



FRED UPDATE 2016

Update on the work of the Forum for Research into Equality and Diversity 2015-16



As we commence a new academic year, it seems timely to provide an update on some of the work that the Forum for Research into Equality and Diversity has been doing over the last year and some of the exciting things that are coming up over the next 12 months. Many of you have been involved in working with the Forum during 2015/16 and we look forward to you being involved in 2016/17.

Pictured with their GED research award are members of the Law School and Forum for Research into Equality: Caroline Chappell, Phil Hunter, Chantal Davies, Wendy Steel, John Morrow, Hayley Whitaker and Sophie Cowell

Events in 2015/16

The Forum has had an exciting year with a number of national events being rolled out:

The Work of the EHRC on Religion or Belief: This was run in collaboration with the Equality and Human Rights Commission and took place on the 9th September 2015. Dr David Perfect (Research Manager at the EHRC) presented an interesting workshop on the recent work of the EHRC in the controversial area of religion or belief.

Workshop on Religion and Belief: This took place on the 23rd October 2015 and was aimed towards Level 5 and 6 students taking Human Rights and Discrimination Law. It was lead by Dr David Perfect, Research Manager at the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

The impact of changes to the DSA on HEI's: This event was held in March 2016 at the University of Chester as part of the University Diversity Festival 2016. It was run in collaboration with Dr Ross Cooper of AchieveAbility. Delegates attended from institutions across the UK.

Discrimination Law Update: This event was held at Aston University on the 11th April 2016 and was led by Robin Allen QC and Professor Muriel Robison who provided an excellent round-up of cases and changes in the law in relation to Discrimination. This was run in collaboration with Dr Melanie Crofts of Northampton University and was geared towards solicitors and barristers. All monies raised were allocated to the Cheshire Halton and Warrington Race and Equality Centre and Northampton Race and Equality Centre.

Gendered perceptions of research activity in Higher Education: This symposium was

hosted in collaboration with Oxford Brookes University on the 15th-16th June 2016 (see below).

Research activity

There are a number of research projects being undertaken by various staff. John Morrow is finalising his thesis on SpLD students and academic assessment, Wendy Steel is continuing her pedagogic research on representations of women in the media, Caroline Chappell continues her research into Female Genital Mutilation, Professor Chantal Davies is continuing with research into categorisation of ethnicity and BME perceptions of employability.

Professor Davies together with Dr Ruth Healey have also completed a one year funded research project looking at gendered perspectives of research activity which culminated in a national Symposium attended by a range of national and international stakeholders on the 15th and 16th June 2016 (see below).

Niel Gillard is well into his doctoral research into female progression within law firms and Sophie Cowell continues her doctoral studies looking into the implications of positive action for football coaches in the UK.

Positive action

Professor Chantal Davies and Professor Muriel Robison continue to research and disseminate their work on the use of positive action by organisations in the UK (see below). In addition, to presenting papers nationally and internationally on this issue they have also published several articles in this area.

More recently Professor Davies has been working with the Equality Challenge Unit in rolling out a programme of work in

Scotland with HEI's assisting them in putting together strategic plans of action in order to implement positive action initiatives. This is now being rolled out across England and Wales throughout 2016/17. In particular, Professor Davies will be leading a positive action workshop at the Equality Challenge Unit Conference on the 30th November 2016.

Professor Davies will also be taking part in a British Council collaboration to be held in Brasilia looking at positive action in Brazil and the UK in December 2016. It is anticipated this will lead to the development of an expert network which will focus on these issues further in future years.

Gender equality research and symposium

The Forum were delighted to be awarded £30,000 funding for 2015-16 from the Research and Knowledge Transfer Office in order to explore the gendered experiences of academic staff in relation to research activity and the Research Excellence Framework 2014.

In June 2012, the Research and Knowledge Transfer Office at the University of Chester sent out a survey to all eligible academics to ask them to respond as to whether they would like to be considered for submission to the REF 2014. This allowed individuals to self-select their interest in being considered for submission for the REF.

Following completion of the REF 2014 submission, a comparison of the equality characteristics of the 215 staff who self-selected and were considered for submission (against the 151 staff who were eventually selected for submission) was carried out. This analysis indicated that the selection process per se had not had any adverse impact on female staff.

