

LIBERATION
FRESHERS'
GUIDE

ST CATHARINE'S COLLEGE MCR

content notes: this guide makes reference to sexual harassment / assault

Is this guide for me?

This guide is for EVERYONE, whether you identify with several of the identities covered in this booklet, or none. We want Catz to be a community in which every individual has the opportunity to thrive academically and socially, and is valued for their personhood. This means working together to create a welcoming, tolerant, and open environment in which we celebrate both our differences and our commonalities. It also means that we all have a responsibility to look out for others and for ourselves, and to commit actively to making Catz the most inclusive community we can be. For a lot of us, this involves acknowledging the ways in which we are privileged, and recognising that each individual experiences privilege or oppression differently based on a unique intersection of multiple identities.

This guide has a twofold purpose. Firstly, it is intended as a (by no means exhaustive) Cambridge-specific collection of resources, websites, and useful contacts for anyone whose identity is covered under this booklet. Secondly, we hope it will be useful for all college members as a source of information, and as a guide to making all aspects of college life more inclusive.

We need your help!

We want to create a liberation library of our own in the Shakeshaft library! This can incorporate any books (fictional or non-fictional) that celebrate diversity and inclusion and provide help and advice for people exploring their identity.

Some ideas to get you started:

‘Girl, Woman, Other’ by Bernadine Evaristo

‘Black and British: A Forgotten History’ by David Olusoga

‘Why I’m No Longer Talking to White People About Race’ by Reni Eddo-Lodge

‘The Argonauts’ by Maggie Nelson

‘How to be an Antiracist’ by Ibram X Kendi

LGBT+

Where to begin:

Cambridge University Students' Union (CUSU) has an LGBT+ welfare officer who is available to talk to you about any questions or queries you may have. You don't need to identify as LGBT+ to contact them! They can also provide further information on non-university LGBT+ organisations and sexual health. You can find them at:

<https://www.lgbt.cusu.cam.ac.uk/what-we-do/welfare/>

CUSU LGBT+ is a campaign aimed at supporting LGBT+ students at the University. Their committee plans events, social gatherings, and campaigns, which are often identity-specific, e.g. trans and non-binary coffee. You can get involved or seek support by liking their Facebook page or subscribing to their mailing list (note that only those subscribed to the mailing list can vote in CUSU LGBT+ elections). You can find out more and download their termcard at:

<https://www.lgbt.cusu.cam.ac.uk/>

SexYOUality is a non-university-affiliated organisation that offers weekly drop in sessions and 1-2-1 support in Cambridgeshire for under 25s. The 1-2-1 sessions are set in a location that suits you, so you can feel comfortable enough to talk through what's on your mind. SexYOUality will also help you get access to other services if needed.

Phone: 01223 369508, web address: <http://syacambs.org/>

Catz has a number of resources available to LGBT+ students. Catz LGBT+ is a student-led society that runs events for students of all sexualities and gender identities. You can also get in touch with the MCR LGBT+ officer Frey (fk309@cam.ac.uk) at any time if you are feeling isolated or would like to discuss any LGBT+ issues.

FUSE is a subsection of CUSU LGBT+ that provides support for BAME LGBT+ students. They also organise social events for queer people of colour and their termcard can be found here:

<https://www.lgbt.cusu.cam.ac.uk/fuse/>

Stonewall is a nationwide charity dedicated to supporting the UK's LGBT+ community. If you are new to a lot of the terminology used in this section, you might want to take a look at their glossary here:

<https://www.stonewall.org.uk/help-advice/faqs-and-glossary/glossary-terms>

LGBT+ Switchboard is a national charity that runs a helpline for anyone who identifies as LGBT+. You can find them here:

<https://switchboard.lgbt>

LGBT+ at Catz:

Dress Code – Catz has a gender-neutral dress code. This means that you are free to choose whichever dress option you feel most comfortable in, provided it is in keeping with college guidelines (see the main freshers’ guide for details).

