

An investigation into the experiences and needs of trans staff and students at King's College London.

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Commissioned by the Diversity and Inclusion team at King's College London, this report describes the experiences of trans¹ staff and students at the university, and outlines the support they feel they need and the ways in which their needs are currently going unmet.

An online survey and subsequent focus groups were designed and facilitated by an external consultant with expertise in trans issues and higher education equality and diversity work, and supported by staff at King's. The research found that trans people at King's, particularly students, are having negative experiences in education, social interaction and pastoral support during their time at the university.

There are no clear institutional messages about how to support trans people to be valued members of the King's community. Policies, where they exist, are difficult to locate for students, who find themselves having to seek them out in order to educate those who should be providing them with support. Attempts at support are made by some staff, who also have difficulty accessing the information and support they need, leading to inconsistent provision.

Students feel that the educational environment is hostile to trans people, reinforcing the gender binary² in a way which erases their experiences, and find themselves again educating their educators. The lack of knowledge about trans people, the issues we may face and how to support us extends into healthcare provision, which is also inconsistent and beset with barriers.

Trans people surveyed at King's have experienced transphobic language being used towards themselves or others, and some have been attacked. Confidence in reporting and in disclosing one's trans status both appear to be low.

Full recommendations are presented on page 38, but they can be summarised thus:

1.1 TRAINING

Both widespread and targeted training are needed, ideally for the whole staff and student body, augmented with specific training for frontline staff supporting trans people and managers who can affect culture change.

1.2 AVAILABILITY OF INFORMATION TO TRANS PEOPLE

A single point of contact and an online repository for all policies and information that trans people may need to access will allow trans staff and students at King's, as well as trans people considering a career at the institution, to see how they should be supported.

¹ 'trans' is an umbrella term which refers to all people who identify as having a gender other than the gender associated with the sex they were assigned at birth. Some trans people will 'transition', sometimes, but not always, involving medical interventions such as hormones and surgery, from one binary gender to the other (eg. male to female or female to male), and may live as this gender all or part of the time. Others may identify as non-binary gendered or non-gendered/agender, having a gender identity other than male or female. A distinction should be drawn between gender identity (how one feels) and gender presentation (how one appears in the world).

² The concept that there are only two, 'opposite' genders, based on only two, biologically discrete, sexes.

1.3 MONITORING

Appropriate monitoring questions need to be added to all information gathering, with disclosure levels also being considered a barometer for student feelings of safety, confidence, and trust in the institution.

1.4 HEALTH CENTRE

Specific investigation of the ways in which the needs of trans people which are not being met by the university health centre should be undertaken, and a senior staff member should be identified who will take responsibility for ensuring that necessary changes are implemented.

1.5 CURRICULUM AND TEACHING

Changes to both curriculum and pedagogical culture need to be made to ensure inclusivity in the classroom.

1.6 SPORTS AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Sports and physical activity need to be made accessible to trans staff and students at King's.

1.7 GENDER NEUTRAL FACILITIES

More gender neutral bathroom and changing facilities should be made available, and a map of gender neutral toilet facilities, which is kept up to date, should be easily accessible online. This map should be available to visitors to the university, and provided, alongside maps and physical accessibility information, online and to those invited to visit.

1.8 POLICIES

Updated and widely publicised policies are needed to underpin and support culture change. The second part of this three-part project is a review of all written policies at King's which may have relevance to trans staff and students. This review will involve production of annotated and/or rewritten policies, accompanied by an action plan.

1.9 TRANSPARENCY

This report and any subsequent response and/or action plans should be made available as minimum to staff and students at the institution. Consideration should be given to making these publicly available in order to evidence commitment to trans inclusion to prospective staff and students.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECT

At the start of 2016, I was contacted by the Diversity and Inclusion team at King's, who were interested in doing some work to a) identify and respond to the needs of trans staff and students at the institution and b) review and update policies and procedures which either referred to or in some way affected trans staff and students. This desire to discover and address the needs of trans staff and students was in part in response to the need to answer questions within the Athena SWAN institutional award application (see below) and increased activity and pressure from student activists within the institution. Student activity had thus far focused largely around the campaign for provision of gender neutral toilets³, which had resulted in provision of a small number of gender neutral toilets by the university.

I was known to staff at King's through my previous role as Equality Charters Adviser at the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU), working on the Athena SWAN Charter. I also have a significant background in working on trans issues, particularly in Higher Education. Over a series of phone calls, emails and meetings, a project plan was developed. This report is the result of the first part of the three-part project.

2.2 STRUCTURE OF THE PROJECT

Amounting to a total of 14 working days across 10 months (February to November 2016), the project plan is divided into 3 parts:

1. Qualitative research with trans staff and students to understand their concerns, any barriers to engagement, and proposed solutions (7 days).
2. A review of policies, procedures and practices based on the research in part one, including proposals for improvements to current provision (5 days).
3. Training and awareness raising with key groups of staff (2 days).

Further information about the structure of this first part of the project is provided in the methodology section (section 3).

2.3 ATHENA SWAN

King's has been a member of the Athena SWAN Charter since 2007, and has held a Bronze institutional award since 2008. 16 departments hold individual awards at Bronze and Silver levels. King's intends to apply for a Silver institutional award in November 2016.

In May 2015, after a trial period during which departments at King's and other universities tested the methodology, the scope of ECU's Athena SWAN Charter was expanded to recognise work undertaken in

³ Toilets which are not designated (by the presence of signage using either the traditional stick figures, the language 'men's' 'women's', or any other binary gendered icons) as accessible only to people of one gender. Gender neutral toilets are usually a self-contained unit including a toilet and wash basin with direct access from a corridor, but when retrofitting older buildings, making a toilet gender neutral is often done through changes in signage to existing facilities which may have sinks, cubicles, and urinals. When the latter is the case, signage may read: 'toilets with urinals' and 'toilets without urinals'.

arts, humanities, social sciences, business and law (AHSSBL) departments; in professional and support roles; and to support trans staff and students. A new set of forms was developed, and questions relating to trans staff and students currently exist at institutional application level in the post-May 2015 forms, at both Bronze and Silver level. The question is as follows:

6. SUPPORTING TRANS PEOPLE

Recommended word count: Bronze: 500 words | Silver: 500 words

(i) Current policy and practice

Provide details of the policies and practices in place to ensure that staff are not discriminated against on the basis of being trans, including tackling inappropriate and/or negative attitudes.

(ii) Monitoring

Provide details of how the institution monitors the positive and/or negative impact of these policies and procedures, and acts on any findings.

(iii) Further work

Provide details of further initiatives that have been identified as necessary to ensure trans people do not experience unfair treatment at the institution.

2.4 WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO THINK ABOUT TRANS PEOPLE IN HIGHER EDUCATION?

2.4.1 Legal responsibilities

Trans status, currently described as ‘Gender reassignment’, is one of nine protected characteristics within the Equality Act (2010), and it is also included in the accompanying Public Sector Equality Duty. The definition of gender reassignment under the Act gives protection from discrimination to a person who intends to undergo, is undergoing, or has undergone, gender reassignment, as well as protecting people who are presumed to be trans, and people associated with trans people, variously from discrimination and harassment. The Duty requires the university to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination on the basis of protected characteristic,
- Advance equality of opportunity for members of the protected groups, and
- Foster good relations between groups.

2.4.2 How many trans people are there?

While it is very difficult to know how many trans people there currently are in the UK (the Equality and Human Rights Commission dedicate an entire chapter to the problem of measuring the trans community in their *Trans research review* (Mitchell & Howarth, 2009)⁴), the most up-to-date information on the size of the trans population in the UK suggests that “organisations should assume that 1% of their employees

⁴ Mitchell, M & Howarth, C. (2009). *Equality and Human Rights Commission Research report 27: Trans research review*. Manchester: Equality and Human Rights Commission.
(https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/research_report_27_trans_research_review.pdf last accessed 08-07-16)

and service users may be experiencing some degree of gender variance. At some stage, about 0.2% may undergo transition.” (GIRES, 2011)⁵.

When considering the likely proportion of trans people in Higher Education, both as staff and students, the following information can help inform our thinking:

- In a recent survey undertaken by Totaljobs⁶, 6.5% of the respondents⁷ worked in Education/Teaching/Social Work⁸. The only larger proportions were Charity/Not-For-Profit (7.42%), IT (9.74%) and Retail (10.9%). There were 35 possible job categories.
- The Engendered Penalties report (Whittle et al, 2007)⁹, found that 29.2% of trans people surveyed¹⁰ had a degree (Totaljobs: 22.42%), compared to 21.1% of the general population, and 14.8% of trans people had a higher degree (Totaljobs: 14.18%), compared to 5.8% of the general population¹¹.

It would require an additional research project to identify the ways in which the other demographic information of the participants in these two pieces of work is similar to or differs from the demographics of trans people at King’s, but both suggest that there are likely to be at least slightly higher proportions of trans people in higher education than in the population at large.

Information received from King’s data collection suggests that 2% of staff identify as trans, or as having a gender identity different than that assigned at birth (2015-16). However, it should be noted that this percentage has fallen year-on-year, from 6% in 2012-13 when the question was introduced, with 4.6% in 2013-14 and 3% in 2014-15. The wording for the question was clarified in 2013-14 after the high proportion reporting in 2012-13, and the fact that the number has reduced year-on-year suggests that there may still be a number of false positives. As an awareness of trans people, identities and issues is still relatively new, and so is the question (it was first formally suggested by the Equality Challenge Unit in 2010¹²), it is widely recognised in the sector that this question produces a significant proportion of false positives, however, given the suggestion by GIRES that 1% of staff and service users may be gender variant, Totaljobs’ finding that up to 6.5% of their respondents work in education, and Whittle et al’s finding that significantly higher proportions of trans people hold degrees, particularly higher degrees,

⁵ GIRES. (2011). *The Number of Gender Variant People in the UK - Update 2011* (<http://www.gires.org.uk/assets/Research-Assets/Prevalence2011.pdf> last accessed 08-07-16)

⁶ Totaljobs. (2016). *Trans Employee Experience Survey* (<http://www.totaljobs.com/insidejob/trans-employee-survey-report-2016/> last accessed 08-07-16)

⁷ More information about the respondents can be found in Totaljobs (2016), *ibid*.

⁸ Category devised by Totaljobs

⁹ Whittle, S., Turner, L. & Al-Alami, M. (2007). *Engendered Penalties: Transgender and Transsexual People’s Experiences of Inequality and Discrimination*. Wetherby: Communities and Local Government publications (http://www.ilga-europe.org/sites/default/files/trans_country_report_-_engenderedpenalties.pdf last accessed 08-07-16)

¹⁰ The research includes a quantitative analysis of responses from 872 self-identified trans people to an online survey.

¹¹ See *Engendered Penalties: Transgender and Transsexual People’s Experiences of Inequality and Discrimination* for further discussions of these statistics.

¹² Pugh, E. (2010). *Trans Staff and Students in Higher Education*. London, Equality Challenge Unit (<http://www.ecu.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/external/trans-staff-and-students-in-he-revised-2010.pdf> last accessed 08-07-16)

than the general population, it may be that King's data collection is coming close to showing an accurate picture of the institution.

Monitoring of trans status of students at King's has been brought in much more recently. Numbers for 2015-16 suggest that 0.004% of undergraduate, 0.006% of PGT, and 0.006% of PGR students identify as trans or as having a trans history. In this case, it appears clear that there is significant underreporting. While there is currently no research which seeks to describe the gender profile of the trans community, the *Trans Mental Health Study 2012* (McNeil et al., 2012)¹³ showed that the highest proportion of respondents (15.9%) were 21-25 years old, while 18-20 was a lower proportion (9%), lower than each of the groups from 26-55, but still higher than 56+, suggesting that the numbers of trans students should be significantly higher.

