

Catherine Tonry

(She/Her)

What's your role?

Senior Lecturer in Computational Science and Engineering

When did you join the university?

As a student 2009, As staff 2013

What's a fun fact about you?

I am the Events Director of the Campaign for Real Ale

If you could have dinner with three LGBTQ+ icons, who would they be any why?

Alan Turing, he has always been a hero of mine. Suzie Eddie Izzard, I've been a fan of hers since I was a teenager. Sally Ride, I imagine she would have some fascinating stories, not just about space but being LGBT.

What's your favourite thing about being LGBTQ+?

It gives me a unique perspective on life.

What's your coming out story?

Like most LGBT people I don't have a single coming out story, in fact I often accidentally come out to people when I assume they know I am trans but they don't! The first person I came out to was my younger brother when I was 18 not much of a story to tell, I told him, he was shocked and that was that. The second person I told was my best friend from school who I had known all my life, I must have been 19 or so, he wasn't so surprised and we had a big long chat. I told my parents while very drunk on either my 21st or 22nd birthday can't quite remember which, was all rather emotional! Generally, my comings out have been uneventful.



Coming out now is a bit different though to back then. A lot of people I meet day to day seem to assume I am a cis woman (though not all), I often forget this and use phrases such as "when I was pretending to be a man still" which confuses them somewhat.

Why is being out at work important to you?

I think it is important to show to both staff and students that being trans is not something to be ashamed of.

What would you say to staff at the university who may be facing difficulties because of being LGBTQ+ or having difficulties "coming out" at work?

If they are having difficulties, I would say talk to someone, there is help available. Coming out is a personal choice and I don't think anyone has the duty to be out, but I would worry about anyone feeling unsafe to be themselves.

What would you like to see other colleagues doing to help make the university a better place to be LGBTQ+?

Be mindful of LGBTQ+ colleagues, though we are often strong out of necessity, microaggressions can still hurt.



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