

## PROJECT AIMS

In order to take action on diversity issues within the chemical sciences, it is essential for all members of the community to be aware of the issues that prevail within our department and beyond. The Diversity Book Club has provided opportunities for members of the department to connect, communicate and reflect upon current diversity issues prevalent within the chemical sciences today.

There were also opportunities to brainstorm and suggest ways to improve Warwick Chemistry diversity initiatives throughout which has led to big impact from this project and movement towards real, tangible cultural change within the department. The ultimate goal of this project was also to develop a toolkit that can be used by departments everywhere to run a Diversity Book Club and make it open access.

## BACKGROUND

The Diversity Book Club focused on four key areas within the first year of launch:

Diversity Theme	Corresponding Book	Corresponding RSC Report
Race	"Superior" by Angela Saini	Diversity Landscape of the Chemical Sciences
Gender	"Invisible Women" by Caroline Criado Perez	Breaking the Barriers
Sexual Orientation	"Straight Jacket: How to be gay and happy" by Matthew Todd	Exploring the Workplace for LGBT+ Physical Scientists
Unconscious Bias	"Sway" by Dr Pragya Agarwal	Is publishing in the chemical sciences gender biased

We chose these areas specifically to complement the recent diversity reports led by the Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC) Inclusion and Diversity team. The Diversity Book Club thus focused not only on reviewing and reflecting on the books selected but also the RSC reports, which will be reviewed and discussed alongside, allowing the diversity discussions to be placed in direct context for the chemists attending the sessions.

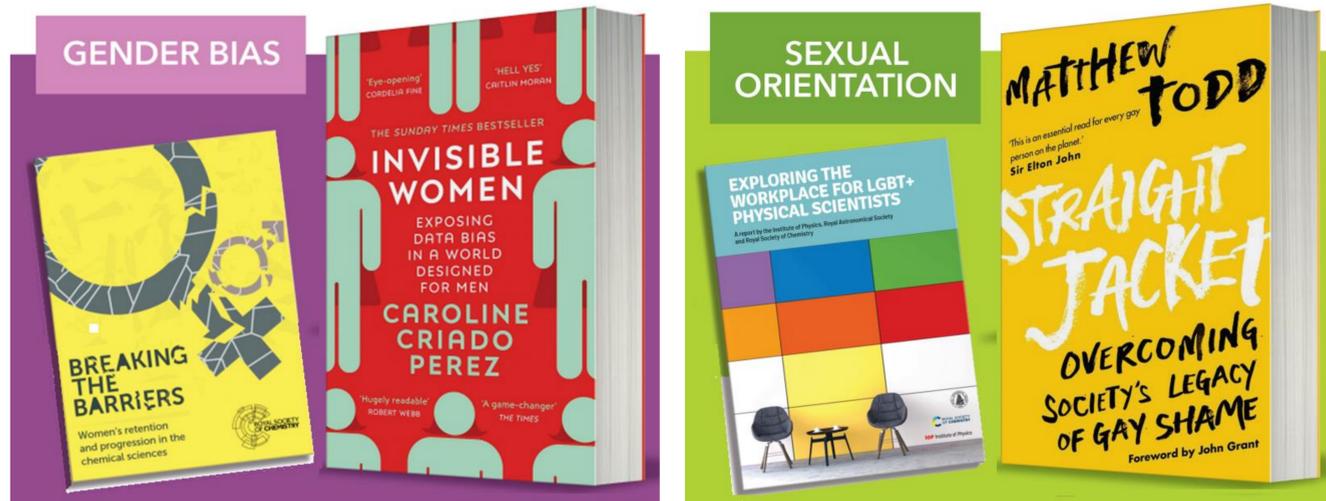
The Diversity Book Club has ran from January 2021 and will finish in January 2022. The Book Club has had ~ 40 participants, ranging from undergraduates to postdoctoral staff, to support staff, over the last year. This has involved small groups (4-8 people) meeting monthly, then meeting all together as a group at the end of each book to discuss.

This project was made possible by:



# Diversity Book Club

The project is led by Zoë Ayres and Bo Kelestyn, and booklet lead Alex Baker, with support and guidance from Adam Alcock, Louis Ammon, Leanne Loveitt, Ally McLoughlin, Maria Kariuki, Kathryn Murray, Tania Read and Michael Staniforth. Poster presented by Elise Bennett.



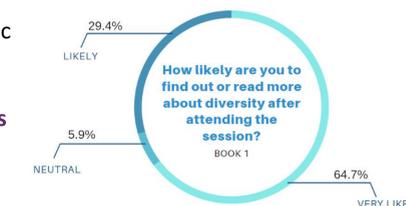
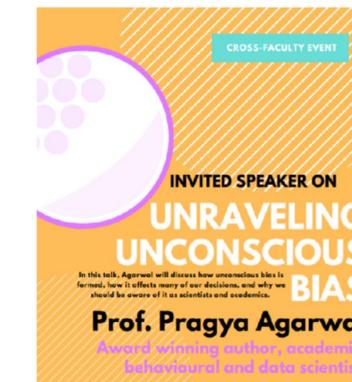
## PROJECT OUTCOMES

We have been really pleased with the outcomes of the project. This has included having departmental discussions and action sessions on improving diversity initiatives within the Chemistry department. We also got faculty support to bring in the final author Professor Pragya Agarwal to do a talk on her book Sway and Unconscious Bias, to a range of STEM departments, reaching a much larger audience than just the book club alone.

The project has also led to several grass-roots diversity initiatives, giving attendees the confidence to advocate for change themselves. This has included:

- **Project InVisible:** An Equality, Diversity & Inclusion based project started by the Warwick Black Chemistry Society.
- **Dorothy Hodgkin Fellowship:** The department have committed to a fellowship for talented postdoctoral scientists needing flexibility, due to caring responsibilities or personal health reasons, and enabling them to build an independent research career.
- **Our Diverse Future Conference:** Undergraduate students as part of ChemSoc are organise a diversity conference in 2022.

What's next? Our department, on the success of the Diversity Book Club, have agreed to fund the Book Club for another year. We will also work on highlighting other diversity themes including disability and mental health.



## SET UP YOUR OWN DIVERSITY BOOK CLUB

All the Diversity Book Club files have been made open access for anyone who wants to download the files and use them. This includes a "How to run your own book club", "Participant Guide", "Facilitator Guide" and "Question Booklets" for each book club session. We have already encouraged other departments to start the book club, and hope to propagate the Diversity Book Club wider into the chemistry community. These files can be accessed at the link below.

<https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/sci/chemistry/aboutus/diversitybookclub/createyourown/>

"The possibility to exchange perceptions about the topic and book was very valuable and interesting."

"[I learned] science is biased and has been used as an instrument to shape the 'truth' of the time."

"I felt I learnt a lot from the sessions - from others' experience"

"It is great to learn that the community within the department is willing and happy to learn and talk about these issues, and I am glad to be a small part of that; so that hopefully we can bring change to the current system."

"I have learned so much! Science is biased and has been used as an instrument to shape the "truth" of the time. We need to dig deeper to understand the true meaning of ideas, values and beliefs we hold as a science community."

"I now have a much better appreciation of the complexities and history surrounding racial diversity issues."