2.4.3 Why is university an important time and place for trans people?

University is a key time in identity development for most young people, but perhaps more vitally so for young trans people. For many, if not most, young people, university represents the first opportunity to live away from home, resulting in a level of freedom in decision making (for example around how to present oneself in the world) perhaps not previously experienced. Although increasingly less so, university can also represent the beginning of financial independence, allowing for decisions about lifestyle to be more freely made. Moving away from a hometown often means for trans young people not only an escape from communities in which they might have concerns about the impact of a seemingly large change (university giving them, essentially, an opportunity to 'reinvent' themselves), but also a move away from the family GP, to whom they might have difficulty expressing a desire to medically transition (if this is their wish), particularly if their family is not supportive. Finally, it is very difficult to access medical support for transition (often even including mental health support) below the age of 18, and waiting lists are in excess of years in many parts of the country, with lists in London currently being the longest¹⁴, so many trans young people may only begin to fully explore their options at around the same time as beginning university.

It is therefore vital that the university is a welcoming and supportive environment and provides a safe place for individuals to experiment, grow and develop. Universities are often thought of as being at the forefront of social and cultural change, but unfortunately the constraints of funding and lengthy nature of publishing means that actually the prevalent attitudes in the academy can lag a number of years behind social movements.

In order to create a truly supportive environment we should begin by ensuring that the most underprivileged have their needs met. Just as it is agreed that the interventions made to increase support for women in the Athena SWAN process benefit men, many interventions which support trans

¹³ McNeil, J., Bailey, L., Ellis, S., Morton, J. & Regan, M. (2012). *Trans Mental Health Study 2012*. Edinburgh: Scottish Transgender Alliance (http://www.gires.org.uk/assets/Medpro-Assets/trans_mh_study.pdf last accessed 08-07-16)

¹⁴ UK Trans Info, (2016) Current Waiting Times & Patient Population For Gender Identity Services in the UK: Report covering August 2015-October 2015 (<http://uktrans.info/waitingtimes> last accessed 08-07-16) see also 4.4.2.3 for further discussion.

people to access, remain, and thrive in higher education will also improve the environment for cis¹⁵ people, resulting in benefits for all staff.

¹⁵ 'cis', or 'cisgender' is a term which refers to all people who identify as having a gender which is the same as the gender associated with the sex they were assigned at birth. For example, a woman who was assigned female at birth.

3 METHODS

Data in this report was obtained through survey and focus group responses to a range of questions about trans people's experiences at King's and requesting their views on what is done well and what could be improved.

3.1 SURVEY

The majority of data collection was carried out through an online survey, using survey monkey. Due to the short time period available for data collection, which included a period of time during which exams would be taking place, an online survey was chosen as it could be completed at any time, and so that data collection could continue for as long a period as possible, starting quickly and progressing while focus groups were convened, rather than relying only on a focus group or interviews where there would be a lead-in time while participants were sought and given a few weeks' notice before attending.

The survey was designed to collect data both through question grids where quantitative data could be collected using responses to a statement by choosing a number from 1 to 5 or a level of agreement, as well as free text fields, where more qualitative data could be gathered.

Because of the client group being worked with (a marginalised community which, as a group, has significant experience of gatekeeping¹⁶, discrimination and tokenistic representation) it was important to be clear in the introduction a) that I, as the researcher, am also part of the community, b) that the information that participants gave me would be kept anonymous, and c) what the information would be used for - making it clear that completing the survey would be worthwhile. I was very clear in all of my communications with participants that I myself am a trans person, and, where relevant, I was explicit about the fact that staff at the institution would not have access to raw data, or that no one knew who was attending focus groups.

The survey went live on 31st March 2016, and was publicised according to the following timeline and using the following methods:

31st March - Initial communications went out to coincide with International Transgender Day of Visibility. This consisted of:

- An email that went to senior staff (the Strategy for Action group) from Jo Lawton (Athena SWAN Project Manager, Diversity & Inclusion Team) asking them to disseminate the survey amongst staff and students within their faculties/departments.
- An article which was published on the King's intranet and a link to that article highlighted on the homepage. This article will have been accessible to all staff and students.
- A link to the intranet article was added to the King's Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) webpages homepage and tweeted about from the D&I twitter account (<https://twitter.com/KCLdiversity/status/715547438006865923>)

¹⁶ A term used particularly, though not exclusively, in relation to healthcare.

1st April - After an early respondent to the survey noted a technical issue and this was resolved, the D&I account tweeted to explain the technical problem with the survey was now fixed and included a link to it again (<https://twitter.com/KCLdiversity/status/715886276851986432>).

6th April - An article was published in the online staff newsletter (Staff News) which is emailed to all staff at the university (<http://kingsezine.newsweaver.co.uk/staff-news/clodytm6is318rbhde1lxn>).

15th April - An email went to the previously contacted group of staff (the Strategy for Action group) reminding them of the survey and the D&I office's request for them pass it on to staff and students in their area.

26th April – The D&I twitter account repeated the call to invite staff and students to get involved with the project (<https://twitter.com/KCLdiversity/status/724934467148734466>).

11th May – an article was included in the termly D&I online bulletin which was emailed to all staff (<http://integrated.newsweaver.com/diversity/ywi8uyqrvpr>).

I maintained communication with the Diversity and Inclusion team during this period, reporting to them that there were very few responses from staff. This accounts for the reminder email on the 15th of April and the tweet on the 26th. Responses to the survey show that the majority of responses from trans staff were received after 15th April. Despite this, responses from staff were still very low (see section 4.1.1).

There was some initial difficulty contacting student representatives to request that they disseminated the survey. Unfortunately, the research period coincided with both exams and the election of a new committee for the students' union LGBT+ society. Once the new LGBT+ society contact and a contact within the students' union were identified, the survey was disseminated through the LGBT+ society and through personal networks, particularly using twitter. This word of mouth, 'snowball', sampling technique is particularly useful for communities of interest or identity in obtaining a large number of respondents, although it should be noted that it can have the effect of producing a sample where the individual members disproportionately share additional characteristics and may not be fully representative of the whole community.

During a focus group, a student noted that the survey had been hosted on the King's intranet, which did not feel to them like the most obvious or visible place to host it, and made it hard to find. The students in the focus group discussed that each faculty had its own culture in terms of use of university websites and intranet, with some faculties having access to sites and platforms that other faculties did not. Despite this, the overwhelming number of usable responses to the survey were from students (see section 4.1.1).

3.2 FOCUS GROUPS

Focus groups were convened using contact details supplied in the final section of the survey, and elicited by the text:

“One aim of the survey is to help frame questions for focus groups and/or interviews with trans staff and students at King's. The results of both the survey and the in-person conversations will be written up into a report for the university. No personal identifying information will be shared.

I would be very grateful if you would be involved in these in-person conversations, as they will allow us to consider and discuss what trans people working and studying at King's want from the university, meaning that recommendations I make will be informed by the experience of staff and students.

If you would like to take part in a focus group or one-to-one interview, please enter your contact details below, or you can email me on harri.weeks@gmail.com."

8 people provided me with their email addresses, but unfortunately one of these was a self-identified cis person. I contacted all 7 others, and eventually spoke with 5 individuals across two focus groups.

The first focus group was organised by contacting all 7 potential participants on the 28th of April, asking them to complete a doodle poll with their availability across 2 weeks in late May. A follow-up email was sent on the 6th of May. Four potential participants responded providing their availability, and a date was chosen based on this availability. All potential participants were then informed of the time and place of the focus group on the 12th of May, and asked to RSVP. Response to this request was poor, and a follow-up email was sent on the 19th of May, as well as text messages (all individuals who had provided email addresses had also provided telephone numbers).

The first focus group was arranged for during exams, and while I was initially expecting 3 attendees, one was unfortunately unable to attend on the day due to family circumstances. I spoke with this potential participant via text message, and we arranged a later date that would work not only for this participant but also another who had been unable to attend due to exams. I emailed the remaining 3 participants who had not attended the first focus group to let them know about this alternative date, and a third participant was able to attend this second focus group, resulting in five focus group participants in total across two dates.

The focus group introduction text and prompts are included at the end of this report as Appendix 2.

3.3 DATA ANALYSIS

Responses to both the survey and focus groups are presented in this report, supported by explanations and possible interpretations of the data. Survey and focus group responses were considered together, with responses from both the free text and the focus group discussions being used to inform reasons behind the trends which arose from the responses to the question grids. Where relevant and necessary, information and knowledge about trans communities is used to help further explain the data.

Discussion of the proportions of respondents distinguishes between proportion of total number of respondents (when discussing the proportion who chose 'N/A' or 'prefer not to say'), and proportion of those who gave a 'numbered' response or chose 'totally disagree' to 'completely agree'. This allows for the proportion to be more representative of the opinions of those who had experienced the situation in question.

Rather than using a purely textual or content analysis, a more discourse analysis style is taken, giving value not only to the written or spoken responses, but also, for example, the numbers of people who responded to the survey overall and their general attitude to completing the survey or answering focus group prompts. One example is that insight can be gained from noting that the survey was accessed by a large number of cis people who were interested in reading the questions and, in at least one case, giving

their (supportive) opinion on the fact that the university was taking action to support trans people. When drawing conclusions, survey and focus group data is considered 'in the round'.

4 FINDINGS

4.1 RESPONSES

4.1.1 Online survey

The online survey drew significant interest, not only from trans people, but also from other staff and students within the institution, as well as 5 from outside¹⁷.

However, only 66 of the 117 respondents (56%) answered the question 'Do you identify as trans, as questioning your gender, or as a person with a trans history?' with either 'Yes' or 'Not Sure', and were thereby eligible to continue to the next page of the survey and answer questions about their experience. The majority (64%) of those who answered 'Not sure' did not continue to answer the questions in the survey, and a number of those who answered 'Yes' (31%), also did not complete any more of the survey. As answering 'No' to this question prevented the user from progressing further to see the questions asked, and as there is evidence that a small number of respondents (~2) progressed through the survey, answering questions, but were not trans people or people with a trans history¹⁸, it is fair to assume that many of those who answered not sure, and many of the 31% who answered 'Yes', but did not answer any of the questions, were cis staff and students, interested in finding out what questions were being asked in the survey.

After removing responses from those it could be guaranteed were not trans respondents, and those where no answers were given to any of the questions, 40 usable records remained. While this is a small number of responses it is sufficient to be able to derive trends. Considerations of the potential reasons for this level of uptake of the survey are discussed throughout the report at relevant points. As noted above, there was some initial difficulty with dissemination to students, and students also mentioned that the survey was not hosted¹⁹ in the most obvious place for them, though this was chosen as an accessible location by D&I staff. Additional factors include the time of year (during holidays and exam periods) and the potential that staff and students were experiencing survey fatigue due to other recent consultation processes.

31% of people who accessed the survey and completed at least the first page were staff at the University. 45 respondents answered that they were staff or students at King's, and then answered 'No'

¹⁷ Question 1 in the survey read: "Do you currently work and/or study at King's, or have you worked and/or studied at King's in the last 3 years?", thus 'within the institution' also includes those who have left in the last 3 years, and 'outside', refers to those who left more than 3 years ago or who have never studied or worked at King's.

¹⁸ Question 14 in the survey, after the questions about experience, and on a separate page, read: "Is your gender identity the same as the gender you were given at birth?". A small number of respondents who had progressed through the survey, answering questions, responded 'Yes' to this question. On at least one occasion, it is clear that this is not due to a misunderstanding about the question, as in one of the free text spaces, the respondent notes: "I am not trans, but as a person that works here, I would like to offer my support."

¹⁹ In terms of where information about the survey and a link to the surveymonkey site was to be found online by staff and students.

to the question: “Do you identify as trans, as questioning your gender, or as a person with a trans history?”. Of these 45, 20 (44%) were staff. It is clear that there was an interest from staff in the survey, but this did not translate into responses from trans staff.

It was disappointing that fewer than 10% (3) of the usable responses came from university staff. This is likely to be for a number of reasons. While the discussion of prevalence of trans people within higher education and King’s own monitoring would suggest that there would be approximately 130 trans staff at the institution, with the number of respondents representing 2.3% of this, it has already been discussed that King’s monitoring is unlikely as yet to be accurate, and trans people will not be evenly spread across all higher education institutions. Even if there were significantly more trans people at the institution than those who answered the survey, it is not unusual for only very small proportions of an eligible cohort to respond to a survey. One additional point to consider is that some older trans people may not identify with the term, instead choosing to identify with their current gender and ignore their trans history; these individuals may not be attracted to a survey targeting trans staff and students²⁰.

