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University**  
NEWCASTLE

# **VC Diversity and Inclusion Scheme**

Sharon Stewart and Dr Frances Hamilton

# At Northumbria

Our Vision is to be a research-rich, business-focused, professional university with a global reputation for academic excellence.

At the heart of the University Strategy 2018 – 2023 is a recognition that our people play a crucial role in enabling the University to achieve its ambitions, as set out in our Strategic Objective ‘Exceptional people empowered to achieve shared ambitions’.



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# **The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) work-stream**

- Embed EDI structures
- Broaden our approach to EDI
- Develop EDI resources
- Create EDI momentum

# The VC Diversity Scheme

- Launched in Jan 2019
- Offers financial support for EDI initiatives, activity or project
- Supported 19 EDI projects in first year
- Submissions were received from colleagues from all four faculties, 3 services areas, UCU, the Student Union and the LGBTQ+ Network.

# The VC Diversity Scheme

Successful application must meet the following criteria:

- Assist in the achievement of a strategic objective
- Address EDI challenges in an innovative way or accelerate the implementation of practices that give support to, or remove barriers for, under-represented groups.
- Allow EDI events or activities to take place that would not otherwise be supported.
- Demonstrate a breadth of impact.



# The 19 Projects

1. Student exodus - looking at student drop out (neurodiversity and gender)
2. A student poster competition - celebrating diversity and inclusion.
3. Supporting Parental Leave through computed-mediated communication.
4. NU Connect - Implement additional accessibility features within the mobile app.
5. A wider exploration of male students experiences in Nursing, Healthcare, Social Work and Education.
6. Supporting women to attend the Aurora programme.
7. The Rainbow Project - create an educational interactive resource to raise awareness of LGBTQ\* inclusion for students.
8. Guest Speakers programme on EDI.
9. Supporting female employees in engineering – community-building workshops, network building and identifying role models.
10. Autism Friendly initiative - widen access and participation for autistic students and staff.



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*The Winning Student  
Poster (from project 2)*





# The 19 Projects

11. LGBTQ+ travel policy - researching travel advice for LGBTQ+ people travelling internationally.
12. Active Bystander Training - challenging unacceptable behaviours.
13. Borrow a Living Book - to hear stories from and ask questions of those fighting prejudices and discrimination.
14. Teaching Inclusively - evaluate the inclusivity of the Humanities curriculum.
15. Inclusive assessment - Identifying barriers and design solutions to create an inclusive assessment design.
16. Leading Effective Equality Diversity Inclusivity Workshops.
17. EDI Matters Posters - individual portraits with a quote on why EDI matters to them.
18. Black Leaders Academy - leadership and mentoring programme for Black Northumbria University students.
19. LGBTQ Network - A mixture of initiatives that support and encourage the presence and understanding of LGBTQ\* culture.





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# Key Learnings

- Obtain senior buy in
- Wide communications
- Simple application form
- Clear criteria
- Simple evaluation form
- 18 month Projects
- Give flexibility to evolve project remit



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“Wow - wonderful! Thank you”

“Thank you Sharon, I am looking forward to helping improve the student’s journey at Northumbria”

“That’s very good to know. I look forward to doing this”

“That is awesome, many thanks”

“Wow thank you so much!!! I’m thrilled!! Thank you so much for all your help with the application process”

“Brilliant that’s great”

Dr Frances Hamilton  
Cameron Giles

Northumbria  
University

# INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL FOR LGBTQ+ STUDENTS and STAFF IN HIGHER EDUCATION

# With thanks

This *International Travel for LGBTQ+ Staff in Higher Education* Report was made possible through a grant from the Northumbria University Vice-Chancellor's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion fund. The authors also wish to acknowledge Dr Alexander Maine, who supported the project during its initial stages.

