



Prof. David K. Smith
University of York
@professor_dave

Dial a Molecule / Directed Assembly July 2019

‘No Sexuality Please
We’re Scientists’

Hidden Diversity





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University of York
@professor_dave

My Educational Environment





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University of York
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Gay Science?

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Gay Scientists?

ProfessorDaveatYork

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Published on 3 Dec 2013

This video explores why there is an apparent lack of LGBT role models across STEM science subjects. Does it matter? What can we do about it as a community?

Up next

Autoplay

LGBT Scientists - Flagship Lecture

ProfessorDaveatYork

1,443 views

41:55

Why It's So Hard for Scientists to Believe in God

Big Think

493,048 views

4:37

Codeine Tutorial - Professor Dave's Organic Chemistry Tutorials

ProfessorDaveatYork

8,093 views

10:26

Heparin Binding in Chemical Science - From Surgery to the Lab and Back Again

ProfessorDaveatYork

2,869 views

9:41

No Sexuality Please - We're Scientists' (LGBT STEMinar)

ProfessorDaveatYork

1,336 views

45:00

Where is it Hiding?

Join the debate at #outSTEM

<http://www.youtube.com/professordaveatyork>



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Chemistry World Article

chemistryworld

HOME NEWS OPINION MATTER ENERGY EARTH LIFE CULTURE CAREERS PODCASTS

OPINION

'No sexuality please, we're scientists'

BY DAVID SMITH | 1 APRIL 2014



David Smith wonders why gay scientists seem to stay unseen, and asks does it matter?

Where are all the LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) scientists? If you look at last year's *Time* magazine list of the [100 most influential people](#), 10% work in science and technology. But *The Independent* 'Pink List' (101 most influential LGBT people) has just two, and then only if you count a psychologist and a technology journalist.





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Is Science Diverse and Equal?

‘You are mistaking us for people who give a ****.
Your sexuality is NOT important vis-a-vis your job’.

‘So your fellow scientists don't give
a shite about your sexuality,
just your research credentials
and publication records?
Isn't that equality?’

Meritocracy or ‘Don’t Ask Don’t Tell’?





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University of York
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Young Scientists



‘I am thinking about coming out to my fellow lab mates and maybe also to my supervisor (when it comes up in a chat naturally), but I am still not quite sure about it.’

‘A lot of people worry that there will be unconscious bias against them in the job hunting process. This should be something we are happy to discuss as scientists. It should just be a part of life’



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University of York
@professor_dave

Being 100% Yourself

Matthew Mears, University of Sheffield

A junior researcher's supervisor can have a lot of influence on their prospects, many researchers think it is necessary to avoid personal details.

'If you can't even have a conversation with a colleague about who you spent the weekend with it's not a nice working environment'





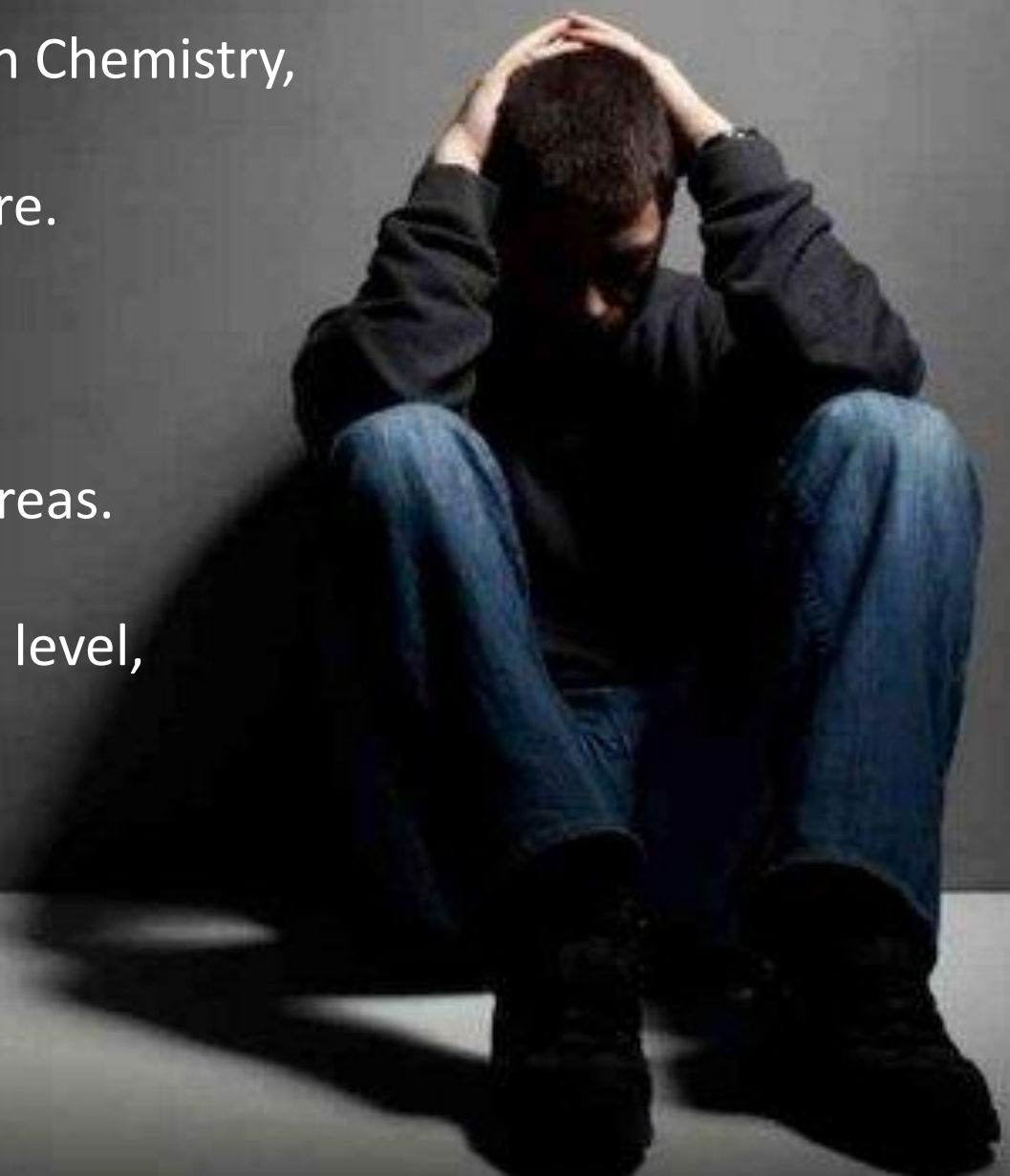
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STEM Cultural Problems

‘Throughout my academic life in Chemistry, I've found it normally has a very conservative, macho culture. Any sexuality related issues are met with embarrassment or sometimes hostility, more so than other academic areas.

