University and College Union

Meeting of LGBT Members’ Equality Conference

Location Conference Aston meeting Suites (CAMS), Aston University, Aston Triangle, Birmingham, B4 7ET

Date Saturday 3rd December 2016

Unconfirmed minutes

Present

Leonie Abrahamson National Self-Employed Branch
Pura Ariza Manchester Metropolitan University
Mark Bendall University of Chester
Steve Boyce (Chair) People Plus
Simon Bruce-Jones Telford College of Arts and Technology
David Calderwood University of Strathclyde
Martin Chivers City University London
Lewis Clarke University of Huddersfield
Beverley Cole Birmingham City University
Jacky Collins Northumbria University
Tom Cowan Plymouth University
Jean Crocker Teesside University
Grant Denkinson University of Leicester
Jennifer Dods Leeds Beckett University
Anthony Drummond Leeds Beckett University
Alun Evans Coventry University
Ciara Doyle University of Greenwich
Virginia Fisher Plymouth University
Joao Florencia University of Exeter
Louise Gooddy Accrington & Rossendale College
Ioanna Ioannou University College London
Mary Jennings University of Cambridge
Tamsyn Hawkins Suffolk New College
Marion Hersh University of Glasgow
Andrew Hollyhead Birmingham City University
Lesley Mansell Central Group – HE South
Ryan Prout Cardiff University
Pat Roche Blackpool & The Flyde College
Aydan Suphi Birmingham City University
Nathaniel Tobias Coleman Birmingham City University
Jeremy Toner University of Leeds
In attendance

Seth Atkin  
Equality Support Official

Helen Carr  
National Head of Equality and Participation

Swati Patel  
Equality Administrator (Minutes)

1 Steve Boyce welcomed all the delegates to the conference.

1.1 Steve Boyce introduced himself. Steve Boyce works within prison education at People Plus and is Chair of LGBT Members’ Standing Committee (LGBTMSC) as well as NEC representative for FE.

1.2 Steve Boyce then introduced Mary Jennings as NEC representative for HE and the rest of the LGBTMSC. Stephen Boyce then introduced members of LGBTMSC present at the conference: Lesley Mansell (Vice Chair), Ryan Prout, Pura Ariza, Pat Roche and Martin Chivers.

2 Role and Function of Conference

2.1 Steve Boyce then explained that the role of the conference is for the LGBTMSC to report back to the conference on the work it has done in the past year. All the work is guided by the motions from UCU Congress. Every LGBTMSC meeting has an update of the work from motions and this is reported back to the conference.

2.2 The role of this conference is to debate, discuss motions, vote for new members of the standing committee and engage with a topic of interest to the LGBT MSC. The conference moves the work of LGBTMSC forward in terms of what should be done through the discussion which takes place.

3 Introductory address by Steve Boyce, Chair of LGBT Members’ Standing Committee

3.1 Steve Boyce started by reiterating that branches are a vital organ of the union. Steve hoped that everyone present at the conference attends branch meetings and ensures that equality is at the centre of everything that the branch is doing. Every dispute which UCU is involved in at branch level has some aspect of equality in it. Also Steve Boyce suggested that members should put themselves forward to the regional committee as they are an important way of getting involved in union and equality work.

3.2 The structure is local branch level, regional level and national level.

3.3 Steve stated that it is good that so many people were present at the conference as there have been LGBT Equality conferences in the past which have not been so well attended. It was also good that members from different sections of the union were in attendance as it is important to have intersectionality and inclusion in all the committees and conference.
3.4 Stephen Boyce then highlighted a few publications which have been produced by the Equality Team which were good tools for branches. These were:

- Diversity in participation – why it matters and how to promote it
- Equality Toolkit
- Challenging Bullying and Harassment at work

3.5 UCU is also represented in the Forum by Seth Atkin. They have recently produced with support from UCU, the Pride and Prejudice in Education report, which is an exploration of experiences and perceptions of sexual orientation and gender identity among post school education learners and staff. This report is a sobering read which shows that we have come a long way in terms of LGBT rights on the surface but there is still a long way to go.

