



Name: Adam Tarrant

Current Job: Undergraduate student (about to start a placement at DESY in Germany)

Scientific Discipline/Field: Dark Matter

University: Royal Holloway University of London

Country: Britain

Pick some letters (L,G,B,T,Q,+, etc.): G and Gender queer

Website: Twitter or other social media handle (if applicable)?

Instagram: [@atotarrant](https://www.instagram.com/atotarrant)

Twitter: [@AdamTarrant](https://twitter.com/AdamTarrant)

What does your job involve?

As an undergrad my day consist of going to lectures and labs. And then when they aren't on I'm trying to keep up with problems sheets, course work, research projects. Then most evenings I have a small part time job, so it can be a pretty full on day. Currently, I've been working in the department over the summer working on a new high-pressure time projection chamber. It's been super interesting working on an experiment which doesn't have to work and dealing with problems that arise many of which don't have the answer. By the end of July, the detector will move to CERN to take data for two months which will be a very exciting time.

How did you get to this job (education etc.)?

To get on my degree I had to get my A-levels. Theses weren't as high as I had wanted but I still managed to get onto a degree programme. From there I've been able to do placements and get a real feel for the enormous scope there is in physics.

Do you feel being LGBT has affected your career decisions?

I never really thought about me being gay as an issue in science. It wasn't till I read an article in physics world about the experience of someone at CERN and having to deal with people who may not come from a country where being LGBT is accepted and how this lead to an 'informal' group at CERN for LGBT+ people. This was the first time I ever really thought that me being gay might affect my career choice further down the line.

Have you had any reactions from colleagues about being LGBT, either good or bad?

I ended up setting up a LGBT group within the department mostly targeting undergrads. I didn't really know if anyone would come. I only had a small budget from the physics society. My head of department at the time approached me and gave me some wine for the event, even then I didn't expect the support I received from the department. At the first meeting it was great to see so many people from both the undergrads and academics that I managed to fill the room. A few meetings have happened since and I'm now trying to organise a public lecture from a diverse range of undergrads to show the public that anyone can do physics. Other changes have occurred such as

geology deciding to dedicate one of their loos to be gender neutral. I think the true test will be in mid-July when I go to DESY for several weeks as it will be my first experience not working at Royal Holloway.

Did you have any role models growing up (LGBT, STEM, totally unrelated...)?

Not really, which is half the reason I started the LGBT group. I struggled because I wasn't stereotypically gay nor was I really into hyper masculine things like sport. So, it's taking me years to realise that stuff like wearing makeup doesn't affect my masculinity. I think the landscape is a lot better than when I first came out and having done most of my degree it's been amazing to meet so many inspiring people that it almost makes up for the lack of role models I had as a child.

What are your plans for the future?

I have one year left of my 4-year degree and hopefully after that I will be able to start my PhD looking for dark matter.



Name: Ashley Spindler

Current Job: R&D Engineer, Online Content Creator

Scientific Discipline/Field: Astronomy + Space Technology

University: University of Surrey and The Open University

Country: United Kingdom

Pick some letters (L,G,B,T,Q,+, etc.): T, P, Q

Website: www.patreon.com/ashleynova,
www.twitch.tv/ashleynova/

Twitter or other social media handle (if applicable)? [@ashley_nova](https://twitter.com/ashley_nova)

What does your job involve?

I research and design a diagnostic package for electric propulsion devices on space craft. This includes developing the theoretical model, choosing relevant devices and technologies, and designing the instrument layout.

I also work as an online content creator, which means I mostly make videos of me shouting into the void while playing video games. I have a successful talk show called “The Trans Agenda” and have a thriving community of viewers on my twitch channel.

How did you get to this job (education etc.)?

I took part in the SEPnet postgraduate placement program.

Do you feel being LGBT has affected your career decisions?

As an academic, being openly trans rarely affected my day to day. However it has limited my career options as many places in the world which are still hostile to LGBT+ people are off the table for job searching and attending conferences. However, universities in the UK are generally quite positive environments for LGBT+ folk, with many ranking in the Stonewall Top 100 employers, which is a factor in my ongoing search for a post-doc.

Have you had any reactions from colleagues about being LGBT, either good or bad?