It doesn't help on an emotional level, leading to feelings of isolation perhaps leading to giving up on a science career.’

Academic (Anon)





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@professor_dave

Do Research!!

EXPLORING THE WORKPLACE FOR LGBT+ PHYSICAL SCIENTISTS

A report by the Institute of Physics, Royal Astronomical Society
and Royal Society of Chemistry

Commissioned by 3
learned societies
RSC, IOP, RAS

With support from the
LGBT+ Physical Scientists
Committee

Over 1000 respondents

Extensive data and
rich lived experiences

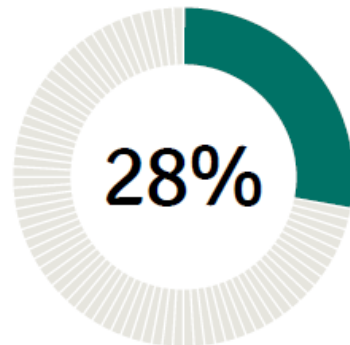
#killerdata



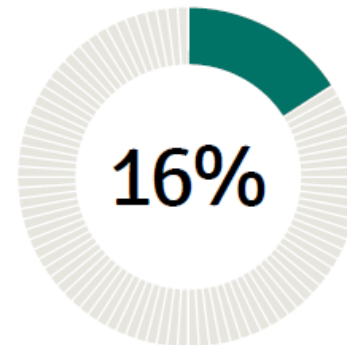


1. Doing the best for science means retaining LGBT+ scientists

Respondents stating they had at some point considered leaving their workplace



**LGBT+
respondents**

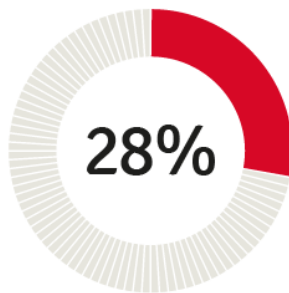


**non-LGBT+
respondents**



1. Doing the best for science means retaining LGBT+ scientists

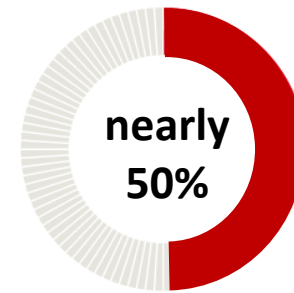
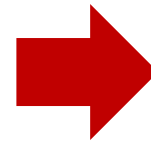
Respondents stating they have considered leaving their workplace because of climate or discrimination towards LGBT+ people



LGBT+ respondents
sometimes
considered leaving



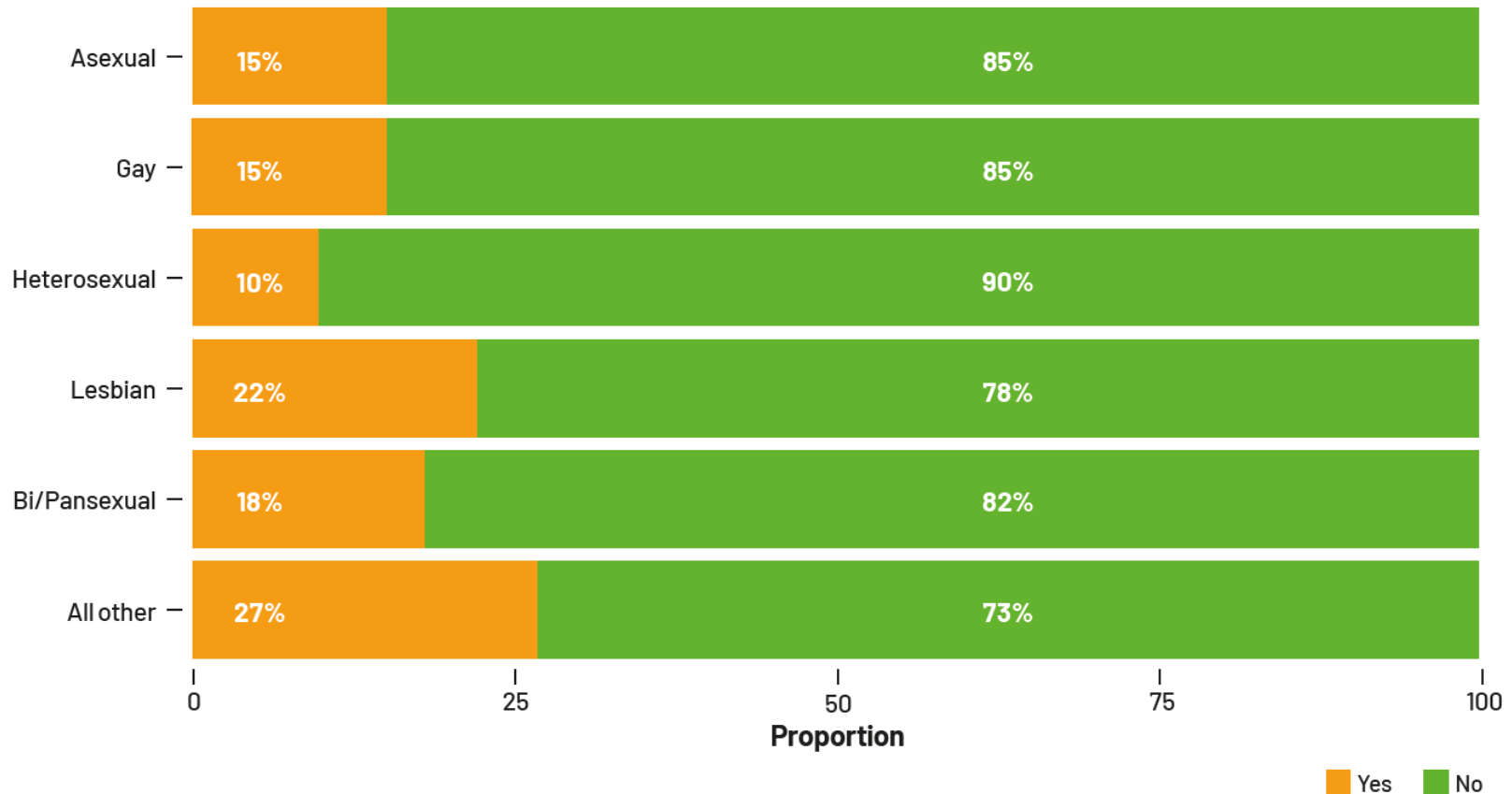
Trans respondents
considered leaving
often



