



**equality**  
**diversity**  
**inclusion**

our staff stories

# diversity pledge

Our vision is that equality, diversity and inclusion is firmly embedded in the full breadth of the Trust's work. We want to understand, reflect and meet the needs of the diverse communities we serve by providing services that are accessible, inclusive and non-discriminatory.

We know that people work best when the skills, experience and knowledge of a diverse workforce are supported to achieve their potential and reach the top of our organisation. We commit to do this and want to realise the benefits of our commitment to equality and diversity in everything we do. We will regularly review our policies, processes and behaviours to make certain that they demonstrate and support this commitment.

To achieve our vision, equality diversity and inclusion needs to be truly embedded at all levels, not as an additional consideration, but a fundamental part of daily working.

We pledge to embed this within the organisational culture, along with a genuine leadership commitment that is embraced throughout the organisation.



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How can you support the EDI agenda at CPFT?

# introduction

We are delighted to present our new equality, diversity and inclusion staff stories book. The power of narratives cannot be underestimated and you will see how these wonderful stories bring the whole agenda to life.

We are privileged to have so many wonderful Diversity Champions and allies in the organisation and we look forward to continuing this work to become a truly inclusive employer.

We hope you will enjoy reading these stories as much as we have enjoyed bringing them together.

Thank you to our staff for sharing these stories with us. We hope they will resonate with you, the reader.

## **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Team**

*Thanks to Kit Connick, former Director of Corporate Affairs, for her support in the development of this booklet.*



Tracy Dowling | Chief Executive



Karen Daber | Non-Executive Director

At CPFT we pride ourselves on our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion for our patients, their carers, and our staff. It's at the heart of our culture and values. We aim to create an inclusive and supportive environment where everyone from all backgrounds feel valued, able to be themselves and can perform at their very best.

We know that different people who work together sharing their ideas, experience and skills, will make the best decisions, and that if we are diverse in our thinking, we are more likely to meet the needs of the diverse community we serve and deliver better care.

We commit to making sure that everyone has equal opportunities and that the Trust is a place where people feel welcomed, safe and valued. We're delighted that this diversity is reflected in this booklet and we hope that these stories both inspire you to perform at your best and support you in feeling valued and included.





## I hear the song of the terraced houses...

Danny Bowyer | Training and Development Co-ordinator, Recovery College East

Their brick-on-brick uniformity is a masquerade that hides a grand and diverse cast. Kitchen-sink dramas acted out by a no-star ensemble. They perform the poetry of expletives, slang, and idioms; the comforting tone of my common tongue. I grew up in these terraces; I live in the terraces still. I am the son of a train driver and a saddler, of London's East End and the black country of the West Midlands, of English serfs and Irish migrants.

I am a working-class romantic. The song of the terraced house rang through my childhood home. It taught me that the working class are artists; their art is an art untrimmed

by critics and convention; it is the art of living honestly in a world where honesty doesn't pay. The art of survival, the art of defiance and the art of learning to dance in the rain as it comes flooding through the ceiling. The art of knowing the game is rigged from the start and still with stubborn audacity playing your hand hoping for your luck to come in.

My romantic lens serves a purpose. In the first instance it allows me to tunnel beneath the vilifications of the media and the disdainful eyes of our lofty neighbours and find beneath it all the humanity and beauty of the working class. Secondly it allows me to find good in my own

circumstances which have so often left me feeling bleak and hopeless.

I knew I was working class as a child but it was school that taught me what that really meant. School was a microcosm of the world that awaited me, a model village of global inequality. The low expectations, the contempt, the dreams mocked and hushed, the ambition strangled, the language of "know your place" all expressed through the mouths of the teachers. More of my classmates have been to prison than have set foot in a university. Not that it was an either/or choice. University was for good kids, good students and these classrooms were never

designed to produce good students.

What lay in wait was not the career of my dreams but whatever work I could get. And work without passion and dignity is its own hell. So off to hell I went. Growing up, poverty was the wolf at our door. When dad died the year I finished school, it was the wolf in our living room. It followed us everywhere and sadder than its existence is that it became normal.

This once fearsome beast became so common place it was akin to a family pet. Inequality is the millstone; it is the albatross; it is the anchor and the prison cell.

Bereavement, the loss and lack of opportunities, the loss of work and of career, the breakdown of relationships, the lack of access to good education, low wages and a hatful of stigma. Having to choose between passion and survival, between art and eating. These things have been the biggest causes of distress in my life. Some were born out of my class experience, some were not, but all of them were underpinned by a life on the unsteady footing of the underprivileged.

And so, I return to the comfort of the song and I urge you next time you pass the terraces, keep an ear out.

A field of yellow tulips with one red tulip in the center. The red tulip is the focal point, standing out against the sea of yellow flowers. The background is a soft-focus field of yellow tulips.

## Uniqueness or disability?

What do you see when you look at me?  
Uniqueness or disability?  
A brave smile to mask the pain and tears  
Or a disabled person with many fears  
The alarm sounds after a sleepless night  
Getting out of bed is an enormous fight  
Trips and stumbles and I prepare for the day  
An automatic car now aids me on my way  
The blue badge scheme helps me to park  
Although I worry about the remark  
Will they think that I am a fake?  
Although I know it's for my own sake  
Do I tick the disabled box?  
Or hide away and take the knocks  
I condensed my hours into a shorter week  
Which helps me re-charge, to retain my peak  
I start to swim to ease the pain  
And now I feel the benefits and gain  
Employing staff with a long-term condition  
Helps the Trust to fulfil its ambition  
Employing me with my long-term condition  
Brings my whole true self to fruition!

Sharon Gilfoyle | Associate Director of Inclusion



# The winter of 1969

Brian Benneyworth | Non-Executive Director

Firstly, let me say that I am a white, 60-year-old, heterosexual male with no disabilities. In reality, I have very few protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010. So, what am I doing writing about my views on equality, diversity and inclusion? What do I know how it feels to be discriminated against, marginalised, harassed or bullied for being different?

My story/experience goes back to the winter of 1969. I was a happy child, full of confidence. In fact my parents said that I was cocky and cheeky. I was in state school education and in the "C" stream class, which meant that I was deemed not particularly bright academically. However, my mates from the council estate where we lived were all in the same class and I was good at football, so it did not matter.

In that winter of 1969, my world was

turned upside down. It had a profound effect on me and my belief system. It has shaped my thinking for the rest of my life.

My mum, who was pregnant with her fourth child, became very ill and had to be hospitalised, I was not aware of it at the time. All I knew was that one day my dad came home and said: "Right, Brian, you and your sister are going to live with uncle and you have to go now!". I was devastated and, despite trying to protest, cry, plead and hide, we were soon on our way with our uncle with a few bags of clothes and a couple of toys. My main one was my prized football!

