St Mary's
University
Twickenham
London

St Mary's University

LGBTQ+ Project Plan

Project Plan

June 2023 – July 2025
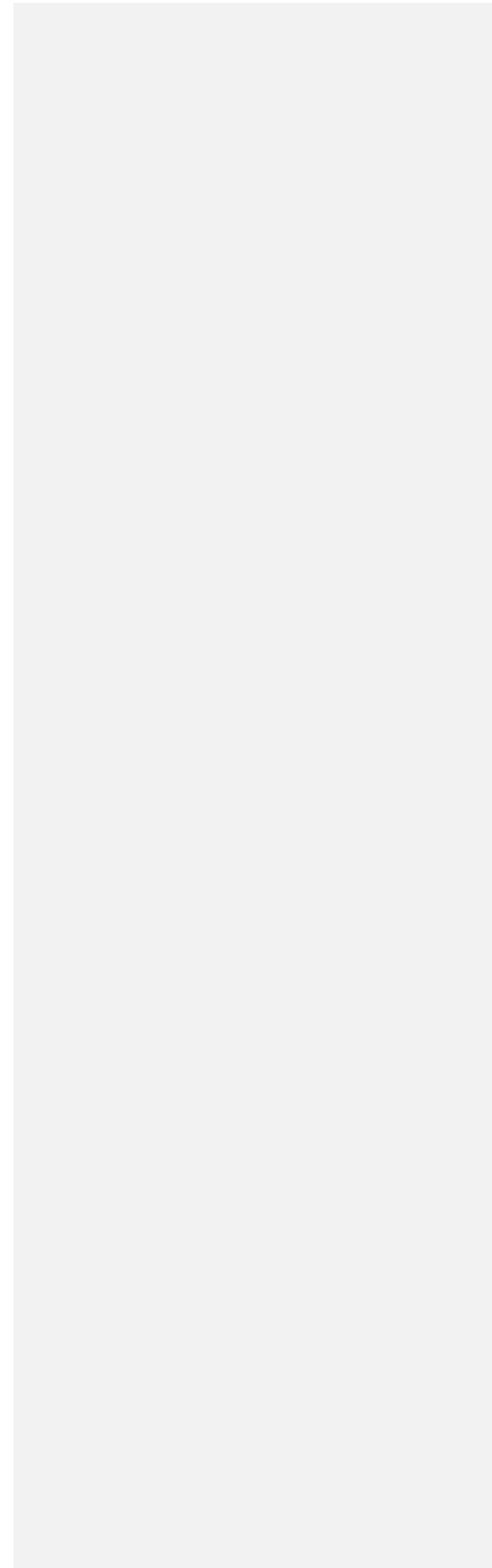
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1.0 Purpose

St Mary's is a Catholic University seeking to develop the whole person and empower our community to have a positive impact on the world. The purpose of this project is to enable St Mary's University to create and promote an inclusive environment for all staff and students, including those who identify as LBGTQ+. Creating and promoting this inclusive environment will be accomplished by undertaking actions to address issues that arose from the Pulse Survey undertaken by University staff in 2023, and undertaking additional work to support the student community.

2.0 Aims

The specific aims of this project are as follows:

- Create an institution-wide approach to improving LGBTQ+ Inclusion for St Mary's staff and students, ensuring values of Inclusion and Respect are lived out for all LGBTQ+ community members

- Create a formal framework for identifying barriers to LGBTQ+ Inclusion for St Mary's staff and students; as well as prioritising and implementing actions to remove or mitigate those barriers

- Centrally record and track actions to improve LGBTQ+ Inclusion for St Mary's staff and students

- Bolster culture of LGBTQ+ Inclusion across St Mary's community, demonstrating institutional and leadership commitment, and supporting the LGBTQ+ Staff Network & LGBT Society's actions to raise awareness of lived experience

3.0 Proposed Membership of the Project Team

The intention is to keep the membership of the project team to a maximum of 16 people. The membership of the LGBTQ+ Inclusion Project Team is derived primarily by role, with roles selected in accordance with those who hold responsibility for key areas that impact staff and student LGBTQ+ inclusion. Membership will be reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure the group reflects a diverse cross-section of individuals and experiences, while remaining strategic in nature. The Co-Chairs will also work closely with the chairs of the LGBTQ+ Staff Network and LGBT Student Society on an ongoing basis to ensure lived experience is at the forefront of this project.