Trans respondents
sometimes
considered leaving

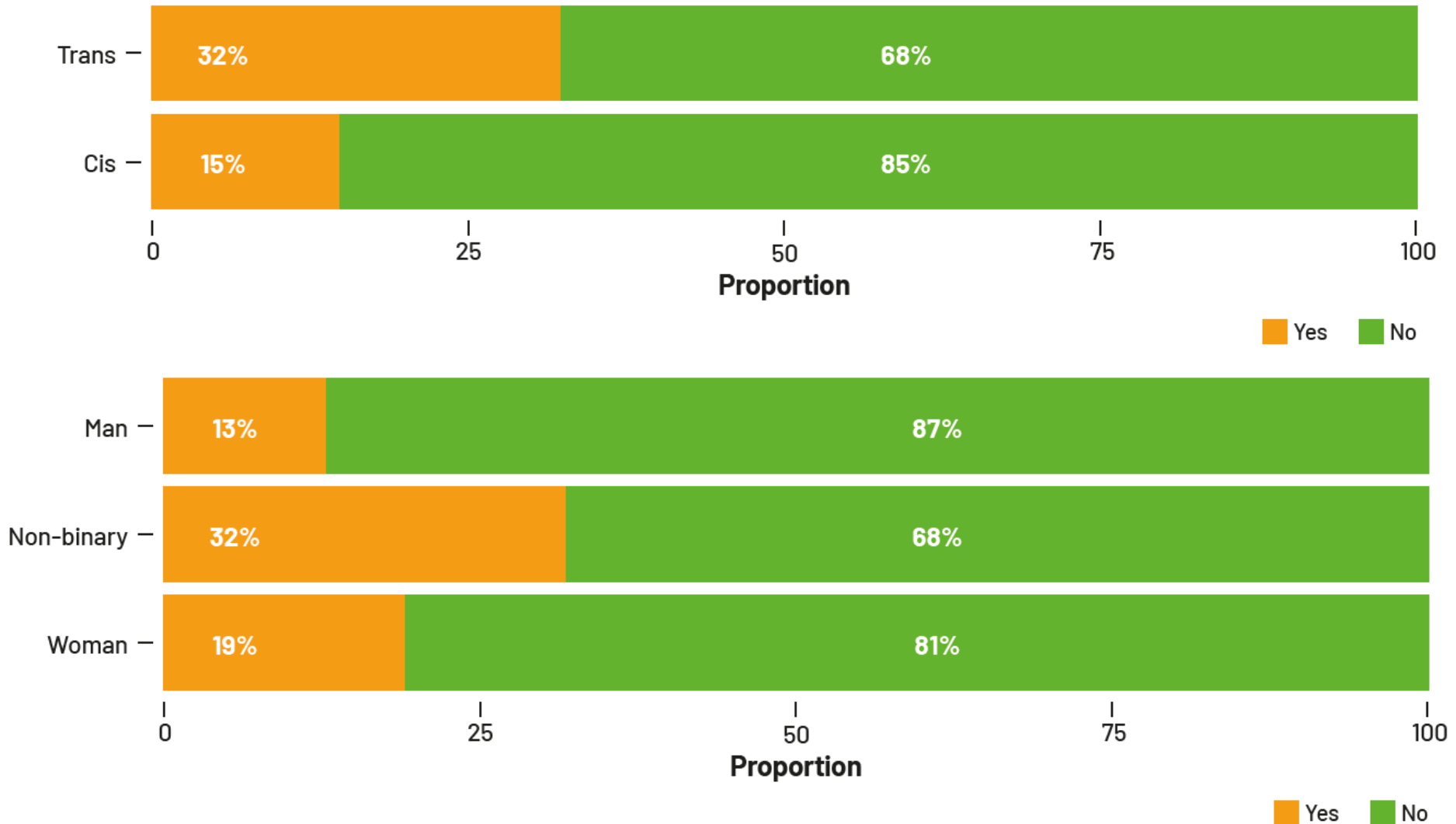


2. A significant proportion of LGBT+ physical scientists had experienced exclusionary behaviour in the last 12 months



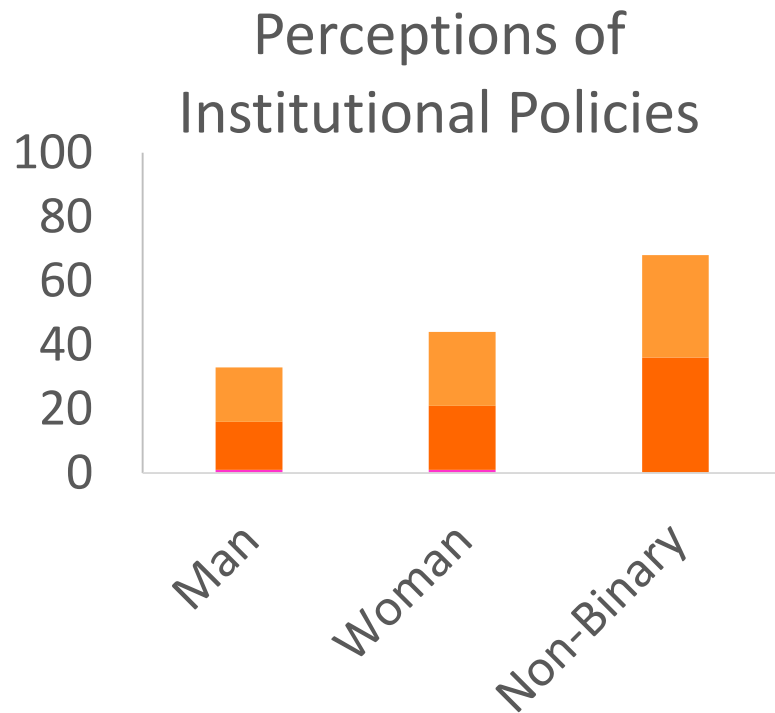


Avoid Exclusionary Behaviour





3. Implementation of workplace policies and practices is uneven



Percentages: Discriminatory / Lacking / Uneven

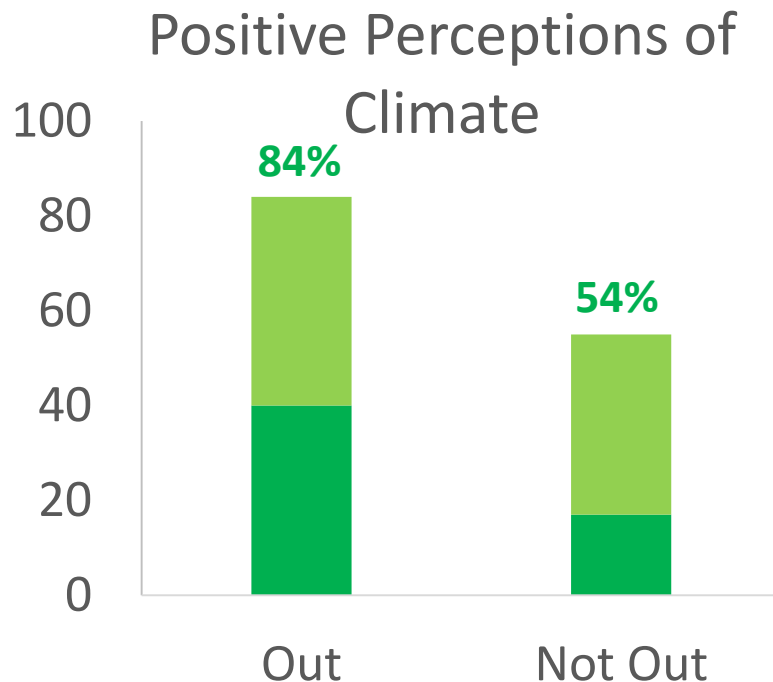


I suppose if there were more people who had transitioned that would probably help and then also maybe some specific policies about people who want to transition, because I don't think there's any, I've never seen any specific policies about staff who wanted to transition. I think that would definitely make me feel like it actually would not be like a huge problem if I did it, if there's actually policies there about it.

Transgender non-binary, bisexual



4. Workplaces with visible LGBT+ physical scientists were felt to be more comfortable



Significant number of 'out' staff has encouraged students to also be out and comfortable in the department.



Individual Stories



It is deliberate that I don't tell people about my trans history at work. I don't want to change the way they act towards me because some people, even if they're not actually hostile, they will treat you differently if they know that, for instance, you used to be a woman. It does change some people's approach.

Transgender man, gay



I'm not out to anybody. I'm single, and have never had a relationship, pretty lonely to be honest. Most of my colleagues, gay or straight seem to be fairly happy. There is a staff LGBT network here but I'm too scared to go along to any events. I probably have devoted too much of my life to research and my career. My parents probably expect grandchildren someday but I've always been the busy, high-achieving scientist. In this way, the climate of STEM is actually a useful shield for not-out people like me. I can distract and immerse myself in my work and stay on my own.