However, the questions were crafted in such a way as to elicit responses which referred to the university and its administration as a whole, allowing in many cases for responses from students to provide information which is useful in understanding what is and isn’t working across the whole university, as well as how to address these issues. Taking steps to address the issues identified is likely to positively impact the experiences of both students and staff, who are likely to have similar concerns in relation to their trans status.

4.1.2 Focus groups

As noted, 8 people (7 eligible respondents) provided their details for me to follow up via interview or focus group. It is likely that there are a few different reasons for this. One likely, and positive, reason is that there was ample room in the survey for individuals to give their views on the issues, both in that the questions covered a range of areas, and in that there were a number of free text fields in which respondents could expand upon their answers. At 17.5% of the total, 7 respondents providing their details to be involved in the focus group is actually quite a high proportion. A particular consideration, which should be noted if doing future work to investigate the needs of trans people at the institution, is that many trans people will already have spent a significant amount of time, and done a lot of emotional work, to educate those around them, to access appropriate support, and to provide their views and describe their experiences to authorities both within and outside of the university. One focus group participant noted: *“There have been times when being really vocal about issues has helped, but it was also really draining.”* Appropriate ways to respond to this issue should best be sought from the specific cohorts with whom you wish to work, but some suggestions include:

- Compensation for time taken to be involved in surveys/focus groups
- Ensuring that it is possible to evidence the actions taken in response to feedback
- Ensuring that those undertaking consultation with staff/students are themselves trans (and where necessary share other characteristics, such as being BME), so respondents can focus on discussing the issues, rather than educating the consultant to become culturally competent

²⁰ It is worth noting however that the survey received responses from individuals who describe themselves as no longer thinking of themselves as trans but ‘just as a woman’, so this consideration may not actually have accounted for any loss of results.

- Outreach. That is, going to where trans people are already gathering and discussing the issues, rather than expecting them to come to you.

4.2 DEMOGRAPHICS

At the end of the survey, respondents were asked to complete a small number of demographic questions. The demographic breakdown of respondents was as follows:

4.2.1 Role

Role	Number	Percentage
Undergraduate	21	52.5
Postgraduate Taught	6	15
Postgraduate Research	4	10
Academic Staff	0	0
Non-academic Staff	4	10
Recent Graduates	2	5
No answer	3	7.5

The student data on disclosure of trans status suggests that the proportion of postgraduate students who are trans is higher than that of undergraduates, and the age profile of the *Trans Mental Health Study* would also support this, however, there is a significantly larger cohort of undergraduates, and we have established that these data are incomplete, as many students will have chosen not to disclose their trans status to the university. Further to this, the sampling method, as mentioned previously, used both word-of-mouth and the students' union social media. The representatives within the LGBT+ society who disseminated the call for participants were themselves undergraduates, and it is common in universities for undergraduates to have a much higher level of engagement with the student union than postgraduates.

The large numbers of undergraduates responding to the survey suggests that there is a growing presence of trans people at King's, and the fact that many of these individuals will be at the beginning of a social and/or medical transition should be noted as they will require greater support than individuals who have already gone through this process.

4.2.2 Age

Age	Number	Percentage
19-21	17	42.5
22-25	10	25
26-30	5	12.5
31-40	2	5
40+	3	7.5
No age given	3	7.5

The age profile reflects the role profile described above, and once again should be noted due to the likelihood that younger trans people will require additional support. As well as many of them being ‘pre-transition’, and requiring emotional, logistical (i.e. changing records and accommodating time off) and medical support in this area, many trans young people will still be dependent on family, and may require specific support if ‘coming out’ results in them becoming estranged. Luckily, this was not an issue which was raised by any participants in the surveys or focus groups, but it is an issue to be considered by the relevant parties.

4.2.3 Gender

Gender option	Number	Percentage
Man/Male (including trans man and man with a trans history)	7	17.5
Woman/Female (including trans woman and woman with a trans history)	5	12.5
Non-binary	20	50
Other	5	12.5
No response	3	7.5

Data collection recently begun by the university²¹ asks whether students’ gender identity is the same as that which is assigned at birth, and provides three options for gender: Male, Female, and Other, as well as the option not to disclose. Interestingly, only 33 students (across all cohorts: undergrad, PGT, PGR) identified their gender to the university as other. If we are to presume that those who identified themselves to me as non-binary would consider themselves not to identify as male or female²², then we are led to question the reason for such seemingly low disclosure to the university. It seems very unlikely to me that the survey will have reached and been completed by every trans student²³, so it is likely that, while there will be some overlap, the 25 individuals describing themselves as either non-binary or other in the survey are an additional group to the 33 identifying themselves as other in the university monitoring.

4.2.4 Ethnicity

Five people chose not to answer the question “How would you describe your ethnicity?”. Of those who answered, 64% described themselves as White. The remaining 26% gave a mix of answers, so that no more than two identified themselves as having the same ethnicity as each other. Those people who

²¹ Which asks students to update their details at enrolment and re-enrolment.

²² My experience within trans communities and having done other work around demographic monitoring of trans people leads me to think that it is possible that a small number of non-binary people might at some times also identify as male or female, but the large majority of individuals, the large majority of the time, will not identify with either of these 2 binary identities.

²³ While it will vary from discipline to discipline, and I could not find one conclusive answer, it appears that most surveys undertaken under similar conditions aren’t expected to receive more than a 20-40% return rate. As noted in relation to focus groups in section 4.1.2, it is likely that the return rate for a survey of trans people might be further impacted.

described themselves as having an ethnicity other than White followed a similar pattern to the overall cohort in terms of gender and age. While statistics suggest that around 50% of the student cohort at King's is not white, the trans community, particularly in the UK, suffers from a lack of visibility of its BME members, with many trans groups having no BME members at all, and many trans people of colour preferring to organise autonomously²⁴. Comments in the survey and focus groups suggest that the LGBT+ society within the students' union has gone some way to ensuring that BME voices are heard, and it is likely that dissemination by the society increased the uptake of the survey by BME trans people.

4.3 ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE RESEARCH

In the focus groups, students gave many examples of having to educate those who should be supporting them, and advocate for sensitive treatment, often at emotional and sometimes educational expense. One focus group participant said:

"We did all of that leg work. We walked everywhere, catalogued every toilet 'cos they didn't have a list of the toilets, we told them exactly which ones could be changed into gender neutral toilets, we sat there for that meeting with them telling us that we shouldn't call them gender neutral toilets because that's discriminating against binary genders and we were like 'no, it's not.' And we just had to sit through it all, all of that, and then they didn't even give us that many toilets."

Whether intentional or not, the way the participant concluded the story could be seen as an allegory: *"...it's still not enough that we have to walk a significantly longer distance to get to toilets than everyone else does."*

However, responses to the survey and focus groups were not given grudgingly, as one might expect, but largely came from a place of enthusiasm. Respondents, both those who described difficulties that they had faced, and those who reported not having had any problems, wrote and/or spoke in largely descriptive terms. Rather than using the survey free text or the focus group to complain about problems, respondents presented clearly what had happened/what the situation was, providing information for me, and by extension the university, to work with. However, some respondents did express their dissatisfaction with the university:

"King's does absolutely nothing for trans staff or students. It doesn't even pretend to understand the issues like it does with LGB+. King's wants to be a "world-class" university but can't even attend to the basic needs of its community."

In the focus groups, I intentionally steered the participants towards providing solutions rather than taking out their frustrations, stating:

"[the focus group is] not a counselling session, or necessarily even a place for you all to air any problems with the University. I'm talking to you because I think you're best placed to suggest ways forward. So that's how I would like to focus our attentions today."

²⁴ There has not as yet been research into numbers of BME trans people, and most trans organising is informal, the Race Equality Foundation has identified this issue and taken steps to respond to it:

<http://www.raceequalityfoundation.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/downloads/Event%20report%20-%20Sharing%20the%20experience%20of%20being%20black%20and%20minority%20ethnic%20and%20trans%20final.pdf>

As a result, even when participants were sharing problems with the University, they were also offering solutions, some of which I might not have considered, as I don't have the experience of being a student or staff member at King's.

Overall, I found that survey respondents and focus group participants seemed engaged, and showed a willingness to be involved in the process of consultation. Responses, particularly from focus group participants, suggested that the university is slow in getting things done, and that much of the work often needs to be done by trans people. However, respondents appeared to want to give their opinions and make suggestions because they now had a sense that King's is listening to them. It will of course now be vital to show that the university is willing to follow through on doing the work required to make the university a welcoming and supportive place for trans staff and students. One survey respondent said:

"I think that King's is on a good way in relation to supporting trans people, especially given the recent inclusion of gender neutral toilets on all campuses (although I am not fully aware about all the available facilities, couldn't find a map anywhere, which would have been useful). There are always going to be new things that will pop up, but given the track record so far I am confident that King's will do their best to resolve any problems and cater to the needs of the trans community."

It is key to note that the respondent has an expectation not only that issues which arise will be dealt with, but also that the university will work proactively to support trans people.

4.4 RESPONSES TO INDIVIDUAL QUESTIONS

The survey was made up of three parts: filtering questions, survey questions, and demographic questions²⁵. The survey questions consisted of 3 question grids and 3 free text fields. The question grids also had the option to add comments at the end of the questions. The responses to the survey questions follow. For the first two question grids, each constituent question is discussed individually. For the third the grid is discussed as a whole. Comments from both the comment field at the end of each grid and from the free text questions support the discussion of the responses to the questions within the question grids. Survey responses were used to inform the discussion in the focus groups, and focus group responses are discussed alongside the survey questions which informed each part of the focus group discussion.

The survey garnered 40 usable responses, and the focus groups involved 5 individuals.

4.4.1 Please tell me about your views on King's as a place to work or study, responding to each statement with your opinion: from totally disagree to completely agree. You can also click prefer not to say, or not applicable (N/A)

4.4.1.1 King's is a supportive place for trans people to work

As previously noted, fewer than 10% of the usable responses to the survey came from staff. The number of responses to this question suggest that it was also answered by students, but this does not mean that the answer should be discounted, as the notion of 'supportive' relates to the whole environment, of which trans students will have a good sense.

²⁵ Please see Appendix 1 for the full survey text and questions.

While only 7% of respondents totally disagreed with this statement, 17% chose somewhat disagree, adding up to 24% of respondents disagreeing with the statement, in comparison to 19.5% of respondents agreeing, split equally between somewhat agree and completely agree. Perhaps due to the number of students answering this question, and/or perhaps due to an awareness that the supportiveness of the university might vary across the institution, 27% of respondents stated that they neither agreed nor disagreed (29% chose N/A).

4.4.1.2 King's is a supportive place for trans people to study

The responses to this question were split much more evenly between disagree (41.5%) and agree (39%). However, responses were grouped much more to the middle of the possible options, with 36.6% of respondents stating 'somewhat disagree'. It is positive to see that 24% somewhat agreed, and 14.6% completely agreed, but when considered alongside the high proportion who somewhat disagreed, and the 5% who totally disagreed, these data paint a picture of very inconsistent experiences.

One focus group participant stated:

"A lot of it depends on your course, what you're doing, the level you're at. So, I know that just in terms of going from undergrad to postgrad there's a massive difference in pretty much everything, the level of support on all levels."

Another added:

"It might depend on the way you're experiencing studying at King's. For myself, I identify as non-binary but...a lot of people read me as a woman, but for friends who're out...I've seen people become quite hostile about it....it doesn't feel like King's is a good place to be a trans person."

