**Talking Together: Shared Experiences of the Pandemic**

A Cross-Network Event Organised Collaboratively

by NU Women, Nu Parents, and NU Carers

The ongoing global pandemic has disrupted the patterns of our everyday lives in unprecedented ways. Living under ever-shifting circumstances in which we are often isolated and separate from familiar networks of support - friends, wider family, colleagues, communities - has made it difficult to share our concerns, advice, and experiences easily and openly. This global event has also exposed and intensified many of the inequalities that members of our EDI Networks currently face. These will not disappear in a post-pandemic world, and there is a need to generate and amplify conversations about how these widening disparities will be mitigated going forward.

As such, we’re planning an **online event** and subsequent **blog series** that will foreground the voices of EDI Networks members trying to navigate the ever-changing conditions of the global pandemic. We hope **to create a space where we can share testimony and resources as a form of support**, as well as **to demonstrate the need to acknowledge the compounding impact of the pandemic on existing EDI challenges**. By promoting collectivity and encouraging fair and equal treatment for everyone working through lockdown, the event and blog will re-centre voices that risk being lost in some broader dialogues.

We’re **inviting members to share short testimonials** (either as **a written contribution or a recorded video**) that reflect on their experiences of working through the pandemic. Written contributions will be **anonymised and presented by network leads at the one-off online event as a way to stimulate conversation** about our diverse experiences of lockdown and its impact. These anonymised contributions will then be **curated by each networks’ advisory group, and finally by the joint EDI networks, for inclusion on our EDI Networks blog alongside resources and reflections** generated by this conversation. Where video contributions are submitted for the event, anonymity cannot be guaranteed, but these contributions will be transcribed and anonymised for presentation on the blog during the curation process.

Any contributions might touch on the following three areas:

* **Impact:** How has the pandemic impacted your ability to manage practically and emotionally with/at work? What has been the impact on your ability to manage work/life balance? How has your identity informed/shaped your experience of the global pandemic and its impact?
* **Coping:** What strategies have you found useful in managing work life through the pandemic? What methods of coping have you discovered/relied on? Are there any resources you would highlight to members of any of the EDI Networks?
* **Looking Forward:** In what ways should pandemic response be seen as an EDI issue? What would you like to see happen going forward to ensure that future efforts limit/lessen the impact of the pandemic (on careers/on workloads/on our mental and physical health) account for the experiences of already marginalised or overlooked groups at the university?

We hope that this event is able to reflect a broad range of voices within and across our EDI Networks. We are particularly interested in gendered and racialised experiences of the pandemic, and especially in hearing from those whose overlapping/intersecting identities have shaped their lived experience of lockdown.

Please **send contributions to your EDI Network lead** as listed below by **Wednesday March 31st 2021**. Where members belong to more than one or all of these networks, please reach out to only one of the leads below.

Paula Fitzpatrick: NU Parents Chair

paula.fitzpatrick@newcastle.ac.uk

Stacy Gillis: NU Women Chair

stacy.gillis@newcastle.ac.uk

Chris Whiting: NU Carers Chair

chris.whiting@newcastle.ac.uk