

## Gem Card for LGBTQ Officer

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Hello all, my name is Gemma but do call me Gem (she/her), I'm currently the LGBTQ+ officer for Halifax College, I'm a first-year music student and I have brought a fresh and vibrant cooperation to LGBTQ+ events within the HCSA. I've worked closely with our VP for well-being and liberation to bring inclusivity and a healthy atmosphere to the college. I have already made myself known not just through events but by being a reliable point of contact for LGBTQ+ members of the college as communication is incredibly important to me within the LGBTQ+ community. As a new student with new ideas, I can promise to deliver a fresh energy to the LGBTQ+ network. Regarding this, I want to remove the stigma around the LGBTQ+ network as some deem it too political. Keeping in mind that campaigning and work to be done in the university is the main priority, I do wish to give a light-hearted and comfortable atmosphere to the network. For example, more equal focus across the spectrum of the community ensuring every member feels valued and that their voice is being heard.

We are our own community and to leave anyone in the dark would be a double standard to what we all believe in – equality. Within the university, especially colleges we need more inclusivity for all gender identities. While in the HCSA, James Mortimer (VP for well-being) achieved an increase in inclusivity for the college by getting sanitary bins in male cubicles, this needs to be pushed further and made a uni-wide policy. Together we can abandon gender boundaries and make The University of York a more accepting and diverse place.

The LGBTQ+ Social group do a fantastic job of bringing our community together, and personally I believe this is something we need to get strongly on board with in the network. We are all here and in these groups for the same reasons and I wish to close the gap between the two and strengthen the bond of the LGBTQ+ community in the university. There needs to be a level of communication with us and I feel this is something we may be lacking. Not just communication with Social, but with college reps and college well-being committees. In addition to this, we need better interaction with college reps to ensure that sexual health information and items can be accessible to students of the colleges wherever possible. Sexual health is very important at university and is often closely related with LGBTQ+ and is something that I feel we can improve upon.

Finally, we need more support for students who identify as LGBTQ+ who maybe don't feel as comfortable attending events and coming out of their shell. I have met many students who are not 'out' at home and this has a serious impact on their lives here at university, it can be an uphill struggle. We've all been through it at some point in our lives. I wish to introduce designated points of contact for people who need that little bit encouragement to explore the LGBTQ+ world we all know and love. I hope you will all agree with my beliefs and choose me to carry you through to desirably, the most inclusive and comfortable LGBTQ+ community the university has seen.

Peace and love x