4.4.1.3 King's is a supportive place for LGB people but not for trans people

29% of respondents, the highest to any question in this section, answered 'neither agree nor disagree' to this question, and 36.6% answered somewhat agree. Responses in the free text help explain the reasoning for this. One respondent wrote: *"Answering 'agree' implies I think it's supportive for LGB but not for trans. Answering 'disagree' implies I think it's not supportive for LGB but is for trans."* Further consideration of this question certainly leaves me agreeing that it is not a well worded question and can be interpreted a number of ways. While most responses were focused on trans people and their issues, and did not draw comparisons with any group, a small number of free text responses which drew comparisons between understanding of LGB issues and understanding of trans issues, or support for LGB people versus trans people, suggested that LGB issues were more embedded, or given greater priority than trans issues: *"[the university] doesn't even pretend to understand the issues like it does with LGB"*.

4.4.1.4 Staff at King's are knowledgeable about trans people and the difficulties we may face

This was the first question where very a stark sense of disagreement arose, with 63.4% of respondents disagreeing with the statement, 26.8% of them strongly disagreeing. One survey respondent said: *"I have had incidences where staff are not even aware of what the word "transgender" means, let alone comprehending how this would affect my studies."*

14.6% of respondents however, chose 'somewhat agree' with only 4.9% choosing 'totally agree'. Again, the fact that these responses spread across all potential options shows a worrying inconsistency in

individuals' experiences, but what is of much greater concern is that 78.1% of respondents did not agree that staff are knowledgeable about trans people and the difficulties we may face.

While focus group participants were able to give examples of where staff had offered to go and find out more (be this about trans issues in general, for example in the counselling service and medical centre, or about policies and procedures, for example departmental administrative staff), they unanimously disagreed that staff were knowledgeable about trans people and the difficulties we may face.

Participants in the focus groups repeatedly returned to lack of knowledge as one of their key concerns, and raised an accompanying concern: that power imbalances between academic staff and students meant that it was both difficult to raise with lecturers and tutors that the things they were saying (either conversationally or during educational presentations) did not represent trans people's lived experiences, and when students did attempt to do so, this did not have any effect on the academics' choice of language after the discussion had taken place. One focus group participant stated: *"they take it as an insult to their authority, so it's quite difficult to have those conversations."*

Another focus group participant suggested that senior leadership was required:

"I know that over the past year or so academics and other staff have had training about unconscious bias and also training from Rape Crisis around sexual harassment. I think, in conversations with those people afterwards, they did seem to understand, or were at least more open to understanding around those topics, so I don't know if it would take a similar kind of training, or just discussion, from like, a higher level...It's important for students to be able to have a voice and speak out, but I think it's really difficult unless you also have some pressure coming from somewhere else as well."

4.4.1.5 Trans inclusion is clearly visible at King's

Again, this statement elicited strong disagreement, with some 41.5% of respondents choosing totally disagree, and another 24.4% choosing somewhat disagree. Only 17% chose either somewhat agree or totally agree, and free text answers suggest that agreement with the statement was based on the visibility of the gender neutral toilets campaign run by the LGBT+ society within the student union: *"very happy to see that a few gender neutral toilets have been put in place after the campaign run by the LGBT+ society"*.

Because of these responses to the survey, a large part of my focus in the focus groups was on both trans inclusion and how to make this inclusion visible. Suggestions included individuals wanting to see more literal visibility of trans people and initiatives in the institution. One focus group participant noted that it was good to see the existence of trans people recognised, for example *"all of the safe space signs include the word transphobia"*, including online. Others suggested changes to structures to make them inclusive of trans people such as *"on forms, the inclusion of more options, not just 'Mr' and 'Mrs'."* And noted that *"Data collection [is important], there's not really any numbers on trans people at King's."* One focus group participant put it simply when they said: *"just respecting people's identities"*.

One focus group participant expressed that inclusion is often seen as disruptive: *"I think some people think we want to make trouble, but we don't want to make trouble, we just want to live."*

4.4.1.6 It is easy to find information about the support that trans people at King's can expect to receive

This statement received the highest proportion of 'totally disagree' answers in this question (42.5%), a further 30% chose 'somewhat disagree'. One possible explanation for the high proportion of respondents disagreeing with the statement was given by focus group participants who talked about the many and varied web and intranet sites available to students at King's, the lack of consistency and signposting between them and the ways these sites are used by staff who seem to have a different understanding of them to their students. As a result, trans students variously stated that there was no information, that information was out of date, that information was located in different places, and found themselves informing each other as to where the information was during the focus groups:

"...there's not really any numbers on trans people at King's"

"I did see some a few years ago, but it was very...hmm"

While respondents to the survey commenting in free text fields and the first focus group participants both complained about the lack of a map locating all of the gender neutral toilets at King's, participants in the second focus group mentioned this map, but noted that it is only accessible to those already registered on King's systems. Participants noted that visibility of support for trans people at King's should not be limited to those already at the institution, as, particularly students, are likely to look for this information before applying or accepting a place.

4.4.1.7 Policies and procedures at King's take trans people into account

The majority (56%) of respondents to this question chose either 'totally disagree' (19.5%) or 'somewhat disagree' (36.6%), and only a combined 19.5% agreed either 'somewhat' or 'totally'. Additionally, because no respondents chose 'N/A', the 24.4% who stated neither agree nor disagree is indicative of the difficulty that trans people at King's described experiencing in locating or identifying policies and procedures to support them (see 4.4.1.6).

One focus group participant thought beyond policies to infrastructure and noted: *"In everything admin related there's no understanding that there needs to be something else [gender options beyond male and female]"*

It was not only internal policies, practices and infrastructure which were of concern to respondents. One focus group participant discussed having to obtain certification to work with animals on their course and being concerned about their personal information being known to staff:

"They need to know everything about you, it's like a DBS check, they need to know your previous names...there's no one you can address these things [to]. The admin, their attitude is that they already have too much to do. And yeah, the details all go through a member of [admin] staff in the department."

The second part of this project is to review the policies and procedures in place at King's in relation to support for trans staff and students. Staff in some departments have been proactive in contacting me for advice and to express that they know more needs to be done in some areas. The responses to this statement (Policies and procedures at King's take trans people into account) will be key to track in any future follow-up or review in order to understand whether policies which are updated as part of this project fully serve trans staff and students at King's, but responses from the focus group which referred

to the inconsistency of knowledge, awareness, and willingness between different staff also mean that it is vital that the awareness and use of these policies by those who may be supporting trans staff or students is monitored as closely as the awareness of them by trans people.

4.4.1.8 I feel comfortable being out to my colleagues/other students about being trans/a person with a trans history

A total of 58.5% of respondents disagreed with the statement. These results should be considered alongside the responses to statements 4.4.2.8 and 4.4.2.9 in the next question, and the 29.3% who responded 'somewhat agree' and 'totally agree' should be taken in the context of the fact that respondents described only coming out to people with whom they already felt comfortable.

4.4.1.9 There is more that King's could do to support trans people

This was, perhaps understandably, the only statement to which no one responded 'totally disagree'. It is positive that 7.3% responded 'somewhat disagree', but 78% of respondents chose to agree, with 63.4% of these choosing 'totally agree'. While I do not mean to discredit the 7.3% who responded 'somewhat disagree', it is interesting to consider the other answers of these respondents. One of these individuals stated throughout and repeatedly that they had never had any problems as a result of being trans, another used the survey as a vehicle to share their complaints about the radical nature of the student LGBT+ society and gave quite confused answers - for example describing themselves as a woman in the free text answers but as a man in the demographic monitoring, and speaking as if they were not a person of colour in the free text, but entering an identity at odds with this in the free text box which asked: "How would you describe your ethnicity?". The 3rd person who responded 'somewhat disagree' had answered this for all questions in the section, and answered '3' for all questions in the next section.

4.4.2 Please rate your experience of the following at King's on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is very negative, and 5 is very positive. You can also click prefer not to say, or not applicable (N/A).

4.4.2.1 Transitioning whilst studying/working at King's

51.3% of participants responded to this statement with 'N/A', so it is important to exercise caution when interpreting the other responses. Only 2.6% of those who responded to this question chose '1', but this was actually 6% of those who gave a numbered response.

At the start of the survey I clarified that:

"In this survey I use the word 'transition' to mean any process of attempting to align your body and/or presentation with your gender identity. This need not include medical transition."

However, the dominant narrative around transition is that it is a medical process of moving between two binary genders. This may have influenced the responses of non-binary participants. As previously noted, however, the age profile means it is likely that many trans students who do wish to medically transition will not yet have had access to this.

Apart from the low proportion of '1' responses, responses were spread quite evenly between 2 and 5, showing once again the inconsistency of experience of trans people at King's. Again, however, the responses to this question cannot be given too much weight due to the small number of people responding to the statement, and because there are many reasons why their responses might differ, for example, the individuals who responded may have transitioned at any point during their university

career, which for a PhD student who may have done their undergraduate study at King's, or a member of staff, may have been a significant number of years ago.

4.4.2.2 Applying to study/work at King's during or post transition

The 'N/A' response to this question was even higher at 59%, which, when we consider the young age of participants, is unsurprising. A further 2 people chose 'prefer not to say', but of the 14 people who chose a numbered response, it is reassuring that none chose '1'. However, 14% of those who chose a numbered response chose '2', and 43% chose '3'. The remaining 43% is split equally between those who chose '4' and those who chose '5', but it is concerning to note that most respondents (57%) did not have a positive experience of applying to study or work at King's during or post transition.

Students in one of the focus groups described having to be very proactive about receiving support around, for example, changing their name between applying and enrolling, and while one participant described having a positive experience with a helpful member of staff, another in the same focus group described the process as having been very difficult. Students spoke about having made decisions about which university to attend based on the way that their enquiries about the support they might receive during their transition had been responded to. Obviously, the students in question had chosen to attend King's, but their story was more damning of the other institution than necessarily cause for celebration by King's.

4.4.2.3 Taking time off for/managing trans related healthcare whilst at King's

This was the 3rd of 4 questions which was answerable by both staff and students and which received a high rate of 'N/A' responses (56%). This may be due to the high number of participants who identified as non-binary, and the greater incidence in this community of individuals who choose not to undergo any medical interventions, as well as the young age of respondents. 46% of the 93% who gave their age stated that it was between 19 and 21, and access to medical intervention is particularly difficult for those under 18. Current waiting lists on referral from one's GP to the gender identity clinic (GIC) in London are approximately 52 weeks at time of writing²⁶, most individuals being seen at the GIC are expected to have 2 appointments, currently usually 6 months apart before any treatment can begin. This tends to be hormones, and referrals are not made for any kind of surgery until a person has been on hormones for 12 months. For this reason, it is likely that if a student at King's had requested a referral at 18, they might be nearing graduation before any medical interventions they were undergoing interfered substantially with their timetable.

However, in both the survey and the focus groups I heard examples of how requirements around sandwich courses, be these years abroad or in industry, were at odds with an individual's ability to access medical interventions. One focus group participant told the following story:

"When things are very rigid, it's very hard to make everything work. Some things have to [give]... For me it was: does my surgery take priority or does my course take priority, and I had to make a lot of very difficult decisions...I wanted to do the study abroad, and I couldn't do it because I was waiting for surgery and I essentially was told: you choose the surgery or you choose the study abroad, you do not get both...The reason is that for my course study abroad is a whole year. For some courses it's a half a year, but for my course it's a whole year. And if I'd had the option to pick a half a year then

²⁶ UK Trans Info, (2016) Current Waiting Times & Patient Population For Gender Identity Services in the UK: Report covering August 2015-October 2015 (<http://uktrans.info/waitingtimes> last accessed 08-07-16)

maybe I could have done both, but it was, that was so rigid and they told me why they couldn't change it, it would require changes both in themselves and their partner institutions, but, for me there have been lots of situations like that, too much has been that I haven't been able to do because of it."

Sadly, this student also spoke of not being able to access the year in industry because it would further delay the surgical aspects of his transition.

4.4.2.4 Managing changes to my university documents while at King's

Once again, there was a very high response to this statement from those choosing 'N/A', at 58%. Due to the small remaining numbers, the difference between 13% choosing '1'²⁷ and 25% choosing '5' should be approached with caution, particularly given that 31% chose '2', and the proportion goes back down again to 19% for '3' and 13% for '4'.