However, as a secondary area of interest, the equality characteristics of research

active staff (i.e. the 215 staff who self-selected for potential submission to REF 2014) was compared against the profile of all 527 academic and research staff who were in employment on the REF census date. This analysis revealed some interesting areas for further analysis, in particular that female staff are significantly under-represented within the institution amongst researchers. Whilst these variations did not suggest that there were any areas of concern in terms of the REF 2014 selection process, they were considered to be worthy of further investigation and led to the funding of this project.

Professor Davies (as Principal Investigator) and her co-researchers (Dr Ruth Healey and Antony Cliffe) collected data via a questionnaire to all academic staff and a series of focus groups and semi-structured interviews. The process was overseen by an inter-disciplinary Steering Group made up of interested representatives from across the University of Chester. A written report was produced with key findings in June 2016 and is now being fed into the institutional Athena Swan strategy.

This research culminated in a two-day national symposium on the 15th-16th June 2016 hosted by the University of Chester in collaboration with Professor Simonetta Manfredi and Professor Lucy Vickers of Oxford Brookes University. The Symposium brought 30 representatives and researchers from across Higher Education in the UK, Europe and beyond together with sector bodies and policy drivers in order to workshop the gendered barriers and obstacles to research activity in Higher Education. A final report of this Symposium is now available on the Forum website at www.chester.ac.uk/FRED.

Dissemination activities

In addition to the events that took place last year and which will be rolled out during 2015/16, presentations were made externally by Forum researchers in order to disseminate work in the area of equality and diversity. Of note for 2015-16, were the following:

- **Wendy Steel's** work on representations of gender in the media was presented at numerous national and international conferences that has resulted in the development of new contacts and potential collaborations (in particular with Bangor University).
- **Caroline Chappell** continues to research and presents her work on Female Genital Mutilation at a national and international level. In particular, Caroline will be presenting a paper on the ethics of virginity testing and associated issues for the international multi-disciplinary Talking Bodies Conference during 2017. Notable conference presentations from last year include:
 - Chappell, C. (2016). Fighting female genital mutilation. Paper presented at the Launch of the Institute for Gender Studies, University of Chester, Chester, United Kingdom.
- **Professor Chantal Davies'** work on positive action and gender and research activity continues. Notable keynotes and conference presentations from the last year include:
 - Davies, C., Healey, R. & Cliffe, A. (2015, December). Scaling the mountain: an exploration of gendered experience of academic staff in relation to the Research Excellence Framework 2014. Paper presented at the Society for Research into Higher Education Annual Research Conference 2015, Newport, United Kingdom.
 - Davies, C. & Robison, M. (2016, January). Crossing the rubicon: an exploration of the use of positive action provisions in Higher Education Institutions in the UK. Paper presented at 2016 International Education Conference, Orlando, United States. (peer reviewed winner of Best Paper in Session).
 - Davies, C. (2016, March). Gender and research activity in HE. Institute of Gender Studies Launch Conference, University of Chester, Chester, United Kingdom.
 - Davies, C & Healey, R. (2016). Melting the Iceberg: gender equality in Higher Education. Paper presented to the Women's Network, Chester, United Kingdom.
 - Davies, C, Healey, R. & Cliffe, A. (2016). Gender and research activity in higher education. Paper presented at the Women in HE Conference, Chester, United Kingdom.
 - Davies, C. (2016). A brief introduction to human rights in the UK. Paper presented to U3A, Chester, United Kingdom
 - Davies, C. (2016). Positive action and the legal framework. Paper and workshop presented to Scottish HEIs as part of the Equality Challenge Unit positive action scheme, Edinburgh, United Kingdom.
 - Davies, C., Healey, R. & Cliffe, A. (2016, June). Scaling the Mountain: an exploration of gendered experience of academic staff in relation to the Research Excellence Framework 2014. Paper presented at the Higher Education Conference, Amsterdam.
- **John Morrow's** work on SpLD students continues to feed into the Parliamentary

Debate on neurodiversity. Notable dissemination activities include:

- Morrow, J. (2015, October). Beyond Reasonable adjustments, the need for inclusivity of assessment in Higher Education. Festival of Dyslexic Culture. In association with London Metropolitan University
 - Morrow, J. (2016, March). Dyslexia and disabling barriers, a review of the experience of law students with Dyslexia. Social science postgraduate research students' conference. University of Chester.
 - Morrow, J. (2016, March). Responding to the Cuts to Disabled students allowance: Inclusive teaching for students with Dyslexia. Forum for Research into Equality and Diversity, University of Chester, United Kingdom.
- **Niel Gillard** is well underway with his research into the impact of the Shared Parental Leave legislation on those working within the legal sector. His work is also likely to feed into national work with SPLASH. Notable dissemination activities include:
 - Gillard, N. (2016). Exploring perceptions and experiences of impact and implications of family friendly legislation on career progression in Law Firms in the UK. Paper presented at the Gender Studies Institute Launch Event, University of Chester, United Kingdom.
 - Gillard, N. (2016). Has the Government Really Thought that Through? experiences and perceptions of legal practitioners on the implications of family friendly rights on career progression in law. Paper presented to the Oxford Women's Leadership Symposium, University of Oxford, United Kingdom.
 - Gillard, N. (2016). Exploring perceptions and experiences of impact of family friendly legislation on career progression in law firms in the UK. Papers presented to the Social Sciences Postgraduate Conference, University of Chester, United Kingdom.
 - Gillard, N. (2016). You Can't Have it All! Experiences and perceptions on the use of family friendly rights in the legal profession. Paper presented at the Postgraduate Legal Research Conference, Queen Mary University of London, United Kingdom.
- **Sophie Cowell** has been appointed to the Kick It Out Youth Group and has presented her work at a number of conferences as well as engaging in media appearances (see below). Notable dissemination activities include:
 - Cowell, S. (2016). A Game Changer? The Football League's proposals to introduce an equivalent to the Rooney Rule. Paper presented at the Approaches to Inequalities Conference, University of Northampton, United Kingdom.
 - Cowell, S. (2016). A theoretical consideration of positive action and the Football League's proposals to introduce an equivalent to the Rooney Rule in the UK. Paper presented at the Sport and Discrimination Conference, Leeds Beckett University, United Kingdom.
 - Cowell, S. (2016). The use of positive action in football coaching. Poster presented at the Postgraduate Legal Research Conference, Queen Mary University of London, United Kingdom.
 - Cowell, S. (2016). Interview with Dee Radio 106.3 regarding the ASPIRE Kick It Out Group. Chester, United Kingdom.
 - Cowell, S. (2016). Interview with Radio Shropshire Drive Time show regarding ASPIRE and women's

football. Shropshire, United Kingdom.

- Cowell, S. (2016). Interview with Radio Northampton with Dr Jim Lusted regarding the Rooney Rule. Northampton, United Kingdom.

Publications

This year has also seen the Forum developing a strong publication record in the area of equality and human rights:

- Davies, C., Healey, R., & Hand, D. (2015). A critical examination of the right to healthcare and restrictions on access to state-funded HIV/AIDS treatment for irregular migrants in '*Justiciability of Human Rights Law in Domestic Jurisdictions*', Springer International.
- Davies, C. (2015). Section 3 Human Rights Act 1998 and convention compliant interpretation. Westlaw Insight. Thomson Reuters: London.
- Davies, C., & Robison, M. (2016). Bridging the gap: an exploration of the use and impact of positive action in the UK. *International Journal of Discrimination and the Law*. 16(2-3), 83-101.
- Davies, C., Healey, R. & Cliffe, A. (2016). Gendered experiences of academic staff in relation to research activity and the REF2014. (Report for the Research and Knowledge Transfer Office, University of Chester). University of Chester, United Kingdom.

A number of further publications are underway including a piece by John Morrow and Professor Davies to be submitted to the ALT journal and a collaborative piece between Professor Davies and Sophie Cowell to be submitted to the International Sports Law Journal.

Student participation

The Forum is keen to provide a vehicle and opportunities for postgraduate and undergraduate student participation and development. To date, the students have been extremely keen to make the most of volunteering opportunities. Notably they have provided vital support in relation to the events referred to above. Equally, the students have also participated in the pedagogic research projects being rolled out. Hopefully, this has also fed into their learning and has and will continue to provide them with valuable experience.

In addition, as a result of Professor Davies' and John Morrow's position with Cheshire, Halton and Warrington Race and Equality Centre (CHAWREC) (see below), we have seen the successful continuation of the scheme whereby a number of Level 6 student volunteers provided a supporting legal casework function in relation to the equality legislation. Last year five Level 6 students volunteered and gained experience on a weekly basis under this Scheme.