Most commonly, I get told I’m “so brave” or “so inspiring” for living my life. Frankly, I think this attitude is a little poisonous, as it shows that people realise that life can be hard for LGBT folks, but don’t want to do anything about it except applaud the few of us that survive.

Did you have any role models growing up (LGBT, STEM, totally unrelated...)?

Growing up, my biggest role model was a character from the TV show Stargate SG-1. Samantha Carter was a double PhD, Air Force Captain (later a general), and didn’t take \$%£! from anyone. As I got older and immersed myself in LGBT+ culture, I find now that many of my inspirations include all kinds of people: Jamie Clayton and Laverne Cox are two of my style icons, my good friend Violet (aka DistractedElf), Karen Masters who I’ve had the pleasure of working with, Alfredo Carpineti and the rest of PridelInSTEM, Beth Hellen... Let’s just say I have a lot of inspriations?

What are your plans for the future?



I'm hoping to start a post-doc soon and get back to staring at galaxies, which is a huge passion for me. Outside of academia, I've started work on my first novel (a Queer Victorian Fantasy), I'm growing my twitch stream and launching new shows and podcasts.



Name: Dominic Galliano

Current Job: Director of Outreach & Public Engagement for SEPnet

Scientific Discipline/Field: Public Engagement

University: All of the SEPnet ones!

Country: UK, from Gibraltar originally.

Pick some letters (L,G,B,T,Q,+, etc.): I'll take a G and a Q.

Website: Twitter or other social media handle (if applicable)?

9-5 Twitter: [@PhysicsDom](https://twitter.com/PhysicsDom)

After hours twitter: [@Domixt](https://twitter.com/Domixt)

What does your job involve?

I help direct the Schools' Outreach and Public Engagement with Research programmes across all the SEPnet Physics departments. So it's a bit of everything really! I manage a team of amazing Outreach Officers who deliver loads of events to all sorts of audiences across the region. We also do some work widening access to physics in schools. This involves bringing down the patriarchy, so keeps us busy! Together with the Officers we consult on projects which involve researchers working with different communities throughout their research.

How did you get to this job (education etc.)?

My career path is a meandering one! After doing my A-Levels in the Boys Comprehensive in Gibraltar and thanks to a grant from the Government of Gibraltar I did a Maths & Physics degree in York. After this I wanted to be a proper grown-up so became a transport planner for a few years. That was interesting, but really not me... I ended up doing a Masters in Theoretical Physics in Imperial (thanks Mum & Dad for helping out with that) and got on a PhD programme in Portsmouth in Cosmology.

There I realised I wasn't a great researcher but had other skills which were important to roles in Outreach & Public Engagement, so got some experience doing my own events while completing the PhD. This led to a job as Outreach Officer for the Institute of Physics in the Physics in Society team. Then ended up in this job!

Do you feel being LGBT has affected your career decisions?

So much! STEM was a safe place for someone who was closeted, so that definitely played a role in why I chose it. I didn't come out until the final year of university. My sexuality fed my ambition to leave Gibraltar and then York, wanting to move to a big city where the gays were. Then found the gays and nearly failed my Masters (so many stories to tell...) so decided to do a PhD in a quieter city!

Have you had any reactions from colleagues about being LGBT, either good or bad?

I came out to my best friend in physics in my final year of my undergrad on the same day she told me she was a lesbian. We then told the rest of our classmates. Tip, don't lead with "We have something to tell you" as everyone assumed we had hooked up! :-P It went well.

As a transport planner I got told I had to pass for a straight person for the clients, or else I wouldn't be considered for promotion, so a piercing was out of the question. Luckily I was on my way out! Within two weeks of getting to London and starting my Masters I got my piercing done. It is still there as a reminder not to compromise myself for

any job. On the first day I met a fellow LGBT+ classmate within like three hours! Then in Portsmouth we had an office that was gay men and women, with one token straight guy!

There are loads of LGBT+ folk working in Outreach and Public Engagement so thankfully feel very comfortable when in conferences.

Did you have any role models growing up (LGBT, STEM, totally unrelated...)?

I didn't have access to science or scientists, so all my role models were fictional. Dr Reed Richards from the Fantastic Four is such a role model, I mean he has liked a million PhDs and explores the universe with his chosen family. Totally fancied him too... Then Dr Ellie Arroway (played by Jodie Foster) from the film Contact definitely showed me that there were careers in Astrophysics. Sadly no LGBT role models until I came to the UK.