My uncle and his wife were fantastic people - kind, loving and cared deeply about me and my sister. They lived in a very upmarket area in Surrey. My profound experience came from being enrolled into the

new school. It was very, very different from the one I had left!

Firstly, they did not play football, which I found difficult to understand. I was told: "We play rugby and hockey here, no football and you will have to get used to it".

I was given a reading, writing and maths test and could not answer most of the questions. I felt really stupid. The teachers looked at my papers, tutted and rolled their eyes and said to me: "Have you ever been to school, Benneyworth?" Suffice to say that my confidence was shattered completely in that moment! The cocky/cheeky little boy had disappeared and, in his place, stood a lonely, frightened, confused one. I felt angry and abandoned. I felt different from everyone else in my new school!

I have never forgotten that moment

and how it felt.

In class, I made no friends. I was placed at the very back of the class, separated from the others, because apparently I was not up to standard and would "hold all the others back from their learning". If I raised my hand to ask a question, I would mostly be ignored or, if I did get to ask it, there would be groans from my classmates and calls of being "thick and stupid".

In PE, I was always the last to be picked to join to the rugby team. I was useless at it and no one wanted me on their side. The ball was infrequently passed to me and, when it was, it was thrown too high or low for me to catch and my teammates would again take the opportunity to call me names.

I was ridiculed everyday about my accent and the way I talked. I had to

spend most of my playground time defending "my difference" many times physically, firstly with my own classmates where I fared quite well, but later with the older boys who were bigger and stronger than me and I would invariably come home with bumps and scrapes from my fights, sore but unbowed from the injustice of being picked on and harassed.

I was a frequent visitor to the headmaster's office, as the other boys would always blame me for the fighting and say that I had started it which was never the case. However, as there were more of them than me, it would be me that was seen as the trouble maker and I received the cane, or "six of the best" as it was known, to add to the injustice.

I tried to make friends with a couple of new boys who joined after me. At first it was ok, but quickly they were

both “warned off” by the other boys and I was left alone again.

In a school full of boys, the same colour and religion as me, I felt so, so different. It all sounds a really sorry tale, but it is not. This experience taught me one of the most valuable lessons in my entire life. It gave me empathy for others, an understanding of being different and what that feels like. It also gave me greater tolerance and resilience and shaped my thinking. I felt I had changed as a person for the better.

After a year, I returned home. Sadly, my baby sister was delivered stillborn and my mum subsequently had suffered severe depression which had delayed my homecoming.

I returned to a new state school, which thankfully offered football, and I was put straight back into the school team. I was also assessed academically and found to have significantly progressed.

I guess in my isolation in the other school, being labelled as “thick and stupid”, had spurred me on to concentrate on my studies. It brought out a different side to my competitive nature, a more studious one. I have continued that journey ever since. I believe fundamentally in the benefits of life-long learning.

In 1973, our school admitted six new students from Uganda. I was in class one day when I was asked to go to the headmaster’s office. It had been a few years since I was last in there. I

had not been in any trouble and been a model student, I thought. I took the long walk to the office with some trepidation given my past experiences.

“Brian, I want you help these new students to integrate into school,” said Mr Fone, our headmaster.

“Why me?” I asked.

“I just know that you will help them. I will make you a prefect,” said Mr Fone.

I looked at the faces of the six boys and I recognised the same scared look that I had a few years before. I knew how they felt. In that instant I knew I was going to do everything I

could to help them. I met them all at break times, helped with their English and I stuck up for them when they were called names and picked on by the other children. They became good friends of mine and I learnt a lot about their previous life back in Uganda.

I received an award at the end of the year from the headmaster and felt proud of my achievements. The boys were all happy at school and that was my aim.

So, that’s my story; why I believe I am passionate about being part of an organisation and society that is tolerant, inclusive and values diversity in all its forms.

It all stems back to that winter of 1969!

“

**In that winter of 1969, my world was turned upside down; it had a profound effect on me and my belief system; it has shaped my thinking for the rest of my life.**

”



# finding the right balance

I am proud to be part of an organisation that values the person behind the role and I have been fortunate to work with people who have supported me to bring my 'whole self' to work and to be valued for who I am, and what I bring. I work part-time to help me be the parent I want to be for my children as well as being fulfilled in my career as a director. It's not always easy balancing home and work and, at times, I have to make choices about what I can and can't commit to. But I know that I have the support of my manager and colleagues who understand that sometimes the work and home diaries clash!

I know and appreciate I am lucky. I have been privileged in my life and career in many ways and so I pledge to 'give back', to be open about equality and inclusion, and make a personal commitment to improve the experiences of others. Most of us probably know what inclusion means and how to do it. However, being a leader who is able to make people feel included is more nuanced – to make sure people feel included for who they are and what they offer; their difference and uniqueness. Sometimes, this means choosing to not see the world through your lens but considering it from a different perspective and stepping out of your own personal experience to understand how it might feel for others.

I want to do this for others, to be an ally and to use my experience and networks to help people to stand out, to be different and have unique ideas that are welcomed and embraced. I commit to support people and appreciate them the way they are, champion their skills and tap into their talents and motivation to help them achieve their full potential.

Kit Connick | former Director of Corporate Affairs



# redefining success a transgender story

BC | Support Worker



In 2010 I completed a return-to-nursing course and by 2011 had secured a job as a mental health nurse on a ward within CPFT. A few years later I switched to a community role as a band 6 CPN. At the beginning of 2019, I work as a band 3 support worker in the community. This is not what you would call linear progression, and to understand it I would need to take you back to 2004. At this time, I was working in London managing a small mental health team. This was also the year I fully realised what I had always known. I experienced what (at that time) was generally called gender dysphoria. Some things happened in my life that persuaded me this was now the time to understand and accept my transgender self. I left London, left my life as I knew it, and changed gender somewhere on the northbound A1. I wish it had been that easy!

In reality, I went through numerous psychological evaluations and met several psychiatrists who diagnosed Gender Dysphoria and opened the gateway to accessing Gender Reassignment Services. I began hormone therapy, underwent surgery, developed an affinity with chocolate that has lasted until this day. I now have a Gender Recognition Certificate and my birth certificate says "Female". There are decisions, and there are consequences. I did not anticipate that my decision to pursue gender reassignment would also precipitate my first confrontation with social exclusion, prejudice, and the nastier side of society. I will immediately balance that and say I have also been fortunate to have met some people who I would describe as truly beautiful in their acceptance of me.

In the years immediately following gender reassignment, my joy that I had been able to finally "become" myself was replaced by a struggle with mental health - notably, social anxiety in a most acute form. For a time I did not step outside of my house. I used to put out the bins after dark when I could hide in the shadows. I was not working. I had not anticipated that society could be so scary for transgender people. If this coincides with a time of feeling fragile, the result can be devastating.