Cisgender man, gay



Individual Stories



I am a bisexual woman in a relationship with a heterosexual man, because of this, many people assume I am straight, including queer people. It feels very awkward to correct unspoken assumptions or to bring up my queerness. I think a lot of people assume I am just an enthusiastic ally, rather than a part of the community itself. I have no problem bringing my partner to work events but I feel my identity is invisible, isolated & erased. I feel out of place at LGBT events, even though that's where I want to feel at home the most, especially if I bring my partner.

Cisgender woman, bisexual



I don't know if it's me, but I always feel like people think that you're oversharing potentially, that you're giving them quite a lot of information about yourself. Whereas if I was straight no one would blink with it. I think there is that thing where, when you give that piece of information, people always have some kind of reaction. Usually, it's nothing, but they will always - I don't know. You feel there's always a bit of readjustment going on.

Cisgender woman, lesbian



5. Scientists are in an international community and not all cultures are as inclusive



My work causes me to frequently meet many new people and occasionally travel to places where I feel less safe being open about my gender identity. This means there are many work scenarios where I don't feel particularly comfortable being 'out' (and therefore don't feel particularly comfortable generally).

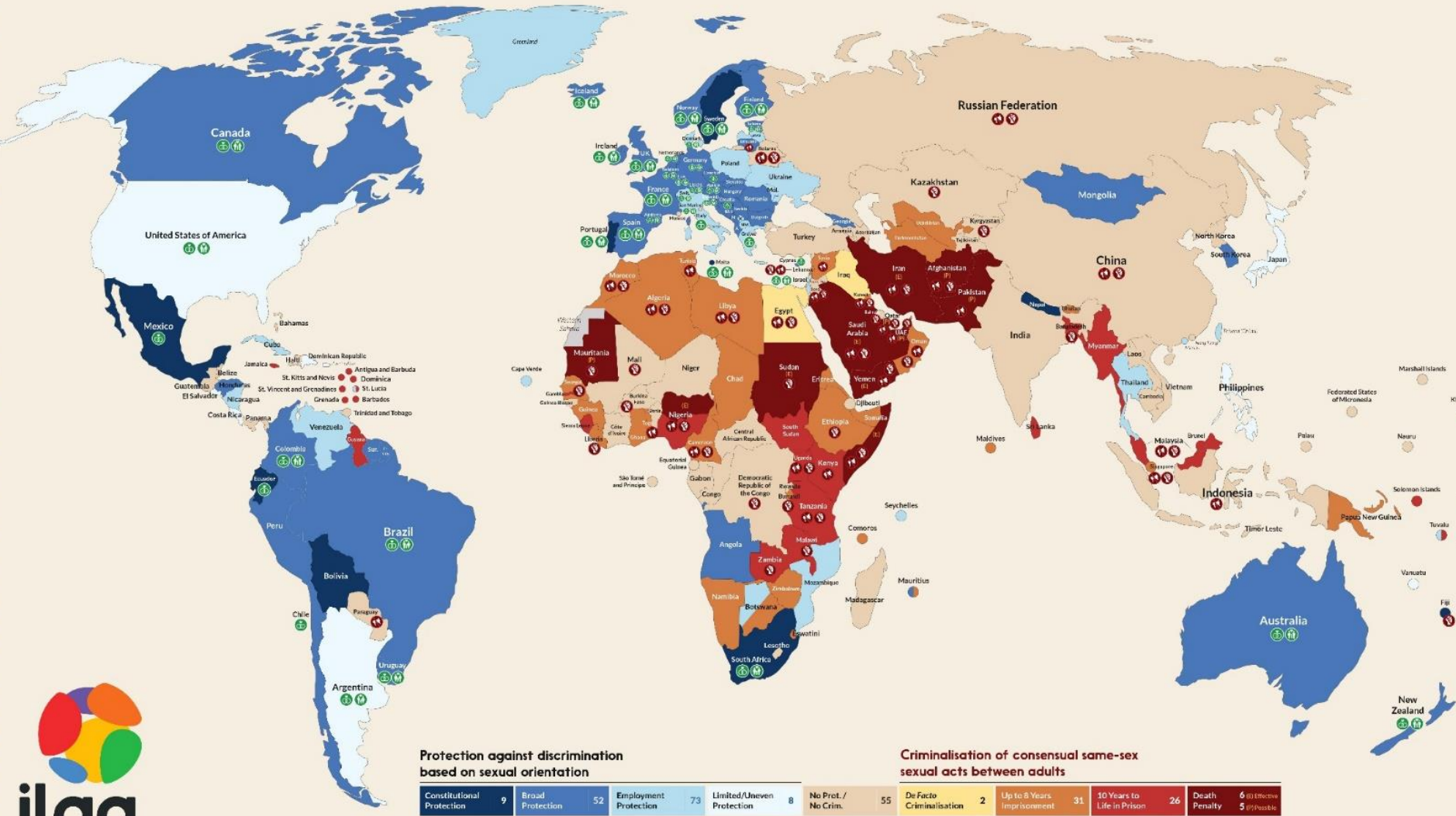
This has at times taken a toll on my mental health and sometimes my performance at work suffers as a consequence.