What are your plans for the future?

Does everyone in the UK have equal access to a physics education regardless of their gender, sexuality, ethnicity, socio-economic status, belief or disability? Are all research groups in physics considering how they can engage with wider society throughout their research? Sadly the answer is a resounding no for both. Therefore I still have work to do.



Name: Eram Rizvi

Current Job: Reader in particle physics, ATLAS group leader at QMUL, Deputy Dean for Research in the faculty of Science & Engineering

Field of research: Experimental particle physics

University: QMUL

Country: UK

Letters: G - partnered with Chris Woodley an established playwright and theatre maker

Social media: Find me on Facebook.

What does your job involve?

I have many jobs! I teach a course on energy and the environment - a subject close to my heart. I manage the research of my group on the ATLAS experiment on the Large Hadron Collider at CERN. As Deputy Dean I am responsible for PhD students across the faculty. And as Director of Training for DISCnet I manage the training programme in data intensive science for PhD students in SEPnet. I also convene a working group on the ATLAS experiment, steering high precision measurements of W and Z bosons to publication. I've also recently taken on the role of LGBT+ Champion for the School of Physics and Astronomy so I'm learning what that entails. Altogether there's never any quiet times!

How did I get into this job?

Aged 12 I saw a BBC2 Horizon programme about the discovery of the Z boson at CERN and this completely captured my imagination. I knew from that moment that I would be a particle physicist and I never looked back!

Has being LGBTQ affected my career decisions?

Not directly. Being an Asian man was already a more obvious and visible difference in the physics community. I'm very glad to see that there is much more ethnic diversity in our student population than when I was an undergraduate. I hope that the same could be true for sexual preference and that's one of the reasons why I joined the equality team at QM - to make the diversity of the academics more visible to students.

Have you ever had any reactions to being LGBTQ?

Not really, I'm fairly open and most people take it in their stride. It can be awkward for some to tell new friends and colleagues, so I usually get around it by introducing my boyfriend Chris.

Did you have any role models?

Yes! My role model was definitely Dr Who (Tom Baker & Peter Davison). I discovered a lot of physics from watching it as a child including learning about the 2nd law of thermodynamics and the heat death of the universe. I've since found that many gay men were also hooked by the program as kids and I wonder if it has anything to do with the Dr being semi-exiled from his own society and travelling across the universe. And my second passion is travelling... in fact I'm writing this from an AirBnB in Athens!



Plans for the future:

I have a suite of related high precision electroweak measurements I want to make with ATLAS data which are sensitive to new physics. With the three-year long Run-2 ending in December we'll have a huge dataset to explore. I've assembled teams to work on these and I'm planning three publications in 2019 and 2020. My other goal is to learn how to do flip-turns in my local pool London Fields Lido



Name: Linda Cremonesi

Current Job: Research Associate at UCL

Scientific Discipline/Field: Particle Physics

University: UCL, previously QMUL

Country: from Italy but working in the UK

Pick some letters (L,G,B,T,Q etc.): L

Website: <http://www.hep.ucl.ac.uk/~lindac/> and
https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Linda_Cremonesi

Twitter: [@LindaCremonesi](https://twitter.com/LindaCremonesi)

What does your job involve?

I study some of the tiniest particles in the universe, neutrinos. I currently work on 2 experiments, one in the US (NOvA) and one in Antarctica (ANITA). The NOvA experiment throws neutrinos from Illinois to Minnesota and then looks at what happens to them (do they transform? do they disappear? do they stay the same?). The ANITA experiment flies at 40km above the surface of the ice in Antarctica to look for neutrinos coming from outside our galaxy.

As a researcher I spend much of my time performing data analysis and simulations, but my job also involves quite a lot of travelling to the experiments themselves and to meetings/conferences, I'm also involved in science outreach and teaching during term-time.

How did you get to this job (education etc.)?

My love relationship with physics started in Italy at the Università degli Studi di Milano, where I gained a Bachelor degree in 2009. During my third year I had the exceptional chance to be an Erasmus Exchange student at Queen Mary University of London. I went on to complete a Master of Science in Physics and Astronomy at University College London, and then a PhD in Physics at Queen Mary University of London.