Long story short, I rebuilt myself to the point where I was able to consider returning to mental health nursing - in a different gender. This was actually a major undertaking, emotionally and psychologically. Once again, I underestimated the strength needed to complete this journey. This was not just about "doing" a return-to-nursing course, but also about redefining myself in relation to colleagues and those I cared for. The stress of trying to juggle so many emotional tasks is extreme. I remember working nights and being in charge of the ward at a time

when a service user took exception to my being transgender. Weeks of abuse took a steady toll. I did not share it with colleagues because my being transgender was one of those conversations that had never really happened. I think "being transgender" was an elephant in the room. To this day I cannot easily watch certain early evening TV programmes - the theme tunes remind me of getting ready to work nights, they give me flashbacks. The culmination of my return to nursing after gender reassignment was a mental breakdown that lasted, all told, for about 18 months. In my absence, my job as a CPN was subject to a wider consultation period. I don't remember much about this - nor much at all of that 18 months. There came a time when, money running out, options diminishing, I had to make a decision about my role within CPFT. I was offered some qualified and non-qualified options. I was still very fragile, and my confidence was at rock bottom, so I opted for reduced hours in a non-qualified role. The key deciding factor was that the team I would be working with were people I knew - I felt this would allow me to rebuild in a safer environment. A decision that proved true.

At one level I have experienced a sense of failure - of having "gone backwards" in my career. I have had several conversations with colleagues and managers who ask, in a supporting way, if I would consider returning to qualified nursing. My pride always feels stroked at these times! There is another reality, however, and that is I am probably still recovering from all that has gone before. Extreme trauma does not just vanish. A broken stick mended with glue cannot escape the fact that it was once broken. But a stick held together with glue has its own beauty - it exists, it survives, it functions. I have learned to measure success differently.

My role as a support worker has helped me to recover. It has helped me exist on a day-to-day basis. I enjoy what I do. I look back over the last few years and realise I have succeeded in things I did not fully accept I was even trying to achieve. I don't put out the bins after dark anymore. I have conversations with colleagues about being transgender. I am a Diversity Champion for CPFT. I have spoken at a diversity conference. Success does not have to be linear - it does not have to be all in a straight line. Success is sometimes about winning the battles that no-one else even knows you are having - the hidden battles of mental health. As I write this, I think I have succeeded in unexpected ways to be successful in surviving. There are still days when I wobble, but I accept these for what they are. Each day is its own journey, and success is completing it.

# mirror moments

Geoff Turrall | Non-Executive Director

January 2020 seems like a lifetime away now. It was then that I had my first 2020 'mirror moment'. These mirror moments are ultimately uncomfortable things, where I see behaviour that angers, frustrates or upsets me, but at the same time it casts reflective light on my own behaviour. Moral outrage about others is easy. What's often harder is recognising that I too can be part of that problem.

Back then a 'debate' was raging across UK media about Meghan Markle and Prince Harry. In 18 months they'd gone from media darlings, when they married, to being hounded by elements of the Press for expressing concerns about their treatment. Good Morning Britain had a segment debating 'Is Britain a racist country'.

Notwithstanding some insightful and thought-provoking perspectives from guests with differing racial and cultural backgrounds, Piers Morgan declared at the end of the segment that no, of course, Britain isn't racist. I was incensed. Not because I have a thought-through perspective on whether Britain is or isn't racist, but that as a white man, how would he know? How has he or anyone else whose lived experience is in white skin able to begin to understand what racism looks like, never mind opine on its impacts?

But with the anger comes the mirror. The rapid realisation that I too am part of the problem. Like so many others, I've nodded along over the past five years when the commentariat has wished for a return for to a more tolerant, inclusive and diverse country. But this rose-tinted view of the recent past is one I only ever hear from white commentators, never from commentators from other ethnic backgrounds, who most likely have a very different experience of their lived reality over the past decade.

A longer, drawn out mirror moment has been unfolding over the course of 2019 and 20. With my colleagues on the CPFT Board, I'm passionate about the ED&I agenda and the deep changes we need to make to become a wholly inclusive organisation, where every individual has the opportunity to



explore and develop their potential. Back in September 2019, I attended a richly rewarding day at the CPFT EDI conference in Peterborough, listening to speakers and hearing the lived experiences of the nine colleagues on my table. Now, looking back, I realise that I regularly fall into the trap of 'othering', where the tendency and risk is to see identities that you are not part of as singular or homogenous. It may be that it is convenient shorthand or just cultural laziness on my part, but the idea that individual colleagues with cultural connections as diverse as South Asia, the African continent and the Caribbean make up a single identity with shared singular challenges is clearly wrong and, perhaps an outcome of my thinking being framed as 'white' and 'other'

So, what am I learning? That as well as listening to others, we need to spend some time listening to ourselves and understanding that our experiences are in part rooted in our

cultural and situational perspectives. That the vehemence of a position doesn't equate to its validity. As a white man in his fifties, I might have a view on the impact of systemic racism on young black men and I might have the channels available to me to express that view with some vehemence, but it has nowhere near the validity of the view of a black teenager who maybe doesn't have access to those same channels.

When it comes to talking about the lives of others, it's always about degrees of validity, but that this can never be an excuse for inaction. And finally, that the infernal mirror isn't going anywhere soon. That I will continue to be frustrated, angry and upset by behaviours that I see every day in others where I have to acknowledge and deal with the reality that to be part of the solution I have to understand the way in which I, too, am part of the problem.

# fighting for equality

I work as an administrator for the Liaison and Diversion Service for part of my week and for the rest I complete bank roles across many different services within CPFT. My current role is with adult safeguarding.

I was born into a civil war in Derry, Northern Ireland, and I feel like fighting for equality is a big part of my make-up. These experiences have given me the confidence to speak out against inequality and to challenge any biases that come to light within the work place, which is something I have faced on a number of occasions.

I would particularly like to encourage and empower administrators who can sometimes feel overlooked. I'm very passionate about creating an inclusive society and stand as an ally to all equality groups. I also represent part-time working and I am a single mother.

Visibility and increasing awareness is important in creating an inclusive society. It's about ensuring no-one feels alone and it empowers staff to speak out if they are feeling discriminated against.

I personally had an issue some time ago where I felt discriminated against at work. I didn't feel there was anyone I could speak to. I understand how delicate these matters can be and the worry about the implications you might face through dealing with these matters formally. I am still working through this at the moment.

I have in the past supported people who have been targeted in the work place. I welcome anyone who would like to discuss any similar issues and I would do my best to support in anyway.

I want to ensure others do not suffer in the same way by creating a safe place for people to discuss any issues. Through this, I hope we can begin to tackle discrimination and to create a warmer, more inclusive workplace.