Gender-neutral toilets – Catz has several sets of gender-neutral toilets, located under the Porters’ Lodge and in the basement of Old Lodge (underneath the MCR). Free sanitary products (tampons and towels) are available in all of these toilets. College is looking into the possibility of reconfiguring other toilets in the college at some point.

LGBT+ People of Faith – It can often be isolating to be a queer person and a person of faith. Catz chapel welcomes LGBT+ students of all faiths and none and is regularly used as a venue for LGBT+ events, such as spoken word evenings. The chaplain Ally Barrett is always happy to talk to people about issues surrounding their gender identity / sexuality and their faith, and can refer you to representatives of other faiths if your religion is not Christianity. Her email address is chaplain@caths.cam.ac.uk.

Transgender and non-binary:

The word ‘transgender’ is used to describe people whose gender identity differs from the gender they were assigned at birth. The word ‘non-binary’ is an umbrella term that refers to gender identities that lie outside the binary of ‘male’ and ‘female’. Non-binary people may also identify as transgender. See this article by GLAAD on being a good ally to trans and non-binary people: <https://www.glaad.org/transgender/allies>.

Pronouns

Addressing transgender and non-binary people with their preferred pronouns is a vital source of validation. People may ask to be referred to with a specific set of pronouns (e.g. he/him, she/her or they/them) for a variety of reasons. As a rule, never assume somebody’s pronouns – if you’re not sure, just ask! If you are a cis person (somebody whose gender identity is the same as the gender they were assigned at birth) try and get used to introducing yourself with both your name and your pronouns. This will make trans people feel more comfortable telling you what their pronouns are!

Transgender and non-binary at Catz

Changing your name / title on CamSis: To change your name or title on official documents in Cambridge (e.g. degree certificates, university/college correspondence, CamCard), you need to make a request to your pastoral tutor to change them on CamSis. A gender-neutral title (Mx) is available. You can also ask them to request a name / title change for things like pigeon-hole labels and dining cards. You can ask the porters for the photograph on your CamCard to be changed simply by stating that ‘it is no longer an accurate likeness’ (you don’t need to mention you’re trans / non-binary). CUSU has a guide on transitioning whilst at Cambridge: <https://www.lgbt.cusu.cam.ac.uk/trans/resources/>.

Gender expression fund: The JCR and MCR have a gender expression fund, which is available to trans, non-binary and gender-questioning students to

contribute to any reasonable costs incurred by gender transition / gender expression. For example, you could apply to use the fund to help purchase a binder or to help with the costs of new formalwear. You do not need to provide any documentation or ID to access this, just the receipts from any purchases.

Challenging homophobia and transphobia in college

We hope that LGBT+ people will feel as welcome and supported as possible during their time at Catz. Homophobia and transphobia are, however, unfortunately still a reality for many members of the queer community. If you experience discrimination or harassment at any time, there are many people you can contact in confidence. The MCR LGBT+, women's/non-binary, and welfare officers are always available to talk to about any concerns you may have, as are the MCR co-presidents. You can also talk to your pastoral tutors, the chaplain Ally Barret, the college welfare officer Mary Simuyandi, the Senior Tutor Holly Canuto, or the college nurse Dee Williams (see the contacts page at the end of this booklet). If you witness homophobia or transphobia in college, challenge it in a way that is sensitive and constructive. If you decide to report it, only reveal the names of those involved if you have their permission. And most importantly, make sure you check in on your LGBT+ friends regularly. Remember that LGBT+ people may experience oppression differently if they are also from a BAME background, a woman / non-binary person, or have a disability.

Disabilities

Where to begin:

DRC - If you consider yourself to have a disability, you can register with the Cambridge University Disability Resource Centre. They offer advice to students on all issues surrounding disability (visible and invisible) and can help you with things like making reasonable adjustments to your learning and assessments (see below for more details). They also offer training to university staff on how to make their services accessible to students with disabilities. You can register with the DCR and find out more here:

