

# STEM, LGBTQ & YOU 2025

Friday 21st February – 09:00–17:00

**9:00 Sign in opens**

**9:20**

Welcome to STEM, LGBTQ & You 2025

Avery Cunningham (Chair) & Rebekah Roebuck (Vice Chair)

**9:30**

Keynote Speaker: Max Fisher RSci

Confessions of a Queer Scientist

**10:15**

Eva Echo

There's No Escape From Activism

**10:45 Break**

**11:00**

Poggy Murray Whitham

Activism in the Workplace: From Research to Action

**11:30**

Darrian Geoghegan

Fireside chat – Activism in the Workplace

**11:30**

David Simons

Workshop – ERGs in Technology: Moving beyond anti-discrimination

**12:00**

Abena Akuffo-Kelly

You Are The Revolution

**12:35 Lunch Break**

**14:00**

Chris Mells

Living Authentically, Driving Change, My Journey in Government

**14:30**

Avery Cunningham & Caitlyn Gilmartin

Volunteering & LGBTQ+ Spaces in Education and Beyond

**15:00 Break**

**15:20**

Katherine Holmes

All about the 'A's: Asexual, Aromantic and Agender experiences in STEM

**16:00**

Nisha Pokar

Ionic, covalent and the lesser known sexual bond

**16:25**

Jasmine Qureshi

Queer(ing) Ecology: Reimagining our relationship with ecology

**16:55**

Closing Session

Avery Cunningham (Chair) & Rebekah Roebuck (Vice Chair)

**17:00 End of Conference & Social (The Goose – B29 6AF)**

*All times in GMT. All sessions hybrid except workshops.*

# STEM, LGBTQ & YOU 2025

**MAX FISHER**  
*THEY/THEM*

## ***Confessions of a Queer Scientist***

Max is a multi-award winning disability and LGBT activist, who was recognised in 2024 as the UK's most influential disabled scientist.

They talk extensively about intersectionality in the workplace, and their experiences as a queer and disabled person in STEM. They have been queer for over half their life, and has spent most of that time advocating for dignity and respect for all people under the LGBTQ+ umbrella. In their working life, they are a registered scientist (RSci) with The Science Council and the Royal Society of Biology, and currently work as a senior research associate, growing cells in flasks and talking to robots.

Their talk addresses the trials and tribulations of being queer in the workplace, and the beauty of the bringing your whole self to work.



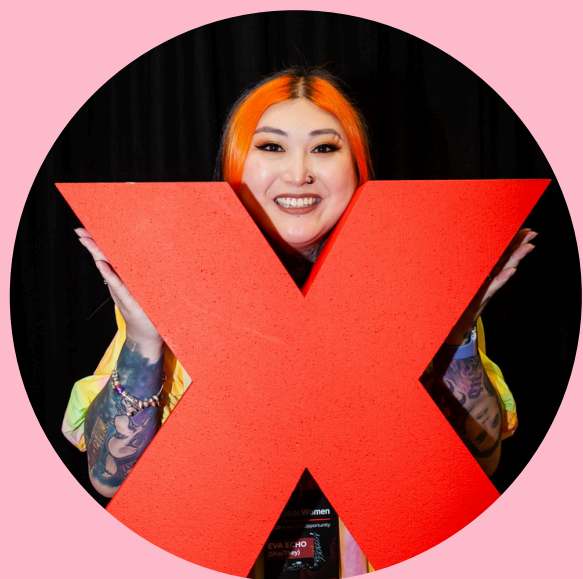
# STEM, LGBTQ & YOU 2025

EVA ECHO  
*SHE/THEY*

## *There's No Escape From Activism*

Eva is an educator, activist and TEDx speaker with a focus on transgender rights, intersectionality and mental health.

Her talk will explore our concept of activism and why there really is no escaping it.



## **POGGY MURRAY WHITHAM** *Activism in the Workplace: From Research to Action*

Poggy Murray Whitham is a professionally accredited engineer, Chartered Manager, and an award-winning DEI researcher and advocate. Currently in the management team at EqualEngineers, Poggy worked up to Senior Management for a global automation engineering company before working full-time in DEI pursuing a doctorate in DEI in engineering.

