

Equality highlights

2013 - 2014

*Celebrating equality and diversity
at Sheffield Hallam University*



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Equality Highlights

staff networks and forums



Sheffield Hallam encourages staff to get involved in equality staff networks which aim to provide a safe and supportive environment where staff can engage in activities that promote diversity and inclusion and drive positive change. Sheffield Hallam currently supports three staff networks:

Catalyst

is the Ethnic Minority staff network group at Sheffield Hallam. The group is relatively new and is thinking about its role and activities so this is a great opportunity for you to influence its development.

Disabled Staff Forum

is the disability staff forum group at Sheffield Hallam. The group meets every couple of months and members are also involved with the Facilities Directorate's Disability Consultation Group. The Forum is currently reviewing its role and remit so this is a great opportunity to get involved in shaping its future.

SIGNAL

is the LGBT staff network group at Sheffield Hallam. The group meets every first Tuesday of the month to plan activities and get together. They have a lot of plans for this year so it's a great time to get involved. Check them out on Facebook and Twitter.

For more information or if you'd like to join any of the groups then please email Trish Elwis in the Equality and Diversity Team on p.elwis@shu.ac.uk or call 0114 225 6287.

Breaking down barriers, *supporting all.*

We have a problem in this country with the significant lack of women in more senior positions in organisations in the private and public sector. But there are some signs of progress: the recent Davies Review Annual Report 2014 looked at the number of women on boards and found that women's representation on FTSE 100 boards now stands at 20.7%, up from 12.5% in 2011. Whilst this percentage is still startlingly low, it does offer some indication that change for the better is happening.



32% of all members of HE governing bodies are women. Here at Sheffield Hallam, it is, comparably, even better news, with those governors disclosing their sex, there was a 44% representation of females on our board of governors in 2013-14.

However, as with others in our sector, the relative scarcity of women in other senior executive positions is where challenges lie, as organisations grapple with unconscious bias and other barriers in the career pipeline for women.

I am pleased that this year our human resources team designed a development programme on unconscious bias. Three pilots were delivered in March to 48 delegates including the Equality and Diversity Board. The University was also involved with the launch of Aurora, a nationwide women's leadership development initiative from the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education.

As this report shows, the University has achieved a great deal, but we are still faced with challenges to ensure we create a working and learning environment where diversity is celebrated and everyone is treated fairly, regardless of gender, disability, ethnic origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation, marital status, age, or nationality.

The University has an Equality and Diversity Team responsible for shaping and implementing our equality and diversity commitments. However, overriding responsibility for equality and diversity lies with everybody in the University. This report shines a light on some of our key achievements, projects and individuals in the 2013/14 academic years, initiatives and individuals making a real difference to the lives of students and staff alike. As we start a new academic year, I hope you are inspired to get involved with the activities, community support projects, and forums taking place across the University in 2014/15.

This edition

News *p.4 - 15*

Here we report on some of the activities related to equality and diversity in the 2013/14 academic year. We've tried to pick out stories that reflect the successes we've had, but also our plans for how to respond to the challenges that lie ahead.

Role models *p.16 - 19*

EQ 2013/14 highlights four student role models, each with a passion for their work, some very active in their communities, freely giving their time and talents to benefit others, all with a passion infectious to others.



University takes part in new leadership initiative for women

Sheffield Hallam is one of the Universities involved in the launch of Aurora, a nationwide women's leadership development initiative from the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education.

Started in autumn 2013, the initiative, which currently has 13 participants from the University enrolled from across many faculties and directorates, encourages women in academic and professional roles to think of themselves as leaders, to develop leadership skills, and to help institutions maximise the potential of these women.

The initiative is a response by the Leadership Foundation to its own research which shows that women are under-represented in senior leadership positions internationally.

The first workshop on Identity, Impact & Voice took place in Manchester at the beginning of 2014 and all 13 participants attended alongside two senior staff from within the University, who attended as role models. Over 200 women participants heard talks from Jackie Arnold, an Associate of the Leadership Foundation and Dianne Willcocks, Leadership Consultant and former Vice-Chancellor at York St John University. Other formal events have followed.

As well as providing inspirational events, the scheme at Sheffield Hallam also matches the participants with mentors and provides workshop sessions for them to socialise and develop in partnership.



'Women mean business in Sheffield' says professor

Women in Sheffield are paid on average 9.6% less than their male counterparts doing work of equal value, a Sheffield Hallam University professor has found.