Corinne Ward | Administrator



My experience of joining CPFT as a Board member is the consequence of seeing an advertisement in the Cambridge paper, looking at the website and seeing that all the Board members at that point were older, white men in suits, and thinking: "Well, if they don't like me that is their problem!" I had thought of becoming a Non-Executive, as I had known others who had a similar role, and I thought my skills and experience might be appropriate and useful but didn't really know what it entailed. So, I thought I would give it a go. I don't know if these posts are usually advertised in the local paper, but I do know that I very rarely get it so the likelihood of my seeing the ad was low. However, it also gave me the courage that if the advert was there it must be aimed at a broad range of people.

I think that illustrates well the difference between me and someone from a different background in terms of race and class. I knew some people who were Non-Executives so it wasn't completely beyond my ken. I had the self-confidence (hard won over a long career but still there) to think that 'them' not liking me would be an issue for them not me. I had applied for jobs before and not always got them, but done well enough. Also, it wasn't a significant career move for me - it is a three-day-a-month job and seemed like a good addition to what I already did. So, the stakes were not all that high. I have learnt over the years how to write an application form, what is required and usually know what the terms used in the job description actually mean. This is not magic, but is a skill that can be learnt. The more difficult bit is having the confidence to believe that you could do a particular job and therefore it is worth applying. I can clearly remember a time, when for a number of reasons, I was feeling very battered and low, looking at the job pages and thinking 'I can't apply for any of those'. I am lucky enough that 'hearing' that thought was enough of a shock for me to go 'hang on a minute' to myself. Fortunately, I also had a colleague who was listening who also said 'don't be so daft'.

# challenging the barriers

...reflections on my experiences of privilege and discrimination



Jo Lucas | Non-Executive Director

So, having that confidence that I am OK, that people will consider my application, that I can do things, really, really helps. That confidence is supported by my fairly privileged background - white, middle-class parents who valued education and expected me to do well. Not as well as my brothers, but well enough. I know I didn't get the attention they got, but that could have been as much to do with their rapidly deteriorating marriage as my gender. We weren't rich but we certainly weren't poor,

and my mother worked full-time most of my childhood. That expectation that I could do things, had a right to be in places, goes a long way. Other things in my life eroded that somewhat and I have had to work on it to get to a place where I can really act on it but having that as a basis certainly helps. I may feel uncomfortable going to some 'posh' or intimidating buildings or environments, but I do have a basic belief that I have a right to be there. That is a huge advantage.

I have also experienced discrimination on the basis of gender. Comments, men looking past me, treating me in a different way, ignoring my contribution. In one context a colleague put his arm round my shoulder and called me an 'honorary man'. I think he meant it as a compliment and didn't see just how offensive it was. Also probably because I look younger than I am it can be 'easy' for people not to take me seriously.

I have learnt several 'languages' along the way - the one for report-writing, a different one for job applications, a third for psychotherapy, and a fourth for being a Board member. I know that it is really important that this does not become a complete barrier. The organisation must learn to be more open, but supporting people to learn a new language is useful in a number of ways as that skill is transferable, and can take us into other paths - not just CPFT or the NHS. So when I ran a small grant-giving organisation we made it a priority to support small groups, helping them apply for our grants, helping them learn how to put things in a way that grant-givers will take seriously, so they could grow into organisations that other funders would support.

Challenging these barriers is of critical importance for me while at CPFT. My role is limited but I do my best at Board meetings, visits and meetings, selection interviews, appeal hearings to make sure that patients and staff are heard. I try to always use visits to encourage staff, notably women, to think about promotion and development for themselves, not to just accept what they have. I also always go into appeal hearings wanting to hear the voice of the appellant as I know that it must feel like the organisation is a lot bigger than them - as of course it is. I hope I have learnt to recognise my privileged position and use it when I can to support others, not to keep them out.

[www.fibonacciasociates.org](http://www.fibonacciasociates.org)

## Aspiring

CPFT has employed me since 2003 when I joined as a team manager in the community managing a placement for adults with a learning disability in a shared residency. I managed a complement of 12 staff, and it was a very good experience of my first job as a manager. CPFT has really empowered me with a lot of training that has equipped me with confidence, skills and knowledge that is transferrable, and I am therefore able to work without hesitation anywhere in the Trust. As I speak now, I was recently elected as a staff Governor for the Trust – an exciting opportunity that I am really enjoying as I am able to attend Board meetings, meetings with our top decision-makers, and hear what the Trust is going through, but I'm also part of that driving force that is leading decision-making in the organisation.

## Deterring

When I felt I was ready to progress further in my career to a higher band I sadly did not feel supported by management. Despite being encouraged to apply for such positions I wasn't successful. Initially, I thought it was about me and that I had not done well in interviews until a Diversity Champion colleague spoke to me at length and said let's look at this from a very different point of view. We spoke about race, skills, experience and in the end we felt there was an element of unconscious bias that was going on.

Following unsuccessful interviews, I felt humiliated, sad and useless as they had appointed someone who was not as qualified for the job, inexperienced and I felt they had been appointed to the post just because of the colour of their skin and friendship outside work. I felt the recruitment process did not adhere to equal opportunities. I believe that BAME staff are prevented from career progression as compared to colleagues who are caucasian and I perceive this as unconscious bias and sometimes clearly just bias and discrimination. The appointment was not based on meritocratic but on personal network and pure dislike of certain candidates. At one point I thought of not going back to work

again and look for a job outside of the Trust. Having reflected on what I have mentioned and hearing other similar stories I strongly feel there is some injustice and bias in the recruitment and interview process. The Trust needs to do more in supporting BAME staff. The success of the Trust is a team effort and the BAME employees are an important part of CPFT. The Trust has a low number of BAME staff in Band 7 and above and it is a real shame that the highly educated and experienced BAME staff are not recognised and rewarded as compared to their white colleagues. There is also evidence that the majority of night shifts especially are covered by BAME staff. This is surely not by choice and, as if that is not enough, if these people are able to take charge of the entire hospital at night, what difference does it make to give them positions of authority just like their white colleagues in management and leadership roles?

## Moving forward

Having gone through some frustrations and feeling that I was not being able to move forward in the team that I loved, I decided it was time to step aside. I left the team that I had a passion for, a job that I was confident and enjoyed doing. The thought of applying for another job was daunting as it feels there is a "pre-recorded voicemail" that will be played after my interviews to tell me "so sorry we were not able to appoint you this time, you missed out on the points". During my Governor meetings when I have met up with the Chief Executive, I have openly discussed with her my experience and other similar cases and suggested the need for:

- The interview process to be reviewed
- Representation at the panel of BAME staff as appropriate.
- That the scoring system is not always the best way of selecting the best person for the job
- Access of leadership courses by BAME staff or staff at lower bands who aspire to progress further

I hope that moving forward these things can be implemented.