In addition, Dr Rebecca Wright has been working with the Forum to promote the work of her charity, The School Consent Project (SCP), which provides advice and workshops to secondary education providers in relation to issues of sexual consent. Again, a number of students were provided with the opportunity to volunteer and gain experience with SCP as part of their Level 6 studies.

Business, Academic and Community Links

The Forum has continued to develop its links with business, academia and the community. Professor Davies has sat on (and has been able to feed John Morrow's work into) the review group for the Subject Benchmark Statement for Law. Equally, the Forum now has well-established links

with the CIPD (running events in collaboration), local law firms and businesses. Thanks to Wendy Steel, links with the CAB have thrived and we continue to develop links with Cheshire Constabulary. Professor Davies has recently stepped down as a trustee of Cheshire Halton and Warrington Race Equality Centre (CHAWREC) and John Morrow has now been appointed as a trustee and representative of the Forum in her place. Professor Davies however has been appointed by CHAWREC as a Special Legal Advisor and will seek to continue her input into the legal work of the Centre in the future. Professor Davies also sits on the board of the Equality Challenge Unit (the national body responsible for overseeing equality issues in Higher Education in the UK). Links continue to be developed with the national Equality and Diversity Forum (EDF) and WISE (Women in Science and Engineering). We have also developed institutional links with Bangor, Strathclyde, Glasgow, Liverpool, Oxford Brookes University, University of Sussex etc. We continue to develop links with the Equality and Human Rights Commission and we are meeting potential new collaborators on a regular basis to seek to develop connections further.

In addition, we have been invited and are currently collaborating with SPLASH (Shared Parental Leave Advice on Sharing). This is a voluntary organisation made up of a group of legal and voluntary bodies (including Cloisters chambers, Old Square Chambers and Fox Williams Solicitors) directed at providing advice and researching into the Shared Parental Leave legislation. We will be actively seeking external funding to carry out research in this area for 2016/17.

Appointments

Chantal Davies has been appointed as Professor of Law, Equality and Diversity at the University of Chester as of the 1st August 2016.

We are also delighted to announce that Gary Loke has been appointed as a Visiting Research Associate with the Law School and will actively work to promote the work of the Forum. Gary is Policy Director at the Equality Challenge Unit.

Gary has responsibility for overseeing and coordinating ECU's policy and research activities. His career has been in equality policy and public affairs. He previously worked for an older persons' charity, Independent Age on age-related policy issues in health and social care and for a rural race equality organisation on projects including minority ethnic people's access to information and public services, racist incident reporting and capacity building of small minority ethnic and faith groups. Gary has also worked within the student's union movement, both at a local and national level.



Gary Loke speaking at the Gender and Research Activity Symposium in June 2016

At the ECU, Gary is currently leading a three year European Commission funded project, GENDER-NET, the first European Research Area network exploring gender equality in research careers and content. He has been on a

number of UK advisory bodies, including the Research Excellence Framework equality and diversity panel, the Quality Assurance Agency's advisory group on the Quality Code on student support, learning resources and careers education, information, advice and guidance, as well as the Legal Education and Training Review Diversity and Social Mobility Expert Advisory Group. He is currently a member of the policy advisory group on migration and ethnicity of the UK Economic and Social Research Council Research Centre on Micro-Social Change at the University of Essex and a member of the gender equality commission of the Swiss National Science Foundation.

Gary will join Professor Muriel Robison to promote the work of the Forum and the Law School in his visiting capacity throughout 2016-17.

Postgraduate study and administration

We are delighted that John Morrow, Niel Gillard and Sophie Cowell are continuing in their doctoral studies under the umbrella of the Forum. In addition to carrying out some Visiting Lecturer work, they have also taken on administrative duties in relation to the Forum. We would hope to expand postgraduate study in this area over the next 5 years.

International Journal of Discrimination and the Law

As a result of the Equality Act 2010 conference (hosted by the Forum in June 2015 in collaboration with the University of Liverpool), a special double edition of the International Journal of Discrimination and the Law was commissioned. Eight papers were selected for publication early in 2016 and this has now been published. Professor Davies together with Professor Nuno Ferreira (University of Sussex), Professor Debra Morris (University of

Liverpool) and Anne Morris (University of Liverpool) edited this and provided the editorial. Professor Davies and Robison (of the Forum) also contributed a paper on positive action to this (see below).

Full citation for this is the International Journal of Discrimination and the Law, Volume 16, Issue 2-3, 2016 (ISSN1358-2291).