Dr Helen Richardson, professor of gender and organisation at Sheffield Business School has addressed the need for the city to recognise and value its talented women in her inaugural professorial lecture.

Her research has looked at economic activity in the South Yorkshire region from the beginning of the recession and found that despite female students outperforming men, they are still likely to receive £3000 less as a starting salary.

By 2010, male unemployment rates in Sheffield had levelled off at 7.4% but for women there has

been a steady and continuing rise, from 4.5% in 2010 to 6.8% in 2013.

Dr Richardson's research also showed there were significant differences in occupation for men and women. Her analysis of the UK Quarterly Labour Force Survey (LFS) found that the majority of the 6820 women in South Yorkshire that were surveyed had roles in administration, education, health and hospitality sectors while the 6322 men mainly worked in manufacturing, construction, transport and communications.

While there are equal numbers of men and women employed in the region, over twice as many women work in the public sector than men.

Dr Richardson, said:

"Women are creative and talented entrepreneurs and companies with the most women in leadership outperform those with the fewest."



National Women in Engineering Day at SHU

23 June 2014 marked the first ever National Women in Engineering Day and 40 girls from local schools took part in a series of Tour de France-themed activities, in which they were able to find out about cycling technology, develop and test designs for a cycling helmet, and meet women working and studying engineering.

Denise Eaton, project manager for the Women in SET team said: "Engineering is all about creativity and problem-solving. It's an exciting and diverse subject that has lots of career options, and events like this can really help to widen horizons. One of the girls who attended told us that she enjoyed learning how engineering has a huge impact on everyday life. Through events like these we are trying to help these girls see all the possibilities open to them." See the Women in Science Engineering and Technology team (WiSET), website for more information. SHU students also took advantage of this national initiative to launch a society which aims to support women and girls to consider non-traditional careers.

The new Women in Engineering and Maths society offers networking and mentoring opportunities, and engages in schools and colleges outreach. All are welcome to join. Contact Saj Parveen to find out more s.parveen@shu.ac.uk



Gender gap in technical apprenticeship take-up

A major new study into 'technical' apprenticeship provision in England and Wales shows that take up amongst women remains low with schools often failing to point out opportunities to female pupils.

The Sheffield Hallam University-led study says more women need to be encouraged to take up technical apprenticeships in careers such as engineering and construction, although the creative and media sector is meeting employment and training demands head-on.

The findings back up figures released by the National Apprenticeship Service which suggest

that, although the number of women taking apprenticeships has more than doubled in the past decade, they make up only two per cent of technical apprenticeship starts in the construction, electro-technical and vehicle maintenance and repair sectors, and less than four per cent in engineering and driving vehicles sectors.

The study was carried out by Sheffield Hallam's Centre for Education and Inclusion Research, alongside the University of Warwick, for the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS).

RAF wins diversity award with help from Hallam

In spring 2014, the RAF won Opportunity Now's 'Inspiring the Workforce of the Future' Award for a scheme that Women in Science, Engineering and Technology (WiSET) team helped to develop and support.



The award recognised years of work running an annual residential STEM work placement programme for Year 10 girls. During the week they are tasked with developing team solutions to intellectual and physical challenges and complete a British Science Association Silver CREST Award.

The programme hopes to engage early with girls to challenge occupational stereotyping. WiSET partner RAF Squadron Leader Glyn Dean was further recognised in June 2014 in the annual World Pride Power List as an Ally.

WiSET team Project Manager, Jill Collins (centre) with members of the award-winning RAF team including Squadron Leader Glyn Dean



Student wins royal award

An inspirational social work student who has rebuilt her life after battling depression has been named the Prince's Trust Young Achiever of the Year at a star-studded ceremony.

Carly Williams, 21, who is a first-year student at Sheffield Hallam University, was given the royal award after overcoming a difficult childhood that led her to depression and sought comfort in alcohol.

Carly had spent 13 years in care since the age of five with many of her placements breaking down, but when she was 13, she finally got the support and stability she needed.

Five years later, Carly decided to live on her own but soon found herself shut away from the world and she sank into depression, turned to drink and quit work and the educational opportunities she had.

After seeking support from Team, a Prince's Trust programme that gives unemployed young people the skills and confidence to find work, Carly is now studying for a BA honours degree in Social Work.