# Aspiring, deterring, moving forward

Norest Mararike | RMN and Staff Governor

“

**I'm part of that driving force that is leading decision-making in the organisation**

”

# Stepping up when we are ready

Bella Amiteye | Liaison Psychiatry Administrator

I recently attend the first Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority (BAME) forum in the Trust. I felt such encouragement. Something that was said struck me: 'If you are not ready to move up yet, it's the assurance you will have knowing you can go further and climb up when you are ready without any obstacles'.

I went home thinking deeply about it. I joined the Trust last year from Cambridge City Council where I had my own experience of being a minority staff member.

This was my first time attending any events involving a minority group and I wasn't sure what to expect. To be honest, it was a lot to take in. I was uncertain where the group was heading and the main motive of the meeting. However, going home and reading through some statistics, I got a wake-up call.

The motive behind BAME is not for personal gain. It's a movement for us to break down barriers that have stopped many of our older generation from progressing and, if not addressed, would stop the next generation. That will include myself and my daughter.

I read my colleague, Onika's, journey and it inspired me. She also said having a family shouldn't stop you. She also further asked me: 'Do you want to progress'? On the spot I said *no*, not yet!

However, I have been motivated and encouraged to aim for more. I have a first degree in economics and government and a Masters in marketing which I

achieved whilst pregnant and raising a daughter as a single mother. However, I have focused on my domestic priorities, which is putting my daughter first and finding something that suits us.

I absolutely love my current job role in Cambridge. I love my working environment and my colleagues are amazing. I have a supportive team and I thought about what Onika said about her journey and also the voices of everyone present at the BAME workshop.

My line manager encouraged me in our recent supervision to take some leadership training courses - for the first time I didn't resist like I normally would.

I have always felt my qualifications were not really useful in medical industry. However, my line manager explained other roles that sounded great to me. I have learnt a lot since attending the BAME meeting.

I also realised it is not about 'not being ready', but about having the assurance and confidence that you could step up when you are ready!

Also, I asked myself 'do I have the Trust's best interest at heart; do I have its values at heart; do I genuinely love my job and have a passion for helping / caring for people?

If so, then nothing should stop me from progressing when am ready, especially if I have the qualifications and right skills/experience for the role.

I have now been enrolled on six leadership training courses, am excited about the future. I am looking forward to future BAME events.



# authenticity, trust, seek good counsel

Onika Patrick-Redhead | EDI Manager

(Seconded to Royal Papworth Hospital)

I was born in Trinidad, one of the islands of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, to parents of mixed heritage and races. My mother is the third of eight children. She's an extremely independent, feisty soul, and moved out of her village at the age of 19 into the capital city to study to become a nurse. Mummy became the matron of the ICU ward until her retirement; she is mixed with white Scottish, Chinese, African and East Indian. My father was the fifth of seven children and he became a pharmaceutical rep for 40 years with the same company. He was mixed with Chinese, Spanish and East Indian.

I am the second of four children; one boy and three girls. I never grew up thinking about race or color as we were all just different shades of brown, some paler than others, some gloriously as brown as dark chocolate and the colors in between. When I moved to the UK with my husband and two-year-old son in 2002 it was very apparent that not only did I have to think about the challenges that being a mother, and a woman entailed, I also had to think about all the stereotypes, and biases the color of my skin now brought. Between 2002 and 2014, I worked for a private firm in Croydon and then transferred to its head office in Birmingham. During my time there I completed my Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) Level 3 and Diploma Level 5. I made the decision to leave as there was no room for growth in the organisation.

I joined CPFT in February 2014. It was seriously difficult in the beginning as I had to try to fit in. By then, my husband and I had two more children - one of whom was just six months old. I came into a team just after (from what I heard) a challenging consultation. I came in ready to work, ready to prove myself, ready to build bridges and do a good job; also trying to juggle a six-month-old, a pre-teen and a fully-fledged teenager. For a couple years I thought I was doing a good job, I was always at

“  
**Authenticity is the alignment of head, mouth, heart and feet - thinking, saying, feeling and doing the same thing - consistently. This builds trust and followers love leaders they can trust.**  
”

*Lance Secretan*

“  
**As we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.**  
”

*WomenForOne.com*

work after 5.30pm and before 7.30am, even though my hours were 8am-4pm. I was asked to do things that did not sit well with me; deliver news to staff that I felt was unwarranted especially after the knock that a lot of them had just gone through. However, I would go along with things to sit under the radar and change my personality and core values to fit in. For three years I learned very quickly to be a bystander, to have the bystander effect. I was less likely to help people who I felt were being treated badly or unfairly because I thought three things:

- I don't want to be the one being treated like that if I speak up
- If I keep under the radar then I won't be treated badly
- I didn't want to get on the wrong side of others

Unfortunately, there comes a time when your core values, your empathy, your person, you, what I learnt in the Stepping Up Programme 'your big self' can't hide and gets tested too much. I went through a really challenging few years where I felt I was treated really badly and this had a huge impact on my health. I went from being a diabetic on tablets to a diabetic being monitored monthly for high blood pressure, not sleeping more than two hours per night, having paranoid thoughts, reading into things people would say to me, shouting at my kids, crying all the time. It was almost a year of pure hell. If I spoke, I was constantly told that colleagues did not understand my point or me. Like somehow my accent or how I spoke now became an issue. I felt marginalised and had lost all my self-belief.

I started to wonder if I was being treated differently because of the color of my skin; maybe because I am a woman. Was there classism and clear bias? Or simply all of the above?

What helped me through my terrible 12 months would be a few fantastic women in CPFT who recognised not only my value with regards to work, but my value, me as a person, what my diversity, my personality, my work ethic, my big self, brought to the organisation. I was also fortunate enough to get on to the Stepping up Programme which quite literally transformed my life.

## words I now live by...

- Show up and be the change you want to see.
- I am enough (you are enough).
- There's a fundamental difference between leadership and management. "Management is efficiency in climbing the ladder of success; leadership determines whether the ladder is leaning against the right wall". (Steven Covey, 7 habits of highly effective people.)
- "Sameness breathes more sameness until you make a thoughtful effort to counteract it". (Michelle Obama – Becoming.)
- Feedback is a gift. It allows you to see how people receive you. What is it like being on the receiving end of you?
- Be authentic. Make sure your words align with your actions.





# LIFE AFTER COVID-19

## my reflection

Ramesh Subbiah | Inclusion Manager

The year 2020 has been challenging for number of reasons. Covid-19 infection brought tremendous pressure on health care workers.

In April 2020, a few of my colleagues become unwell with the Covid-19 infection. At the same time articles were published stating there is a disproportionate impact on Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities.

The national articles and my colleague's health made me more interested to learn about why there is a disproportionate impact on BAME staff. Looking at the national data as well as our Trust data, the number of BAME staff working in frontline roles are high compared to those working in senior posts. There were a number of factors involved, including socio-economic background, living conditions and in some cases, an inability to discuss their concerns without fear.