3.6 Marion Hersh raised the point that it would be interesting to hear about LGBT issues in prison.

3.7 Stephen Boyce highlighted these issues related to prisons:

- A new directive has recently been issued.
- Recently there have been deaths of two male to female trans people (men changing to women) as when they were at pre-operative stage they had been put in a men’s prison.
- Prisons tend to put people in post-operative stage to the relevant gender assigned prison and not in pre-operative stage. Equality law in the UK recognises that people should be recognised as the gender they identify with rather regardless of any medical intervention.
- Most prisons have LGB groups. Equality reps in prison also attend these group meetings.
- Austerity cuts affect prison population considerably.
- A question was raised whether LGBT staff attend the LGBT prison group meetings? LGBT staff do attend the LGBT prisoners’ group meetings and there is a separate LGBT staff meeting convened by Ministry of Justice.
- There is limited information about LGBT people in prison or criminal justice system. Information about life in prison and sexuality is kept secret.

3.8 There is a Prison Education Conference on 10th March.

3.9 It was agreed at last year’s Congress that LGBT History Month should be celebrated in a much more public way. Therefore a film has been commissioned to commemorate LGBT History Month. Members were invited to a vox pop filming after the conference. The film will be launched at the start of the LGBT History Month.
4 Conference Business

4.1 Stephen Boyce introduced the top table Seth Atkin, Equality Support Official, Cooper Bates from Leeds City College who is a speaker and Swati Patel, Equality Administrator. He also introduced Sharon Russell, Equality Support Officer responsible for the LGBT filming and Helen Carr, Head of Equality and Participation. He thanked all staff members for their hard work.

4.2 Adoption of standing orders

4.3 Steve outlined the purpose of the standing orders and everyone agreed to them.

4.4 Motions to LGBT Members’ Conference

Motion 1 Provision of Gender-Neutral Toilets
Proposer Birmingham City University
Word count 144

That this conference notes the need for, within the construction of any new university or further education facility, the provision of gender-neutral toilets for the use of staff and students regardless of their gender status.

It should not be necessary or desirable for staff and students to need to identify their gender when performing a basic human function when in their place of work or study. The provision of gender-neutral toilets supports dignity at the workplace for all.

We call on the union to provide support, including guidance and campaign resources, to local branches in institutions where new facilities are being constructed to ensure that all persons, whether trans, cis or gender non-binary, have the option of gender neutral toilets and that best practice is followed.

Going forward, this conference should note that existing campus buildings and facilities should, where possible, incorporate this provision.

4.5 The motion was seconded.

4.6 This motion was carried unanimously.

4.7 Elections to LGBT Members Standing Committee

4.8 The following members who had put themselves forward as nominees were elected to the LGBT MSC:

- Jennie Appleyard – Leeds City College
- Martin Chivers – City, University of London
- Joao Florencio – University of Exeter
- Louise Gooddy – Accrington & Rossendale College
- Tamsyn Pauline Hawkins – Suffolk New College

4.9 Stephen Boyce pointed out that there were still 3 places on the LGBT Members’ Standing Committee and requested for members’ present to put themselves
forward as nominees to be co-opted for one year to the committee.

4.10 The following members put their names forward:

- Virginia Fisher – Plymouth University
- Jeremy Toner – University of Leeds
- Ioanna Ioannou – University College of London
- Nathaniel Tobias Coleman – Birmingham City University
- Nicholas Williams – UAL – London College of Fashion (Although he was not present due to an accident Nic had expressed interest in the co-option)

4.11 As there were 5 nomination for 3 places the present LGBT MSC will decide on which of the above nominees will be co-opted to the committee. The Committee will look at the balance i.e. HE or FE, gender identity, when deciding on who should be co-opted to the standing committee. The members who are co-opted will be notified in due course and will be expected to attend the next standing committee meeting which will take place on Friday 13th January 2016.

5 Report of the LGBT Members’ Standing Committee by Steve Boyce, Chair of LGBT Members’ Standing Committee (followed by question and answer session)

5.1 Stephen Boyce started by thanking all the members of the standing committee. For Steve Boyce this is the second year as the Chair of the Committee. Steve explained that there is a lot of linking with the other standing committee members as there are many issues which are common for the four equality standing committees.

5.2 UCU is well represented at the TUC. UCU had official stalls at London, Manchester and Birmingham Prides which are well attended. UCU sends a full delegation to the TUC LGBT conference. There is more involvement in international solidarity work. LGBT MSC provides active support to sector initiatives such as LGBT history month, and the production and promotion of the Voices and Visibility wallchart.

5.3 LGBTMSC helps to shape the annual conference.

5.4 LGBTMSC members attend UCU Congress with members speaking to various motions.

5.5 The priorities from UCU Congress 2016 are:

- Following up key LGBT research reports including “Pride and Prejudice in Education” and “Transgender Equality” by House of Commons Women and Equality Committee.
- Producing guidance which were highlighted earlier.
- Seth Atkin provides equality training nationally.
• Emphasise, at every opportunity, the importance of the inclusive and supportive provision and culture of FE.