## Contact Details

Frances Hamilton – email: [frances.hamilton@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:frances.hamilton@northumbria.ac.uk)

Cameron Giles – email: [cameron.a.r.giles@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:cameron.a.r.giles@northumbria.ac.uk);  
tweet: [@giles\\_cameron](https://twitter.com/giles_cameron)

# Aims and Objectives

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*Does the growing focus on internationalisation across UK Higher Education create additional challenges for LGBTQ+ students and staff?*

*What is the impact of the complex and uneven legal and social framework for LGBTQ+ people worldwide on staff and student travel?*

*Are these issues currently being addressed? What best practices can be seen across the HE sector? How can institutions develop their own approaches and where should further research focus?*

# Background to the Project

- There is a huge diversity of legal rights and social lived experiences relating concerning LGBTQ+ individuals worldwide.
- Individuals, as well as those responsible for their wellbeing and development at work, need to be fully informed about potential risks when they travel, work abroad or work in international teams.
- This is highly relevant to the Higher Education sector where there are increasing demands for internationalisation in a globalised world.
- The lack of ability to travel safely, means that LGBTQ+ colleagues' chances of career progression and development can be severely impacted. The structure and international nature of many academic careers means that international reputation and peer review are essential to career progression, as is the ability to travel abroad for conferences, field work or collaboration.

# Dimensions of Dangerous Locations for LGBTQ+ expatriates

Taken from McPhail and McNulty, 'Oh, the places you won't go as an LGBT expat! A study of HRM's duty of care to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender expatriates in dangerous locations' (2015) *European J. International Management* 737, 756.

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## *Dimensions*

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Legal	Legal repercussions for being 'out'
	Death penalty for homosexual acts
	Anti-homosexual law/legislation in place or proposed
	Anti-homosexual law/legislation in place and acted on
	Local laws do not protect LGBT people
<hr/>	
Cultural	Local laws prohibit LGBT activities
	Rural locations
	Quality life or livelihood threatened if 'outed'
	Required to be closeted/in
	Imminent threat
	Fear of physical violence, aggression, humiliation, ostracism, demotion and/or termination
Threats of death	
<hr/>	
	Culture encourages and does not criminalise violent activity that targets LGBT people

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# International Travel by LGBTQ+ Students

Students arguably face additional barriers to accessing support for their international travel:

- Student may be less aware of the different legal and cultural frameworks found internationally and of where they can find this information and institutional support.
- Students may also find it more difficult to raise these issues with supervisors and others, particularly if this involves “outing” themselves.
- Students may be uncomfortable raising these issues, particularly if uncertain regarding what support is available.





Some  
Current  
Sources  
Regarding  
LGBTQ+  
Rights



# Data Collection

- We recognised that institutions may provide information in distinct ways, different formats or via different mediums, particularly dependent upon whether the advice was general; in relation to staff travel; or in relation to student travel.
- As a result, our approach to data collection was purposefully broad and attempted to capture the state of the sector as it current is.
- Freedom of Information requests provide a convenient, cost-effective way to achieve a “snapshot” of policy practices at public institutions, our data provides a snapshot of policies as they existed in late 2019 – early 2020.



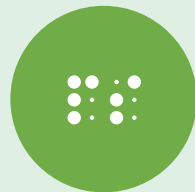
# FOI Methodology

- Sampling: All UK Higher Education Institutions (HESA + OfS Records) and 6 Alternate Provider Institutions (Using “University” in Trading Name).
- Request: Information/Guidance/Policies held or provided to staff in relation to:
  - Travel by LGBTQ+ Staff *and/or* Students
  - Travel specifically by Transgender Staff *and/or* StudentsWhere these were held within larger documents; relevant extracts from those documents.
- Analysis: Data-driven content analysis, statistical analysis using basic categorisation of institutions.