In addition to members from St Mary's staff and student populations, the LGBTQ+ Inclusion Project will include members external to the University who will serve as 'critical friends' throughout the project. These external individuals will hold the university accountable for progressing at pace on actions identified by the project team.

Proposed Membership

- **Members AY 23/24**

- *Staff-Related Members:*
- Staff LGBTQ+ Project Chair   Rob Johnson
- Staff LGBTQ+ Network Chair(s)   Rob Johnson
- Head of EDI (and EDI Coordinator)   TBC and Sam Cross
- Lead HR Business Partner (HR)   Claire Hierlehy-Brown
- Head of External Relations (or nominee)   Sam Yarnold
- Professional Services Staff representative   Haley Anson-Placido
- Academic Staff representative   Megan Hersey
- Charter Representatives
    - Race Equality Charter   Melina Healy
    - Athena Swan   Jane Chambers
    - Disability Confident   ?
- *Student-Related Members:*
- Student LGBTQ+ Project Chair   Caitlin Finn
- LGBT Pride Student Society President   Angel Verbeek
- Head of Student Services (or nominee)   Nicola Mills
- Head of Registry (or nominee)
- Student Life President (SU)   Caitlin Finn
- Campaigns and Insights Coordinator (SU)   Hayden Tyler
- Student Engagement Manager (WP)   Elizabeth Parker
- Inclusion VP   Beth Kelly

*Membership will also include our (five) LGBT Foundation Champions, if not already represented in the list above

- Jo Blunden

- o Lorna Piper
- o Jordan Baker
- o Helen Duncan
- o Gopi Pajwani

4.0 Programme of Work

The following work has already been undertaken and need to be incorporated into the project:

- Production of the Staff Pulse Survey in 2022

- Consultation with LGBTQ+ Staff Network, LGBT Society, and Student Experts Panel to agree Terms of Reference (including membership) for the working group; Recruitment of leadership sponsor (UEC member) and Project Co-Chairs

- Approval and buy-in of the project outline and Terms of Reference from the VC

The suggested programme of work from Summer 2023 to November 2023 is as follows:

- Recruitment of working group members in accordance with the Terms of Reference

- Creation and agreement of project plan including commitments

- Creation of staff and student workstreams within the project team

- Development and delivery of the LGBTQ+ Student Survey (Autumn 2023)

- Compilation of a detailed list of activities to enhance/improve LGBTQ+ Inclusion for staff and students previously undertaken

- Analysis of the data from the LGBTQ+ Student Survey and related data from Staff Pulse Survey and the 2023 Staff Engagement survey

The suggested programme of work from November 2023 to July 2024 is as follows:

- Using the analysis of the data and categories such as Policy, the Employee Life Cycle, the Student Experience, Role Models, Monitoring, Training and Senior Leadership, create an initial list of issues to be addressed in relation to LGBTQ+ staff and students

- Creation and prioritisation of a SMART action plan for 2023-24 and beyond, with appropriate timescales and action owners

The suggested programme of work from Summer 2024 to July 2025 is as follows:

- Working groups and other relevant people deliver on the action plan, monitor progress and supplement with any additional actions as necessary

- Progress made in 2023-24 reviewed and reported to relevant committees and groups

- Progress report published to staff and students and via the website, outlining progress made and areas still to address in 2024-25
- Update of action plan for 2024-25 produced

5.0 Summary Timescales

The proposed timescales for the project are given below:

- Finalise TOR and resourcing: April – June 2023
- Distribute TOR to proposed membership and set up Project Team: June – July 2023
- Finalise Project Team meetings for 2023-24: July 2023
- Review existing data and identify gaps: July – September 2023
- Regular Project Team Meetings (6-8 weekly): September 2023 - July 2024
- Identification of Working Groups: September 2023
- Undertake data collection/student survey: September 2022
- Complete data analysis: October 2023
- Develop action plan and identify training needs: November – December 2023
- Production of first annual review: July 2024
- Agree amended action plan and ongoing work for 2024-25: July 2024