"Studying social work has opened my eyes to the challenges that social workers face, and it's made me even more determined to succeed in the profession."

Carly was announced the winner of her four-strong category at the Prince's Trust and Samsung Celebrate Success Awards held at London's Leicester Square Odeon. The royal event was hosted by entertainment duo, Ant and Dec and Carly and her fellow finalists appeared on ITV's This Morning.

Leading the way to increase autism support in Sheffield



A Sheffield Hallam University lecturer is helping to pioneer a transformation of services to support thousands of adults with autism in the city - which could provide a blueprint for 40 NHS Trusts nationwide to follow suit.

John Kay, who himself has Asperger's Syndrome, has helped to secure £500,000 worth of funding to allow adults in Sheffield to have access to diagnostic support for Autistic Spectrum Conditions (ASC).

Previously, the 'out-of-area' referral policy followed by the Sheffield Primary Care Trust, meant adults living in the city could not access its Asperger's Syndrome Service for autism alone and would only qualify for diagnosis and support if they had additional mental health conditions.

John said: "I used the Sheffield Asperger's service

following my diagnosis and was able to do so because I lived out of the area in Chesterfield. When I subsequently became a governor of the SHSC Trust, I was made aware of many cases in Sheffield where access to the service had been denied and that prompted me to do something about it.

"Now, thanks to the support of MPs and our partners in the NHS we have appointed a team of clinical specialists to help provide a service that can assess, diagnose, treat and support all adults with ASC and we've already had our first referrals accessing the support."

Sheffield Hallam 10/10 in Stonewall's University Guide

The 2015 edition of Gay by Degree, Stonewall's online university guide for lesbian, gay and bisexual prospective students helps prospective students choose a university that will welcome and support students. This year, SHU has evidenced it meets all of the ten checklist categories Stonewall uses to show how gay-friendly the UK's 150 universities are.

Sheffield Hallam nominated for local LGBT award

The University was in the running for a 2014 Sheffield Pride Award for its work promoting equality. The awards were a joint initiative between Sheffield Pride and the Sheffield Chamber of Commerce.

The organisers stated that Sheffield Hallam had been nominated by a sample of the local LGBT community and that the nomination highlighted the University's 'positive impact on the LGBT community as well as showing an unrelenting spirit to promote equal opportunities and diversity in their workplace and business environment in relation to sexual orientation and gender identities.'



Fun and fundraising at the Office Pinknic

Sheffield Hallam was a proud sponsor of the annual Sheffield Pinknic.

Inspired by the event, the Advice & Information team pulled together with Signal, the LGBT Staff Network to organise Hallam's first 'Office Pinknic' as a show of Sheffield Hallam's and Student Services' explicit support for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender colleagues, students and communities. Staff were challenged to enter an LGBT-themed bake-off for the chance to win a £5

Lakeland voucher, and individuals from across SLS participated. The sale of pink biscuits, rainbow muffins, and yellow cakes raised £86.84 for local charity, Sheena Amos Youth Trust. A fun morning and lots of eating was had by all. The winning entry was a blue and green lemon poppy seed cake by Advice & Information's resident baker Victoria Ishaq, and very tasty it was too!

Students investigate homophobia in sport



University students have worked with LGBT charity Sheena Amos Youth Trust (SAYiT) to lead workshops with the young people investigating issues around homophobia in sport as part of their journalism module.

To prepare for their workshops, SAYiT provided students with training to raise their awareness of the issues that young LGBT people may face in sport and in society.

SAYiT is a charity based in Sheffield which provides support and opportunities for young people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT).

The topic was a particularly timely one for students given that several high profile athletes,

such as Tom Daley, had recently 'come out' and because of debates around the ethics of participating in the Sochi Winter Olympics when the host country, Russia, had passed punitive legislation against 'homosexuality propaganda'.

'Part of the ethos of their course is linking wider social issues in sport to ordinary people's everyday experiences' states Module Leader Beth Fielding-Lloyd. 'The challenge for students here was to produce sport journalism that investigates issues that are current and newsworthy whilst also discovering how they impact on young people within their community.'

'I found the opportunity to work outside the normal university environment incredibly valuable and it was fantastic that we were given the opportunity to work with such a forward thinking and progressive organisation' said Sport, Culture and Society student Kieran Wall.



Above: photos from various career mentoring schemes sessions.

Mentoring scheme tackles LGBT issues in the workplace

A new LGBT career mentoring scheme was launched in 2013/14, alongside the main career mentoring scheme.

