

THE BRITISH LIBRARY

GENDER EQUALITY, TRANSGENDER AND SEXUAL ORIENTATION ACTION PLANS

INTRODUCTION - [May 2010 – April 2013]



Foreword

I am delighted to present our 2nd 3 year Gender Equality and Transgender Action Plan which this year also includes our first 3 year plan for Sexual Orientation.

As we come to the end of our current 3 year plan I am pleased to inform you that I remain just as committed about gender and transgender equality as ever and they remain central to our workforce and how we promote inclusion for everyone whatever their gender identity in accessing our services and collections.

The public sector duty to promote gender equality has been a significant lever in driving this agenda forward and this has been beneficial to the Library and all its stakeholders in providing a constructive framework for promoting equality, addressing and tackling potential barriers and prejudice that people experience.

We have had a good deal of support from the men, women and transpeople who have contributed to our internal and external consultations and information gathering and from our stakeholder partners to whom we say a huge thank you.

Also, over the past 3 years in particular, the work of the Library's HR Diversity Team, Gender Action Group, colleagues and union members across the Library, has enabled substantial progress in embedding Gender Equality across the Library. We have also recently become members of Opportunity Now an employer-led organisation on gender issues in the workplace. We hope to build on our good work and keep abreast of best-practice in this area.

Another key project area for the Library is Domestic Abuse. The Gender Action Group invited Refuge to do a presentation to the group to inform the development of the Domestic Abuse policy. We have developed our Domestic Abuse policy to ensure it is inclusive of men and women and cultural groups and the LGBT community as we realise Domestic Abuse does and can affect everyone.

Throughout the period of the 1st action plan the Gender Action Group's remit of work has also encompassed Sexual Orientation and has setup a sub-group on Sexual Orientation tasked with delivering the actions in this area.

We have already begun creating greater awareness of sexual orientation issues and as part of the Library's contribution to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans (LGBT) History Month 2010, Bart Smith of the Humanities Reference Service gave a talk on 500 years of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans-related resources in the Library on 9 February. The capacity audience in the Auditorium at St Pancras were shown examples of some the rare, historic and explicit items from the Libraries Collections. The talk received very complementary feedback from the audience.

LGBT staff in the Library have also created a social and informal group which aims to meet regularly to share experiences, provide support and discuss issues and initiatives that affect LGBT groups at work and externally.

The Library have also become members of Stonewall's Diversity Champions Programme to further progress areas of work , which is a important area for all of us and we shall build stronger networks with sexual orientation



organisations. We have also established a stronger relationship with the Gender Trust who presented at our recent Transgender consultation. In addition, The National Centre for Domestic Violence also presented at our recent General Gender Consultation to inform the Library's area of work in this important area.

However, we realise that there is still more work to be done and we shall continue to strive to meet the expectations of our staff, service-users and stakeholders in working towards meeting our actions.

Mary Canavan
Gender and Sexual Orientation Champion -
Director of Human Resources
The British Library

Our plans for 2010 -2013

The Library reviewed its Gender Equality Scheme in 2008 when it brought together the generic areas of our Disability, Race and Gender Schemes into an umbrella document the Unified Equality Scheme which you will find at <http://www.bl.uk/aboutus/stratpolprog/diversity/schemes/unifyingdocument.pdf> There has not been a requirement for a subsequent or further review at this stage.

The Unifying Generic Equality Scheme holds a comprehensive framework for compliance across all Library functions and sets out how we planned to meet these requirements.

We have kept the bespoke areas of each strand of diversity separate so you will be able to find the Gender Action Plan for 2007-2010, the consultations in 2007 and the annual progress reports for 2007-08, 2008-09 on separate links under <http://www.bl.uk/aboutus/stratpolprog/diversity/schemes/index.html>

The 2009-10 report on the final year and 3 years our current plan will be available shortly.

Our consultations in March and April 2010 and our new plans for 2010 to 2013 can be found under

<http://www.bl.uk/aboutus/stratpolprog/diversity/schemes/index.html>

- External General Gender and key projects of Domestic Abuse and Transgender Consultations –
- External Sexual Orientation Consultation
- Internal General Gender and key projects of Domestic Abuse and Transgender Consultations
- Internal Sexual Orientation Consultations

- Gender Equality and Transgender Action Plan 2010 – 2013
- Sexual Orientation Action Plan 2010 – 2013

We are looking forward to progressing our second new 3 year action plans and thank you to all who helped to gather information to be able to produce these plans.