



THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH
School of Divinity

New College Equality, Diversity, & Inclusion Newsletter



We are delighted to share this semester's New College EDI Newsletter. Responding to student feedback, the Newsletter was introduced to strengthen communication between the EDI Committee and student body, offering a round-up of activities held each semester and providing contacts and resources for student support. This past semester we organised a number of fascinating events, including an interfaith Black History Month panel; a book session on religion, gender, and race, jointly held with the NC Book Festival; and our first ever NC Diwali Potluck. The above photo shows the beautiful tea-light arrangement for the Potluck, which was held in the Rainy Hall.

We have some exciting updates in terms of the EDI Committee, as we welcome new members. These include 4 students enrolled in 4 different programmes. Josie Gwin is the new PG Rep and Gorraav Bains is the new UG Rep. Ashley Raper and Valerie Mear are the new Co-Convenors of NC Pride, our School's LGBTQ+ student group. The email contacts for the student reps - and all the committee members - can be found at the end of the newsletter. Lastly, having finished his sabbatical, Dr Shadaab Rahemtulla returned this semester as Director of EDI. Special thanks go to Dr Alysa Ghose for her stellar work as interim Director. She will continue to serve as a committee member.

If you have any questions about the newsletter or any EDI queries or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact Dr Rahemtulla at s.rahemtulla@ed.ac.uk

December 2023

BLACK HISTORY MONTH LECTURE

“Black Religious Experiences in Scotland: Christian and Muslim Perspectives”

This year’s New College BHM Lecture was an interfaith panel, with a focus on our own local context in Scotland. Chaired by PG student Michael Harris and consisting of two Christian and two Muslim speakers, the panelists discussed the lived experiences, intersectional problems, and challenges facing Black communities of faith in Scotland, and how these might compare to the broader UK context.

Held on Oct 27, the panel built on previous NC events exploring race, sexuality, and faith leadership (Father Jarel Robinson-Brown, click [here](#) for the recording) and Black History in Islam (Imam Mustafa Briggs, click [here](#) for the recording).



SOCIAL CLASS WORKSHOP

“Classism in the Classroom”

On Sept 15 we offered a training session for teaching staff and PG tutors in order to become more aware of class privilege and unconscious bias in the classroom. The session was led by Dr Neil Speirs, who is the Widening Participation Manager at the University and has spent many years interviewing working-class students in the higher education sector. This was the second run of the workshop at Divinity. With last year’s attendance, over 50 staff and PG tutors have now taken the social class training.

FEATURED EVENT

THE DIWALI POTLUCK

On Nov 9 we held our first ever Diwali Potluck at New College, drawing an excellent turnout from within and outwith the University of Edinburgh. Spearheaded by EDI Committee member Dr Alysa Ghose and PG student Chloe Gardner, this interfaith event explored Hindu and Sikh perspectives on the Festival of Light.

The University's Hindu Chaplain Shipra Kohli spoke on the significance of Diwali for Hindus, while our very own UG student rep Gorrav Bains provided insights from a Sikh perspective. After the presentations, audience members shared their own personal, lived experiences of Diwali, and then we all dove into the delicious food!





MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING

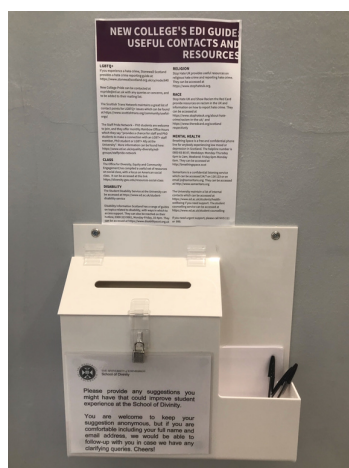
“Move & Stretch Classes”

To promote better mental health and wellbeing, we have been running weekly “Move & Stretch” classes for over a year now. Led by EDI Committee member Dr Suzanna Millar - who, in addition to being a biblical studies scholar, is a certified fitness trainer - the class involves gentle stretching and movement to soft music. The Martin Hall has been a fantastic, roomy venue for this activity and, thanks to a Student Experience Grant secured by Dr Millar, we have brand new yoga mats! As Dr Millar is on sabbatical this coming Semester 2, the classes will resume next September.