<https://www.disability.admin.cam.ac.uk/>

Reasonable Adjustments - All colleges and university departments are required by law under the Equality Act 2010 to provide 'reasonable adjustments' to teaching practice for people with disabilities. This encompasses anything from allowing lectures and seminars to be recorded, to changing the venue of a teaching session so that it is wheelchair accessible, to installing adequate hearing loops, to providing handouts and other resources in plain text format. It also impacts upon forms of assessment, and includes 'adjustments' such as extra time in exams or greater flexibility with assessment deadlines. Your college tutor or the DCR can help you to access 'reasonable adjustments' to teaching and learning. You can also contact the college nurse Dee Williams to discuss issues surrounding your disability. The university policy on 'reasonable adjustments' can be found here:

https://www.educationalpolicy.admin.cam.ac.uk/files/cop_disabled_19-20.pdf

Disabled Students' Campaign - This is a campaign run by the Cambridge Students' Union that provides advice to students with disabilities, as well as raising awareness of issues surrounding disability at Cambridge, lobbying the university to make its teaching and learning practices more inclusive, and running social events for students with disabilities. They can also provide information on intermission and double-time studies. They have a facebook group and a committee, all of whom can be reached via their website:

<https://www.disabled.cusu.cam.ac.uk/>

Mental Health - Long-term mental health problems, such as anxiety, depression, and personality disorders are defined as disabilities under the Equality Act 2010. This means that the university is also required to make reasonable adjustments to education practices to meet the needs of students with mental health conditions. The DRC and Disabled Students' Campaign have an extensive collection of resources on mental health at Cambridge. College has a small team of counsellors who are able to see students at relatively short notice; referrals are made through the college tutors and welfare team. You might also wish to access the University Counselling Service, which provides free counselling to all Cambridge students. If you are BAME, you can request to see a BAME counsellor. The waiting list for the counselling service can be quite long, but if you need to see someone urgently you can ask your tutor to make a request for you to be fast-tracked

to the top of the waiting list. In certain circumstances, college can make financial arrangements for you to see a private counsellor, particularly if you have specific needs which cannot be met by the University Counselling Service. If you wish to seek help accessing private counselling, speak to one of our postgraduate tutors. The University Counselling Service can be contacted via their website:

<https://www.counselling.cam.ac.uk/>

Other useful websites

<https://www.mind.org.uk/>

<https://www.samaritans.org/>

<https://cambridge.nightline.ac.uk/>

<https://disability-cambridgeshire.org.uk/>

<https://studentmindscambridge.wordpress.com>

Disability at Catz:

Disability Tutor – Our disability tutor is Dr David Bainbridge (see list of useful contacts), who can be contacted about any welfare issues disabled students may have.

Toilets – Disabled toilets on main site can be found by the bar (accessible via lift) and in the McGrath centre. All these toilets should contain the free sanitary products provided by the MCR and JCR – please let us know if this is not the case.

Libraries – The Shakeshaft library is wheelchair accessible and has an automatic door. The staff in the library office are always very happy to help with any particular queries you may have, and will help to make sure you can use the library comfortably.

Induction Loops – Hearing loops are installed in the McGrath centre and the Ramsden Room.

Chapel – The chapel is accessible via a door in chapel court and a ramp.

Porters – If you need urgent help, the porters are available to be contacted 24/7. They are all first aid trained, including for mental health emergencies. They can also help with more general queries surrounding accessibility in college, including providing keys for accessible doors or offering guidance on accessible routes through college.

Welfare Taxi – The welfare taxi is available for free to anyone who needs assistance travelling to or from main site, at any time of day. To access this service, speak to the porters and they will ring for a taxi.

Welfare Hub – This is a virtual collection of resources on mental health and wellbeing created by the college welfare team. It includes tips on self-care, and recommendations for feel-good activities to do on your own or with friends, as well as resources on welfare during quarantine / self-isolation.

<https://www.caths.cam.ac.uk/welfarehub>

Full college accessibility information can be found here:

<https://www.caths.cam.ac.uk/about-us/visiting-and-viewing-college/accessibility-guide>

Making the MCR more accessible:

We all have a responsibility to help make Catz accessible for students with disabilities. Remember not all disabilities are visible, so never make assumptions about whether someone is disabled or not. Don't assume that someone with a disability feels burdened or victimised, but be mindful that students with disabilities can often be inadvertently denied access to things you may take for granted. If you are planning a social event and you know someone in your group has a disability, ask them how you can organise it so that they feel able come along. This might mean choosing a venue that has wheelchair access or padded seating, or making sure that wherever you're going isn't too loud and has an accessible quiet room. Always assume there might be someone with a disability attending your event and make the appropriate adjustments.