Inpatient staff feedback sessions helped me to understand their worries about Covid infection and provided some guidance for

next steps. My senior managers supported me to continue with the work. The informal support group findings were presented to the Gold command meeting. A BAME Covid group was established and a BAME and vulnerable staff support group was established and ran for a number of weeks during the first wave.

May 2020 brought more challenges to me as we lost a valuable team member at the Cavell Centre and, for me, I lost a loving friend. At the same time, one of our colleagues was admitted to the Intensive Care Unit at Royal Papworth Hospital. May 2020 was an emotional roller coaster, and the psychological impact on me was huge. I knew if I did not redirect my energy and focus, I would be depressed and would need time to recover.

During this time, I was often challenged by so many different people - why focus on BAME colleagues, when other people are affected by Covid too? I was frustrated but I saw that as an opportunity for me to explain why there is a focus on BAME. I learned to accept that not everyone I spoke to would

understand the rationale, but I was happy that they made an effort to stop and listen to the explanation.

I have faced comments like, "I am here for my patients, I don't know about you". Even though I felt shocked and upset by the comment, I felt that I must explain my role and what I am trying to achieve. Unfortunately, some people did not understand the scope of my role and the work I was doing to ensure workforce wellbeing support, but that does not mean my work is not valued or supported.

Being part of the Trust's incident control Gold command structure gave me the opportunity to discuss staff feedback/concerns directly to the senior managers and directors. A number of staff from BAME communities were involved in all control and command structure meetings, so staff voices can be heard at all levels. The year 2020 has been very challenging but the support and the number of new initiatives brought in our Trust gave hope and opportunities to bring the necessary cultural change we are aiming for.

# It feels good to have meaning and purpose

Michael Lafond | Peer Support Worker



I'm going to share with you what spirituality means to me. I'm a peer worker. I use my lived experience to help others on their recovery journeys. Spirituality for me is doing the things in life that give me meaning and purpose.

Caring for my little dog - she's there when I wake in the morning, I make her breakfast and take her out for a walk. My reward is a doggy smile and a waggy tail and it feels good when she jumps up on my lap and wants to be with me. This makes me feel good and gives me meaning and purpose.

I go to work and be with others at a men's coffee morning. We chat to each other over coffee and biscuits, sharing what we've been up to, talking about what's been on the news and what's on at the cinema. I enjoy being there. We say goodbye and see each other next week. It feels good and gives me meaning and purpose.

I visit my nieces. "Uncle's here," they scream in their high-pitched voices. "Are you behaving?" I ask. They want to play hide and seek. They hide in their usual places and I pretend it's hard hard to find them. Then it's my turn to hide. They find me and it puts a smile on my face. When I leave they look out the window and wave to me. It feels good; it gives me meaning and purpose.

I pray and ask God to look after me. I have faith that he's guiding me. I ask for peace and wisdom. I feel cared for. God has a purpose for me and gives me meaning in my life. It feels good.

I go to work and I greet people for the Sunday service. We sing, we read a Bible passage, we shake hands and share the peace, we pray, and we chat afterwards over coffee and biscuits. I feel part of a spiritual community and it feels good. It gives me meaning and purpose. I look forward to doing it again.

I call my girlfriend and we meet up to chat over something to eat. We watch a DVD and cuddle up. It feels good and gives me meaning and purpose.

I walk into town and pass a homeless man. He catches my eye and asks for some spare change. I tell him I don't have much to share at the moment but I can give you a roll-up. We chat as he rolls it. As I walk on it felt good to talk to him. Others may have just passed him by. I hope that he finds meaning and purpose. I walk in the park and see trees in their autumn colours - they look beautiful. I wonder if they have meaning and purpose. They mean something to me.

I've had challenging times in my life. I felt like I had little meaning and purpose but now I am grateful that my journey has brought me to where I am today. It feels good to have meaning and purpose. I am sharing parts of my life with you today which feels meaningful. It feels good to share and I am grateful to have this opportunity to be here with you in a spiritual way.

## Heart and Soul



 <https://twitter.com/heartandsoulwh1>

I was asked to share my perspective about working as a lesbian woman in CPFT. Although I sometimes use the word “lesbian” to refer to myself, it doesn’t always feel right for me. I haven’t found a word that sits completely comfortably with me, but sometimes I use the word “queer” because it is broader than “lesbian”. My reservation about the word “queer” is that it has been used as a term of abuse, and for some people it still has the power to hurt and denigrate. My partner uses the word “gay” to describe herself.

It’s important that we get to choose the words we use to express our identities, and this is true not just for sexuality, but for other characteristics such as gender identity. When I logged onto ESR (Electronic Staff Record) recently to record my personal information, there wasn’t an option “queer” that I could choose, nor was there a free text field where I could type this in. On the whole my experiences of being an out queer woman in CPFT have been positive. A small change that could help me, and possibly others, to feel more included is to increase the number of words that describe sexual orientation on ESR, or to add a free text field. Another point I want to make here is the words we choose to describe ourselves can change over time, reflecting shifts in our understanding about who we are – our identities. The words we choose can also have political significance for us.

People sometimes talk about coming out, as if it’s something you do once in your life, or during one period of your life. But I haven’t experienced it like that. I have come out many times in my life – when accessing new services; starting new courses and jobs; meeting new people in social settings. When I meet new people, they often assume that I am straight. I find this stressful, and it always poses a dilemma– do I risk coming out to this person, or do I choose not to? It is worth saying here that choosing not to come out also has a cost. Hiding a fundamental part of who I am is stressful. It requires energy, and makes me

# My story

Emily McMullen | Trainee Psychological Wellbeing Practitioner



anxious: What if I let it slip? What if this person is prejudiced? What if this person would reject me if they knew this about me? What helps most is when people don’t make assumptions about me. If I refer to “my partner” and people respond with “they” or “he or she”, that is helpful. As society has become more tolerant and I have become braver, I more often than not say: “My partner, Alison...” or “my partner, she...” However, there are still times when I don’t do this, and careful use of language by the person I’m talking to makes a big difference. Language that makes me feel excluded, wrong or like I have to explain myself, is not helpful.

I was a CPFT service user before I became a member of staff. When I faced significant mental health challenges in 2015, my partner Alison became my carer. Alison was by my side during the darkest times. These included home visits by the crisis team, an admission to hospital and a 2am trip to the emergency department when I had suffered a severe suicidal reaction to my anti-depressant medication. Luckily for me, Alison had read the side-effects on the leaflet that came with my medication, realised what was happening, and took me straight to the ED. Her actions probably saved my life. When we saw the psychiatrist, I described as best as I could what was happening to me. Alison, as the person who knows me best and at one remove was able to add important details to my account, gave a fuller overall picture. On this occasion and on my subsequent journey through services, Alison and I always felt that she was listened to by the professionals who were

caring for me. It helped us both that she was respected and treated no differently from any other caring relative.

