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What initially drew you to Queen Mary, and what were your expectations before you arrived?

I wasn't really drawn to Queen Mary specifically as I was drawn to London. There were two factors that drew me here. The first was the far greater number of jobs than the rural locale where I lived beforehand; the second was that my partner lived here. So I moved rent-free into his parent's attic (something they were VERY nice about), spent a chaotic three-month period applying for an array of different jobs, and landed here (and in the flat where we both now live) shortly afterward.

I didn't really have any expectations of Queen Mary. This is my second job post-graduation and my first unconnected to the university I studied at. I knew what a university was like, but I didn't really have any idea what a professional services role within it would involve day-to-day. It was a bit of a mystery.

Your experience of Queen Mary as an LGBTQ+ staff member

This is a really interesting question, and one which I'm not sure how to answer because I've judged my experience of Queen Mary as a gay man to have been *normal*. This is obviously very unhelpful to anyone who's not me! As a younger worker, I have never experienced homophobic bullying in Queen Mary or any workplace – but then again I wouldn't really expect to. I have a picture up of me and my partner on my desk – but I wouldn't think that any uncomfortable comments would result from this. I talk freely and openly about my personal life to my colleagues in a way I'm sure people wouldn't have dreamed of doing even ten years ago. I suppose I'll never truly understand the debt I owe to the LGBTQ+ people who used their bodies as a battering ram to break those doors open for me. I wonder if that was the point.

How you feel supported by Queen Mary and what we should be doing to improve this - Is there anything else that Queen Mary

could do to further support our LGBTQ+ community?

There are several occasions where Queen Mary has supported its LGBTQ+ community very well. The vigil held jointly by the Human Resources department and [QMOut](#), the LGBTQ+ Staff network (and co-organised by me as [QMOut](#) co-chair) springs to mind as a way it's shown solidarity with one of the most vulnerable groups of people under the LGBTQ+ umbrella. Especially at a time where ideologues elsewhere in London are deliberately trying to marginalise transgender people with groups like the so-called "LGB Alliance", that's been very welcome.

When it comes to ways in which Queen Mary could further support its LGBTQ+ community, I have two suggestions. Firstly it could pay the representatives it relies on. There is a process currently underway by which the QMOut co-chair positions would be reorganised, and would come with an amount of facility time; this would be an important step in Queen Mary recognising that it values the (currently voluntary) work done by its LGBTQ+ staff. Secondly, I'd like to see the disciplinary procedure updated so that justice is not only done in cases of workplace queerphobic abuse, but is also seen to be done. Currently if someone is subject to a homophobic slur at work, the reporting process is confidential with the victim of the abuse, and the witnesses to it (if any), not usually being informed of the outcome. This means that whichever way the case goes, not much will be seen to have changed. This doesn't seem right to me.

Projects or studies you are working you would like to share with us/ something interesting about yourself

I am a shop steward and Labour Link officer on the [Queen Mary UNISON branch committee](#), and I represent my union's members in grievance and disciplinary cases. If you're in UNISON, I might represent you at

some point. If not, you can join here: <https://join.unison.org.uk/>

I'm preaching to the choir for anyone who's seen the film *Pride* here, but trade unions and the labour movement have been absolutely essential to our advancement as a liberation group. Everything intersects: LGBTQ+ oppression, the oppression of every other minority group, and the oppression of the 99% by the 1%. We need to fight this all at once, and we need everyone in order to win. For similar reasons, I am also an active Labour Party member in my local area. Finally, as previously mentioned I am also the co-chair for [QMOut](#), the LGBTQ+ staff network, in which capacity I am grateful to work with my fellow co-chair [Helen Bintley](#).

Why you want to be an LGBTQ+ role model? Why is it important? Why is visibility important?

I was approached to take part in this project by the HR department due to my position as [QMOut](#) co-chair. To be honest, conscious of my position as a cisgender white man and therefore currently the most visible stripe in the rainbow, I'm not sure I personally need to be any more visible than I already am! But obviously it's always useful for members of our community generally to be visible. It's harder to hate or fear someone you know or someone in your workplace, than someone in the news or on a computer screen.

Thinking now about Queen Mary's LGBTQ+ community, what would be your advice to students wanting to be more visible or active?

Regarding being more visible: I suppose it depends on how you want to do it. Something that I'm not sure straight people realise is that as an LGBTQ+ person you never really stop coming out – only last week, a colleague in my office who I've worked with for six months turned to me and said "You know, I never knew you were gay" – but I've found a picture on your desk is among the subtler ways of letting people know.

Regarding being more active within the network: contact me directly. Help me and Helen run the network – we certainly need it! And regarding being more active outside the network: right now, you won't need to look for long until you find a cause which would be grateful for the help. Good luck.