After my PhD, I started this job as a neutrino hunter at UCL.

Do you feel being LGBT has affected your career decisions?

Definitely. I think I felt that I couldn't really be myself in Italy and that's why I moved to London in 2009.

Have you had any reactions from colleagues about being LGBT, either good or bad?

The reactions from my colleagues and collaborators have always been extremely good. When I announced that I was getting married, they were all extremely warm and genuinely excited for me!

The only bad experience I had was still when I was at uni in Italy, some students were being homophobic, and that's one of the reasons why I left.

Did you have any role models growing up (LGBT, STEM, totally unrelated...)?

My role models have always been people close to me, like family, friends and colleagues, rather than an idealised image of somebody I've never met. The person I admire the most in the World is my gran, she's 97 years old, she has a lot to say and she's still kicking!

What are your plans for the future?

My only criteria for a future job are: an interesting research and having my wife with me, so who knows where I'm going to be?

Anything else you'd like to add?

I guess I'm one of the few people that can say I've touched all the continents on Earth 😊



Name: Nick French

Current Job: IT Technician

Scientific Discipline/Field: Computer Science

University: University of Kent

Country: United Kingdom

Pick some letters (L,G,B,T,Q,+, etc.): Gay

Website: www.kent.ac.uk/physical-sciences/staff/profiles/techs/nick-french.html

What does your job involve?

My job is quite varied but mainly involves looking after and maintaining the IT infrastructure in the School of Physical Sciences. This can be fixing computer hardware, maintaining various software as well as looking after the school website. We have two labs with student PC's in which I maintain also.

How did you get to this job (education etc.)?

I got my BSc in Computer Science here at the University of Kent and after a few fixed term jobs in Canterbury and London I applied for my current job. I have been doing this job now for three and a half years now and still find I am doing new things all the time!

Do you feel being LGBT has affected your career decisions?

Being gay hasn't affected my career decisions. I've never felt put off from pursuing a certain career because of my sexuality. Ever since I was young computers and technology have interested me and so I decided to take my career in that direction.

Have you had any reactions from colleagues about being LGBT, either good or bad?

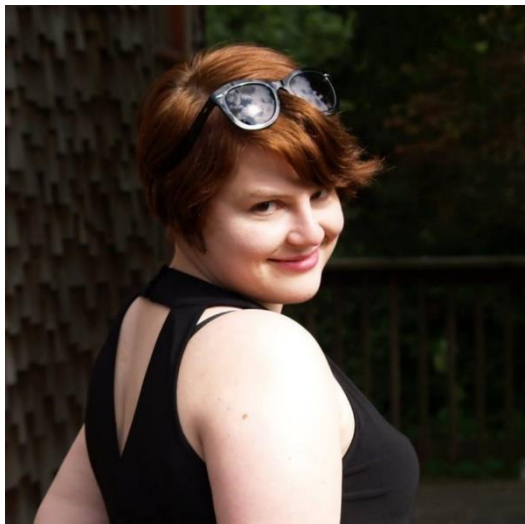
I don't think I've been treated any differently from any other members of staff. I've certainly never had any negative experiences at work. My partner and I recently got engaged and my work colleagues were very happy for us both.

Did you have any role models growing up (LGBT, STEM, totally unrelated...)?

I enjoyed the books written by Chris Wooding a lot and when I was younger I was an aspiring writer so I would say he would be the closest thing to a role model. He taught me it was ok to be imaginative and creative as a man and that being interested in books instead of sports wasn't abnormal.

What are your plans for the future?

Planning my wedding! As for my career - to take on more responsibilities and to get involved with the Technicians Commitment to help other technicians develop.



Name: Sarah-Jane Lonsdale

Current Job: Principal's Career Development Scholar (PhD Student)

Scientific Discipline/Field: Nuclear Physics

University: University of Edinburgh

Country: United Kingdom

Pick some letters (L,G,B,T,Q,+, etc.): B/P

Website: <http://nuclearsarah.wordpress.com>

Twitter or other social media handle (if applicable)? [@NuclearSarah](https://twitter.com/NuclearSarah)

What does your job involve?

I study Nuclear Astrophysics – the origin of the chemical elements inside stars. My research is in experimental nuclear physics, so I perform experiments to simulate the nuclear reactions that occur in these environments in the laboratory. This means I get to travel a great deal to perform my research at international facilities, like CERN.