1	2	3	4	5
13%	31%	19%	13%	25%

The main thing that these results show us, once again, is the variation in experiences that staff and students at King's are having. In this case, the variation could be for one of two reasons, either different parts of the university, and/or different requests. While a student changing their gender is likely to need to change most of the same documents, it may be that it is easier for those who are changing from one binary gender to another than for those who are requesting documents use non-gendered titles²⁸, or register them as other than 'M' or 'F'.

4.4.2.5 Treatment by colleagues/other students who know/assume that I'm trans

Fewer than 20% of respondents answered that this statement was 'N/A', and it is initially very reassuring to see that 30% of respondents chose '5'. However, these results should be considered alongside the responses to the next question (4.4.3), and it should be noted that a total of 19% chose either '1'²⁹ or '2', and another 19% chose 3, with only 14% choosing '4'.

While a pleasingly large proportion of respondents (44%) appear to have had positive experiences of treatment by colleagues/other students who know/assume that they are trans, this is far from a universal experience, and it should once again be noted that many trans people will only come out to those with whom they are already comfortable, although this does not account for those who have no option over coming out.

4.4.2.6 (for staff:) Treatment by managers who know/assume that I'm trans

Responses to this question should be considered with a great degree of caution, given that 75% of respondents chose 'N/A' (mostly due to being students, rather than staff, one can quite reasonably assume, although as this is a very high proportion, it should also be considered that some staff marked this as 'N/A' because they had chosen to not be out to their managers). This small number of responses means that the difference between the 12.5% who each responded with either '1' or '2', and the 37.5% each who responded '3' and '5' (no respondents chose '4') should not be considered significant. It is

²⁷ As a reminder, this section uses a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is very negative, and 5 is very positive.

²⁸ The most common of these is 'Mx', often pronounced [ɛm ɛks] or [mæks or mæks]

(<http://mxactivist.tumblr.com/post/143384912785>)

²⁹ As a reminder, this section uses a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is very negative, and 5 is very positive.

possible, however, to note that 62.5% of respondents chose in the range of 1 to 3, suggesting that the majority of staff have not had positive experiences of their treatment by managers.

4.4.2.7 (for students:) Treatment by lecturers/tutors who know/assume that I'm trans
 There is a high (40.5%) proportion of respondents who chose that this statement was 'N/A', therefore suggesting that they were able, and had chosen, to not be out to staff. However, it is reassuring (although not surprising, as trans people tend not to make the decision to come out to others lightly, and unless coming out is necessary, may choose only to come out to those who they feel safe with) that those who had chosen to come out to staff had often had positive experiences. Responses to this question show a clear trend, with the responses of those who chose a number as follows:

1	2	3	4	5
5%	19%	19%	24%	33%

4.4.2.8 Staff responses to me disclosing my trans status

While not as high as the first 4 statements, this statement also received a relatively high rate of 'N/A' responses, at 49%. It should again be considered that, unless it is necessary to come out to a member of staff (for example due to the need to discuss transition-related absence, changes to documents, etc.), trans individuals will only have come out to those staff with whom they felt safe to do so. It is relatively positive to see that 42% of those who disclose their trans status had a neutral experience (choosing '3'), and good to see that 26% had a very positive experience, choosing '5'. It should be noted, though, that 5% each chose '1³⁰' and '2' (a further 21% chose '4'). Unfortunately, it is not possible to know how the experiences differ between those who come out through choice and those who have had to. Breaking down the information in this way might be useful in a future survey, depending on the response rate.

One focus group participant noted, in relation to applying for funding and PhD places:

"I know for disability related things at least, a lot of people are told, by academic staff, 'Don't disclose'. Because, even though it's not supposed to be a disadvantage to you, because a lot of places are so competitive, don't take the risk, essentially. Pretend everything is normal. I suspect it could be the same for trans status."

4.4.2.9 Student responses to me disclosing my trans status

If we compare the 'N/A' response rate to this statement (29.7%) to that of the previous statement (48.7%), it seems that respondents, who we should recall are >90% students, are much more likely to disclose that they are trans to other students than they are to staff. As noted throughout, the main reason for this is likely to be that students only come out to those who they already trust. This would explain why 38% of respondents who chose a number chose '5' for this statement, though it is of course concerning that 8% chose to and 16% chose 3. As one student stated in the survey: *"I had a positive experience of disclosing to a small number of fellow students, but these were carefully selected people I felt I could trust (some of whom were also trans)."*

³⁰ As a reminder, this section uses a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is very negative, and 5 is very positive.

4.4.2.10 Support received from the university in relation to being trans

While it is reassuring to see that only 12.5% of those that chose a number in response to the statement chose '1', unfortunately, the proportion who chose '2' is 33%, and the proportions drop steadily from here:

1	2	3	4	5
12.5%	33%	25%	17%	12.5%

This suggests that the large majority (70.5%) of students had an experience that was less than good in terms of the support that they have received from the University in relation to being trans. Less than 30% chose a number which suggested that they had had a positive experience, only 18% of all of those who answered the question. 34% of respondents to this statement chose 'N/A', and while it will of course be true that some respondents have not sought out support as they have not felt the need for it, as this is a higher proportion than, for example, those who said that a statement on disclosing trans status to a staff member was not applicable, it seems likely that there are a proportion of students who require support and have not received any, possibly even after requesting it.

4.4.2.11 (for staff:) Access to development, progression or promotion

it is interesting to note that, at 85%, the proportion of those who marked this question 'N/A' is higher than the 75% who marked the previous (for staff:) question as not applicable. This suggests that some/a higher proportion of those who marked this question not applicable are in fact staff members who found the question to not be applicable to them, rather than students who found it not applicable by default. For some, it could be suggested that this is because they feel their role or position at the University does not have development, progression or promotion possibilities (for example, this might be felt by non-office-based support staff), for others, this question may be seen as not applicable because they do not feel that their trans status is relevant to development, progression or promotion.

It is up to the University to decide whether trans status should be relevant to development, progression or promotion, but issues such as time taken off to recover from surgery, publications under a previous name, and specific needs in relation to support and development that trans people may have, as a minority group particularly susceptible to mental health problems due to stress and isolation, should be considered. Of those who did reply by choosing a number, 25% chose '1'³¹, 25% '3' and 50% '4'. With such small numbers of responses, unless all respondents chose '1' or '5', not much can be inferred from the results except that staff have had different experiences, and it should be considered that while this may be due to different departments, it could also be due to staff's experiences spanning a period of time.

One focus group participant described their concerns around progression thus:

"It's frustrating because when you're applying for things like PhDs and you're told 'well you didn't get it because we've had applicants who did the study abroad and they did the year in industry and they did this and they did that and you haven't done any of that.' And it's 'yes, but I haven't done any of them because:' and you don't necessarily want to disclose, but it's difficult."

³¹ As a reminder, this section uses a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is very negative, and 5 is very positive.

4.4.2.12 (for students:) Assessment and academic support

39% of respondents to this question felt that it was 'N/A', and 2.8% chose 'prefer not to say'. Of those who chose a number value, there is no significant trend, with the highest proportion choosing '3', but only slightly lower proportions choosing every other value except for '1'.

1	2	3	4	5
9.5%	19%	28.6%	19%	23.8%

Given the experiences recounted in the focus groups in relation to pedagogy (see 4.5.6 for more on this) and sandwich courses, it is surprising to see such positive results (although it could be said that, at 57.1%, the majority did not have a positive experience).

It should perhaps be considered that some respondents may have had difficulty identifying experiences where their trans status had affected their assessment and academic support, particularly given that the picture that has been created so far is that many respondents are not known to be trans to academic staff, and/or are not currently taking steps towards medical intervention which might increase their need for specific academic support. In this case, the question may have been answered by some in relation to overall experiences of assessment and academic support, and future research or investigation may wish to consider in more detail how this is affected by a student's trans status.

4.4.2.13 Support received from the Students' Union in relation to being trans

52.4% of respondents who chose a number had a positive experience ('4' or '5') of support from the students' union in relation to being trans, compared to 28.6% who chose '1' or '2'. The remaining 19% chose the neutral option of '3', while 40.5% of overall respondents stated that this question was 'N/A'. It is unclear what kind of support people are referring to, and whether they had, for example, positive experiences of formal support and negative experiences of informal support, or vice versa. It is also not known whether students were responding in relation to the students' union as a whole, or the LGBT+ society. The LGBT+ society is discussed in more detail later in this report, but largely was spoken about very positively.

4.4.2.14 Social and networking events at King's

One student noted that "The only positive events were LGBT+ exclusive ones organised by the LGBT+ society. Other societies do not have trans safety in mind and especially TPoC³²." While another added "I have met a community of trans students through the SU, notably the LGBT+ association. Their regular coffee socials and events are a place I feel safe to be open about being nonbinary." It is to be expected that responses to a question about social and networking events will largely centre around the students union.

Of those who gave a numbered response³³, 50%, spread almost completely evenly between the two, chose either '4' or '5', with 30% choosing '1' or '2', 23% of these having chosen '2'. The remaining 20% chose the neutral '3'. Overall, it appears that more respondents had positive experiences than negative, but that there were also a significant proportion of the respondents whose experience was neutral. The students' union is discussed in more detail later in the report.

³² Trans People of Colour.

³³ As a reminder, this section uses a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is very negative, and 5 is very positive.

4.4.3 Transphobic language and attacks

90% of respondents chose to answer the following questions, after being given the following option to opt out:

“If you would rather not answer a question about transphobic and sexual violence, you can skip that question here.

Please skip that question

I’m happy to answer”

Due to the potentially sensitive nature of the issues under discussion, the clear trends in the survey data, and the small size of the focus groups, as well as their aim and purpose, issues around transphobic language, attacks, and sexual violence were not raised in the focus groups. Cis-centric language and concepts were, however, noted and discussed by participants in response to prompts which were developed in relation to other questions.

One area which was not tackled in the survey was individuals’ experience of reporting and willingness to report these experiences. As noted in section 5, this could be the subject of a further investigation.

Respondents were instructed to: “Please answer yes, no, prefer not to say, or not applicable (N/A) to the following statements:

- I have experienced transphobic language being used towards me at King's
- I have experienced transphobic language being used towards others at King's
- I have experienced cissexist language (used here to mean language which erases trans people, and/or positions them as not normal) being used at King's
- I have been physically attacked because of my trans status at King's
- I have witnessed another being physically attacked because of their trans status at King's
- I have been sexually harassed/assaulted/attacked because of my trans status at King's
- I have witnessed another being sexually harassed/assaulted/attacked because of their trans status at King's
- I have felt excluded from services/activities provided by King's because of my trans status/history”

4.4.3.1 Transphobic Language

It is interesting to note, given previous considerations about the respondents to the survey, for example the fact that many might not yet have taken steps to medically transition or to socially transition in a way that was evident to those outside of their friendship groups, that only a small proportion of respondents (5.9%) felt that the statement ‘I have experienced transphobic language being used towards me at King's’ was not applicable to them. This suggests that almost all respondents felt vulnerable to transphobic language. Only one respondent felt that ‘I have experienced transphobic language being used towards others at King's’ was ‘not applicable’, and as this was one of the same individuals who stated that the first statement was not applicable to them, it is perhaps possible that this was due to misunderstanding the statement, though it might also be someone who did not knowingly know any (other) trans people.

26% of respondents to the survey have experienced transphobic language being used towards them at King’s. A significantly higher proportion, 59%, have experienced transphobic language being used

towards others. While the survey question did not ask who was the perpetrator in these situations, free text responses note that transphobic language was used towards them and their friends and colleagues by both students and staff:

“There was one instance when I have experienced transphobic/cissexist language being used towards others at King's, and it was towards one of my non-binary friends during a student society event. It was handled extremely well by both our friend group and the members of the committee present, but it happened nonetheless. The person...was a cis gay man, to add more context here.”

“I have experienced transphobia at St Thomas's Occupational Health. I am registered there because I'm a nursing student. I made a formal complaint. It was acknowledged and an apology made - although I was also made to feel that I was "over-sensitive.””

“I do not go out much on campus as I often do not feel very safe in university spaces. on the rare occasions that I have gone to waterfront or guys bar I have witnessed or heard transphobic language used towards other people. Also transphobic/assumptive responses from security guards when using gendered toilets.”