Women / Non-binary People

It has been just over 40 years since women were first allowed to study at Catz. We marked the 40th anniversary of the admission of women to the college last year with our *Catz 40* celebrations (<https://www.caths.cam.ac.uk/about-us/catz40>). It is important that women and non-binary people feel welcomed within the community and there are lots of activities to get involved in during your time at Catz and Cambridge.

Facebook Pages:

Cambridge University Students Union (CUSU):

The Women's Campaign is a political group of self-identifying women and non-binary people from all backgrounds (religious, ethnic, socio-economic, LGBT+, people with disabilities, parents) with an overall aim of challenging discrimination against women at Cambridge. They organise discussion groups, awareness campaigns and social events, and lobby the university on policies that directly affect women and non-binary people (most recently they worked with the university to reform its sexual harassment disciplinary procedure). They also have a library in the CUSU building where you can borrow books on feminism and other political issues free of charge. They regularly collaborate with the LGBT+ campaign, the BAME campaign and the disabled students' campaign, and have representatives from all three groups on their committee.

The CUSU women's officer is in charge of co-ordinating the women's campaign, and this year she is an ex student from Catz!

Here is their website:

<https://www.cusu.co.uk/about/cusu-campaigns/the-womens-campaign/>

<https://www.facebook.com/CUSUWomen/>

The BME campaign, LGBT+ campaign and disabled students' campaign all have women's officers, who can be contacted here:

BME campaign women's rep: Hannah Afrah, bme-womens@cusu.cam.ac.uk

CUSU LGBT+ women's rep: Sophie (she/her), lgbt-women@cusu.cam.ac.uk

Disabled students' campaign: Sam, sc2116@cam.ac.uk, disabled-women@cusu.cam.ac.uk

For information about FLY (a Cambridge group for women and non-binary people of colour), please see the BAME section of this guide.

Catz Pages:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2118203611735145>

St Catharine's College MCR Page:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/stcatharinescollegemcr>

On the MCR page we regularly post about important topics which directly impact young women and non-binary people, with the aim of raising awareness

of issues that are often classed as taboo (Cervical Cancer Screening, International Non-Binary People's Day). Other opportunities aimed at women/non-binary members of the community are highlighted here as well. For example, *Code First Girls* offer free introductory coding courses for those identifying as women/non-binary. The courses on offer include: Introduction to Web Development and Introduction into Python (both are 8-week courses with a 2 hour commitment each week typically between 6:30-8:30 pm). Previous courses have been run at Murray Edwards and Corpus, but these courses are currently offered virtually due to coronavirus. Here is the link to the website if this is something you are interested in:

<https://codefirstgirls.org.uk/>

More opportunities for women/non-binary members of the community will be posted in the Facebook group throughout the year.

Sports Opportunities at Catz:

There are a variety of different sports with women only teams, for more information visit the college website.

<https://www.caths.cam.ac.uk/college-life/clubs-and-societies>

For rowing opportunities visit St Catharine's College Boat Club website:

"If you are interested in joining the womens side feel free to contact the Womens Captain Charlie Lamb (cj193@cam.ac.uk). You need no rowing experience to join the boat club so you can learn how to row here at Catz. Those early mornings will be worth it for the beautiful sunrise over the River Cam, so now is your time to get involved with a very Cambridge sport and part take in the famous Lent and May Bumps."

<http://www.boatclub.caths.cam.ac.uk/> Instagram: [stcatharinesboatclub](#)

Health:

Both physical and mental health is so important; if you are struggling please speak to a member of college (Welfare Officer or College Nurse) or your GP (It is important to register with one while you are here in Cambridge).