How did you get to this job (education etc.)?

During my GCSEs, I was able to secure some work experience at the National Physical Laboratory, through a mentoring programme at my school. I had always been interested in how things worked, and this gave me the opportunity to see what it was like to work in scientific research.

I studied Mathematics, Physics, Geography and Further Mathematics at A-Level, and also did an AS-Level in German. It's important to study Physics and Mathematics at A-level to apply for undergraduate degrees in Physics and Engineering, to have a good technical understanding.

After I took part in the Year in Industry scheme, I took up a place to study for an MPhys in Physics at the University of Surrey. I really enjoyed my experience there, and the opportunity to perform my Masters research in Tennessee, USA. The experience gained while abroad helped me to get my PhD position at the University of Edinburgh.

Do you feel being LGBT has affected your career decisions?

Sometimes. I definitely had to think carefully before deciding to take up my placement in Tennessee, as I was unsure how tolerant the community would be. It was fine in the end, and my colleagues in America were very supportive, but I know attitudes can vary. I try to be cautious around new colleagues from different backgrounds, as I am aware that other societies have very different views on LGBTQ+ people. To pursue an academic career, it's quite common to move internationally to broaden your expertise, and this can be difficult for LGBTQ+ people. As I'm in my third year of my PhD, that's something I'm starting to become more concerned about, as I think about my next steps.

Have you had any reactions from colleagues about being LGBT, either good or bad?

I've generally had a very good experience of being 'out' in science. The university sector in the UK is very welcoming, and I've had no problems with colleagues that I've collaborated with so far in my academic work. People tend to be intrigued, and might ask a bit about my partner to begin with, but other than that it's business as usual!

I'm aware of other LGBTQ+ colleagues in the UK that have had difficulties as a result of their gender expression/sexuality, but these incidents were dealt with swiftly and appropriately by their departments.

Did you have any role models growing up (LGBT, STEM, totally unrelated...)?

On the LGBT side, I had a bit of an obsession with Brian Molko (lead singer of Placebo). He was openly bisexual and androgynous in the late nineties and early noughties, when a lot of mainstream musicians weren't. The band's sound and queer aesthetic really appealed to the outsider that I was as a teenager. I also felt similarly about David Bowie; he really was a man ahead of his time and his music is just phenomenal.

In terms of STEM, most of my role models have actually come from my own working experience. Aside from Marie Curie, I'm not sure that I was consciously aware of many female scientists while I was growing up, and the idea of pursuing science didn't seem very likely until I met women, like myself, who worked in STEM.

What are your plans for the future?

Aim for the stars!

I'm looking at my options at the moment and trying to decide whether I will pursue a position academia, or move into another role, perhaps in scientific computing or science communication. Whatever I choose, I plan to be proudly LGBTQ+ in STEM.



Name: Solomon Melides

Current Job: PhD Student

Scientific Discipline/Field: Food Science (although now Chemical Engineering & Physics)

University: University of Surrey

Country: United Kingdom

Pick some letters: Gay

What does your job involve?

I'm doing a physical sciences doctorate so most of my time is in the lab gathering experimental data. I am also a demonstrator.

How did you get to this job (education etc.)?

I used <http://findaphd.com>.

Do you feel being LGBT has affected your career decisions?

No, it's had no impact.

Have you had any reactions from colleagues about being LGBT, either good or bad?

Not really.

Did you have any role models growing up (LGBT, STEM, totally unrelated...)?

No

What are your plans for the future?

Work in the food industry as a professional research scientist.



Name: Steph Astro

Current Job: SEPnet Employer Engagement Officer, School of Physical Sciences

Field of research: Industry Engagement in Physics.

University: Kent

Country: UK

Letters: L

What does your job involve?

Most of my job involves working with industries to see how I can help them; either by linking them with someone in academia or supporting their recruitment targets. Much of this is ensuring companies have visibility within our physics department and that employers have an opportunity to share their skills with students.

How did I get into this job?

I spent nearly 15 years as a science teacher, so traversing to higher education (with a quick segue to the IOP) wasn't too much of a stretch.

Has being LGBTQ affected my career decisions?

