

# LGBTQ+ Equality Implementation Group

25 May 2023, 10:00 – 11:30

MS Teams Online Meeting

Minutes

## Attendees

More than the minimum number of attendees required were present. The meeting was quorate.

## Introductions

New Interim Director of EDI introduced to the group, outlining her focus on supporting the EDI team and providing strategic oversight until a permanent Director is appointed.

## Minutes and actions from previous meeting

Minutes from March's meeting were approved.

**Action: EDI team to upload minutes to LEIG (LGBTQ+ Equality Implementation Group) webpage.**

## Updates and reflections from EDI Committee meeting

LEIG Manager announced that the EDI Committee (EDIC) had approved of the LGBTQ+ equality action plan. This gives the plan institutional weight and commitment.

Prior to EDIC, the LEIG Manager had authored a paper to support the action plan, and in this meeting expressed thanks to Prof Anthony Smith and Noel Caliste for their sponsorship of the paper as well as Dr Rebecca Jennings for attending EDIC to offer support of the action plan, field questions, and champion the work of LEIG and LESG.

LEIG Manager also thanked the new EDI Director for supporting LEIG's decision to table the paper at EDIC this May, rather than delaying to a later meeting.

Other reflections from the EDIC meeting included that the Provost was very positive about this work and thanked LEIG. It was also noted that Provost acknowledged that it was unsustainable to rely on the good will of staff volunteers to carry out EDI work, and said it was important that EDI have increased resource. Some LEIG members expressed uncertainty as to whether Provost's feelings on this would translate into

action, noting that there is no information regarding who within the EDI team will keep the action plan going once the LEIG Manager's role comes to an end in November.

## Discussion of how best to launch the action plan

The LEIG Manager explained that he would develop a communications strategy to launch the action plan to the wider university. LEIG members agreed this was a good idea given the sensitivities about UCL's approach to LGBTQ+ inclusion and EDI generally.

EDI Director and LEIG Manager assured the group that now EDIC, which was chaired by Provost, have endorsed the action plan, no further sign-off is needed, but the plan should be circulated to demonstrate LEIG's progress and priorities. Members said that it was important for the Provost to advocate for this plan publicly to demonstrate his support.

Chairs noted that in these communications, it's important to be honest about the reality for LGBTQ+ staff and students at UCL. This will avoid pinkwashing, demonstrate integrity, and ensure LEIG's work is celebrated authentically.

**Action: LEIG Manager to draft a comms strategy ahead of July meeting.**

## LGBTQ+ staff experience project

The lead researcher for the LESG/qUCL research piece mentioned that paper will highlight some negative and challenging experiences faced by LGBTQ+ staff. This will require sensitive communications, and LEIG members agreed that all should be prepared to offer wellbeing support to the lead researcher given the emotional labour involved in conducting and launching this research. LEIG Manager suggested that criticisms of this research could be mitigated by having a senior academic champion (or indeed several) to sponsor and celebrate this piece of research.

## Priorities for the rest of LEIG's timespan

Other than the comms strategy, the LEIG Manager discussed three priority actions: auditing EDI webpages and guidance; training; and a self-audit process.

Regarding the webpage audit, the LEIG Manager may require some volunteers to support with suggesting new content.

Regarding training, LEIG Manager would ambitiously aim to create a first draft of an LGBTQ+ allyship training by November 2023 that could be uploaded to HR's central training platform. This would be self-led and it may not be as detailed as some may like; however, it would offer a strong foundational knowledge, be more sustainable

than in-person training, would reach many staff members, and be resource-effective. It would also be a strong springboard for any future LGBTQ+ trainings.

Regarding the self-audit, there are various ways UCL can be held accountable, and more information should be available in the coming months with the new Heads of EDI providing more structure and governance over this work.

To obtain impartiality and the external scrutiny, an annual review of LGBTQ+ actions could be written up, with feedback being provided by LESG, the Students' Union, critical friends, and potentially other universities (with whom the LEIG Manager has good relationships). It might even be possible to develop a staff experience survey using Out@UCL which could help the EDI team assess priorities and obtain data to make a case for positive change.

Chairs mentioned that the team need to consider what is sustainable once LEIG ends as resource will be limited. Some members expressed approval of a survey, saying that it would be relatively easy to run.

## Safe spaces conversation

Envoy for LGBTQ+ Equality and Gender Equality are considering engaging with an external facilitator who could come to UCL and offer guidance on handling difficult conversations. The aim of this would be to align 'Disagreeing Well' with EDI.

**Action:** all to review and feedback on this proposal to Envoys

## AOB – new dates and socials

Some members explained that mid-September would be unideal for the next meeting due to preparation for Term 1. A slightly earlier LEIG meeting would be preferred.

**Action: LEIG Manager to move 18 September meeting to earlier by a couple of weeks.**

**Action: LEIG Manager to set up separate meeting with LEIG chairs, Head of EDI, and critical friends to debrief.**