EDI and the NC Book Festival

“The Colour of God”

The EDI Committee collaborated with the New College Book Festival to invite Professor Ayesha Chaudhry to discuss her new book, *The Colour of God: A Story of Family and Faith* (click [here.](#)) Professor Chaudhry teaches Islamic and gender studies at the University of British Columbia in Canada. *The Colour of God* reflects on the complex intersections of identity, race, gender, diaspora, and religious minoritisation. Held in a packed Martin Hall, the event was co-hosted by GenderEd. The book discussion was followed by a reception, co-sponsored by RaceEd & the Scottish Network for Religion and Literature.



Have an EDI question or suggestion?

Use our "EDI Suggestion Box" in the Foyer of New College

An online version of the Box can also be found on the UG and PG SharePoint sites.



NEW COLLEGE'S EDI GUIDE:

USEFUL CONTACTS AND RESOURCES

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NEW COLLEGE EDI NEWSLETTER

LGBTQ+

If you experience a hate crime, Stonewall Scotland provides a hate crime reporting guide at <https://www.stonewallscotland.org.uk/cy/node/640>

New College Pride can be contacted at ncpride@ed.ac.uk with any queries or concerns, and to be added to their mailing list.

The Scottish Trans Network maintains a great list of contact points for LGBTQ+ issues which can be found at <https://www.scottishtrans.org/community/useful-orgs/>

The Staff Pride Network – PhD students are welcome to join, and they offer monthly Rainbow Office Hours which they say “provides a chance for staff and PhD students to make a connection with an LGBT+ staff member, PhD student or LGBT+ Ally at the University”. More information can be found here: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/equality-diversity/edi-groups/staffpride-network>

SOCIAL CLASS

The 93% club is a student-led network and charity in the UK that provides support for working-class and state-school educated students in the Higher Education sector. Their website can be accessed here: <https://www.93percent.club/>

The Office for Diversity, Equity and Community Engagement has compiled a useful set of resources on social class, with a focus on American social class. It can be accessed at this link <https://diversity.gwu.edu/resources-social-class>

RACE

Stop Hate UK and the Red Card provide resources on racism in the UK and information on how to report hate crime. They can be accessed at <https://www.stophateuk.org/about-hate-crime/racism-in-the-uk/> and also see <https://www.theredcard.org/scotland>

The Staff BAME Network welcomes all Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic academic and professional services staff, including PhD students. Their website is: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/equality-diversity/edi-groups/staff-bame-network>

RELIGION & INTERFAITH

The University Chaplaincy provides personal, emotional, communal, spiritual, faith, and belief support, for all members of the University. People of no religion use it as much as people of particular faiths. The chaplaincy is also a good resource for reaching out to specific student faith groups and networks. Their website is <https://www.ed.ac.uk/chaplaincy>

DISABILITY

The Student Disability and Learning Support Office at the University can be accessed at <https://www.ed.ac.uk/student-disability-service>

Disability Information Scotland has a range of guides on topics related to disability, with ways in which to access support. They can also be reached on their hotline, 0300 323 9961, Monday-Friday, 10-4pm. They can be accessed at <https://www.disabilityscot.org.uk>

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MENTAL HEALTH

The University Student Wellbeing Service operates Monday to Friday 9am-5pm. Their website is <https://www.ed.ac.uk/student-wellbeing-service> and they can also be reached at student.wellbeing@ed.ac.uk

The student counselling service can be accessed at <https://www.ed.ac.uk/student-counselling>

Breathing Space is a free and confidential phone line for anybody experiencing low mood or depression. The helpline number is 0800 83 85 87, Weekdays: Monday-Thursday 6pm to 2am, Weekend: Friday 6pm-Monday 6am. They can be accessed at <http://breathingspace.scot>

Samaritans is a confidential listening service which can be accessed 24/7 on 116 123 or on email jo@samaritans.org. They can be accessed at <http://www.samaritans.org>

If you need urgent support, please call NHS 111 or 999.