When I started working at CPFT I didn’t know any of my colleagues. I had been out of work for over 2 years because of my mental health, so it was a challenging time. Added to this were the usual anxieties about starting a new job, including whether I would be accepted. Not long after I started, during a team meeting I saw a colleague drinking out of a mug with “Nobody Knows I’m Gay” written in large letters across it. This helped me a lot because it signalled that sexuality wasn’t an issue here, and I was able to relax and feel more confident about being myself. I think that every team should get hold of one of these mugs and if no-one feels comfortable drinking out of it, just leave it somewhere visible, where it could make a big difference to someone.

I’m sure there are a lot of allies reading this and I would like to ask you to do something for me and the rest of the LGBT community. Please find ways to signal your solidarity and support. I think I can speak for a lot of people when I say that unless you have made it clear you’re an ally, I won’t assume it to be the case. This comes from a lifetime of countless messages that it is shameful to be queer and I am a second-class citizen. Eighteen years ago I when I was working at a language school, I was standing in line to use the photocopier. The colleague in front of me made a comment when her handouts started coming out of the machine on pink paper. “Oh dear, are the students going to think I’m a bit, you know,

funny?” To my colleague, this was probably just a throwaway comment, forgotten by the end of the day. But this comment has stayed with me for 18 years. I have lost count of the number of comments I have heard like this throughout my lifetime, but I do know that every one of them has hurt me, and everyone has made me question if I am ok as I am. An easy way to show support would be to wear an NHS rainbow badge, or a rainbow ribbon. This may seem like a small gesture, but it will send a really important message loud and clear to everyone who sees it: I am an LGBTQ ally.

Finally, I wonder how often in the last year you have seen two women or two men holding hands or kissing in public. It’s something that even now, in Cambridge in 2019, I rarely see. Often when I’m out in public with Alison I would like to hold hands with her. But we rarely do this because we fear other people’s reactions. In the backs of our minds is always the possibility of verbal, or even physical assault and this is very scary. But far more likely is having to deal with others’ open disapproval such as staring, whispering or laughs. It is this kind of behaviour we are often faced with when we are brave enough to hold hands, and sometimes even when we don’t. We have been together for 17 years, and only been out for a meal once on Valentine’s Day. Our mere presence in a room full of straight couples drew so much judgment that we’ve never wanted to repeat the experience. If what I’m describing here is outside of your experience, I invite you to try and imagine it. I think if we all try a bit harder to notice where we are privileged and to imagine what it’s like for those who do not share these privileges, we will make some important steps towards achieving equality. I know that on a daily basis I benefit from being white, middle class, cis-gendered, non-disabled and educated. My challenge to myself is to notice when and how these characteristics give me advantages; and to imagine what it’s like for those who don’t share them. Will you join me in challenging yourselves in these ways, too?

# who am I?

Emma Taylor | Recovery College Manager

This is how I felt when I first considered seeking a diagnosis. What would that mean? Would this mean I would lose who 'I' was? Would this be all anyone saw (including myself!).

Even though every day I shared with my students that it didn't matter what diagnosis they had, I remember being tormented by my feelings of anxiety and desire to fit in to what was perceived as the 'social norm' when a colleague said to me "Emma, this isn't a new thing. This is you. You have had this all your life. All a diagnosis is, is you fitting into a set of criteria. This doesn't change YOU..."

But why do we seek a diagnosis? Are we looking for validation? An offer of some sort of an explanation? Or simply to confirm what we already suspect?

Diagnosis can have many benefits but it can also limit our hopes and expectations, diminish our sense of self and focus on our deficits rather than our strengths.

Here at Recovery College East we support people to understand what a diagnosis may mean to them but most importantly how to live a fulfilling life with meaning and purpose with (or without) a diagnosis. Being an educational provision we want to enable people to learn how to live a great life regardless of any ongoing symptoms/challenges. We want people to see they are so much more than any diagnosis, set of symptoms or challenges they may experience.

This is something I have learnt along my journey of diagnosis. Initially I felt like I was putting myself into a box, losing all sense of who I was and just seeing the label. I struggled to see that I could still have a sense of identity, still be my 'quirky' self and receive a diagnosis. But with talking to my peers and professionals I worked alongside I began to truly believe what I told my students every day, because ultimately with or without a diagnosis aren't we all uniquely trying to navigate the unfolding challenge and complexity we call life, carrying our tools and resources that we pick up along the way alongside our baggage from the past?

Simply put a diagnosis may or may not be a helpful part of that journey. I have decided to continue to seek a formal diagnosis but I now know who I am and I'm proud to be unique, possibly even different, but ultimately no less than anyone else.

Simply put a diagnosis may or may not be a helpful part of that journey.



# My journey to the unknown land

I came to England when I was 10 with my mother and two older brothers from Delhi, India. I didn't have a clue about the West or even about the world until my father came to England. He worked for Allied Motors, a very reputable motor company in India. He was offered the opportunity to work for a year in England and he took this chance. I remember my father saying he couldn't believe he was offered such an opportunity. I think he later realised what that meant for my mother. Being a mother, she couldn't be left to manage by herself, so my grandfather had to come from Amritsar in Punjab to live with us in Delhi.

Before we could even get used to the idea that father was leaving for England, he was being dropped off at the airport. I had no idea where the airport was, it was all confusing. I was so close to my father and I missed him. It felt like my world had come tumbling down. My family wasn't rich or poor but lived a good life. My parents were proud when they bought their first house and I remember many happy memories in that house full of fun and laughter.

Once grandfather came to live with us in Delhi life was difficult because there were so many "dos" and "don'ts". Six months later there was trouble between India and Pakistan that led to a war. Delhi was being bombed and everyone had to have sandbags in their houses and windows blacked out. There was a curfew every night and we were not allowed to go out of the house at night time. Schooling was affected, which wasn't a bad thing! It meant I didn't have to go to school, but the downside was that I couldn't go out and play with my friends as it was too dangerous.

I couldn't make much sense of what was happening, felt confused and very frightened. Every night in the neighbourhood we would get told how many soldiers got captured and how many people got killed due to the bombing.

Many years later I read about this conflict that led to the war to get any understanding and why we came to England.

As the war was not coming to an end, my grandfather suddenly told us that we would be going to England where we'll be safer and with father. I couldn't understand what was happening, there was so much confusion - fear of going to the land of the unknown and not being able to speak a word of English. The only thing I looked forward to was to see my father.

Within months our paperwork to come to England was being prepared. My mother had to lock away all our belongings that we couldn't

take with us. I was upset because I had to leave so many of my toys behind. My mother kept reassuring me we will be back in a year or two.