# Results 1



Lack of Policy

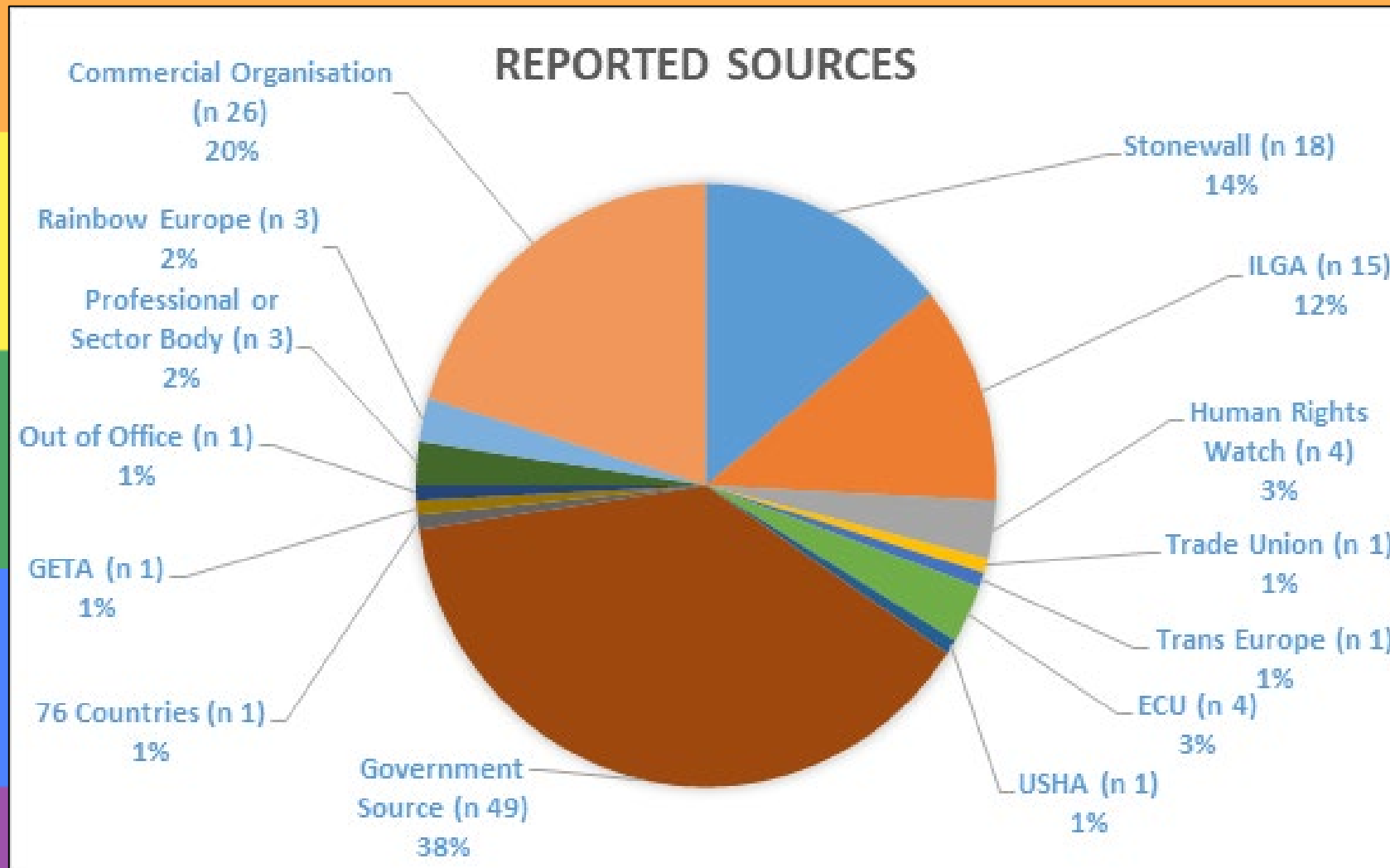


“All-Inclusive”  
Policies



Limited Sources

# Results 2: Sources of Information



# Results 3: Legal Advice



CRIMINALISATION OF  
SAME-SEX ACTS



LACK OF ANTI-  
DISCRIMINATION STATUTES



LACK OF LEGAL STATUS  
FOR PARTNERS



LACK OF LEGAL  
RECOGNITION FOR  
TRANSGENDER PEOPLE



RESTRICTIONS ON FREE  
EXPRESSION IN RELATION  
TO LGBT PEOPLE

## Results 4:Cultural Advice

- Less variation in this guidance, although some institutions went into greater detail than others.
- Impact of external advice and support apparent.
- Some institutions continued to emphasise that the impact these difference can have on LGBTQ+ was key.

## Risk awareness

### Non-legal factors

- Treatment by state authorities (e.g. police harassment has been reported)
- Societal attitudes towards LGBTQ+ people (e.g. open hostility to out LGBTQ+ people)
- Lack of LGBTQ+ community (no known LGBTQ+ neighbourhoods, venues or support groups)
- Visibility of LGBTQ+ people (either not visible or negatively portrayed)
- Lack of LGBTQ+ inclusive services (e.g. health professionals are not trained on LGBTQ+-inclusive health services)



Based on material provided by Stonewall 2017 – *Studying Abroad* – A guide to supporting LGBT students in higher education

Example 1: PowerPoint Slide for LGBTQ+ Students considering Study Abroad.  
Pre-1992, English, Russell Group Institution

