

Please provide a project title for your proposed programme of research

Queer Women in the East Midlands c.1967-2000: Experience, Space and Identity.

Project Proposal (max. 500 words)

Please outline as relevant to the stage of your research at the time of applying, and with reference (e.g., Jones, 2017) to existing literature in the field:

The **context** of your project (i.e., the research or practice background to the problem/challenge/research gap you will investigate).

The **research question(s)** it will answer.

The **method(s)** you will use to investigate your research question(s).

The **impact(s)** your project could make in terms of an original contribution to knowledge in the field(s), and beyond academia (e.g., in professional and creative practice, industry, etc).

An **indicative structure/timeline** for your project across the duration of the award you are applying for.

CDA applicants will want to consider the **context** and **research questions** slightly differently, please see the guidance notes for details.

This project examines queer women's experiences and spaces in the East Midlands from c.1967-2000. It is a much-needed addition to an established body of work on British queer women's history (Jennings, 2006; Doan, 2001; Oram, 2007) and will be a significant departure from an overwhelming focus on London and the first half of the twentieth century. There are three interlinking objectives motivating the research, which will be investigated using a mix of archival and oral history sources. The research will focus on women who are attracted to women. The first objective is to illuminate the experiences of queer women in the East Midlands. This encompasses a goal to discover the ways in which queer women's experiences of work, relationships, politics, leisure and pleasure have changed in the last decades of the twentieth century. The second objective is to analyse queer women's connections to the spaces they occupied or were excluded from. There is a need to examine what spaces existed to serve queer women, who created them and why. It is also necessary to evaluate how geographical location affected queer women's experiences of same-sex desire. There were many spaces and organisations in the East Midlands that were for all LGBTQ+ people, but it has been acknowledged that women experienced sexism in these spaces (Edgley, 2006). This begs the question of how women navigated their marginalisation within these spaces. The third objective is to interrogate Jennings' assertion that 1971 was a 'turning point in British lesbian history' and the extent to which a 'culture of ambiguity and silence' continued to exist in the following decades (Jennings, 2006). This involves examining the discursive narratives constructed by queer women, exploring the stories that are being told by queer women across the East Midlands about their lives, experiences, spaces and identities. To date work has been focused on conducting a literature review, establishing connections and preparing

to conduct oral history interviews. Connections have been made with Notts LGBT+ Network, Nottinghamshire's Rainbow Heritage and the Sparrow's Nest Library and Archive who have allowed access to a collection of relevant and practically unused archival material and oral histories. I have also made contacts within various groups including Leicester LGBT Centre and their oral history project, Nottingham Women's Centre and their archive project, UoN Women's Staff Network and Nottingham BiTopia. The next stage of the project will continue with this as well as further exploring archival material and existing oral histories which record LGBTQ+ women recounting their experiences in the East Midlands. I intend to add to the records by conducting ten interviews in Summer 2022, I already have seven respondents and more advertisements to go out in early 2022. In year 2 oral history interviews will be transcribed and analysed using a grounded theory approach and follow-up interviews conducted as necessary. Writing the thesis will be an ongoing process, I expect to have completed the first draft by the Summer of 2023. The remaining time will be dedicated to redrafting, editing and finalising the thesis.