Two focus group participants added:

“I expect something to be done, I don't know about maybe security getting training in stuff? Because I know there have been issues with security.”

“They're always just like 'tell us', but we're like 'uhm, we don't want to'.”

“They're really big men, and a lot of people aren't quite comfortable.”

And another focus group participant suggested: *“There should be an anonymous reporting form or something, that would probably be useful.”*

4.4.3.2 Cissexist language

70.6% of respondents stated that “I have experienced cissexist language (used here to mean language which erases trans people, and/or positions them as not normal) being used at King's”. This is not surprising, as cissexist language it is the norm, but it is easily resolved, and it was disappointing to read in the free text that: *“When approached, lecturers have not changed this attitude.”* and *“Cissexist language is used continuously in Health, Life & Bio Science courses.”* A third survey respondent noted: *“Cissexist language is general used by most staff, most commonly when greeting everyone and such.”*

Cissexist language is not only to the personal detriment of individuals, such as, as one survey respondent described: *“assuming someone's preferred pronouns and using them when they're inaccurate”*, but also affects all students' learning, as described by another survey respondent:

“Medical school curriculum is full of cissexist and assumptive language (that in many cases is just wrong! when we are taught that 'men' are at higher risk of particular things, usually what is meant is that estrogen is protective, and post menopausal cis women or those with low levels of estrogen are equally as at risk!).”

4.4.3.3 Physical attack

It is concerning to note that one respondent reported having been physically attacked, and three responded that they had seen others be physically attacked, because of their trans status, at King's. As previously noted, there was no question dedicated to discovering whether these attacks were reported, and transphobic attacks were not discussed in the focus groups. It should also be noted that against both of these questions, two people chose the response 'prefer not to say', suggesting that, even in an independent survey, staff and/or students at King's are not comfortable reporting that transphobic attacks have happened.

4.4.3.4 Sexual harassment/assault

While no respondents stated that they had been sexually harassed/assaulted/attacked as a result of their trans status at King's, two respondents stated that they 'prefer not to say', and 5 respondents stated that they had witnessed another being sexually harassed/assaulted/attacked, with 3 answering 'prefer not to say' against this statement. No comments were made about sexual harassment/assault in the free text. As with transphobic attacks, these results are concerning both in terms of the reported incidences of harassment and assault and the numbers who prefer not to respond to the question.

4.4.3.5 Exclusion from services

9% of respondents chose 'N/A', to this statement, presumably meaning that they did not feel they had tried to access any services. 53% of respondents stated that yes, they have felt excluded from services/activities provided by King's because of their trans status/history. 35% of respondents chose 'No' in response to the statement, suggesting that they had not felt excluded.

The main service that students referred to here was the University Health Centre. In a focus group, in response to the prompt "What are the main 3 changes that King's needs to make to be more inclusive of trans people?" one respondent stated:

"My number one would be healthcare. Because that's so materially important. To not have to, every time I go to the doctors', I don't have to deal with all this extra stuff... Whether I'm going to the doctor about something related to being trans or not, a level of basic understanding, that would be massive."

Responses to the survey and in the focus groups suggested that the health centre did not seem to provide its staff with training on how to provide health services for trans people. This was not limited to services related to medical transition, or even exclusively physical health, students also referred to mental health staff stating that they could not support trans service users as they 'did not know how'.

In the free text following this question, one respondent summed up the views of many with whom I spoke and who completed the survey when they said: "*The KCL Health Centre does nothing to include trans students.*" Another participant in the survey noted that they had made a formal complaint about transphobia within Occupational Health. This complaint was responded to, however: "*I was also made to feel that I was "over-sensitive."*". Other students had effectively self-excluded on account of their trans status:

"I elected not to use the campus health centre as I didn't want to run into other students in the waiting rooms when attending my semi-regular appointments for hormone injections, and have to make up a reason for being there."

Another service from which respondents to the survey felt excluded was sporting activities. One respondent described gendered sports teams as *“hard to navigate”*, while another noted that they *“erase non-binary identities.”* and added: *“I have been misgendered at all sporting events/clubs I have attended.”*

4.5 OVERALL THEMES

4.5.1 Personal support

Where support, be this formal or informal, is provided, this is often done well and respondents report some positive experiences. However, seeking support or advice requires significant proactive work on the part of the trans person, and a lack of visibility of support, the effort required to progress change and pervasive cissexism and everyday transphobia, led to an overall feeling that the University is not supportive of trans staff and students.

Focus group participants, for example, cited the campaign for gender neutral toilets as having been lengthy and requiring that they undertake work they would expect to have been undertaken by the university, and one survey respondent described it as follows:

“Students have had to fight for gender neutral toilets for YEARS and even when it finally happened, our tactics were questioned and we had to do all the leg work (including a FULL AUDIT of toilets on campus) by ourselves”.

This feeling of lack of support was due to both lack of institutional systems, processes and procedures (and/or visibility of said initiatives), and widespread ignorance of trans people, our identities, and the issues we may face, often coupled with dismissiveness or resistance (particularly from academic staff) when these issues were raised.

Responses were not exclusively negative. Administrative staff, for example departmental secretaries and admissions staff, were credited in focus groups with attempting to seek out solutions when trans students approached them with problems (mostly in relation to registration). However, it was reported that these staff sometimes had difficulty finding answers to their questions. The responses from focus group participants showed that support varied significantly depending on departments and individuals, suggesting that there was no one agreed-upon approach, that this was not known to the staff member, or that differing systems across departments did not allow for policies to be enacted as written. One student stated: *“Other people I know have had positive experiences of changing their records, but this doesn't apply to me.”*

4.5.2 Institutional competence

There is evidence of a lack of knowledge and awareness of trans people and the issues we may face, leading to a lack of commitment to inclusion. One survey respondent said:

“The culture, both pedagogical and professional is not where it needs to be in terms of trans awareness or inclusion. I attended a gendered intelligence panel a few weeks ago, and at no stage have I seen senior academic leadership wish to engage with trans people or attend such sessions, even though their knowledge is certainly not up to scratch, never mind anyone else's.”

While another added: *“KCLSU healthcare staff are impressively ignorant of trans issues.”*

Focus group participants spoke of a lack of understanding of gender diversity and the small changes that could be made in order to be more inclusive leading to awkward and uncomfortable situations. One participant recounted:

“Speaking to receptionists...when you have to be on the phone and they’re like ‘oh, *what’s* your name?’...’oh she’s here to pick up the money’ and, well, ‘She’s’ not here. There is no ‘She’. That’s quite a big problem. They’re not doing it on purpose, but everyone should be using ‘they’ unless they specifically know.”

One respondent suggested that there is a need for:

“compulsory trans awareness training for ALL STAFF - this should include basics such as name-changing on official documentation and pronouns, and also basic knowledge of transitioning healthcare - trans awareness days advertised by the university, for the students, that trans people are not completely given the burden of organizing.”

This was supported by numerous others, and particularly emphasized in the focus groups. As one student noted:

“Students and lecturers outside of the SU do not participate voluntarily in trans awareness events, and as far as I’m aware are not obligated to attend any trans awareness training. Thus they are ignorant as to proper pronoun usage and ways to respect trans identities, and have no idea of transitioning and health issues that affect trans people.”

Individuals in the focus groups discussed having to participate in a lecture on plagiarism at the beginning of each year, and questioned why a similar session on trans issues was not provided.

4.5.3 Visibility

King’s currently has a lack of visibility of both trans people and of the support provided for trans people at the university. One focus group participant stated: “*When I turned up it felt like I was the only one here*”. While a survey respondent noted: “*Support for trans individuals at King’s is not visible (I’m not aware of any)*.” And others added:

“The presence of transgender people and issues are highly ignored from my experience. King’s does not visibly promote any programmes or support to help trans people”

“Trans inclusion is definitely not visible... There are policies and procedures in place but they need to be more explicit: it took me a long time to work out how I could register my name change.”

As well as responding to the issues that trans people might experience, it is important that visibility of trans people is celebratory and places trans people alongside cis people at King’s as equals. One survey respondent suggested:

“A nice campaign maybe showing alumni who are trans and want to show how they are successful.... We have so many famous alumni and increasingly we are seeing all the PoC³⁴ and women who have worked so hard at King’s to become brilliant. It would be nice to maybe have something with trans people.

³⁴ People of Colour.

4.5.4 Healthcare

Healthcare was one of the main areas from which trans people at King's felt excluded, as described in section 4.4.3, with a range of barriers to accessing the university Health Centre described by respondents. One survey respondent stated:

"Training for all staff, especially councilors [sic], need to be in place and compulsory. It's not great sitting there and spending half an hour basically giving them a trans and non-binary 101 introduction."

Physical and mental health are key concerns for trans people. Many trans people wish to access medical transition in the form of hormones and surgery, and then require ongoing monitoring for side-effects for the rest of their lives. As well as this, gender dysphoria³⁵ can result in physical neglect, eating disorders, failure to recognise symptoms of illness, (particularly those associated with the sex assigned at birth) as well as anxiety and depression. 88% of respondents to the *Trans Mental Health Study 2012*³⁶ stated they currently or had previously experienced depression. For these reasons, physical and mental health services need to be not only accessible to trans people but welcoming and explicitly trans inclusive.

4.5.5 The Students' Union

The students' union, and particularly the LGBT+ society, was mentioned by many respondents as a supportive and affirmative space in which they felt able to be out about their trans status and receive support. 58% of the free text answers to the statement "Positive things I want to say about being trans at King's are:" mentioned the LGBT+ society.

One student stated: "*If I was not part of the LGBT+ society this year, I would have totally disagreed with everything.*" [every statement in the first question grid] While another added: "*LGBT+ society is brilliant, everything else is pretty abysmal.*" And a third stated:

"I have met a community of trans students through the SU, notably the LGBT+ association. Their regular coffee socials and events are a place I feel safe to be open about being nonbinary."

This positivity towards the LGBT+ society was almost universally felt. However, it should be noted that there was one respondent who felt that the LGBT society was too militant, and appeared unhappy that the society was working to become inclusive of non-binary people and work on antiracist campaigns, feeling that, for example, learning about gender norms was "*childish*" and use of gender neutral pronouns "*babyish*".

In the focus groups, participants were asked: "Are there aspects of the ways in which the LGBT Society works, or things that it does, that could be translated into the University?" One participant gave the following comprehensive response:

"One thing is visibility. This year we've had the first openly trans president of the society and that's made a big difference... A lot more people feel comfortable coming out...[It's] creating an environment that feels safe for trans people, listening when trans people bring up issues or want something to change. Being responsive."

³⁵ Gender dysphoria is a medical term used to describe a person experiencing discomfort or distress because of a mismatch between their biological sex and gender identity.

³⁶ Ibid.

When asked if there were other ways that it had become a safe space beyond the election of a trans president, the same participant noted that one aspect was:

“Challenging old ideas around trans people...having those difficult conversations that it’s easy to push to the side or say ‘that’s too challenging’ and not deal with it. It’s having the courage to tell people who aren’t trans that ‘if you’re not going to respect trans people then that’s your issue and you can take it elsewhere’, and I feel like at the moment that would never be said by the university. They would never actually challenge people who are powerful, like who don’t care about trans people or respecting trans people.”

4.5.6 Pedagogy

In both the survey responses and the focus groups, students commented on the lack of content in their courses which either described and referred to trans people and the issues they may face, or took account of trans people’s lived experience as sometimes problematizing the gender binary. One focus group participant noted that it was particularly important in medical and biological science disciplines:

“Because they’re going to be being into that field, they’re going to need to understand that their patients are going to have differing genders and sexualities.”

Students also noted a number of issues that occurred when they attempted to raise this as a problem with academic staff. Students noted:

- A resistance from lecturing and teaching staff when they raised issues with them
- That they were concerned about the reputation that they gained with academic staff when they found themselves raising these issues repeatedly
- that they felt responsible for raising the issue as it was important that their classmates became aware of the issues/the incorrect information being taught (particularly in medicine and biosciences)
- that they felt it should not be their responsibility to carry the weight of educating the academic staff, particularly in areas where they felt the curriculum should take account of gender diversity as standard.

