

## James' Men's Officer proposal rejected



By [Oscar Bentley](#), Editor (2018)  
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James College [Image: University of York]

A referendum to create the role of Men's Officer on the James JCRC has ended in the proposal being rejected with a 60 per cent majority against. An email, which was sent to members of James College on 20 April, asked students whether the JCRC should enact two gender officers: a 'Men's' Officer, and a 'Women's and Non-Binary' Officer.

The email noted that while James JCRC currently had a range of liberation officers, namely LGBTQ+, BAME, Disabled Students, and Mature Students, they wanted to "highlight" the experience of Fe-male, Non-Binary, and Male students by adding two new gender officers, aiming to increase representation and encourage the college to consider how gender issues impact students. The email further noted that this was intended to bring the JCRC in line with other colleges and YUSU, however some members of the Women's Network had expressed concerns regarding the concept of a male liberation officer.

In a meeting attended by YUSU President Alex Urquhart and Community and Wellbeing Officer Mia Shantana Chaudhuri-Julyan, it was established that there was confusion over what the JCRC aimed to achieve, regarding whether the role was intended to be a male wellbeing officer, as opposed to a "more controversial" liberation officer. Other colleges do indeed have gender wellbeing officers, with the Halifax College Student Association (HCSA) having two gender equality officers on its committee.

James JCRC Chair Alexander Smart said that "We simply made an error in wording in a proposal we sent out to the college which we have since apologised for and are dealing with accordingly."

Chaudhuri-Julyan told Nouse that: "Liberation groups reflect structural and systemic inequality, which women face specifically because of their gender. This is not something that applies to men whatsoever, thereby I would not support a men's officer in a liberation capacity as they are not an under-represented group."

Chaudhuri-Julyan further commented: "Men's mental health is a specific demographic wellbeing issue that does need attention. The choice available to the committee in my opinion is this, they could decide now to run a priority campaign on men's mental health to tackle this issue under the current wellbeing

representation structure, or, they could decide based on the need of the college members that a male wellbeing representative is needed in some way either as a full officer in its own right, by specifying that one wellbeing representative under the current structure must self-define as male, or by following Halifax's example and electing a gender equalities officer. The choice is theirs."

Nadine Smith, one of YUSU's Women's Officers and a James College member told Nouse that 'We believe that the James JCRC meant no offence with the referendum and the suggestion of a 'Men's Officer' and fully support introducing a gender equalities officer, which would be inclusive while supporting liberation.'



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