



The Neighbourhood

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HTA's equality, diversity & inclusion newsletter

The past year has seen many exciting changes across the practice not least when it comes to our focus on diversity & inclusion.

HTA is committed to ensuring that our practice is a great place to work and we believe that our success relies on the active encouragement of contributions from a diverse range of people both within and outside the practice. We encourage everyone at HTA to be themselves and share in different perspectives, experiences, lifestyles and cultures in a safe, supportive environment.

What we deem to be important at HTA, and what comes across in our core values, is an emphasis on conversation and dialogue across the practice. This year, we have openly discussed, shared and celebrated many of our personal experiences, built new external relationships, formed and engaged in diversity related groups and networks including: Stonewall, WiP, WiSH, Equal Approach, the Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust, and Rethink Mental Health, to name a few.



This first newsletter, aims to provide you with an overview of our D&I activities so far, as well as insight into what's coming up over the next few months.

“It felt reassuring to see my stresses and problems in other people’s lives, to realise that I’m not alone and there are people here who I can speak to. I feel so glad that we did this talk and I think it’s the first step to talking more openly about all manner of issues within the office. Thank you!”



You learn something new every day...



"What a memorable evening. Insightful, thoughtful, touching and above all warm. Hats off to the 4 speakers for being so eloquent and candid about such personal experiences. I learned a LOT."

On 28th February, HTA kicked off its diversity & inclusion activities for 2017 with an inspirational panel launch event, organised by Stephanie Warner and facilitated by Natasha Broomfield-Reid from Equal Approach. Four HTA panelists (Lucy Smith, Phoebe Eustance, Zakiya Umer and Eleni Stathi) shared heartfelt and thought provoking personal stories relating to LGBTQ, mental health, religion & belief and gender, marriage, and pregnancy.



The event was received very positively and highlighted how important and powerful it can be to openly discuss diversity and equality

issues in this way, as is demonstrated by the following snippets of feedback:

Following on from this event, Natasha from Equal Approach was commissioned to deliver three half-day Diversity & Inclusion workshops for its management team, which took place in April, May & June 2017.

HTA has since invested in a series of pre-recorded diversity & inclusion webinars covering topics such as: Introduction to Diversity & Inclusion, Unconscious Bias and Dignity at Work. The webinars now form part of HTA's New Joiners Induction Programme that staff must complete within their first 6 months.



LGBTQ+

incl.usive



Network Group

HTA's first LGBTQ Network Group was launched on 22nd May 2017. The formation of HTA incl. was prompted by staff who identify as LGBTQ and wished to establish a network to support and inform within the practice. Inclusivity is at the heart of the group's ethos and a space is created for allies to join and participate in discussions and events.

Incl. are now also starting to network with other external LGBTQ groups in the industry to raise awareness externally and advocate HTA as an organisation that values diversity and inclusion.

To this date, the group has represented HTA at various events including the RIBA Pride breakfast on Saturday 8th July and at London City Hall for Planning Out's anniversary on 20th July. To bring it back to the realm of architecture and urban

design, HTA incl. are also looking at future research projects that create links between urban design and LGBTQ spaces. Last September, HTA invited Ian Rutter from Stonewall to give a talk on LGBTQ issues, what it means to be a Stonewall Diversity Champion and the value of membership.

Lucy Smith and Stephanie Warner have since met with Stonewall to take discussions further on behalf of HTA and attended Stonewall Annual Conferences in London and Manchester, which provided a chance to network and gain a fuller understanding of the issues and how workplaces can better support its LGBTQ employees.

On 30th November we are delighted to host Ben Campkin and Laura Marshall, from UCL Urban Laboratory, who will present their recent research project focusing on nightlife spaces important to London's LGBTQ communities. This timely and important piece of work has been widely circulated and is quoted in the Mayor of London's Culture and night time economy SPG.





In July, Riette Oosthuizen, attended the NLA's Inspiring Women Speed Mentoring - an event that aims to bring together younger talent with more established professionals for a night of encouragement and inspiration, creating an opportunity to discuss a particular challenge or seek career advice.

Riette also completed PedeElle in May, cycling 500 km across Portugal, for Coram.

Women@HTA

HTA have been active in promoting events for women. In June, we hosted a Networking Skills event for women facilitated by Debra Constance and Nicola Dibb from WISH (Women in Social Housing).

Dolcie Foster Finn and Lara De Villers from HTA's Manchester office are due to represent HTA on 29th September at a WISH North West event - Make Changes NOT Excuses in Business & Life.

Lucy Smith was invited to be part of LBWomen, an initiative that aims to explore ways to support and advise organisations in creating an environment where Lesbian and Bisexual women can be authentic at work. Lucy was part of the panel at the recent Women in Property (WIP) 'build to rent' event (story currently on the website)!

Stephanie Warner will shortly confirm dates for a number of informal lunchtime discussion opportunities focussed on topics relevant to women in the workplace. Suggested topics include:

- Addressing the challenges of working during Pregnancy
- Addressing the challenges of returning to work following maternity leave
- Support for working parents
- Empowering women or women in leadership - assumptions holding women back and barriers to success
- Confidence boosters for women in business
- Career progression and Mentoring for women.

These discuss groups will take place quarterly and will be open to all staff regardless of gender.

BAME

HTA continues to support opportunities for BAME communities through working with The Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust.

Caroline Dove now sits on the STCT Advisory Board and is in the process of discussing ways in which HTA can become more active in the Building Futures Programme. Over the past two years, HTA has offered three Part 1 places to young architects and a technologist introduced to us by the SLCT.

We continue to provide an annual bursary to the Building Futures programme and this year, we have sponsored an award, which was presented by Ben Derbyshire at The Annual Stephen Lawrence Memorial Lecture this year at RIBA alongside Francis Kéré, Spencer de Grey and Simone de Gale, which was on 12th September.

 Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust



Religion & Belief

In light of HTA's commitment to supporting religion and belief within the workplace, the new 'snug' room at HTA is the new designated as a new place for quiet reflection and prayer with easily moveable furniture and frosted glass to ensure privacy.



Useful resources & activities

HTA subscribes to **Health Assured - Employee Assistance Programme** providing 24/7 help and support when you need it. Now available in the palm of your hand via their Health e-Hub App.

RIBA recently held an event to launch **'Anxiety Arch'** attended by Ben Derbyshire, Phoebe Eustance and Stephanie Warner. The Architect's Benevolent Society have teamed up with Anxiety UK to launch a new mental health support helpline specifically for Architects, Architectural Assistants,

Landscape Architects, Technologists and their families.

In addition to educating around the subject matter of mental health, HTA's new offices have been sensitively designed to enhance the health and wellbeing of staff, with plenty of light and plants dotted around desks and communal spaces. We are also providing staff with opportunities of physical relaxation by means of an Urban Massage and Yoga to be trialled in London and Edinburgh during September 2017.

Rethink mental illness

There has been a great deal of work done in recent years to alleviate the stigma around mental health in the UK, demonstrated by its prevalent position in current political debate and recent party manifestos. The importance of encouraging and supporting everyone to take care of their mental wellbeing cannot be under estimated.

In April, HTA invited **Melanie Ball** from **Rethink Mental Illness** to deliver two half-day workshops, provided free of charge courtesy of **Camden & Islington Council**, where our management team were



provided with the essential knowledge and guidance on how to promote wellbeing and act conscientiously when people are encountering difficulties with their mental health. The workshops also provided useful resources and tips on where to signpost people to, for more professional help and advice.

Rethink also provided free training in **Mental Health First Aid** via MHFA England to **Phoebe Eustance** and **Stephanie Warner**.



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