroundings.”**

**“I don’t think I know of any member of staff who would knowingly use incorrect pronouns. This isn’t to say that there aren’t members of staff who would be difficult or belligerent about it.”**

**“I feel there are some staff members that may not understand why the use of pronouns is important for our transgender students.”**

**“We had a transgender student and we asked them which pronoun they preferred however, staff felt quite unsure of it within the team.”**

Most concerningly, one respondent described colleagues mocking transgender students:

**“I have seen staff ignore/make fun of preferred pronouns (not in front of the people in question). This has been discussed casually as a point of contention, but was not reported as an incident.”**

As noted earlier in this report, no transgender respondents to the survey were confident that their colleagues always refer to transgender staff and students with the correct gender pronouns, and 50% of trans respondents reported being misgendered by colleagues.

## Bi-erasure and assumptions about identity

Bi-erasure refers to the tendency throughout our society to ignore or conceal evidence of bisexual people’s lives and experiences. Bisexual people may experience the feeling of erasure both in mainstream society and in the LGBTQ+ community, either because they are perceived or treated as a straight person or a gay or lesbian person. This section deals with bi-erasure as well as other assumptions about identity.

Several respondents spoke directly about bi-erasure or discrimination against bisexual people:

**“I identify as bisexual, but am in an opposite-gender relationship, which can amplify the overall sense of bi-invisibility. Even though people talk about ‘LGBT’, the ‘B’ I personally feel is often forgotten. I have had people at St Mary’s... put me in a box, making assumptions because I ‘read’ as straight. I was recently in a work situation where an issue about an LGBT event came up, and it was**



**presumed that my voice was 'only that of an ally'... I did speak up in this instance to clarify, but that was slightly daunting, and there are definitely a lot of assumptions at St Mary's."**

**"I recently came out to a few people in the office and I experienced a bi-phobic comment from one colleague within seconds."**

Other respondents recalled comments assuming heterosexuality as the norm:

**"People often begin conversations with me which would assume I have a partner of the opposite sex. It's an unusual experience that until I joined St Mary's, I hadn't experienced for a long time... if they are unsure of my sexuality, [people] tend to struggle to make conversation."**

**"I have found that colleagues sometimes refer to my partner as my 'friend', or question whether people date me 'as' my gender."**

In addition to the comment above, there were comments from respondents who faced incorrect assumptions about their gender:

**"I am not transgender, but have occasionally been misgendered by staff outside of my department."**

### Fear and worry

Another theme that was raised throughout the survey's open text responses was fear and worry. As was covered in the "Being Out" theme, several respondents spoke about being fearful to come out at work, whether because of the University's Catholic identity, or fear of being discriminated against/excluded because of their sexual orientation/gender identity.

One respondent who identifies as LGBTQ+ shared they were **"very wary"** when they first joined St Mary's as to whether it would "truly be an inclusive environment" or whether inclusion was "just lip-service because of legal obligations." However, this respondent shared that inclusion has not been an issue for them personally.

Another respondent spoke about fear in relation to the University's willingness to openly support LGBTQ+ staff – namely identifying institutional reluctance to be "more publicly supportive and inclusive" of the LGBTQ+ community for **"fear of upsetting some of our investors and/or target market."**

Another way this theme emerged in the qualitative data correlated to "Reporting and Discrimination," where several respondents shared worry in reporting more 'micro' discrimination or comments for colleagues, for fear those incidents might be seen as not explicit or important enough by the university.

For respondents who do not identify as LGBTQ+, one spoke about being fearful of offending LGBTQ+ colleagues or saying the 'wrong thing' when discussing issues specific to the LGBTQ+ community.

### Discrimination & reporting

The theme addressed most often in the data was Discrimination and Reporting, with 29 references in the survey free text responses. In terms of experiencing discrimination, three respondents shared they had not (though two of those respondents did not identify as LGBTQ+, and the one LGBTQ+ respondent noted that they are "very lucky" to have not experienced discrimination). Conversely, one respondent who identified as LGBTQ+ shared they didn't come out at work for fear of "laddish banter" and the potential of being excluded based on their sexuality. Another respondent did not disclose their sexual orientation or gender identity in the survey due to extreme fear of discrimination for answering questions candidly in this anonymous survey. They shared,

**"I can't say this in case you'll be able to work out who I am - that's how fearful I am of discrimination at St Mary's. \*Every\* LGBTQI+ person I know who works there feels the same. We're either forgotten, feared or fetishised. It's awful."**

A subtheme within Discrimination and Reporting was comments/jokes made in the workplace that were homophobic, biphobic, and/or transphobic in nature. Several respondents (both those who identify as LGBTQ+ and those who do not) reported hearing or experiencing these types of comments, both in public and private spaces on campus. These comments were made by colleagues, senior leadership, and students. One respondent shared,

**“I've been very disappointed by two instances of LGBTQ-related discrimination at work. The first was a comment a very senior colleague made about gay men. It was repeated to me by a gay colleague who was there when the comment was made. He was upset but didn't feel comfortable taking it further, even anonymously.”**

Another respondent shared an experience involving preferred pronouns, where they witnessed colleagues “ignore/make fun of” another colleague’s preferred pronouns when that colleague was present.