Non-binary, pansexual



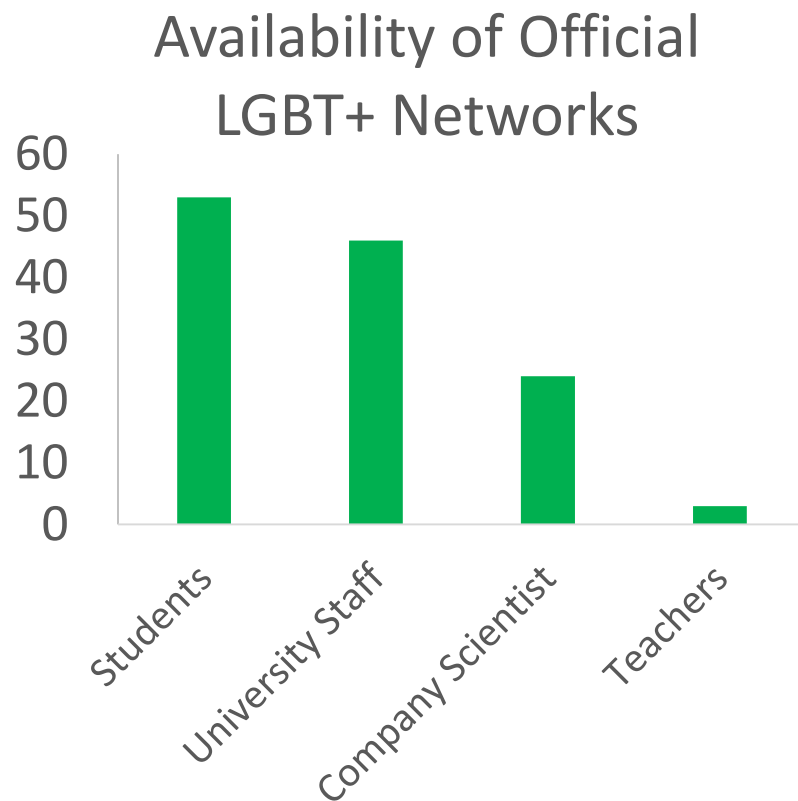
SEXUAL ORIENTATION LAWS IN THE WORLD - 2019

From criminalisation of consensual same-sex sexual acts between adults to protection against discrimination based on sexual orientation





6. Networks bring LGBT+ scientists together, helping to alleviate isolation, exclusion and marginalisation





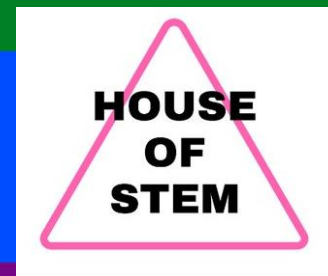
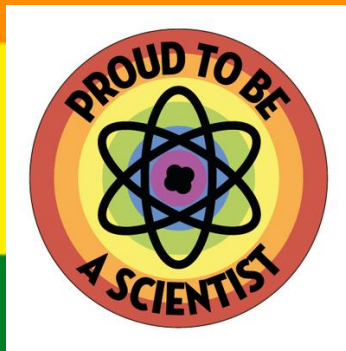
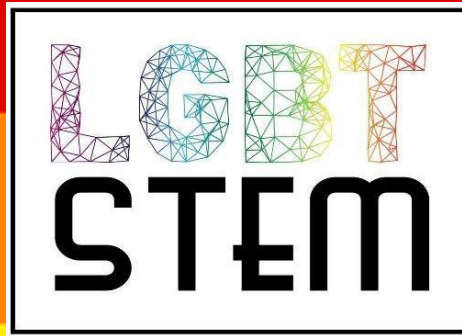
Networks Need Support