Global Equality and Diversity Award

We are delighted to report that the Forum achieved national recognition and in 2015 received the Global Equality and Diversity Research Award, which celebrates outstanding examples of research methods and insights into diversity and equality in organisations, companies or services. Professor Chantal Davies, received the award at the Global Equality and Diversity Conference in London in November 2015 from Baroness Oona King, Diversity Executive at Channel 4 and a member of the Labour's front bench in the House of Lords. The award was announced by Trevor Phillips, OBE, writer, broadcaster, and former chair of the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

Professor Davies said: "*we are extremely excited to have won this prestigious award, especially because our Forum, which specialises in research and knowledge transfer activities, is less than two years old. Trevor Phillips said that we received the accolade for showing an outstanding example of collaboration that had the potential to be a template for how organisations work together on researching equality and diversity in the future.*"

Kick It Out Youth Group

Sophie Cowell (researcher for the Forum and PhD student) who is researching in the area of race equality in football has been recruited on to a national football

advisory panel, which aims to promote the message of equality in the game, and in society in general. Kick It Out works throughout the football, educational and community sectors to challenge discrimination, encourage inclusive practices and campaign for positive change. It is funded by the Football Association and the Professional Footballer's Association, the Premier League and The Football League.

Following a national campaign looking for volunteers, Kick It Out recently launched a new group aimed at young people aged between 16 and 21, to provide a youth perspective to the organisation's work, act as advisors and ambassadors for Kick It Out, and ensure the next generation continues to challenge discrimination and promote inclusion in football.

Sophie Cowell, who is 21, and from Whitchurch in Shropshire, is one of just eight young people chosen from across the UK to sit on the group. The members will be in their voluntary post for two years, taking part in a programme that will provide them with skills, contacts and experience to become future leaders in football.



Pictured in Wembley with the other Young Ambassadors is Sophie Cowell from the Forum for Research into Equality and Diversity (centre)

Sophie said: *"When Kick It Out put the call out for this group, it was perfect timing and something I knew I*

had to go for. I am proud to be part of a group of like-minded young people who are working to make a real positive, practical impact on the sport, and to gain valuable experience in the area that I wish to research and work in in the future. We also have the opportunity to achieve something that will have a positive impact on the organisation's work."

Congratulating Sophie on her appointment, Professor Davies (Director of the Forum), said: *"We are extremely proud of Sophie's achievement and wish her every success during her two-year programme with Kick It Out. This is a national organisation and competition was therefore fierce, so Sophie has done really well to become part of the group. Her appointment will not only help her research but she is also helping to put the Forum on the map - well done Sophie!"*

Forthcoming events and activities

The Forum has an exciting year ahead with a number of events to be rolled out during 2016/17 including the following:

Interrogating Differential Outcomes in Degree Awarding: towards a post-race pedagogy: This seminar to be led by Professor Glynis Cousin and Dr Gurnam Singh will take place on the 16th November 2016 and will seek to provide a brief historical and contemporary overview of the issues commonly known as the BME attainment gap.

Equality in the UK post Brexit: Professor Davies will be providing a keynote presentation at the North West TUC Equality Conference on Saturday 19th November 2016 looking at the implications for equality in the UK following the Brexit referendum.

Implications of the Human Rights Act 1998 for HEI's: Professor Davies will be providing a keynote at the Equality

Challenge Unit Annual Conference on the 29th November 2016 looking at the impact of the HRA 1998 on HE.

Implementing positive action in HE: Professor Davies will be leading a workshop on effective ways of implementing positive action in HE as part of the Equality Challenge Unit Annual Conference on the 30th November 2016.

Gender and Research Workshop: This event will be held as part of the University of Chester Diversity Festival in February/ March 2017 and will provide an opportunity for academics and stakeholders to debate the issues surrounding gender and research activity. This workshop will build upon the gendered perspectives of research activity report and Symposium held in June 2016.

There are lots more events and work in the pipeline with work now focusing on strategic planning for the next 5 years. If anyone would like to input into this process, please do let us know and we would be delighted to include you.

If anyone has an idea on how they would wish to use the Forum to promote their own work/interests please do let us know. Equally, if there is any existing work which has been completed which would fit into the Forum remit we would be thrilled for the Forum website to be used to promote this.

Contact chantal.davies@chester.ac.uk for further information.