As for reporting such incidents, five respondents shared they would feel comfortable reporting – although only one of those respondents identified as LGBTQ+. One of those respondents shared,

**“If I did experience it at St Mary's I would feel confident in reporting it, as I know that I would have the full support of my line manager and colleagues. Obviously this could change depending on the personnel in my department.”**

Conversely, four respondents who all identified as LGBTQ+ shared they would not feel comfortable reporting for a variety of reasons, including fear that incidents are too ‘micro’ or perhaps not ‘clear’ enough, and fear of reporting on a line manager or more senior staff member.

### Education & awareness

Another theme that emerged in the qualitative responses was Education & Awareness. Five respondents touched on this theme, two identifying as LGBTQ+, and three who preferred not to say, all of whom spoke about the need to increase education and awareness of LGBTQ+ awareness and allyship at St Mary's. Below, please find a few relevant quotes from these respondents:

**“I feel confident that my colleagues always refer to transgender students and staff with the correct gender pronouns-- I think it varies across the university, more awareness/ confidence raising can be done regarding this.”**

**“I would say that most colleagues are sensitive and well meaning, but not always fully informed.”**

**“I do believe we need to do more around bystander training, allies training and ensuring that our university is a safe space for all staff and students.”**

### Management and leadership

Thirteen respondents made comments about the University’s leadership or about their own managers. Some comments were positive, showing the impact that individual line managers can have on a staff member’s perception of having an inclusive employer, and even their ability to be out at work:

**“I am out at work. I have a very supportive and inclusive team and managers.”**

Other respondents specifically noted the absence of discrimination from their current managers:

**“My line manager and team don't treat me any differently because of my sexual orientation, and I can talk comfortably about my relationships in the same way that my straight colleagues do.”**

Indeed, three respondents contrasted their experiences with previous managers, suggesting that freedom from discrimination in the management relationship may be a temporary “perk” rather than widespread practice:

**“[I] feel that my current line manager would take action if presented with discrimination, which hasn’t always been the case.”**

**“I now have an excellent line manager, but my former line manager made comments that I would deem microaggressions and I definitely didn't feel I could report this because (a) they were 'micro' and therefore hard to call out and (b) the power imbalance made it especially difficult.”**

**“If I did experience [discrimination] at St Mary's I would feel confident in reporting it, as I know that I would have the full support of my line manager and colleagues. Obviously this could change depending on the personnel in my department. Sadly previous experiences have taught me not to take anything for granted, and relatively small changes in the culture of an organisation can have an enormous impact.”**

Meanwhile, one respondent reported a difficult relationship with their manager due to LGBTQ+ issues, showing the negative consequences LGBTQ+ staff can face for reporting discrimination:

**“I have been strongly criticised by my line manager for raising incidents of homophobic or transphobic microaggressions.”**

The university’s senior leadership, both past and present, was a common theme for a large number of respondents. Only one respondent made a positive comment in this regard:

**“HR leadership seems to be very supportive of the LGBTQ+ community at SMU, so I would feel comfortable reporting.”**

Others raised discriminatory comments made by senior members of staff, one noting that the experience had caused them to choose not to disclose their LGBTQ+ identity in the workplace:

**“I'm not out at work because I was once told about a high-level conversation that two senior managers had about me where one asked if I was 'alright' and the other answered 'Yes, they're married'. I realised that there is little understanding or respect for diversity at St Mary's. I put this down to the Catholic nature of the university.”**

**“I've been very disappointed by... LGBTQ-related discrimination at work. [There] was a comment a very senior colleague made about gay men. It was repeated to me by a gay colleague who was there when the comment was made. He was upset but didn't feel comfortable taking it further, even anonymously.”**

A third respondent noted how comments made by senior colleagues had led to homophobia between other staff:

**“I was between two members of staff (unaware of my sexuality) who actively discussed a senior associate of the University having said LGBT issues are an issue for after this life, and the other described the whole situation as a 'real pain in the arse' (pun was intentional, followed by lots of laughter).”**