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University of York
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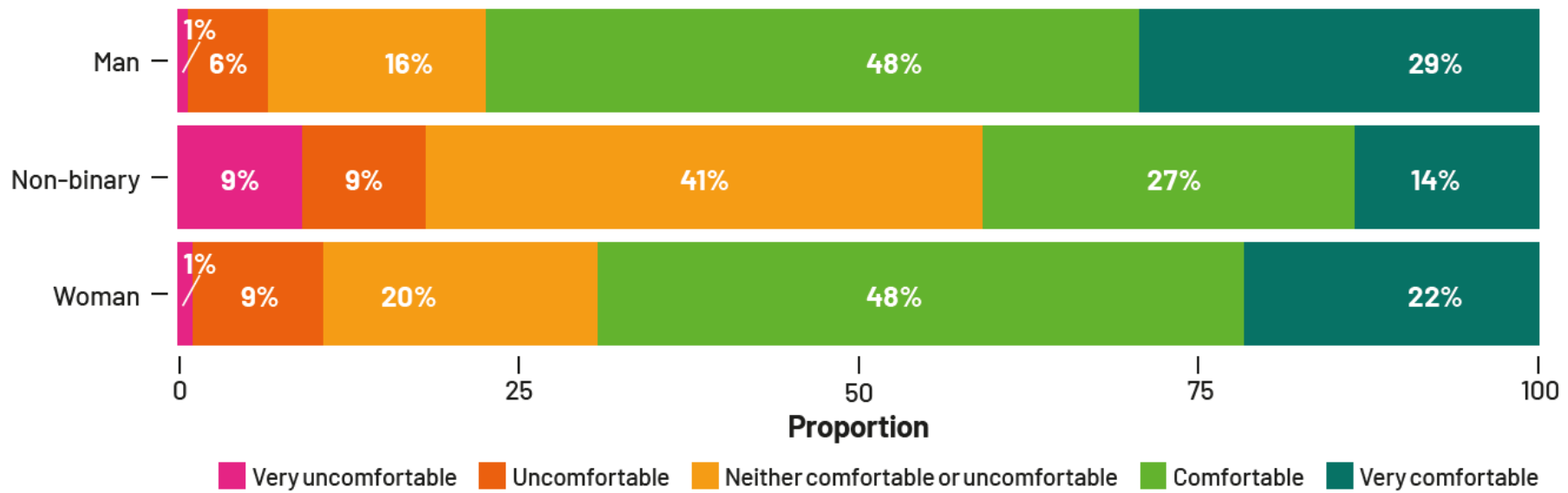
Informal Networking



LGBT STEMinar, LGBT STEM Day etc.

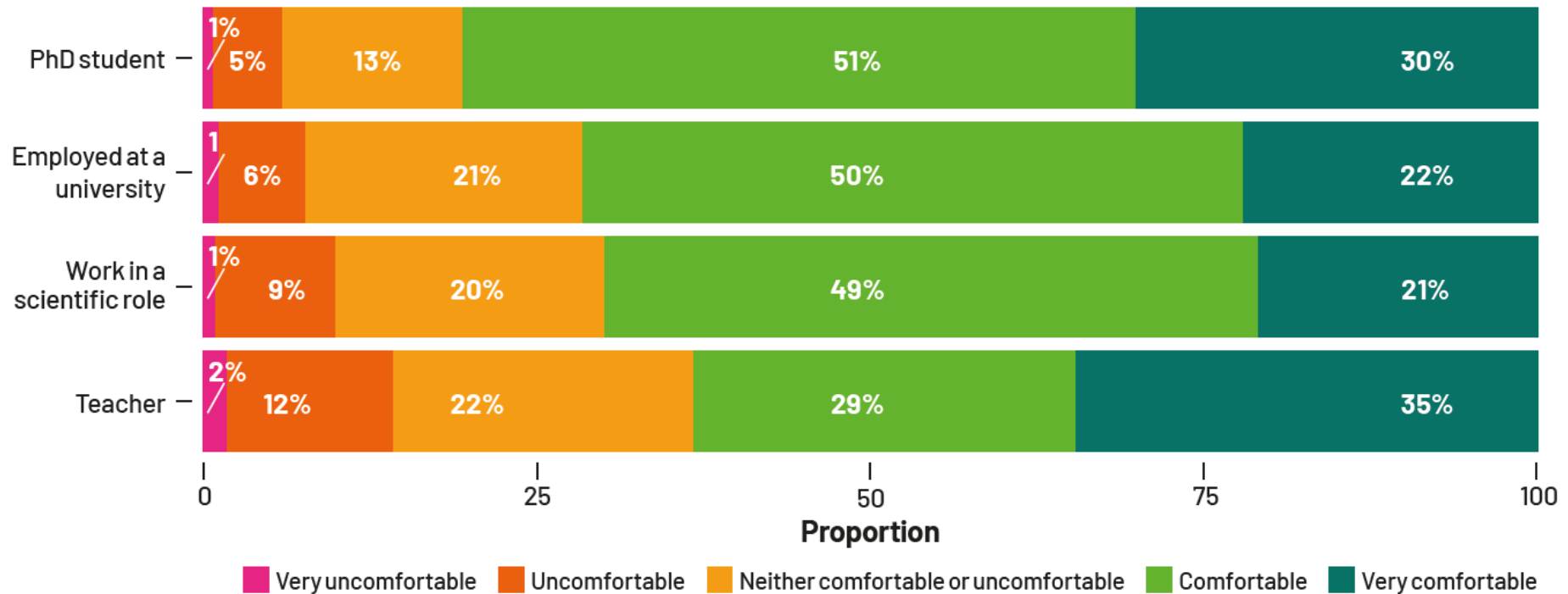


7. Despite progress, the current workplace climate experienced by LGBT+ physical scientists is uneven





Uneven Workplace





Three overarching areas for increased action emerged from our findings:

- **Building a visibly welcoming community**
- **Reviewing and improving policies**
- **Introducing and improving training**

We have identified a number of actions under each area aimed at individuals, employers and professional bodies to encourage working together to provide an inclusive and supportive environment and address harassment and bullying.