6.0 Project Deliverables

There are a number of existing requirements – these will be supplemented after further data collection and analysis:

Partnerships

- Establishment of relationships and continued working with key stakeholders (including senior managers) across St Mary's to deliver on the project

On Campus

- Recognition of key dates in the LGBTQ+ calendar, including Pride, LGBTQ+ history month and trans day of remembrance.
- Display of flags relating the LGBTQ+ people to be available at key times (as above) and consideration given to a permanent display of the Progress Pride flag.

Support Services

- Development of a support service to report issues relating to LGBTQ+ discrimination and offer signposting, support and guidance for staff and students, building on work already in train to meet OfS Statement of Expectations for preventing and addressing harassment and sexual misconduct affecting students in higher education.
- Evaluation of the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) and staff and student wellbeing initiatives to review their ability to meet the needs of LGBTQ+ people.
- Following introduction of a Trans Equality Policy for staff to develop a Trans Equality Policy to provide an appropriate framework for trans and non-binary students.
- Review of resourcing of LBGTQ+ initiatives, including ongoing support for the project within the EDI team.
- Review of training requirements in relation to EDI issues, including LBGTQ+.

Any other key developments identified from the addition data collection and analysis and after the production of the SMART action plan.

7.0 Project Risks and Mitigation

The most obvious risk is the failure to make sufficient progress on the project as a result of lack of resourcing. The University is taking steps to guard against this by the employment of additional support within the EDI team as well as the recent appointment of the EDI Co-ordinator to support the project and other EDI initiatives. However, the consultancy support is for a limited period, and a permanent replacement for Head of Equality and Inclusion Projects will need to be in place before the end of the consultancy contract.

Consideration should also be given to putting in place contingencies if there is not sufficient support for the project, particularly from the student community. Alternative means of data collection should be identified if the survey does not deliver sufficient data to provide a realistic picture of the issues for LGBTQ+ students at St Mary's.

Commented [JN2]: Is it worth suggesting some illustrative examples as to what these could be?

8.0 Communication Systems

A number of communication channels will need to be established and maintained to ensure the effective delivery of the project.

a) **Regular Project Team Meetings**

   The Project Team will be required to meet on a 6-8 week basis from the start of the academic year 2023-24 until the end of the academic year 2024-25. They will also be required to participate in working groups focusing specifically on staff or student issues, so appropriate workload allocation should be agreed for those participating in the project, in recognition of the significant commitment being made.

b) **Teams**

   As there is a significant amount of data and other information required to deliver on the project objectives, it is very helpful to ensure that all resources and information are put into a central location. This provides a "one-stop shop" for essential data and enables effective sharing of information by project team members and within the wider University. It is essential that everyone knows where to find key information and has access to training and other relevant resources.

c) **LGBTQ+ web page**

A dedicated webpage will signal key messages about St Mary's commitment to the LGBTQ+ community as well to potential staff and students and a wider audience about its commitment to equality. This needs to be regularly updated with initiatives and activities relating to LGBTQ+ activities and initiatives. There should be a key individual or group responsible for this and wider communications about the project.

d) **Departmental Briefings/Open Meetings/consultation on action plan**

One of the key features of a successful project of this kind is consultation and communication with a wide range of staff and students. This will be achieved by means of meetings both within departments and those which are open to all staff, where people can ask questions and receive information about the project.

e) **Regular Staff Newsletters/Bulletins**

Regular updates in conjunction with the Communications team should be given to staff and students spreading the word about the LBGTQ+ project and gaining engagement and feedback from those not directly involved in the process. These can include the following:

– Quotes from members of UEC in support of the programme
– Links between the LBGTQ+ project and St Mary's core values and strategic objectives
– Reasons for St Mary's deciding to undertake the LBGTQ+ project.
– Important activities and events
– Staff profiles
– Case Studies
– Key achievements
– Commentary on progress

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