Four respondents questioned the commitment of senior leadership (past and present) to equality for LGBTQ+ people, such as one acknowledging the University’s strategic orientation:

**“In the past there has been an element of 'Don't ask don't tell' and a reluctance to be more publicly supportive and inclusive of the LGBTQ+ community for fear of upsetting some of our (i) investors and/or (ii) target market.”**

“Don't Ask, Don't Tell” was a discriminatory policy of the United States government from 1993 to 2011, barring openly gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people from military service, while prohibiting military personnel from discriminating against or harassing closeted service members or applicants. 13,650 members of the armed forces were discharged due to LGBTQ+ status under the policy. In this sense the above comment can be understood as one about a fear of job loss.

Another respondent expressed their perception of a limitation on advancement at St Mary’s:

**“With St Mary's it feels like a silent discrimination and a glass ceiling for LGBTQ+ members of staff. It would be hard to assert that outward discrimination happens, but micro-aggressions do, although these can be small it adds up to a lack of general support, openness and encouragement. Lack of diversity in senior management makes it feel like progressing to this type of position would not be possible at St Mary's for an LGBTQ+ person. A sense of low-level hostility from previous management re-enforces this.”**

A third respondent questioned whether the University was less committed to LGBTQ+ equality than other areas of equality, diversity, and inclusion, suggesting that for LGBTQ+ staff, there may not be a perception that stated commitment to equality applies to them:

**“There doesn't seem to be clearly stated support from SLT in the way that there are for other areas of inclusion (e.g. women or race) for instance and it's really hard to tell where LGBTQ+ people stand as a result. The support from St Mary's is ambiguous at best; it's not outright hostile, but it's really unclear if senior leadership support inclusion for LGBTQ+ people and how far that support extends.”**

Finally, one respondent noted the difference in culture at St Mary's compared to other British universities:

**“In terms of the student experience, I am angry at the lack of visibility around gender, sexuality, and sex issues. I was at university a decade+ ago and the campus was plastered with different rainbow flags, posters about visibly queer events, etc. There were free condoms, free STD screenings in the SU and on club nights, posters in the toilets about keeping safe when out - talking openly about drink spiking (something I experienced three times at university, between myself and female friends), getting home safely, being followed, groped, cat-called, etc. Recently students have confided around issues of sexual assault saying there is no visible campaign/support around this - just some information on SIMMSpace which you have to go looking for. There is, I feel, a sense that 'the university' doesn't want to risk controversy and talk openly about LGBT issues/anything to do with sex. This is a serious problem when you look at various statistics amongst university students. A more open conversation - one that doesn't fear differing opinions - is really needed.”**

### Catholic ethos

Seven respondents explicitly referenced the Catholic ethos of the University in their responses to the survey. One respondent, who did not identify as LGBTQ+, suggested that Catholic ethos may be a justification for not being inclusive of transgender members of the St Mary's community:

**“There is a tension between Catholic teaching and trans-gender rights. I'm unsure whether the teachings of Christ overrule or don't overrule the politically correct way of referring to students in the context of the university.”**

Multiple respondents expressed worries about the University's catholic ethos, and a tension between that ethos and one of inclusivity, with one describing the university as **"owned and governed by an organisation which is blatantly... sexist and homophobic"** and another saying they were **"fearful of being too out"** due to **"the senior leadership team and the views of the Catholic church and its treatment of LGBT people historically and currently in many regions of the world."**

One respondent raised concerns about specific practices, such as the common practice in the UK HE sector of distributing or retailing condoms to students:

**“For me the challenge can often be our Catholic identity, although most staff and students are not Catholic. I am frustrated... that we cannot hold same sex weddings... cannot provide contraceptives to students etc.”**

Several respondents expressed that being LGBTQ+ or promoting LGBTQ+ inclusion did not feel welcomed by the University:

**“Being LGBTQ+ often feels like it isn't compatible with the Catholic faith 'ethos' on site... the feeling is, it is ok to be LGBTQ+ but just don't advertise it widely, or put it on the external website.”**

**“I think there’s a nervousness about LGBTQ+ because of the Catholic ethos of the university.”**

One respondent also recalled how support for LGBTQ+ students is often done unofficially by LGBTQ+ staff, outside of the University’s support services.