In addition to offering the professional benefits of the main scheme, the LGBT strand of the scheme also gave students the opportunity to discuss specific issues such as 'coming out' in the workplace, with mentors who could relate their personal experiences of being LGBT at work.

The scheme follows evidence published in 2013 by Stonewall that found that over a quarter of lesbian, gay and bisexual people are not at all open to colleagues about their sexual orientation. Furthermore, in the last five years 2.4 million people of working age have witnessed verbal homophobic bullying at work.

However the report also found that many LGBT people work in supportive workplaces and enjoy the many positive aspects of being able to be "out" at work. Many of the larger organisations in both the public and private sector, have made a massive commitment to supporting their LGBT staff.

Learn about how having an LGBT career mentor has helped student role model Matthew (p17) prepare for the decisions he will be faced with when planning his career.

European LGBT communities face barriers and bullying

A European study by Sheffield Hallam University into the barriers and bullying faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT) young people in education and employment was presented at the European Parliament in Brussels by MEP Michael Cashman.

The West Midlands MEP - Labour's human rights spokesman in Brussels - said more needs to be done to end bullying at the launch of the new Sheffield Hallam-authored report from the International LGBT Youth and Student Organisation in partnership with the Intergroup on LGBT Rights and the Intergroup on Youth.

The study of LGBT people aged 15 to 38 from Croatia, Denmark, the Republic of Ireland, Italy and Poland found 73 per cent had experienced name-calling whilst at school and one in three had considered suicide as a result of homophobia in schools.

Michael Cashman MEP said: "This important report proves that discrimination kills, literally and spiritually. It is a timely reminder that we need to do more, not less, when it comes to ending the bullying, defamation, and discrimination which lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people face on a daily basis."

The study was commissioned by IGLYO, a Brussels-based international NGO, and carried out by Eleanor Formby from Sheffield Hallam's Centre for Education and Inclusion Research.

Jordan Long, IGLYO's programmes and policy officer, commented: "We hope that with the launch of this research, European decision makers finally see that it is time to act. We cannot continue to wait for political will to build for anti-bullying initiatives; too much is at stake, for individuals and for society as a whole. It is up to policy makers to take the next steps for change."



Holocaust survivor speaks against accepting negative stereotypes

To commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day, kindertransportee Steve Mendelsson spoke to students and staff of how he, aged 12, and his brother Wally, aged 8, were put on the kindertransport by his parents to escape the horrors of Nazi Germany.

He spoke movingly about the journey and his experience of arriving in England. He also reminded the audience of the danger of demonising any group of people. He suggested recent portrayals in the UK media of people from Eastern European countries were an example of how easy it is to reduce people to negative stereotypes.

The multifaith chaplaincy at the University organised the talk to mark the Holocaust Memorial Day in 2014. Alongside the talk there were also a two-day exhibition at City campus describing the story of journeys undertaken by survivors of the Holocaust and subsequent genocides.



Championing a multi-faith approach as part of student services

In June 2014, the Reverend Capt Ian Maher from University's Multifaith Chaplaincy was invited to speak at a workshop for student services managers from around the UK about its integrated offering as part of Student Wellbeing.

The reverend outlined to managers from other Universities how chaplaincy, a team drawn from thirteen different religious traditions is made more accessible by being an integrated part of student services rather than an 'add-on'. The chaplaincy at Sheffield Hallam is fully funded by the University.

Hallam recognised as breastfeeding friendly



Sheffield Hallam University has been formally recognised as a Breastfeeding Friendly institution and presented with the Sheffield Breastfeeding Friendly Award.

The award recognises the facilities and support available to mums who want to feel confident and comfortable when breastfeeding their babies in public at the University. Women can also choose to feed or express in five respite locations across the both University campuses and staff across the organisation have been trained to offer mums any support they may need.

The award is part of a wider initiative to increase

breastfeeding rates in the city and to raise awareness of the positive impact the method has on the physical and emotional well-being of mums and their new-borns, as well as the economic and social benefits for the wider community.

Mark Swales, Director of Estates and Facilities at Sheffield Hallam, said: "We've always supported breastfeeding, but this award formally emphasises our ethos of being a truly inclusive institution committed to supporting our staff and students in every aspect of their lives."

"Many of our courses attract students with families, so it is important that we can cater for those people and our students can feel safe in the knowledge that we will be supportive of their choices."