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Chemistry at York



**Athena
SWAN
Gold Award**

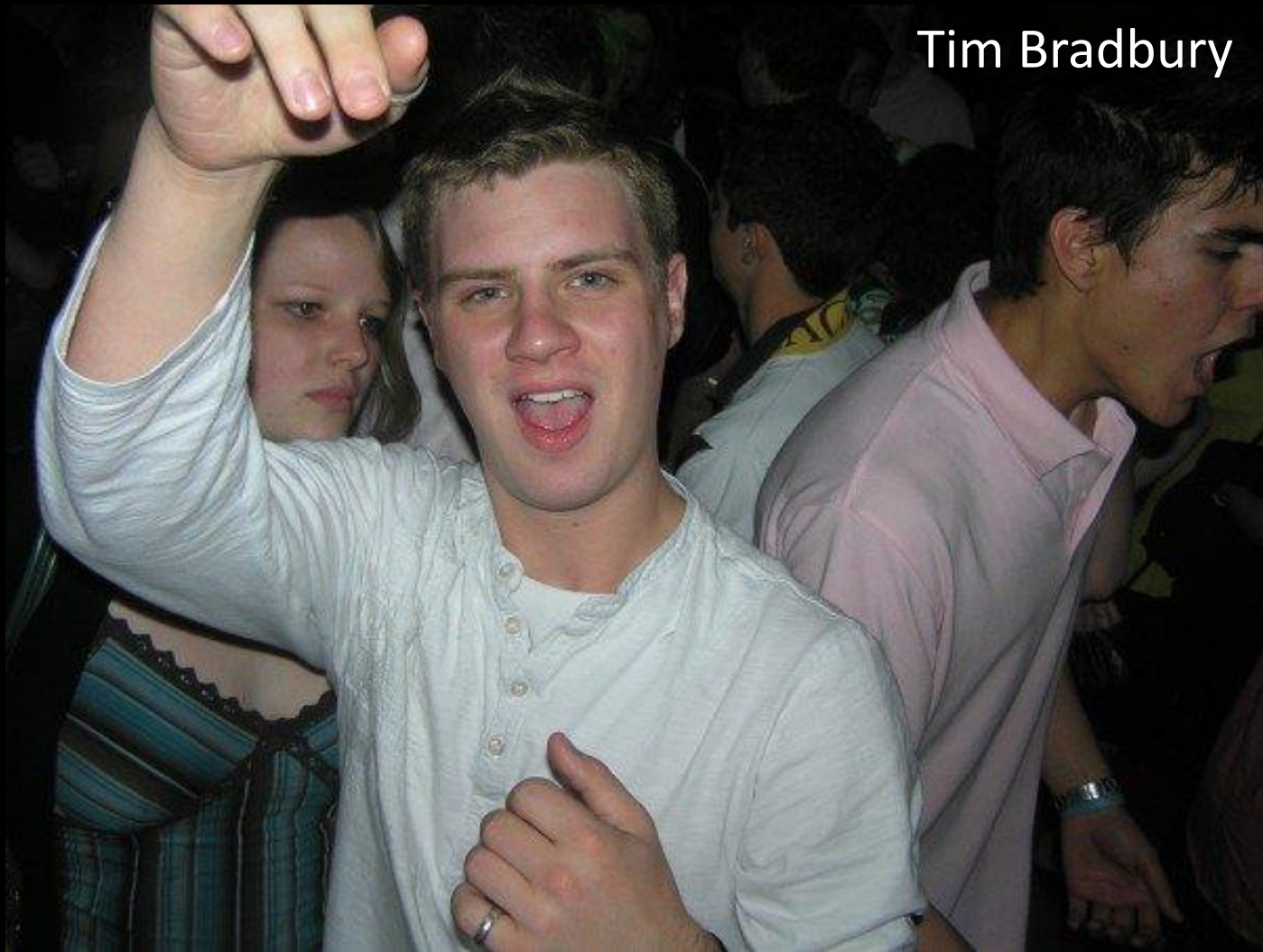




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York Changing the Ethos

Tim Bradbury 2005

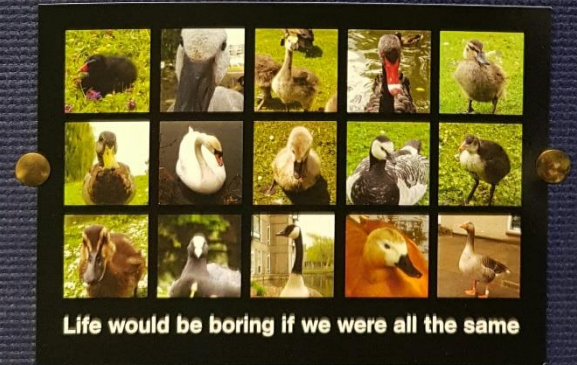


‘There is gossip in the department about Dave Smith
It is homophobic in nature, and is making some of us very uncomfortable’



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University of York
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Being 'Out'





Prof. David K. Smith
University of York
@professor_dave

Individual Action Do Ask, Do Tell

Dave Smith is Professor of Chemistry at University of York, where he carries out fundamental research in the field of smart nanomaterials and nanomedicines. He has always been heavily involved in chemical education, and as well as university teaching, as given outreach lectures to >30,000 school students, and developed his own YouTube chemistry channel, with >half a million views. Dave has been recognised for excellence both in research and teaching, having received the Corday Morgan Award in 2012 from The Royal Society of Chemistry and a National Teaching Fellowship from the Higher Education Academy in 2013.

Dave entered into a civil partnership with his husband Sam in 2010. They live in central York, with their adopted son, where they enjoy the vibrant and historic city, and enjoy cooking and travelling.





Prof. David K. Smith
University of York
@professor_dave

When Chemistry Gets Personal

Volume 54 | Number 38 | 11 May 2018 | Pages 4731–4884

When Chemistry Gets Personal

From Diverse Beginnings to
Smart Nanomedicines & Materials

How Sam
Inspired SAMul

@ChemistryatYork

ChemComm

Chemical Communications
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ISSN 1359-7345



FEATURE ARTICLE

David K. Smith
From fundamental supramolecular chemistry to self-assembled
nanomaterials and medicines and back again – how Sam inspired SAMul



Embedding within Departmental Ethos

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Opportunities and

The Department of Chemistry is dedicated to supporting staff and students who identify as LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender) and to creating an inclusive community where everyone can thrive.

Sources of information

- [University Equality & Diversity Office](#)
- [University Staff Sexual Diversity & Equality Forum](#)
- [YUSU LGBTQ page](#) ↗
- [Stonewall](#) ↗ - working for LGBT rights

Survey

The Equality and Diversity Group welcomed the positive results of a survey carried out among LGBT students about their experience of studying in the Chemistry Department. Following on from this survey (reported in the departmental newsletter [Chemistry Update](#) in January 2014) possibilities for improving support and representation for LGBT students are being investigated by the working group.

Support for LGBTQ+ Students/Staff

If any students and/or staff in the department have concerns specifically relating to LGBT+ issues, including personal difficulties, or any experiences of homophobia and transphobia, they can approach any of the following senior staff members, who either as LGBT+ individuals themselves, or as allies, are happy to discuss any problems and take action where appropriate.

LGBT Contacts: Duncan Bruce, Peter O'Brien, David K. Smith, Jane Thomas Oates, Paul Walton and Derek Wann.