**“In the past I have had LGBTQ+ students reach out to me because they haven’t felt safe, valued or supported. Whilst section 28 ended in 2003, at St Mary’s there isn’t sexual health resources (particularly for LGBTQ+ people) apparently and openly available. The university should think about the parity of student experience in comparison to other HE/FE providers. People do not apply to St Mary’s simply because it is a Catholic university and sexuality should be... important to openly accept. It doesn’t diminish the Catholic faith by giving people choice and support.”**

### Terminology and methodology

Some respondents expressed concerns about using the wrong wording when referring to LGBTQ+ people:

**“I don’t always feel comfortable talking about LGBTQ+ issues for the fear of using the wrong terminology and I’m not sure how colleagues from the LGBTQ+ community would respond to mistakes and wrong use of language etc.”**

**“There is probably hesitance about asking what someone’s pronouns are and how to do that sensitively.”**

This report recommends that efforts are continued to raise awareness about the LGBTQ+ community, as well as empowering students and staff to (for example) express their correct gender pronouns proactively if they wish.

Respondents were not asked closed questions about other protected characteristics such as race. However, respondents were asked “Do you wish to add any other comments about how you identify?”, adding that “this is a qualitative study and we will use [this information] ... to contextualise your responses in an intersectional way.” There were a small number of responses, including one with concerns about making themselves personally identifiable.

However, an intersectional analysis of the diversity of LGBTQ+ experiences has largely not been possible from this survey, and reviewing this aspect of methodology will be a key improvement for future iterations of the survey.

One respondent, indicating their gender as “Non-Binary/Other”, also reacted to the terminology used in the survey:

**“I identify under non-binary as genderfluid, and queer as these are concepts that shift for me, fully capturing them in boxes is hard, but thank you for this box!”**

It is hoped that the practice used in this survey for asking about gender, sexual orientation, and gender reassignment will be a model for colleagues throughout the university. A template of these questions is available in Appendix C.

### Progress

Thought many respondents spoke positively about progress at St Mary’s in supporting the LGBTQ+ community, one respondent who identifies as LGBTQ+ described there being little progress at St Mary’s as compared to other higher education institutions (HEIs). They shared:

**“Whilst section 28 ended in 2003, at St Mary’s there isn’t sexual health resources (particularly for LGBTQ+ people) apparently and openly available. The university should think about the parity of student experience in comparison to other HE/FE providers. People do not apply to St Mary’s simply because it is a catholic university and sexuality should be as important to openly accept as**

**different races and faiths are. It doesn't diminish the Catholic faith by giving people choice and support.”**

As for forward progress for St Mary's, one respondent who identified as LGBTQ+ noted, **“St Mary's has made significant changes recently and has become much more welcoming.”**

Two respondents who did not identify as LGBTQ+ described progress in the University's awareness and support of the LGBTQ+ community. One of these respondents noted their department is “very aware of the LGBTQ+ community” and though there is “still a long way to go, good steps are being taken in this area.” The second of these respondents shared that they have seen positive steps more recently, though they wonder if they would feel differently if they worked in a different department or identified as LGBTQ+ themselves.

## Appendix C – Survey Questions

Respondents were asked to select “Agree”, “Tend to Agree”, “Neither Agree nor Disagree”, “Tend to Disagree”, or “Disagree” in response to the following statements:

- I feel valued by St Mary's.
- I would recommend St Mary's to a friend as a good place to work.
- My line manager respects and values me.
- Generally I am happy at work.
- I often think about leaving the university.
- I am comfortable talking with work colleagues about my partner and dating.
- My colleagues always refer to me with the correct gender pronouns.
- I feel confident that my colleagues always refer to transgender students and staff with the correct gender pronouns.

A free text field was provided with the heading “We invite you to give more context about your decisions, including whether you consider yourself out at work.” There were then two more statements with the same options to indicate agreement:

- I have seen or experienced LGBTQ-related discrimination at work.
- I would feel confident reporting LGBTQ-related discrimination to my employer.

Further free text fields:

- We invite you to give more context to your answers about discrimination below.
- We invite you to share anything else about your experiences at work below.

The personal details section was as follows:

- Gender: respondents could choose “Female”, “Male”, “Non-Binary/Other”, or “Prefer not to say.”
- Sexual orientation: respondents could choose “Gay”, “Lesbian”, “Bisexual”, “Queer”, “Straight”, “Prefer not to say”, or use a free text field labelled “Other”.
- Respondents could answer “Yes”, “No”, or “Prefer not to say” to the question “Do you identify with the same gender you were assigned at birth?”
- A free text field was provided with the heading “Do you wish to add any other comments about how you identify?” and a gloss: “We haven't asked about other protected characteristics in this survey, but please include any information you consider important to your identity here. This is a qualitative study and we will use it to contextualise your responses in an intersectional way.”