This talk will explore Poggy's personal journey in engineering, shedding light on some of the challenges faced. It will highlight some key insights from their research and the research of EqualEngineers, as well as discussing the importance of networks / ERGs, with practical advice on creating and sustaining these within the workplace.



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**DARRIAN GEOGHEGAN**  
*HE/HIM*

## *Activism in the Workplace: Fireside chat*

Darrian is a freelance D&I consultant with a background in leading large scale transformations in large corporates by day and by gay he has chaired a number of LGBT+ working groups and pushed for the FS industry to be more inclusive of all communities including the LGBT+ community.



This talk will focus on the importance of workplace activism and how it permeates through everything that we do.



**DAVID SIMONS**  
*HE/HIM*

## *ERGs in Technology: Moving beyond anti-discrimination*

David manages engineering teams in the energy technology sector.

He has recently set up an ERG (employee resource group) and shares his learnings about supporting LGBTQ+ people in tech, specifically in a young company where many of the battles around respect and allyship have seemingly been won.



# STEM, LGBTQ & YOU 2025

**ABENA AKUFFO-KELLY**

***SHE/HER***

***You are the revolution!***

Abena is an everyday activist whether it be in her union work, as councillor, as mayor or a freelance trainer and coach.

Her talk is labelled you are the revolution! Many of us think "I'm only one person; what difference can I possibly make?" Every movement was started by an individual, it takes one person to ignore their internal imposter and saboteur and do it anyway. When the revolution happens within you you become the catalyst for change.



**CHRIS MELLS**  
***HE/THEY***

***Living Authentically, Driving  
Change, My Journey in  
Government***

Chris is a Civil Servant in the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, overseeing a decarbonisation scheme for SMEs in the West Midlands.

With experience across the Departments for Transport, Housing, and Work & Pensions, as well as the charity sector, Chris is driven by a passion for making a meaningful impact.

Openly queer at work, he believes that authenticity and activism are key drivers of change, shaping his approach to leadership and public service.



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**CAITLYN GILMARTIN**  
*SHE/THEY*

## *Volunteering with oSTEM*

Caitlyn Gilmartin works at Moog as a Supplier Quality Engineer for the aerospace industry and acts as oSTEM's Volunteer Coordinator, helping to connect interested volunteers with the needs of oSTEM.



They love cooking, cats, gardening, and their wonderful fiancé.

**AVERY CUNNINGHAM**  
*HE/HIM*



Avery and Caitlyn will discuss opportunities to volunteer, particularly looking at our own work as part of oSTEM. If you are looking for more ways to get involved with oSTEM and you want to make a positive impact in your community or the world, or even just curious about the work we do, this session will help you learn about the different teams within oSTEM and how you can use your skills, time, and enthusiasm as a national or regional volunteer.

# STEM, LGBTQ & YOU 2025

**KATHERINE HOLMES**  
**THEY/SHE**

***All about the 'A's: Asexual,  
Aromantic and Agender  
experiences in STEM***

Katherine is a finalising PhD candidate in quantum dynamics and a budding Science Communicator.

They identify as asexual (ace), aromantic (aro) and genderfluid/agender.

In their talk, they will share their experiences and spotlight the experiences of other A-mazing people in STEM.



# STEM, LGBTQ & YOU 2025

**NISHA POKAR**

***SHE/HER***

***Ionic, covalent and the lesser known sexual bond***

Nisha is a scientist, writer, and woman who spent years misreading the data on her own sexuality. A lesbian, neurodivergent Indian woman

with a PhD in Chemistry, she knows what it's like to overanalyse everything—except the fact that she wasn't actually into men. Raised with cultural expectations, undiagnosed ADHD and autism, and a complete lack of discussion around attraction, she missed every sign.

Now, she's committed to making sure the next generation doesn't have to go through the same confusion. By living openly and sharing her journey, Nisha hopes to create space for others to fully embrace who they are—without the years of uncertainty or misguided dating choices.

In her talk, Nisha will explore the intersection of neurodivergence, sexuality, and cultural expectations, building on her personal experiences to inspire others to embrace their identities and challenge societal norms.







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