Some students felt that their ability to engage fully in education had been hampered by their trans status. One survey respondent stated:

“King's does not do enough to make the university feel safe for trans and non-binary people. Things such as language used during lectures and seminars by staff members are often binary and assumptive of how one presents.”

Another student, in a focus group, spoke of not speaking up in class because:

“In lectures when they pick someone and they’re like: ‘oh, her’ or ‘the girl over there’ or ‘the boy over there’... and you’re sitting there like ‘I’m never gonna put my hand up because you’re gonna push some gender on me and it’s gonna be really embarrassing when I speak.”

As previously noted, the rigidity of course structures, particularly in relation to sandwich programmes such as study abroad or year in industry, is unsuitable for many trans students due to their healthcare

needs. Respondents also raised concerns around reasonable adjustments being made for time taken out of studies for medical appointments and surgery.

5 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER INVESTIGATION

Not listed below are the next two stages in this three-part project: a review of policies and procedures, and training for frontline staff. However, in relation to staff training, it should be noted that during the focus groups it became apparent that there were many and varied areas of the University in which students felt that staff could benefit from a baseline of knowledge about trans people, and that students noted that leadership needed to come from above, so consideration may additionally need to be given to methods by which basic trans awareness training can be rolled out to all staff, and managers trained to support their staff to in turn support trans individuals.

5.1 REPORTING OF TRANSPHOBIC LANGUAGE/DISCRIMINATION/ASSAULT.

As noted earlier in this report, there were no specific questions about reporting of transphobic language, discrimination or assaults. Respondents, however, discussed an unwillingness to report, and the reasons for this and how these concerns might be addressed should be investigated.

5.2 HEALTH CENTRE

The survey did not ask specific questions about the University Health Center. Respondents both in the survey and the focus groups referred to their experiences with the Centre, and the experiences were always negative, with staff being obstructive and lacking knowledge both about trans people and about how to support them. Specific research to learn more about trans people's experiences of the Health Centre, as well as identify how to address these issues should be investigated.

5.3 FOCUS GROUPS WITH STAFF

- Trans staff

As previously noted, very few of the respondents, and none of the focus group members, were university staff. Once work has begun to implement the recommendations of this report and any further initiatives that the university designs, and staff are therefore perhaps more aware of King's commitment to improving the institution for trans people, it may be easier to convene a focus group of willing trans staff.

This focus group would be well positioned to assess the effectiveness of any work done by the institution and comment on any areas specific to staff which may not have been picked up in the survey. It will be important to instill confidence in staff that their anonymity will be protected by ensuring the focus group is run independently from the university.

- Staff from key areas of concern

Focus groups or surveys should be undertaken with staff from areas where significant concerns were raised, for example the health centre and medical/biomedical departments, to ascertain whether it is lack of knowledge or active resistance which is resulting in insufficient support and negative experiences for trans students.

5.4 ACADEMIC SUPPORT

Various examples were given of students' trans status affecting their experience of their education, and at times their access to educational opportunities available to other students. However, responses to question 4.4.2.12, asking respondents to state their experiences of assessment and academic support, did not reflect this, perhaps because of a lack of clarity in the question. Alternatively, it could be the case that relatively few students experience notable effects on their academic career due to their trans status, but responses from the survey and focus group suggest that when this does happen it has far-reaching consequences.

This is certainly an area which warrants further consideration and study, perhaps through a targeted task and finish group, including trans students, and staff if possible, focusing on identifying the areas within the university where either curriculum and/or course structure can have a negative effect on the learning experience of trans students.

5.5 TIMING

If surveys or focus groups are to be re-run, or new investigations planned, consider doing this at a time which doesn't overlap with long holidays or exam periods.

6 CONCLUSIONS

According to the experiences of those consulted, trans people at King's, particularly students, are having negative experiences in education, social interactions and pastoral support during their time at the university. Almost every respondent to the survey felt that more could be done by the university to make it trans inclusive.

These negative experiences appear to be due to a lack of knowledge, understanding, awareness, and willingness to change practice by both academic and support staff, as well as institutional disorganisation around the issue – there are no clear institutional messages about how to support trans people to be valued members of the university community, and information about what support is available is difficult to locate, where it exists. Some staff make attempts to support trans students, but lack the information and support required. Training for staff which addresses these issues is clearly needed.

Two areas in which these issues were noted by participants to be particularly severe and cause them particular difficulty were teaching and the health centre. In the classroom, cissexism is prevalent both in the teaching environment and in the curriculum, resulting in students' educational opportunities being limited, and the replication and reiteration of a society which is hostile to trans people, rather than the creation of one which recognises our experiences and seeks to support us. The provision of healthcare to trans people at King's is patchy at best and obstructive at worst.

Responses showed that experience is very varied. When the proportion of people picking each option was similar across the whole range of experiences, free text and focus group responses suggested variation between faculties and career stages. Additionally, a lack of clear information and guidelines resulted in treatment and support varying person to person even within these spheres. Where trans people were disadvantaged, non-binary trans people usually found things even more difficult.

Respondents have experienced transphobic language being used towards themselves or others, and some trans people have been attacked. There does not appear to be a culture of reporting, and focus group participants described actively avoiding speaking up about harassment, while a survey respondent making a formal complaint described having been made to feel like an inconvenience.

With such a lack of knowledge across the institution and inconsistency in levels of awareness of institutional policies where they do exist, it is not surprising that there is a lack of visibility of institutional supportiveness, that there are no trans role models, and that it was not apparent to respondents that the university has any understanding that trans staff and students exist. While it is true that, for individuals, personal visibility can be a double-edged sword, real change is only likely to happen when both the support for, and issues affecting, trans people at King's are both recognised and made recognisable.

Perhaps because of this uncertainty over whether the university is a safe place for trans people, where possible, trans people are not coming out, and are also not declaring their trans status to the university. The only way to change this is to make it clear that coming out will be a benefit rather than a risk to each individual, as well as to trans people at the university as a group. Respondents suggested looking to the Students' Union LGBT+ society for good practice, which included trans people wanting to see others like themselves, and feel supported and celebrated in their diverse identities and experiences.

7 RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 TRAINING

The most significant concern arising from this report is that of the inconsistency of support and treatment experienced by staff and students across the institution. Where good practice is experienced this is due to individual actions, often requiring initiation and direction by the trans person seeking support. Poor practice is frequently due to lack of knowledge and appropriate policies, though also arises through personal resistance to critique.

This inconsistency needs to be addressed using a combination of methods:

7.1.1 Widespread training and information

Ideally, all staff and students should be required to undertake a basic level of training on trans issues. The most accessible method would be through using an online interface, though this method can be difficult to enforce. For this reason, it is vital that frontline and management staff receive specific in-person training (see below). If all students receive in-person induction training/presentations, trans issues should be made part of this. While it would be advisable not to single out trans people as the only group discussed in a 'special session', it is also vital to ensure that trans issues are not absorbed into a more generic 'equality and diversity' session where we are only given a cursory mention.

7.1.2 Specific in-person training for frontline staff and managers

Training can be most effective if targeted at two points in the organisational structure. Staff who are mostly likely to be interacting with trans individuals in need of support need a specific type of training to provide them with the information they need to both understand and address the issues, and the knowledge required to treat the trans person appropriately and compassionately. This training will need to involve familiarisation with policies and practices, learning about trans people and the issues we may face, and being provided with a supportive space in which to consider and question their own assumptions.

Senior managers such as faculty leads and SMT also need to receive training which addresses all of these areas. Additionally, they will require support in adapting their existing management skills to confidently support the sharing of knowledge and understanding about trans people at King's and how to support them to staff throughout their departments, and show leadership in responding to any incidences of harassment or discrimination.

7.1.3 Relaunching, and familiarisation of all staff with, new policies

New policy development is part of this project. The development of new policies provides an opportunity for attention to be drawn to the issues which may arise for trans people and how to appropriately respond to them, as well as more general education about trans people and how to create supportive spaces.

7.2 AVAILABILITY OF INFORMATION TO TRANS PEOPLE

As well as making policies and information on how to support trans people available to all staff (as any staff member may find themselves in a position of needing to support a trans person), it is vital that

trans staff and students are able to easily identify and access the same information. Respondents encouraged the development of a single point of contact for trans people needing support (perhaps in each faculty or on each campus) as well as recommending that all information and policies be gathered together onto a single webpage, which could then be signposted to from the relevant other services.

Examples of services which might signpost to this webpage are: the health centre, disability services, equality and diversity pages, student support pages; pages on data protection, study abroad, clinical placement, sickness and absence policies; and particularly application and student accommodation. The page which provides links to all of the relevant information and policies should also aim to provide explanatory notes and information and policies should be available in easy read versions.

7.3 MONITORING

As discussed on page 16, the disclosure of trans status, and particularly of non-binary gender identities, by students is notably low. If the university is to effectively address the issues which have arisen in this investigation, there will need to be some way of monitoring whether the experience of trans staff and students is improved. Monitoring is also key to responding to the questions relating to trans people in the Athena SWAN application.

Monitoring for a range of genders, and for trans status, should be added to all surveys of students and methods of monitoring student satisfaction, with context as to why the question is being asked. Disclosure should be considered as a barometer for student feelings of safety, confidence, and trust in the institution. There should be transparent reporting of the data and the ways in which it has been used to improve staff and student experience.

7.4 HEALTH CENTRE

Both medical and support staff within the University Health Centre should be supported to increase their knowledge and understanding of trans people at the issues we may face, and this should be made mandatory for all staff.

If possible, both systems and processes should be adapted to allow for the use of preferred names and recording of non-binary genders, and where this is not possible, care should be taken to ensure that there are agreed practices whereby all individuals are recognised as the gender they identify with³⁷.

Specific investigation of the ways in which the needs of trans people which are not being met by the health centre should be undertaken, and a senior staff member should be identified who will take responsibility for ensuring that necessary changes are implemented.

7.5 CURRICULUM AND TEACHING

Consideration should be given to the ways in which gender is used in the curriculum, and how teaching reinforces gender binaries.

The option to provide a preferred name at registration should be provided and care given to ensuring that this name is then used on all registers, class lists, etc. When calling on individuals to speak in class,

³⁷ It should be noted that some people identify as agender or nongendered, and provisions made for this.

gendered term should not be used unless the student has made it clear which they prefer³⁸. Never divide classes or activities by gender. Consideration should be given to these issues whether a trans person is known to be in the class or not.

Responsibility for ensuring that these and other relevant identified actions are undertaken should be at a senior level, and actions to improve the accessibility of the teaching environment and the curriculum to trans and non-binary students should be included in staff appraisal.

7.6 SPORTS AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Consideration should be given to regulations around membership of teams³⁹, provision of appropriate facilities, and what work can be done to develop an inclusive culture. Advice and inspiration might be taken from Trans Can Sport in Brighton⁴⁰, or Trans Girls Can⁴¹ (based in the Midlands).

7.7 GENDER NEUTRAL FACILITIES

Where possible, and where at least one set of gendered bathrooms would still be available for those who wish to use them⁴², more gender neutral bathroom facilities should be made available, with the aim to have them available in every building. Gender neutral bathrooms do not need to be purpose-built, and some institutions have created gender neutral facilities by simply changing the signage on gendered bathroom doors to read “toilets with urinals” and “toilets without urinals”. In this situation, care should be given to remembering to ensure that sanitary bins are available in all toilets. In new builds, individual stalls which each contain their own sink and other facilities are preferable.

A map of gender neutral toilet facilities, which is kept up to date, should be easily accessible online. This map should be available to visitors to the university, rather than hosted on a part of the website which requires a student or staff sign-in, and should be provided, alongside maps and physical accessibility information, online and to those invited to visit the university.

7.8 POLICIES

The second part of this three-part project is a review of all written policies at King’s which may have relevance to trans staff and students. This review will involve production of annotated and/or rewritten policies, accompanied by an action plan.