Celebrating Sheffield Hallam's cultural diversity

For a week in March, the University was alive with the sounds of music, dance and poetry celebrating the diversity of the students and staff at Sheffield Hallam.

SHU Fest was established in 2010 to celebrate the talent, culture and diversity of students and staff.

Krassimira Teneva who organises the event said: "It's great to see students and staff perform during SHU Fest. It creates such a buzz and excitement in the University. It truly makes Sheffield Hallam a special place to study and work".

SHU Fest 2014 was our largest ever, with more than 30 events, activities and performances. Performers included the spoken word poet Addie P. Abbott, Indian classical dancer Swati Prasad, ukelele player Rongrong Cai, ballroom dancers Fides

Marzdorf and Ramen Sen. There were also lots of audience participation events for everyone to get involved in - a Brazilian carnival, a celebration of Iraqi culture, a learn-Chinese-in-60-minutes session, and flamenco and salsa dance lessons.

Samantha Logan, one of the festival organisers in the International Student Support Team said "Putting the spotlight on talented students and staff from so many different cultures broadens our intercultural perspective and strengthens our sense of belonging to the University community".



New tool kit designed to make inclusive teaching easier

To support its lecturers in providing learning that is inclusive for everyone, the Faculty of Health and Wellbeing has created a new online toolkit.

The resource is split into three main chapters which consider inclusive practice in curriculum design, assessment and learning and teaching. It also includes examples of how practice might be improved.

Filmed case studies show staff describing their approaches to learning and teaching and students with a disability discussing their experiences at the university.

The resource is interactive and encourages staff to consider how inclusive their own practice is.

The first version went live in June 2014 and will subsequently be reviewed and updated twice a year.



Unconscious bias awareness scheme to be rolled out across university

The human resources team has designed a development programme on unconscious bias for all employees at Sheffield Hallam University.

Unconscious bias refers to when we automatically respond to others, such as people from different racial or ethnic groups, in positive or negative ways. This bias can affect the recruitment and selection of students and staff. It can also affect the ability of those groups to achieve their full potential.

The programme aims to raise awareness of this topic amongst all staff to help develop a diverse workforce, more inclusive culture and better learning experience within the university.

Throughout March 2014, three pilot courses were designed and delivered within the HR directorate and the Equality and Diversity Board. These were day long courses delivered by an external provider.

In total, 48 delegates attended, providing a whole wealth of positive and constructive feedback for HR to analyse. The data collected has supported the creation of a university wide development programme which is due to be launched in the 2014/15 academic year.



Sheffield Hallam works with IBM to foster diversity

Earlier this year, IBM enablement consultant Emma James reached out to the University to provide a number of tailored sessions for Sheffield Hallam's students to inspire a diverse range of students to apply for IBM graduate and placement schemes.

Following a highly successful 'Women in IT' series, a second 'Black and Minority Ethnicities' series was organised. The sessions helped students to prepare for applying for placements with a mock assessment centre, and by offering hints and tips to help them with their approaching applications.

As with other diversity sessions from the employer, there were two guest inspirational speakers from IBM who talked about their experiences throughout their careers as well as their challenges and successes. This event included speakers Mariam Ogunbambi (MBus), Business Consultant

and Kashif Taj, Professional Development Manager.

Emma James, who is a former Sheffield Hallam student, explained why working with the University to increase diversity in the backgrounds of the people who apply to work with IBM is so important to their business:

'Having a diverse workforce with diversity of thoughts will fuel innovation. And innovation springs from the intersection of different experiences, education, skills, thought processes, and knowledge.'

Peer mentoring scheme designed to boost attainment

The attainment gap for BME students is a national problem: currently university students from black and minority ethnic backgrounds are less likely than white students to graduate with 2:1 or higher degree.

In response to this problem Manny Madriaga, Senior lecturer in research and evaluation, has been developing a peer mentoring scheme designed not only to promote belonging but also to improve retention and reduce the BME attainment gap. A pilot scheme will focus on the LLB Law degree because it typically contains a large proportion of BME students. Students from the second and third years will reach out to help new students to get used to university life and answer any questions they have about the course.

Manny explained:

"The main things the peer support does is show them around the campus, show them how to use student services. Also peers can explain how the first year does count because you need good marks to get placements in your second year. All this came from the students. I'm only here to organise the meetings and be a mouthpiece for the scheme. The students have set up an open Facebook group. They did this."

