

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

LGBT+ Allies in the NTU workplace

What does being a workplace LGBT+ ally mean?

Being a workplace LGBT+ ally is about visibly supporting and advocating for LGBT+ equality, by:

Increasing personal knowledge and understanding of LGBT+ inclusion issues, and sharing that knowledge with colleagues. You don't need to already be an 'expert', but be willing to learn and reflect on your workplace practices.

Being willing to challenge: not letting comments or 'jokes' slide which could be seen as harmful or offensive.

Pride: actively and openly supporting LGBT+ people, events, key dates etc.

Accepting diversity: knowing that no individual has the same needs or experiences, and that being an ally can mean different things to different people. *"Being an ally is about speaking up/out for LGBT+ issues but also includes having an awareness of the diversity of the community and not being drawn into speaking on behalf of LGBT+ people."*

LGBT+ Allies at NTU

LGBT+ Allies at NTU are **self-selected** and **self-motivated members of staff**. They are individuals who, through their workplace role or through their personal commitment (or both), wish to visibly support and advocate for LGBT+ equality.

They demonstrate this commitment through whatever avenues and opportunities are available and appropriate. Some initial ideas and resources are in this pack, but it is up to you to motivate yourself to do something!

Our core principles

Self-motivation. This scheme is centrally supported, but not centrally led. It is up to each individual to make use of these resources, their role and work environment etc.

Education. We enable the wider staff community to learn more about LGBT+ rights and inclusion, by first educating ourselves, then sharing our learning with others.

Dignity. We respect that not everybody wants to be 'out' at work, and that LGBT+ people may not want to get involved in LGBT-specific activities. We treat any disclosures with respect and sensitivity. We understand that we are not the experts in anybody's needs and experiences except our own. We don't 'own' other people's identities or histories, but we hear them, learn from them and – with permission and where relevant – share them to enable further learning and development.

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Solidarity not sympathy. We don't believe that Allies have any more power, authority, influence or credibility than LGBT+ staff. But we add volume, locality, diversity and solidarity to those voices which are telling us that we can do more, do differently, or do better.

Visibility. We make it as easy as possible for LGBT+ staff & students, current and prospective, to see that NTU is somewhere to belong and thrive.

Activity: from attitude to action. Being an Ally is more than just 'being okay with' LGBT+ identities. It's starting conversations you might not have started otherwise, informally or on your team agenda; wearing or sticking on your door a visible symbol of solidarity; learning new things which help shape your understanding; actively reflecting on the opportunities you might have to develop your practices, resources or services to be more inclusive.

Boundaries. We are not the Expert: we do not know all the facts or have all the answers.

Whilst an Ally might challenge the language or attitude of others, we do this in a way which gently re-educates, rather than chastises or 'polices'.

Whilst we aim to be a 'safe space' for people to raise any issues, we listen and 'signpost' to other services rather than try to solve anything ourselves. We cannot provide answers or representation where professional help or formal procedures are required.

Some useful contacts include: Dignity and Respect Contacts service (you can find this by searching our website), Occupational Health, Student Support Services, Human Resources or local services such as the GP or local LGBT+ organisations.

Small changes can have a big impact on lives

"I've tried not being myself around my colleagues and it's hard work! You feel isolated and constantly on your guard about what you're saying. I felt so relieved once I was honest with people and stopped wasting my time trying to be a different version of myself. Knowing there are people around me, allies, who aren't LGBT+ themselves but want to make sure I can be comfortable to be myself, makes a huge difference to me."

— C, Staff Network member

"It can be exhausting and isolating if you can't be yourself at work and if you have to watch what you say or self-censor when you talk about your non-work life. As an LGBT+ person I am comfortable speaking up for my rights but it is also really important to have colleagues who don't assume and don't judge, who are open and supportive and around whom I can be myself. It takes more than policy and legislation to create an inclusive environment, it takes allies."

— M, Staff Network member

Find out more: equality@ntu.ac.uk

Respect at NTU

Give it. Get it. Expect it.

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