Here are some useful and informative websites for women's health:

CoppaFeel!: <https://coppafeel.org/>

CoppaFeel! is a charity focused on breast cancer with the overall purpose of education and getting to know our bodies better so we are aware of any changes.

The Eve Appeal: <https://eveappeal.org.uk/>

The Eve Appeal is a charity which provides support and information on gynaecological cancers.

Women's Aid: <https://www.womensaid.org.uk/>

Women's Aid is a charity which provides support and information for anyone suffering domestic abuse.

Sanitary Products:

We understand that period poverty is an issue in the UK, and sanitary products are essential. There are sanitary products provided for free within a vast number of toilets located on main site, for people to use if needed. If you want to discuss these products or have any suggestions please feel free to contact the MCR Womens and Non-Binary Officer (see list of contacts at the end of this booklet). The MCR and JCR are also sometimes able to subsidise the cost of mooncups for students.

Trans women:

At Catz we affirm that trans women are women and that all trans people are entitled to the same rights and privileges as cis people. Trans women and trans feminine people are welcome at ALL the women's events offered by college. If you would like to attend a women's event but feel anxious about doing so please get in touch with the MCR Women's/Non-binary or LGBT+ representative and they will be more than happy to talk to you about your concerns or to arrange for someone to meet you beforehand. For more information on being trans at Catz see the LGBT+ section of this booklet.

What to do if you experience sexual harassment or assault:

We want Catz to be an environment in which everyone can feel safe, and the wellbeing of students is our top priority. If you experience sexual harassment or assault - whether inside or outside of college -, you can speak to anyone in the list of contacts at the end of this booklet at any time. The University Counselling Service also has a dedicated Sexual Assault and Harassment Advisor, Amy Thompson, who can be contacted about any incident, even if it occurred before your arrival in Cambridge. Disclosing this information to someone does not oblige you to report it officially if you do not want to do so, and confidentiality will always be maintained unless you or someone else is believed to be in danger. If you wish to speak to the senior tutor or another member of staff, but would prefer not to do so on your own, you can take a friend along or request for one of the MCR liberation officers to accompany you.

If you witness sexual harassment or assault, do not report it without the permission of the individual affected unless you believe them to be in danger. Remember someone may have a reason you are unaware of for not wanting to report an incident of harassment or assault. If they would like you to report it on their behalf, make sure you ask whether or not they would like you to include their name.

If someone tells you they have been the victim of harassment or assault, always assume they are telling the truth. Make sure they have control over whether or not the incident is reported. Remember you have been asked to listen and not to pass judgement.

Catz MCR is also part of the Bystander Intervention Initiative, a programme that provides training to enable people to recognise and intervene safely in potential incidents of harassment and assault. Ally the Chaplain is the programme coordinator in college, so you can get in touch with her for more

information. Our welfare officer Charlotte has also taken part in the training and is happy to answer any questions.

BAME

Where to begin:

The CUSU Black and Minority Ethnic Campaign (BMEC) is a group made up of and working on behalf of all students from ethnic minorities at the university of Cambridge. They organise social events, discussion groups, and political campaigns, and work to ensure that the social, cultural, and religious needs of BAME students are met. Like the other SU campaigns, they have representatives from the LGBT+ and female/non-binary community. Their website can be accessed here:

<https://www.cusu.co.uk/about/cusu-campaigns/the-black-and-minority-ethnic-campaign/>

and their facebook page here:

<https://www.facebook.com/CambridgeBME/>

For information on FUSE (a university community for queer people of colour) see the LGBT+ section of this guide.

aim (access, inspire, mobilise) is an organisation that aims to demystify life at Cambridge for students and prospective students from underrepresented ethnic backgrounds. It was founded by an engineering student in Catz JCR! They can be found here:

<http://www.aimcambridge.co.uk>

FLY. - FLY is a Cambridge University network for women and non-binary people of colour. They run a blog that explores life in Cambridge and beyond for female and non-binary students from underrepresented ethnic backgrounds. Here is the link to their website:

<https://flygirlsofcambridge.com>

Cambridge BME Theatre Group - This is a university society affiliated with the ADC for all BAME students interested in theatre. Their productions include the yearly BAME Shakespeare play - a tradition started by an ex-student of Catz! Here is their website:

<https://www.cambridgesu.co.uk/organisation/7101/>

There are a large number of university-wide societies for people from different ethnic, cultural, or religious backgrounds. Here is a (by no means exhaustive) list:

Cambridge University African and Caribbean Society

<https://cambridgeacs.org>

Cambridge University India Society:

<https://indiasoc.co.uk>

Cambridge University Chinese Society:

<https://www.cucs.com.hk>

Cambridge University Pakistan Society:

<https://paksoc.co>

Cambridge University Islamic Society:

<https://isoc.co.uk>

Cambridge University Sikh Society:

<https://www.facebook.com/cusikhsoc/>

Cambridge University Jewish Society:

<https://www.cujs.org>

Seeing a BAME Counsellor

The Cambridge University Counselling Service (<https://www.counselling.cam.ac.uk/>) has a policy by which all BAME students have the right to request to see a BAME counsellor if they are seeking counselling. For more information on the university counselling service and other mental health support please see the Disabilities section of this guide.

BAME at Catz

Our MCR BAME officer is Than Dar (contact details at the end of this booklet) who can help with any issues surrounding welfare / access / social life / studies! You can contact her via her committee email address at any time.

Prayer Rooms:

The college chapel is available throughout the day for people of all faiths or none to pray or have some quiet time. College is actively exploring installing a permanent prayer room for those who do not feel comfortable practising their faith in the chapel.

Halal food:

Catz hall regularly serves halal meat, and where halal ingredients have been used they are clearly labelled. There are always at least two non-meat options.

Black Lives Matter

In light of the recent Black Lives Matter protests, the JCR BME officers came up with a fantastic guide on allyship, activism and welfare, which is available on the collage welfare hub. It contains this list of dos and don'ts on how to be a good ally to black people and other people of colour:

DOs...	DON'Ts...
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recognise your own white/non-black privilege• Take action as well as saying the words - with individuals as well as on the internet	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make it about you• Expect to fully understand something you have not experienced

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use your own agency and platforms - including at the ballot box • Listen to, and amplify, black voices • Educate yourself about historical, as well as contemporary, racism • Check in with your black friends • Be an advocate for mental health - be aware how others may be affected by what you say • Create a long-term strategy - how will you be an ally for the rest of your life? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask your black friends to educate you when there are resources already available • Think that sharing this list means you have done enough • Expect to be able to engage with this and still feel comfortable • Share sensitive or potentially triggering videos/content • Undermine people's reactions from events you might feel disconnected from • Think this is something you should not fight for because it does not negatively affect you
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Important Contacts:

MCR Presidents	Souradip Mookerjee (he/him) and Jess Forsdyke (she/her)	mcr.president@caths.cam.ac.uk
MCR Welfare Officer	Charlotte Guffick (she/her)	mcr.welfare@caths.cam.ac.uk
MCR LGBTQ+ Officer	Frey Kalus (they/them)	mcr.lgbtq@caths.cam.ac.uk
MCR Women's and Non-Binary Officer	Bethany Cooper (she/her)	mcr.womens.nb@caths.cam.ac.uk
MCR BME Officer	Than Dar (she/her)	mcr.bme@caths.cam.ac.uk
Head Porter	Dave Dove	head.porter@caths.cam.ac.uk
Chaplain	The Rev'd Ally Barrett	chaplain@caths.cam.ac.uk
Senior Tutor	Dr Holly Canuto	senior.tutor@caths.cam.ac.uk
College Nurse	Dee Williams	nurse@caths.cam.ac.uk
College Welfare Officer	Mary Simuyandi	welfare.officer@caths.cam.ac.uk
Postgraduate Tutors	Dr David Bainbridge; Dr Niamh Gallagher; Dr Fatima Santos	gradtut@caths.cam.ac.uk
UCS Sexual Assault and Harassment Advisor	Amy Thompson	sexual.assault.advisor@admin.cam.ac.uk