The scheme will partner with a nationwide scheme championing diversity in law called Aspiring Solicitors. This will complement the pastoral aspects of the peer mentoring with additional professional skills development.

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role models

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Hajar Razaghi

PhD research scientist and member of the university's STEM educational outreach team

‘When I talk to younger people, I tell them mathematics is a game for the brain. It’s how you train your brain to be smarter and solve problems.’

When Hajar moved from Iran to start a Medical Electronics Engineering PhD here, she quickly became involved in a scheme encouraging women to study for careers in science and engineering. She talks of how female scientists are the norm in Iran and says showing children how maths can be applied to the world will encourage more to take the route she chose.

In Iran, it is quite normal for women to choose engineering and sciences at university and to follow successful careers in related fields. It is not like in the UK where it's often more common for women to study other subjects. Instead, there is an expectation for them to study hard and pursue sciences. There is a large number of highly successful women doctors, engineers and scientists in Iran. Parents encourage girls and boys at early age to follow these disciplines. So it was an easy decision for me to get into sciences.

Physics was my favourite subject at university. Again, being a woman studying physics was anything but unusual – the majority of students on my course were female. Because I enjoyed physics and studied hard, I was able to study at a high-ranking university and complete an MSc in Physics after my first degree (that was also in Physics). After this I decided to go abroad to get an international experience of studying.

At that time I read a lot of papers. I saw that the field of Medical Electronics Engineering had lots of potential for research and developments. And then Sheffield Hallam offered me a very interesting PhD project using new analysis techniques to detect osteoporosis. Currently the technique used is not very reliable for children under five. It's in its early stages, but we developing a novel method that

is more cost effective, more reliable and unlike existing methods does not involve x-ray radiation. We are collaboration with Sheffield Children's Hospital for this study.

The second month after I arrived the university, I met Maxine Greaves and the women in the SET team and I told them about my PhD. They asked me to be involved in their outreach activities, encouraging school children to think about maths and science as a career. There were some events called Girl Days. These sessions were to encourage more women to not only be actively involved with sciences but to lead these fields. At one event we guided them to construct a bridge with Lego and we judged which one was more beautiful and which was stronger. The girls were very creative in the structures they created. At another event, we said to the girls 'Imagine you were in a disaster zone: how can you create a shelter point?' They proposed several good designs and many great ideas. They realised how they could actively help people through engineering and sciences.

Other outreach work I have done included coming up with creative ways to teach seven to thirteen year olds about mathematics. I had fun with that. I particularly remember using an apple pie to explain number Pi! This work was about helping children to understand the importance of mathematics. In my view, maths is the basis for other sciences and engineering. Once you understand maths, you have the tool for development and innovation. And I love it. Sometimes when people hear about what I do they say, 'Oh how difficult that must be.' Actually it is easy because I love it. When I talk to children, what I tell them is that for me mathematics is a game for the brain. It's how you train your brain to be smarter and solve problems. The life of mathematics is not boring. It is not just writing formulas on paper. When you look at buildings, cars and robots, aircraft, trains, televisions, mobile phones and medical electronic equipment, they all needed maths for their designs.

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role models



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Matthew Airey

LGBT Career Mentoring mentee

‘You worry about coming out at work - I always think that people are going to think a certain way when actually they’re fine with it. But you get more used to it, it’s just life experience.’

As a high achiever on his course, Matthew qualified for the Career Impact programme run by the Careers and Employment Service. The programme gave him access to the new LGBT strand of the career mentoring scheme. He describes how having a professional mentor who is also gay helped him to talk about his anxieties about coming out in the workplace.

I grew up with a friend who came out when he was thirteen. And at first I kept my distance because I wasn’t sure about my sexuality, and it wasn’t until I was seventeen I got in touch again. That’s how my parents found out because I was hanging around with my friend who they knew was gay.

When it came to applying for university the course was the driving factor, and I went to the open days to get a better idea. This course seemed really good. I didn’t look at anything to do with LGBT. It was still a bit raw with Mum and Dad, so I didn’t want to bring it up, like ‘is this university good for LGBT?’ I think they were scared for me because I’m gay. Because I’m different they think I might be a target and get beaten up.

All my course mates were really nice, but I didn’t come out to them until half way through my first year. When I did come out, some thought they knew, but generally nobody really cared. There was another person who started the course late who was out and I kind of came out through hanging around with him. I think that makes it easier, coming out as part of a group.