7.9 TRANSPARENCY

This report and any subsequent response and/or action plans should be made available as minimum to staff and students at the institution. Consideration should be given to making these publicly available in order to evidence commitment to trans inclusion to prospective staff and students.

³⁸ For instance, you could call on “the person at the back in the green sweater”.

³⁹ Many National Governing Bodies now have trans-inclusive policies.

⁴⁰ <https://www.facebook.com/transcansport/>

⁴¹ <http://transgirlscan.tumblr.com/>

⁴² Some women, including trans women, may feel safer using women-only bathrooms. Some religious observance does not allow for the use of mixed bathroom facilities.

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9 APPENDICES

9.1 SURVEY

[Page 1 – Introduction]

My name is Harri, and for the last 10 years I have been working in the higher education sector as a consultant, to improve knowledge and understanding of trans communities.

I previously worked with staff at King's on the Athena SWAN Charter, and have been recently invited me to work on a project to understand more about the experiences of trans staff and students at the university and help put some initiatives in place to support trans staff and students and improve their experience.

The definition of 'trans' I work with is very broad, and includes anyone who feels that their gender does not match that which would be assumed to follow from the sex that they were assigned at birth. (For more information, visit Gendered Intelligence's 'Knowledge Is Power' definition: <http://genderedintelligence.co.uk/projects/kip/transidentities> this resource is designed for young people, but this page gives a clear description of what 'trans' means.)

This survey is the first part of this project, and will help me to understand what work needs to be done. I would be very grateful if you would complete the survey if you work or study at King's and feel that you fit within the definition above. For this project, it does not matter to me if you transitioned 20 years ago or plan to this year, are only just beginning to question your gender, and/or feel that the idea of transition does not make sense for you. If you feel that you fit under the trans umbrella, please complete this survey.

Only the sorting questions on the first page of the survey are compulsory; after this please tell me as much or as little as you are comfortable with. The raw data from the survey will not be made available to staff at King's, and any identifying features will be removed before sharing any specific examples. If you close this page at any point before completing the survey, none of your responses will be recorded.

The survey is being disseminated to all staff and students at King's, and I would appreciate it if you could also send the survey on to any trans people you know personally who have recently left the institution.

Thank you for completing the survey. I look forward to working with you to make King's a better place for all trans people.

[Page 2]

It is important that we get information from the right people about their experiences so that we can make the right changes. I will be using data about trans people's experiences in higher education as a whole, and in the country as a whole, to support my report and recommendations, but for this survey, it is important that the responses are restricted only to staff and students currently at King's, or who have left recently (in the last 3 years).

*Do you currently work and/or study at King's, or have you worked and/or studied at King's in the last 3 years?

Yes

No

*Are you staff or a student at King's?

Staff

Student

Prefer not to say

Other [-----]

*Do you identify as trans, as questioning your gender, or as a person with a trans history?

Yes

No

Not Sure

[Page 3 – Your experience]

On the following 3 pages, please feel free to give as much or as little information as you wish. The more information you give, the more we have to work with to improve King's for trans people. There will be an option at the end of the survey to offer to take part in further face to face or telephone discussions about your experiences of King's.

[Page 4]

Content note: This survey briefly mentions, and asks you to think about, transphobic and sexual violence. There is the option to skip this question.

In this survey I use the word 'transition' to mean any process of attempting to align your body and/or presentation with your gender identity. This need not include medical transition.

Please tell me about your views on King's as a place to work or study, responding to each statement with your opinion: from totally disagree to completely agree. You can also click prefer not to say, or not applicable (N/A)

	Totally disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Completely agree	Prefer not to say	N/A
King's is a supportive place for trans people to work							
King's is a supportive place for trans people to study							
King's is a supportive place for LGB people but not for trans people							
Staff at King's are knowledgeable about trans people and the difficulties we may face							
Trans inclusion is clearly visible at King's							
It is easy to find information about the support that trans							

	Totally disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Completely agree	Prefer not to say	N/A
people at King's can expect to receive							
Policies and procedures at King's take trans people into account							
I feel comfortable being out to my colleagues/other students about being trans/a person with a trans history							
There is more that King's could do to support trans people							

Please feel free to comment on any of the above [-----]

Please rate your experience of the following at King's on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is very negative, and 5 is very positive. You can also click prefer not to say, or not applicable (N/A).

	1	2	3	4	5	Prefer not to say	N/A
Transitioning whilst studying/working at King's							
Applying to study/work at King's during or post transition							
Taking time off for/managing trans related healthcare whilst at King's							
Managing changes to my university documents while at King's							
Treatment by colleagues/other students who know/assume that I'm trans							
(for staff:) Treatment by managers who know/assume that I'm trans							
(for students:) Treatment by lecturers/tutors who know/assume that I'm trans							
Staff responses to me disclosing my trans status							
Student responses to me disclosing my trans status							
Support received from the university in relation to being trans.							
(for staff:) Access to development, progression or promotion							
(for students:) Assessment and academic support							
Support received from the Students' Union in relation to being trans.							
Social and networking events at King's							

Please feel free to comment on any of the above [-----]

*If you would rather not answer a question about transphobic and sexual violence, you can skip that question here.

Please skip that question
I'm happy to answer

[Page 5]

Please answer yes, no, prefer not to say, or not applicable (N/A) to the following statements.

	Yes	No	Prefer not to say	N/A
I have experienced transphobic language being used towards me at King's				
I have experienced transphobic language being used towards others at King's				
I have experienced cissexist language (used here to mean language which erases trans people, and/or positions them as not normal) being used at King's				
I have been physically attacked because of my trans status at King's				
I have witnessed another being physically attacked because of their trans status at King's				
I have been sexually harassed/assaulted/attacked because of my trans status at King's				
I have witnessed another being sexually harassed/assaulted/attacked because of their trans status at King's				
I have felt excluded from services/activities provided by King's because of my trans status/history				

Please feel free to comment on any of the above [-----]

[Page 6]

On this page there are some optional text boxes you can complete to tell me about your experiences at King's, and any thoughts you might have on the subject of being trans at the university.

These are the final questions about your experience at King's, the next page is demographic questions.
Positive things I want to say about being trans at King's are: [-----
-----]

Negative things I want to say about being trans at King's are: [-----
-----]

I have some thoughts about how the university could improve its support for trans people, they are: [----
-----]

[Page 7 – About you]

To help me analyse the results of this survey, it is useful to know some things about you. I would be grateful if you would answer as many of the following questions as you are comfortable answering.

What is (or was) your main role at King's?

An academic staff member

An office-based professional services staff member

A non-office-based professional services staff member

An undergraduate student

A Masters student
A PhD student
Other (please specify) [-----]

What is your age?

Under 18
19 to 21
22 to 25
26 to 30
31 to 40
41 to 50
51 to 60
61 and over

I am happy to give my age it is: [--]

How would you describe your gender?

Woman/Female (including trans woman and woman with a trans history)
Man/Male (including trans man and man with a trans history)
Non-binary
In another way [-----]

Is your gender identity the same as the gender you were given at birth?

Yes
No
Other (please specify) [-----]

How would you describe your ethnicity? [-----]

Do you consider yourself to be disabled (including chronic illness/long-term health conditions)?

Yes
No
Not sure
Other (please specify) [-----]

One aim of the survey is to help frame questions for focus groups and/or interviews with trans staff and students at King's. The results of both the survey and the in-person conversations will be written up into a report for the university. No personal identifying information will be shared.

[Page 8 – Further involvement]

I would be very grateful if you would be involved in these in-person conversations, as they will allow us to consider and discuss what trans people working and studying at King's want from the university, meaning that recommendations I make will be informed by the experience of staff and students.

If you would like to take part in a focus group or one-to-one interview, please enter your contact details below, or you can email me on harri.weeks@gmail.com.

Email Address [-----]

Phone Number [-----]

[Page 9 – Thank you]

Thank you very much for completing this survey, your answers will shape the work I do with King's to help make it a better place for trans people to work and study, including training for staff, a review of policies and development of an action plan for future work.

9.2 FOCUS GROUP SCRIPT

Hi, my name is Harri, I'm a trans person with a history of working in education and healthcare largely around research, policy, and institutional. As you know, I'm working with King's to try and improve the support for trans staff and students. Thank you all very much being here this morning, in a minute we will go into introductions but I need to do a few housekeeping things first.

I will be recording the session. This is because I don't have the ability to take notes on everything that is said and want to get a good record. Only I will have access to the recording.

Apart from the people in the room today, no one else knows who is here today, and when writing up the report I will remove any information that that might make you recognisable from any quotes I may use.

I have some questions/prompts I would like to use, which have come from the responses to the survey. I'd like to keep the group quite informal, however we only have 2 hours and there are lots of areas that it's important I cover, so at times I may ask you to begin to wrap it up, or check in with you as to whether something you are talking about is relevant to the question and the overall aim of improving King's' provision and support for trans people.

I would like for us to be able to take a few small breaks throughout the 2 hours. I've scheduled these into my list of prompts, and will let you know when there is one coming up, but if you need to take a break at any time, just let us know.

As it is only me here today, I don't have someone with me who can come after you if you leave without explanation. Whilst I know it may be hard. If you feel the need to leave and be alone for a moment I would really appreciate it if you made that clear as you left. If you'd like to speak to me on your own outside, please ask me take a break, and then let me know that you want me to step out with you.

All that being said, I don't intend for this to be a deep and stressful session. It's not counselling session, or necessarily even a place for you all to air any problems with the University. I'm talking to you because I think you're best placed to suggest ways forward. So that's how I would like to focus our attentions today.

The bathrooms are:

There isn't expected to be a fire alarm.

Can we now take a couple of minutes to introduce ourselves? Please give your name, the pronoun that you would like other people in the room to use if they refer to you, and, if you're comfortable, a little bit of context would be useful.

For example, I'm in the 2nd year of my undergraduate degree, it's in a science subject, I started transitioning last year. Or: I'm a Masters student, I transitioned medically 10 years ago. Or: I'm in my final year of my undergraduate degree in History, I don't intend to medically transition, and I have a gender queer or non-binary gender et cetera et cetera.

Does anyone have any questions at this point? (quick break, tea, toilet, etc. Will start at 10/15:20)

1x:20 We will start with spending a few minutes on quite an open question:

There was quite an even split between people who felt that King's was and wasn't a supportive space for trans people to study, why do you think this might be?

(15 mins)

1x:35 A significant majority disagreed that staff at King's are knowledgeable about trans people and the difficulties we may face. Do you agree? (2 mins)

1x:37 What do you think could be done to improve the situation?

(10 minutes)

1x:47 One more short question and then we will take a break.

Are there any particular groups of staff/parts of the university that you feel there is a problem with? (Are there any particular areas that you think it is most important have a higher level of knowledge?)

(8 mins)

1x:55 Ok, let's take a (10 minute break)

1y:05 Two thirds of people disagreed that trans inclusion is visible at King's.

In a few words, and I will come to each of you in turn, what would trans inclusion at King's look like?

(5 mins)

1y:10 How could this inclusion be made visible?

(5 mins)

1y:15 After this one, we'll take another break: Respondents strongly disagree that it is easy to find information about the support trans people at King's can expect to receive. Where would you expect to see or find this information?

(10 mins)

1y:25 Ok, now let's take a (5 minute break).

1y:30 The LGBT Society received a lot of positive feedback. Are there aspects of the ways in which the LGBT Society works, or things that it does, that could be translated into the University?

(5 mins)

1y:35 In general, respondents reported positive treatment by staff and students who knew that they were trans, and very positive experiences of coming out to other students, and to lecturers and tutors. Is this in line with your experience? To you have any comments on this result?

(5 mins)

1y:40 Are there any areas you were expecting to see discussed in the survey or today which haven't been? (go to each in turn)

(5 mins)

1y:45 For the final 10 minutes, I would like you each to speak for a couple of minutes.
What are the main 3 changes that King's needs to make to be more inclusive of trans people?
(10 mins)

1y:55 Thank you all so much for your time today. You have my email address, so if you have any other thoughts or questions, please drop me a line.

Before we all leave, does anyone have any questions, or anything that they would like to say to close off the session?