I wasn't accepted as Bi. Many thought I just hadn't made up my mind and when I finally found a relationship with someone (who happened to be male) I was obviously not part of the gay community and in the end lost contact with people of whom I had built friendships.

At work, it wasn't something that could be talked about, for risk of losing a job. A male gay colleague had to keep his partner a secret as he had lost a job before.

I would tell those in similar situations that there is strength in numbers, not least because you always have someone to talk to but also, a group of people have a voice. There are still prejudiced people hidden in the tiniest of pockets wherever you work. They may be less outspoken about their views, but in some ways that makes it harder to tackle. A community voice can help to give perspective on the actions of others and create guidelines for response to the stress and anxiety of either trying to 'fit in' or professionally manage the subtlety of some people's ignorance.

Have you ever had any reactions to being LGBTQ?

I was 17 when I finally came to terms with being a bi-female. There was no fanfare or huge debate, rather it was more a pat on the head from parents with "Well, we all experiment when we are young." And a physical recoil from a dear friend – who 6 months later said "You were joking, weren't you?"

Did you have any role models?

It wasn't until I moved to London after completion of A levels that I met with others from the LGB community.



My earliest memories were of Eddie Izzard and Ellen De Generes, both of whom were incredibly brave for their time period. They were themselves, proudly and unapologetically.



Name: Toby Shannon

Current Job: Public Programmes Manager at the Institute of Physics

Scientific Discipline/Field: Public engagement with physics

University: I graduated from the University of Surrey in 2009

Country: UK

Pick some letters (L,G,B,T,Q,+, etc.): G,Q

Twitter or other social media handle (if applicable)?

@ClangyAndJammy at [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) (come for the GIFs, stay for the poorly-taken photos of my various craft projects!)

What does your job involve?

I'm the Public Programmes Manager for the IOP and my job is to manage a wide range of projects that aim to bring people and physics together in creative, exciting ways. I work with lots of different partners to make this happen from community groups to music festivals and institutions like the Tate Modern and the Royal Opera House.

How did you get to this job (education etc.)?

I studied Physics with Nuclear Astrophysics at the University of Surrey where, over the course of my degree, I became more and more interested in the stories behind physics and how those stories can be shared with all kinds of audiences. I went on a Year in Industry as part of my degree and spent it at the Rutherford Appleton Laboratory where I ran their exhibition space, led tours for school groups and represented the lab at science festivals; this experience made me certain that I wanted to work in public engagement with physics. After finishing my undergrad, I did an MSc in Science Communication at the University of the West of England and then moved to London to begin my first job with the British Science Association where I was Science in Society Officer for 4 years. I started in the IOP as the UK Coordinator for the International Year of Light in 2014 where I gained a wide range experience in running projects that bring together physics and culture in all sorts of unexpected ways which has led to my current role.

Do you feel being LGBT has affected your career decisions?

In a way, yes. I have been really fortunate in that I have had loads of amazing role models and colleagues (LGBT+ and otherwise) in the roles I have worked in and this has made me feel that this is an inclusive, diverse field to work in and one that I feel at home and included in. So, whilst it hasn't impacted on my decision to choose this type of work, it has definitely helped in terms of how I see my career developing and I want to be a strong, queer role model for others, if possible!

Have you had any reactions from colleagues about being LGBT, either good or bad?

After the terrorist attack at Pulse in Orlando in 2016, I started wearing my nail varnish full-time (previously only for weekends and parties), including to work which I had been too scared to do before this point. I do this because I like the colours but also as a way to make my queerness more visible and, in doing this, make a statement to the world about myself in memory of the people that died that day – in a world where things like this happen, I want to stand up and be counted as a proud member of the LGBT+ family, including as my professional self at work. Reactions to this were exclusively good and I get a lot of positive comments which often throws me a bit! I get some looks on the tube but my colleagues have always been really supportive, which is absolutely lovely.

Did you have any role models growing up (LGBT, STEM, totally unrelated...)?

Donatello from the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, Captain Janeway from Star Trek: Voyager, the Spice Girls, Eddie Izzard and Cher, in no particular order.

What are your plans for the future?

I want to continue to work in public engagement with science in all sorts of creative, experimental ways and make my work more exciting, delightful and inclusive than ever before. All whilst keeping true to my queer self and wearing ever-more FIERCE nail varnish. Watch this space.