During my third year, I went on a placement at a city council I didn’t have a really good experience.

I never came out there until the leaving do. Then they were all fine about it and actually I did enjoy myself a lot more after I’d told them!

You worry about coming out at work - I always think that people are going to think a certain way when actually they’re fine with it. But you get more used to it, it’s just life experience.

This year, I’ve really taken the opportunities available at the careers service. I got on to the Career Impact programme, which helps students who are doing well get on to a graduate scheme. At one of the sessions Linda Wilson, one of the careers advisers came to talk to us about the Career Mentoring scheme, and mentioned that they had LGBT mentors. There’s been a definite link between me and Linda in careers services. We’re both gay so we’ve got something in common!

Linda was able to put me in contact with a career mentor at IBM who is gay. He and I were able to share some of our experiences of coming out in the workplace. He talked about how at first he was ashamed of his sexuality, but he came out through the support he got at the company. He was very open and helped me think more about how to deal with it in a work situation.

I have been successful in getting job interviews since I graduated this summer and have just started my first job.

When it comes applying for jobs now I always put my sexuality down on the diversity monitoring section, which I didn’t do before. But I still don’t really think about the LGBT credentials of a company, it’s more about whether the job fits. And I can imagine working in a company where I don’t come out straight away. I think that’s okay. I don’t introduce myself by saying ‘Hi I’m Matthew and I’m gay’, just like someone else wouldn’t say ‘Hi, I’m straight’. It’s about communicating it, but saying it more subtly. I think I’m getting better at that.



Pippa Smith

Final year student and champion of mental health support in the university

‘Disclosing my severe chronic depression took courage. It was a very hard thing to do. But since then it’s been clear sailing.’

Pippa Smith recently won an outstanding contribution to student services award for her work helping fellow students with mental health issues. Here she explains how her own mental health issues gave her the motivation and insight to support her peers.

I dislocated my knee during fresher’s week and I was on crutches for five months. Not a great start in some respects - for one thing it’s not as much fun going out when you’re on crutches! But it also helped me to quickly realise how important student welfare was. I suffer from chronic depression, migraines, dyslexia and ME so getting access to all the services that are on offer has been really important to my education.

I’ve always been somebody who’s tried to help people, especially with mental health issues. It’s something I’ve done all throughout school and university. I know how difficult it is to tell people about it, because you don’t know how people are going to react. Like I could think ‘I’m not going to disclose my chronic depression because everyone will see it as a buzz kill’. But actually it was a huge relief. So I’ve been increasingly vocal on these issues.

In my second year, I took leadership of Headspace. It’s an organisation that is trying to de-stigmatise and help individuals with mental health problems. We try to stress the importance of keeping up a positive disposition, and the importance and benefits of looking after yourself. I was also one of the first members of Nightline for Hallam, a student-run information and listening service and had quite a big role in bringing it to here. You may

even have seen me incognito, dressed as Percy the mascot to publicise it! For the work with Headspace and Nightline I was given an Outstanding Contribution to Student Services award.

The University has been the most proactive that I’ve found in terms of student support. I’ve been to disability conferences and found out that many other universities don’t have a student learning contract. The learning contract is drawn up with an advisor to help get you the best help for you. You get the promise of support and they get the promise that you will access the support appropriately. It gives a lot of clarity.

I have quite a sizable contract. At first it was just for dyslexia. Hallam are amazing with dyslexia. If I’ve messed up they can help. Despite finding that easy to disclose this, disclosing my severe chronic depression took much more courage. It was a very hard thing to do. But since then it’s been very guided, it’s been clear sailing. We were able to put in really practical steps, like a note taker for during lectures to help me to carry on with my studies.

Despite having these issues, it’s the extra work with things like Nightline and Headspace that have kept me going, that passion for helping others. I just don’t want other people to go through the things I did. And to be able to say, ‘I struggled with that for years, try this’ can help.

If I was going to give any general advice it would be not to think ‘Oh, my problem isn’t big enough. I don’t want to take up their time’. There’s a step for you that can help, so that isn’t a waste of time.

And also be yourself here, because I now have a bunch of friends who are amazing and don’t mind me when I’m being quiet eccentric! After all, there are over thirty thousand students, so one of them is going to be like you!



