

MAKE NO ASSUMPTIONS.



Dear Recipient,

I am writing to you on behalf of Cambridge University Students' Union: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Plus (CUSU LGBT+) as part of our Make No Assumptions campaign. With it, we seek to make everyday situations for transgender people in Cambridge easier by challenging the assumptions people make about gender and the unhelpful focus on gender that occurs throughout our society.

In 2013, the CUSU LGBT+ transgender rep produced a comprehensive document entitled 'Including Transgender Students at the University of Cambridge'. This document explains some background information about being transgender, advises colleges on how best to assist a student who is undergoing transition, and issues some recommendations for the University and colleges to improve accessibility for transgender students bringing them into line with the Equality Act 2010. The launch of another transgender awareness campaign in Cambridge seems a suitable time to re-release this guidance and gently draw your attention to it. Particular areas where changes could still be made are highlighted below.

One of the most helpful things colleges and departments can do for transgender students is to ensure teaching staff, porters, housekeeping staff and others who have contact with students have a basic understanding of what it is to be transgender and how to manage this sensitively when it is relevant. This information is included in the 'Including Transgender Students at the University of Cambridge' document. We have also included two shorter guides giving some basic information on what being transgender means and how best to be respectful to transgender people. We would be very grateful if you would please circulate this information amongst your fellows and staff.

Many colleges have made fantastic improvements in making their dress codes and language in correspondence sent to students gender neutral. However this is not yet unanimous and we would encourage you to ensure that gender neutral language is used in both existing and future documentation and correspondence. This is an extremely important aspect of making college life accessible to transgender students, for whom gendered language and the associated expectations can cause enormous and unnecessary anxiety.

While the provision of gender neutral toilets in colleges and departments has improved over the past few years, there is still a distinct shortage of facilities which transgender students can use without having to select from one of two gendered options – being forced into this choice is something which leads to considerable internal discomfort, and carries a risk of the transgender person being harassed for their choice. We would encourage you wherever possible to please designate toilet facilities as gender-neutral and ensure all new buildings include clearly signed gender neutral toilet facilities.

We would be very grateful for these changes to be addressed over the coming months. If you would like to know more about our campaign or get more involved, there are a wealth of resources and further information on our website, www.makenoassumptions.org.uk. If you have any further questions, please get in touch via email at cusutrascampaign@gmail.com

Many thanks for your time in assisting us with these requests.

Yours Sincerely,

Robin Cumming
CUSU LGBT+ Transgender Representative
On behalf of CUSU LGBT+ and the Make No Assumptions campaign.