• Try and break down the lad culture.

• Continuing to network with trans organisations especially Transgender Europe, who UCU is working closely with

• Also looking at the acronym LGBT. The general consensus at present is to have LGBT+. LGBTMSC have to report to the Equality Conference 2017 as to how we want to identify ourselves as.

5.6 Unconfirmed minutes of Equality LGBT Conference 2015 were proposed to be accurate and true record by Simon Bruce-Jones and seconded by Jeremy Toner. It was AGREED that the minutes were an accurate record.

5.7 A film clip was shown about first ever debate on transgender issues in the House of Commons which took place on 1st December 2016 which shows the speech made by Ruth Cadbury MP.

5.8 Steve Boyce also informed the conference that Lord Cashman has announced that all gay and bisexual men convicted of now-abolished sexual offences legislation in England and Wales are to receive posthumous pardons on 12th December 2016. People who are living and had previously been convicted of an act that is now legal can apply for a pardon. A more inclusive bill put forward by the SNP was unsuccessful.

There was short break.

6 Gender Identity Today

6.1 Steve Boyce introduced Cooper Bates of Leeds City College.

6.2 Cooper Bates introduced himself as currently a college student and in the past year has taken part in a youth volunteering program with Stonewall as well as a project called "It’s my Right”.

6.3 Cooper Bates collaborated with a friend to make a film about young trans people. Last year there were about 30 trans women wanting to transition to men who killed themselves.

6.4 This film was then shown to the conference which highlighted the barriers experienced by trans people. In the film trans people spoke about how they would like to be addressed and about mis-gendering.

6.5 Mis-gendering constitutes a form of harassment. The Equality Act 2010 protects trans people and a self-identifying trans person does not have to be under medical supervision to be protected against harassment and discrimination.

6.6 Direct discrimination occurs when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic such as gender re-assignment. One example of direct discrimination is trans people not being able to use the toilet of the appropriate gender at school or college.
As a trans person NHS have to treat everyone with respect and trans people should be put in the appropriate gender ward. NHS constitution states compassion is central to the care provided and each patient’s pain, distress and anxiety have to be responded to by humanity and kindness.

In the film trans people were urged to report bullying. The Ofsted Inspection Education Act of 2006 states that teachers have a legal duty to ensure that all forms of bullying are gathered in schools. This includes trans bullying. Bullying and harassment can be reported to police as hate crime.

Cooper Bates spoke after the film

Cooper Bates explained the terminology around gender identity. Definitions put forward by Cooper were

- Gender identity is how a person defines themselves – woman, man or genderqueer.
- Gender expression is the way a person views themselves in the way they express themselves through dress, behaviour, etc. This could be feminine, masculine, androgynous and many more.
- Biological sex is what is registered at birth – for example female or male
- Sexual orientation is who a person is physically and emotionally attracted to based on the other person’s sex/gender - heterosexual, homosexual or bisexual and others.

The term transgender or transsexual refers to people who have a gender identity, or gender expression, that differs from their assigned sex. Other terms are male to female mtf, female to male mtf, gender non-conforming, non-binary, bi-gender, gender queer and many more.

Mis-gender(ing) is a term when a person is referred to by another person which does not match the way they express themselves for example in Cooper’s case being referred to as a female.

Transitioning requires an operation and although it is a medical condition it is not considered as a technical condition. When a trans person experiences distress or discomfort because of their biological sex being of different gender identity, it is not considered by many people to be an actual mental health problem. It is also known as gender identity disorder or transgenderism.

In transition the term used by many people is permanent full time adaptation or different gender role to life with family, work and society. This is when someone makes changes which is a gradual process as it cannot happen overnight, starting with change of name.

If someone is arrested they are taken to the prison of their birth sex and not the sex which they identify with. Not all trans people have surgery for various reasons including that there are complications with surgery.

Gender Recognition Act of 2004 requires applicants to have transitioned 2 years
before a certificate is issued. If you cannot prove that you have transitioned you can be mis-gendered throughout your life.

6.17 Cooper Bates then gave his own experience. From the age of 3 Cooper Bates knew that he wanted to be male and not female. He was very angry and frustrated at not being able to tell his family about his gender identity. At age of 9 he went online and found some information about trans people he could relate to.

6.18 Cooper Bates talked about the challenges facing him as a result of trying to talk to his family about being trans. Difficulties involved in coming out as trans to his family resulted in Cooper Bates suffering from mental health issues. Cooper Bates came out as being trans at school first and then his family.

