**Supporting LGBT groups in outreach - Kirsty McLaren, Kings College London**

*Group Activity* – Name one time when you felt like you couldn’t be yourself:

Starting university; working a job abroad; being a parent; being a comprehensive school student amongst private school students; not fitted in with groups within school; starting a new job.

*Background to the session:*

* 20% of students were encouraged to hide their identity by university staff
* 42% of LGBTQ+ students have hidden or disguised their identity through fear of discrimination
* LGBTQ+ students from low income households report more negative comments from other students compared to LGBTQ+ students from higher income households
* LGBTQ+ students are 47% more likely to drop out of university
* LGBTQ+ students are 4 times more likely to underachieve in their attainment due to truancy and bullying
* 25% of homeless youth in the UK say their status is a direct result of their LGBTQ+ identity
* 52% of LGBTQ+ students in the UK report experiencing depression in the last year

*Group Activity – Privileges for Sale task:*

In groups, look at the list of privileges (please see below). Each privilege costs £100 to purchase, with some exceptions. As a group and acting as a university student, please purchase as many privileges as your money allows (£500).

1. Study without negative remarks from fellow students
2. Study without negative remarks from university staff
3. Attend a residential outreach event and stay in the block that reflects your gender identity
4. Attend a university event whose safeguarding policy safeguards your sexual orientation
5. Go through 1 year of study without being physically attacked
6. Go through 1 year of study without being verbally attacked
7. Have relevant role models in your curriculum
8. Wear the clothes that you want on campus
9. Use university toilets comfortably, and without remarks
10. Use university changing rooms comfortably
11. Practice your religion **and** be open about your LGBTQ+ identity on campus (£200)
12. Being able to complete forms and paperwork with the information you feel most accurately communications who you are
13. Have the emotional support of your family throughout university
14. Being able to travel, or show ID in campus restaurants/bars, without fear you’ll be rejected
15. Holding hands with your partner on-campus without threats
16. Holding hands with your partner on campus without others staring
17. Being addressed by your correct name at university
18. Join a club or society without being rejected based on your gender identity
19. Apply to university with grades which accurately reflect your academic potential
20. Reading books or seeing movies about a relationship you wish you could have
21. Being accepted by new friends
22. Being able to go to a university doctor and getting treatment that doesn’t conflict with your identity
23. Have support staff who have been trained in supporting students like you

Each groups choices tended to be very similar and focused around religious identity, as well as receiving emotional support from family. Many groups expressed that they wished they could have bought specialist support for students from their budget.

At KCL, staff who offer specialist support and are trained to help students wear rainbow lanyards so they can be easily identified by students.

*Group Activity – Case Studies:*

Each group received a student case study and were asked to consider three questions:

What does the person think/feel?

What do they wish to gain?

What actions would you take?

Following the activity, groups discussed what provision was currently in the attending HEI institutions. A large part of the discussion centred on accommodation provision for transgender students during summer residential programmes.

Many of the attending HEI’s have mixed sex accommodation during their residential programmes. Kirsty informed the group that KCL have mixed block accommodation with the option for single sex accommodation available. Initially this did raise questions regarding safeguarding concerns, however it was judged that single sex (only) accommodation had been previously implemented not as a safeguarding measure, but rather as a means of ‘sexual deterrant’ for attending heterosexual students. Therefore, there should be no actual barrier towards mixed sex accommodation.