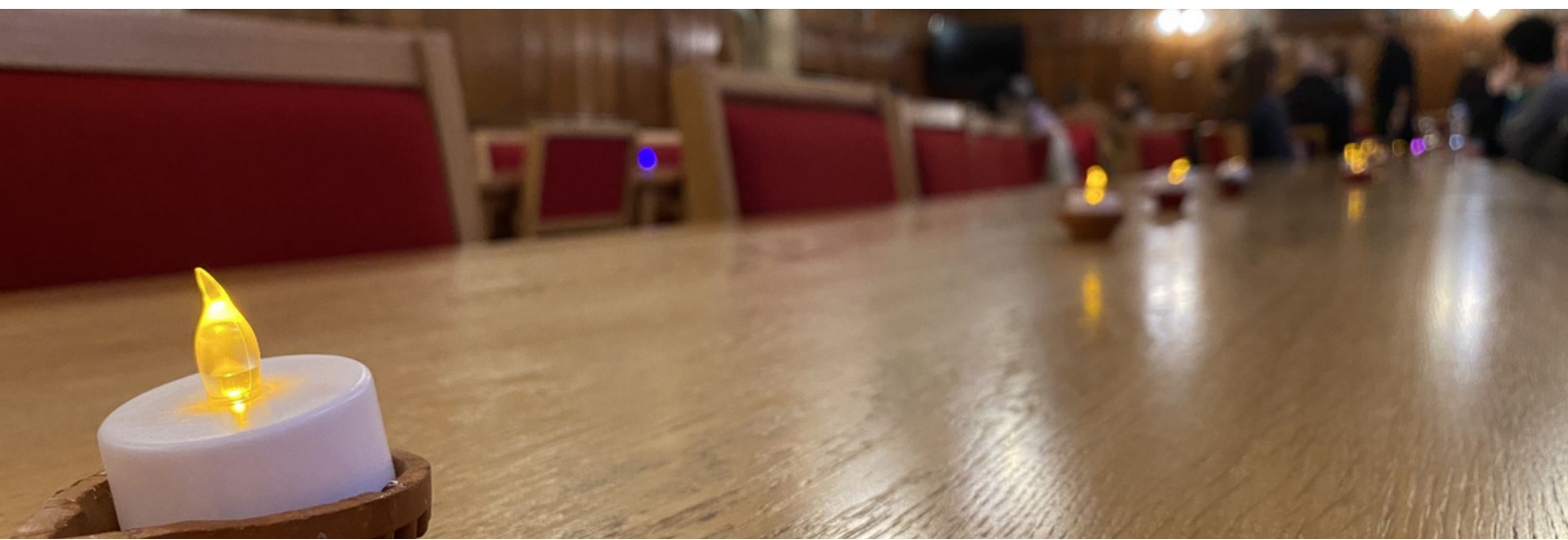
GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

Equally Safe is a specialist support team within the University dedicated to supporting students and staff who have been affected, or are they themselves supporting someone affected by Gender Based Violence (GBV), or who has experienced sexual harassment.

The Equally Safe Team can support those who have experienced GBV historically or those who are experiencing it currently.

The Report-and-Support service is one of their most useful resources for survivors, which provides an opportunity for reporting experiences of sexual assault, GBV, and/or harassment anonymously. Further details on report + support can be found here: reportandsupport.ed.ac.uk.

For more information regarding the Equally Safe team more broadly, visit: edin.ac.uk/GBV-support or email equallysafeteam@ed.ac.uk



MEET YOUR EDI COMMITTEE



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