By mid-November our passports were ready. We could take just one suitcase each. My mother didn't know what the weather was like in England and we traveled in summer clothes. Delhi airport was alien to me, but I remember my brothers excited at seeing the aeroplanes. Arriving at Heathrow, it was cold, foggy and miserable. None of us had jackets and we were cold! What was reassuring was seeing father eagerly waiting for us.

The shock came when I couldn't understand

anything anyone was saying. I didn't know a word of English. My brothers were fortunate enough to have learned English at their school in India. They started to teach me to say "hello" and this is the first word I learned!

Life in England was strange and very difficult for a few years. Not being able to relate to anything or communicate really set me back. But I made friends and missed all my friends in India and wondered if I would ever see them again. Sadly, I never did. I did however go back to India ten years later and connected with all the relatives that we had left behind and continued to explore and learn about Delhi, the place where I was born.

Sue Rampal | Equality and Diversity Officer



My name is Kathy and I am a service manager in the Children's, Young People's and Families Directorate. I have been working on and off in various guises in the Trust for many years across a range of teams and services working alongside fabulous people with a passion for delivering good services.

How things have changed over that time! I was working in the newly formed Crisis Resolution and Home Treatment Team when I returned to the Trust in 2006. It was a challenging time for that team and the culture of understanding regarding diversity relating to LGBTQ+ people was poor. As an example, I was unfortunately involved in a clinical discussion in which a senior clinician was keen to make a safeguarding referral to children's social care solely on the grounds that the father in the family had begun a romantic relationship with another man. At the same time, a close friend of mine, and inpatient nurse, had his car defaced with homophobic slurs whilst he was on shift. He received minimal managerial support to manage his safety or the wider impact of this.

We had come a long way at that point in terms of wider LGB rights. The Civil Partnership legislation had been passed in 2005, same-sex couples had recently become able to adopt children, and Section 28 of the Local Government Act (1988) which prohibited the 'promotion' of homosexuality in schools, was repealed in 2003. However, as with all things, the legal story often doesn't reflect the social one and I would often refrain from mentioning my girlfriend at work, or using gender-neutral terms to refer to my 'partner' if questioned for fear of the reaction I might receive from my colleagues and the impact that might have on my work.

Once I found my feet and got my first



## bridging the equality gap

Kathy Lawrence-Clarke | Service Manager

management position in 2006, I decided that I had a responsibility as a gay woman in a management position to normalise same-sex relationships for my LGBTQ+ colleagues across the Trust. I took a deep breath and ditched the gender-neutral terms. It wasn't always easy, but I am fortunate in that I have never been persecuted as a result of my sexual orientation. That's not to say I haven't experienced significant discomfort such as when a passing colleague questioned in an open forum the exact method I used to get pregnant! This, and other intrusive and uncomfortable questions, weren't being raised with the intention of making me uncomfortable but rather out of simple curiosity. I wish I could say I was always able to reflect the impact of their question back in the moment, but it's not always that easy

and often I just wanted the moment to end so I would mumble something and change the subject. Even in a position of power, being singled out as different can disempower very easily.

Fast forward 13 years and it's true that we have come a long way. The LGBTQ+ community is much more embedded in the mainstream these days, both in law with marriage equality and representation within mainstream media. On a personal level I have noticed a significant shift in culture. I can see and hear colleagues questioning their assumptions about same-sex couples and families and it's heartening to see. We're not quite there yet. Unfortunately I often still experience people correcting me when I refer to my wife, using the term 'partner'

instead and I very often experience murmurings of surprise from colleagues when I mention her for the first time. Again, these are not acts borne of malice but do demonstrate a level of discomfort with my difference. It makes being open about myself at work rather like having an injection – you know it's right and will be good in the long term but it stings a little at first still every time!

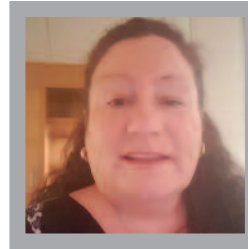
What headway we have made as a work community. We should all be rightly proud of the thoughtfulness and compassion towards LGBTQ+ colleagues and service users evident across our services today.

Let's keep making those strides and leap those final bumps together!

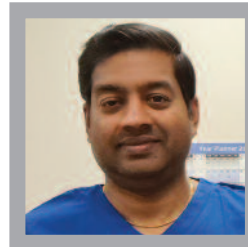
# How can you support the equality, diversity and inclusion agenda at CPFT?

**We need your support! There are so many opportunities to get involved in the Equality Diversity and Inclusion agenda.**

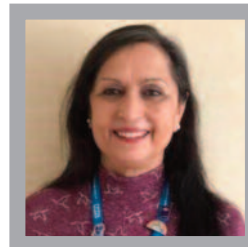
- Consider becoming a Diversity Champion (you can sign up at [EDI@cpft.nhs.uk](mailto:EDI@cpft.nhs.uk)).
- Join staff networks BAME and W2H and spread the word to get others to join.
- Read the EDI reports (WRES/WDES) to understand the current challenges.
- Think about your language. Make sure it's recovery focused and gender neutral where possible.
- Ensure equality, diversity and inclusion is the golden thread through all that you do.
- Role model the behaviours you want to see in others.
- Call out bad / inappropriate language and behaviour – in a kind and compassionate way.
- Ensure equality, diversity and inclusion is on your team meeting agenda and discussed regularly.
- Do not tolerate any racist, sexist, transphobic, homophobic behaviour or comments. If you witness these, raise this with your manager.
- Have a noticeboard for equality, diversity and inclusion in your team, ward, etc.
- Have a picture of your diversity champion on the board with their contact details.
- Seek out equality, diversity and inclusion training and speak to your manager about your interest in ED&I at your appraisal.
- Talk to your patients and peers about equality diversity and inclusion, be thoughtful with your language.
- Contact your equality, diversity and inclusion leads if you need any support in your area of work.
- Add the Embrace logo to your signature strip to show your support and wear an embrace or rainbow badge.
- Talk about equality, diversity and inclusion; don't hide away from this.
- Offer gender-neutral toilets where possible.
- Find ways to be involved in equality and diversity activities such as Black History Month and LGBTQ+ month.
- Don't make assumptions about people!
- Read, learn, ask, and be inquisitive!
- Think about the images you use in your teams and literature, do they reflect the diversity of your teams and client groups (for example, pictures of same-sex couples, a variety of age groups, people from BAME background, and people with disabilities).



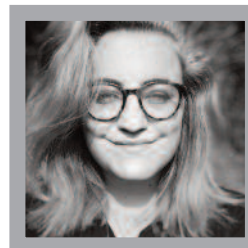
Sharon Gilfoyle | Associate Director of Inclusion



Ramesh Subbiah | Inclusion Manager



Sue Rampal | Equality and Diversity Officer



Bea Cole | EDI Administrator/Peer Support Worker

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