Rebekah Makinde

Law student involved with Aspiring Solicitors to tackle diversity in the legal profession

'I didn't realise how much lack of diversity in law was a problem in the industry. Even having a regional accent constitutes diversity! Now I am working with Aspiring Solicitors to change this.'

Rebekah threw herself into university life and has found that she can tackle a lack of diversity in the legal profession by helping to bring Aspiring Solicitors to the University, and make friends for life by helping to run the Afro Caribbean Society.

Law was something I always wanted to do. When I first heard about the Jamie Bulger case I couldn't understand how two children could do that to another child. I did well at school in London and then chose to come to Sheffield Hallam to do my degree. At first it was very different from what I was used to, because London is so multi-ethnic. So, walking down a street in Sheffield and maybe being the only black person took some adjustment.

Because I had just left my home city, finding people I could relate to was an important consideration. In the back of my head, I had 'What happens if I don't click with anyone on my course?' The Afro Caribbean Society (ACS) was really important in helping me find my feet. It's where I met all my friends. I was also equal opportunities officer there in my second year. I think it's really important to join societies to meet people you can click with. The people who I love the most here are from the ACS team. They're all from different courses, different places in the UK, the Caribbean and Africa.

I didn't realise how much lack of diversity in law was a problem in the industry until I got to the second year and was applying for placements. In law, even having a regional accent or not being from a red-brick university constitutes diversity! With something like seventy people applying for the same job, if you don't fit certain narrow criteria, you can be discounted straight away.

Now I am working with Aspiring Solicitors which is an organisation that aims to change this and improve diversity in law. I am helping the founder to get things set up here at Hallam. The scheme helps students from underrepresented groups, by encouraging and organising things like pro bono work and sector awareness talks and workshops. Through Aspiring Solicitors we're offering 250 placements nationally to members and we're planning to release more. That's really exciting.

Although to start with I didn't really like how different Sheffield was to London, now I'm seriously considering staying here after I graduate. The job prospects are very good in the city and they really like Sheffield Hallam students. Plus, you can walk everywhere. I really like that aspect.

Right now I have my summer planned out at the civil service and I'm part of an organisation where hopefully I'm going to go somewhere. At the moment I love tort law but as a trainee I know I'm going to develop a lot of loves for law. I definitely want to work with people. I don't want to just sit in an office all day, I want to help real people.

Equality & Diversity

Highlights Calendar 2014-15

22-26 September	National Work Life week
October	Black History month
10 October	World Mental Health Day
11 October	National Coming Out Day
November	November
5 November	Stress Awareness Day
3-9 November	Dyslexia Awareness Week 2014
16 November	International Day for Tolerance
20 November	Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDoR)
17 -21 November	Anti Bullying Week
22 Nov - 22 Dec	UK Disability History Month
3 December	International Day of Persons with Disabilities
10 December	Human Rights Day
27 January	National Holocaust Memorial Day
February	LGBT History Month
March	Womens History Month
17-23 March	Islamic Awareness Week
8 March	International Womens Day
2 April	World Autism Awareness Day
21 April	UN World Day for Cultural Diversity
11-17 May	Mental Health Awareness week
17 May	International Day against Transphobia and Homophobia (IDAHO)
21 May	UN World Day for Cultural Diversity
15-21 June	Mens Health week
27 June	Sheffield Pinknic
tbc	Sheffield Pride
10-12 July	Sparkle - National Transgender Celebration
tbc	Eid Festival in the Park

Major religious dates 2014-15

https://staff.shu.ac.uk/sls/qess/ss/studentwellbeing/chaplaincy/Documents/3503.2_Online%20web%20version.pdf

Find out *more...*

If you've been inspired to make a difference or are interested in aspects of this report, such as the student and staff support networks, contact the Equality and Diversity team.

We're happy to help.

Telephone: 0114 225 2787
or email: diversity@shu.ac.uk

What did you think about Equality Highlights 2013/14?

Did you learn something new? Did you feel there was an important equality activity from 2013/14 missed? Did you feel represented? Did you feel inspired?

We would love to hear your comments, please drop us a line or call

Next edition of Equality Highlights in 2014/15

Equality Highlights reports annually on positive activities across our university. We want to develop this for and by our diverse community.

If you are involved in any equality good news stories; forums, conferences, activities, awareness raising, or if you wish to nominate someone for their commitment and dedication to equality please contact Zoe Hunter, equality and diversity team.

We want to include your voices.

Contact us

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