# Results 5: Health Advice

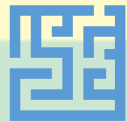
- Rarely directly addressed, although the impact of legal and cultural conditions should be noted.
- Physical Health Concerns:
  - Access to hormones and other medication for transgender travellers
  - Access to Sexual Health Services
- Mental Health Concerns
- Methodological Limitations



# Discussion: Identifying Best Practices



Distribution of  
Responsibility



Recognising the  
Scope of the  
Problem



Involving *All* Staff

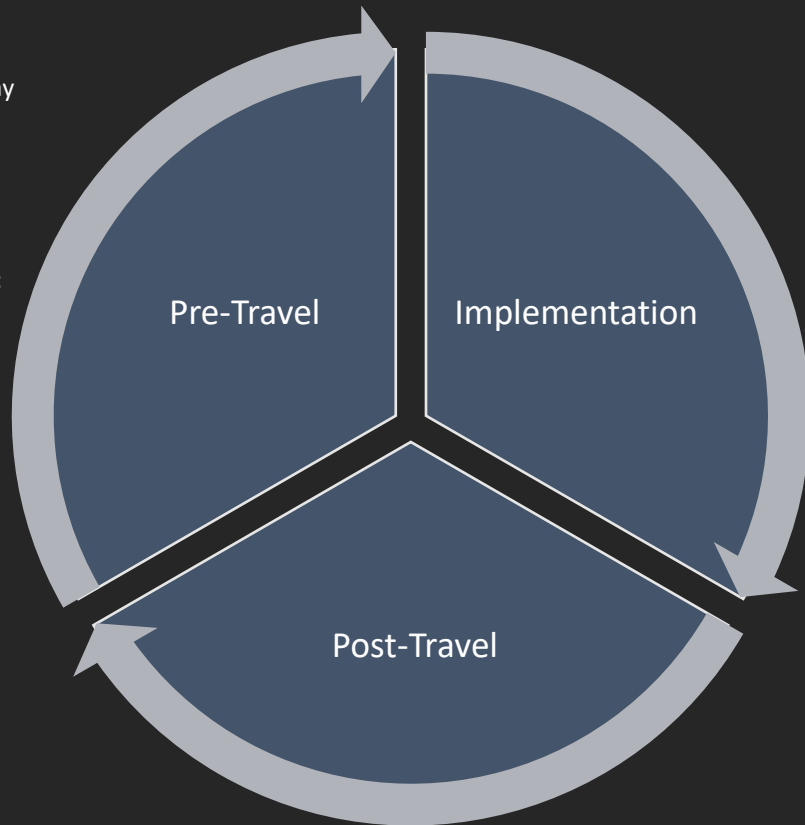


Drawing on a range  
of sources



Developing Policy

# Discussion: Developing Best Practices



- Engage with travellers and recognise they may not always be aware;
- Enable allies, don't limit this discussion to LGBTQ+ travellers;
- Draw on external expertise and support;
- Risk Assessments can be a valuable part of this process, but requires policy to augment;
- Don't wait until these issues arise.

- "Prepare" for the unexpected;
- Offer travellers support, recognise that experiences may change over time;
- Keep in touch!

- Reflect, reformulate, develop!
- Draw on traveller expertise.
- Offer additional support post-trip, particularly around mental health.

# Conclusions – A Gap in the Market

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- The findings of this project show that there is a considerable gap in policy across UK Higher Education on the issue of international travel and deployment by staff and students somewhere on the LGBTQ+ spectrum.
- Policies need to be developed to consider legal, cultural and health conditions– preferably across institutions and external providers, so as to be collaborative and share best practices.

# Discussion: Further Thinking Points



Separate policy for LGBTQ+ but generally available on webpages and linked to any travel briefings / risk assessments



Should consider legal, cultural and health



Pre, post and returning periods



Links to relevant travel websites, government and charity resources.



Developing case studies – concentrating on destinations with which there is the most contact from a University staff and student perspective. These need to be kept up to date on an annual basis.



Message boards for staff and students to place individual personal experiences.

The background of the slide is a horizontal rainbow gradient with stripes of red, orange, yellow, green, and purple. A blue callout box with a 3D effect is positioned on the left side, containing the main title and authors' names. A second, empty blue callout box is on the right side.

# INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL FOR LGBTQ+ STUDENTS and STAFF IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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