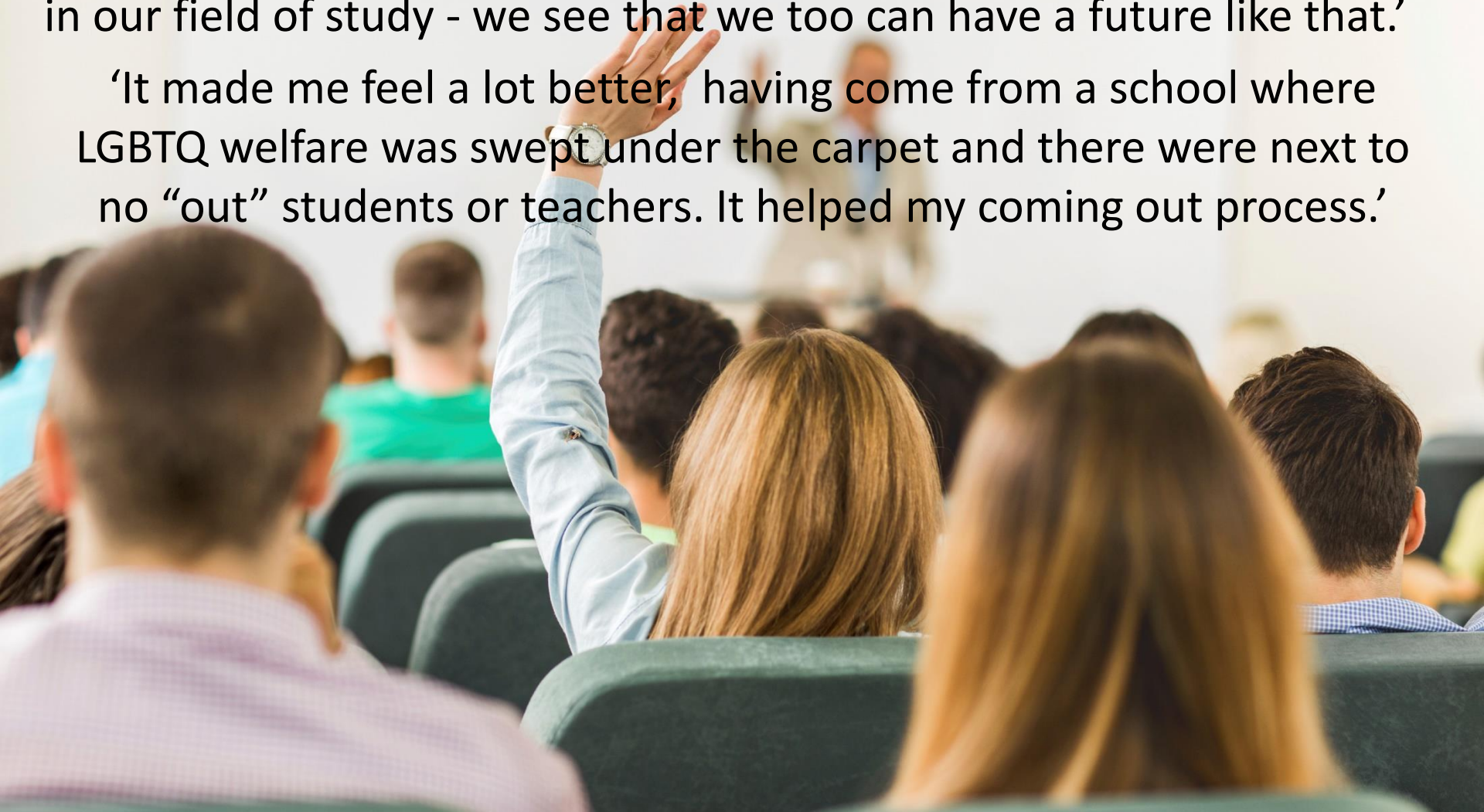


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LGBT Chemistry Student Survey

‘It's important for LGBT students like me to see that there are people like us who make it higher up and do great things with their lives in our field of study - we see that we too can have a future like that.’

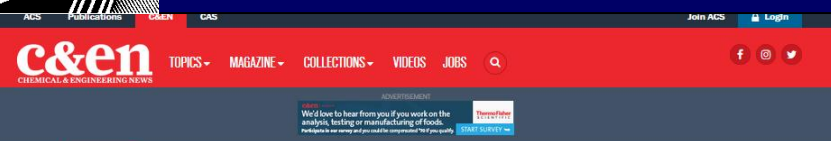
‘It made me feel a lot better, having come from a school where LGBTQ welfare was swept under the carpet and there were next to no “out” students or teachers. It helped my coming out process.’





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University of York
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Turning Point?



Science is full of personal stories. York's David Smith thinks scientists should share them

Supramolecular chemist supports LGBTQ+ scientists by talking about his personal journey

by Katharine Sanderson, special to C&EN

APRIL 24, 2018 | APPEARED IN VOLUME 96, ISSUE 18



Credit: John Houlihan

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Life inspires clinical applications

By Sharon Ann Holgate | Oct. 7, 2014, 7:00 AM

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Turning point: Out for chemistry

Virginia Gewin

Nature 531, 265 (2016) doi:10.1038/nj7593-265a

Published online 09 March 2016

This article was originally published in the journal *Nature*

nature

David Smith promotes chemistry, and networking opportunities for LGBT scientists.

Subject terms: [Careers](#) • [Chemistry](#) • [Society](#)

David Smith, a chemist at the University of York, UK, spent his early career avoiding personal discussions with colleagues because he did not want to reveal that he is gay. In January, he gave the plenary talk at the first LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) STEMinar, a conference devoted to networking.

How did the LGBT STEMinar come about?

A postdoc at the University of Sheffield, UK, Beth Hellen, decided that she wanted to get a bunch of LGBT scientists she knew through Twitter together for networking. She thought 20 people would attend, but about 80 showed up. It was, as far as I know, the first ever meeting in the United Kingdom to specifically target LGBT scientists across all disciplines. It was a really nice meeting, with genuine networking. Similar things have gone on in the United States, especially at the big conferences, like the American Chemical Society meetings. But this has never been a feature of UK–European science.

Do you think it will continue?

Yes. One of the most heartening things about the meeting was that it got support from high-level societies such as the Royal Society of

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John Houlihan



**University is meant to be a
professional working environment.**

**So, as to why this questionnaire is asking
such childish questions is beyond me.
Outside of the physics department, in
more a social setting, this would be fine.
But inside the department we are all just
scientists, regardless of gender or sexual
orientation, etc.**

Cisgender man, heterosexual



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Doing the Best for People Does the Best for Science

“Only when all people feel comfortable to be themselves in the workplace, without any fear of discrimination, will global science truly be able to thrive. Even more importantly, only then will we stop wasting so much human capital.”



RSC News, The first ever LGBT STEMDay, 2018