6.19 Cooper Bates then changed his name by default. Cooper Bates had requested for the name to be changed in school but the school informed Cooper Bates that he did not have any legal documents, so they were unable to change the name on their register. Cooper Bates eventually decided to leave school.

6.20 Since leaving school Cooper Bates has attended the Tavistock clinic in Leeds. He then started getting hormone injections and is feeling a lot better. Cooper has done some volunteering work and would like to teach about LGBT issues in schools.

6.21 Most monitoring forms only have the categories male and female possibly with other as an option but with no further space to self-define as for example non-binary or genderqueer.

6.22 Also in this college the toilets are single unisex toilets. Many other institutions have now started adopting this type of toilets.

6.23 ID documents are also a challenge. The Gender Recognition Act requires £140.00 as registration fee. A person needs to be in transition for a year before he/she can register. The person needs to sign a form saying that they will be the assigned sex for the rest of their life and require signatures from 2 medical professionals.

6.24 Transgender people are disproportionately homeless as often families do not accept them when they come out as being transgender. Transgender people are also subjected to bullying and harassment.

6.25 The statistics for trans people are:

- 48% of Trans people under the age of 26 have attempted suicide at least once
- 59% of Trans people under the age of 26 have considered attempting suicide
- 59% of Trans youth have deliberately hurt themselves
- 62% of Trans people have experienced harassment from strangers when out in public
• 17% of Trans people have been physically assaulted
• Only 27% hadn’t experienced any Transphobia

6.26 The average waiting times for a first appointment from first being referred to the local clinics in England are:
• Charing Cross in London – 54 weeks
• Leeds – 182 weeks
• Northern Region Gender Dysphoria Service in Newcastle – 65 weeks
• Nottingham Centre for Gender Dysphoria – 52 weeks
• Porterbrook Clinic in Sheffield – 73 weeks
• From April 2015 to July 2015 there was a 4% increase overall of referrals to gender clinics in England.

6.27 This was followed by a question and answer session:

6.28 As a lecturer there would be students in similar situation needing support. The question was of one thing that the school Cooper Bates attended should have done differently.

6.29 Cooper Bates wanted acceptance of the change and allowing his name to be changed.

6.30 Disabled people see their disability not as medical condition but as a societal condition. Could this apply to transgender people?

6.31 Cooper Bates thought that a lot of transgender people suffer from various mental health issues so there is a medical condition, but if society accepts them, it would make the transition a lot easier.

6.32 Under Equality Act even if you are not a protected characteristic but witnessed the breaching of certain characteristics, the Act could be invoked. Thus would it not be possible for other students or teachers to invoke the Act on behalf of a trans person, as duty of care to others so that it would make it easier for transgender people to come out.

6.33 Since Cooper Bates came out, other students in the school he attended have come out and the school has improved the way it treats transgender students. The head teacher of the school has become involved and a new policy on how to treat trans students has been produced.

6.34 Social model of disability views disability as a barrier by society. A condition is medicalised when it does not need to and social model of disability highlights the problem is with society not the individual facing disability. This applies to any of the protected characteristics.

6.35 All discrimination needs to be challenged in order to change it.

6.36 The situation that Cooper Bates faced was individualistic and as a trade union
need to figure what can be done collectively so that there is a better context for people to realise their equality rights.

6.37 There are equality chartermarks but do chartermarks actually promote equality or are they just a marketing tool.

6.38 Gender pay gap is an excellent campaign model to follow.

6.39 Would education on this issue widen the knowledge and thus remove the ignorance and prejudice?

6.40 Where Cooper Bates teaches there are people from different cultures and religion who do not accept LGBT people. Cooper Bates talked to trans people from other cultures who said that their parents did not agree with their gender identity but they wanted to educate their parents and make a change. They asked Cooper Bates of how to educate their parents’ and thus change their attitude. By talking and educating they eventually got their parents’ to understand that there is nothing wrong with being trans.

6.41 It was asked how do you get college to be participative in progressing change of monitoring forms or being more accepting of LGBT people?

6.42 Suggestions were made that awareness could be increased through various initiatives including getting NUS and HR involved, providing trans training, and discussion about terminology including the use of the term cis gender.

6.43 It was asked whether there should be a campaign opposing registration of sex, for example registration at birth so as to further enable self-definition?

6.44 There is a campaign to make LGBT part of the sex education.

6.45 Cooper Bates was asked about one thing he would like conference to take away.

6.46 Cooper Bates response was to educate people.

The conference finished at 1.00pm.