

**Stonewall**

# ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

**This resource is produced by Stonewall, a UK-based charity that stands for the freedom, equity and potential of all lesbian, gay, bi, trans, queer, questioning and ace (LGBTQ+) people.**

At Stonewall, we imagine a world where LGBTQ+ people everywhere can live our lives to the full.

Founded in London in 1989, we now work in each nation of the UK and have established partnerships across the globe. Over the last three decades, we have created transformative change in the lives of LGBTQ+ people in the UK, helping win equal rights around marriage, having children and inclusive education.

Our campaigns drive positive change for our communities, and our sustained change and empowerment programmes ensure that LGBTQ+ people can thrive throughout our lives. We make sure that the world hears and learns from our communities, and our work is grounded in evidence and expertise.

To find out more about our work, visit us at [www.stonewall.org.uk](http://www.stonewall.org.uk)

**Registered Charity No 1101255 (England and Wales) and SC039681 (Scotland)**

Stonewall is proud to provide information, support and guidance on LGBTQ+ inclusion; working towards a world where we're all free to be. This does not constitute legal advice, and is not intended to be a substitute for legal counsel on any subject matter.

## Young Futures Aviva Transcript – James's Story

Hi. I'm James, I am partially deaf. I'm also a gay man. I interchangeably use he/him, he/they, and I'm. I'm a Senior Business Architect. Toward the later years of schooling, I had no idea what I wanted to do, I still don't to some degree.

I did know that I want to do full time education. I really wanted to do politics, but I wasn't that great at history, so my mum kind of gave me the advice, you can do politics, but you have to do analytical, scientific subject. Balance something you like, with something that you're good at.

So politics and economics was my degree choice at the University of Leeds. Now, I'm very happy that I did university, but more so in terms of what it gives you. Soft skills, life experiences. I did a year abroad in Hong Kong for example, which had massively impacted the way I see the world. In school and university.

I was like, oh, no, I'm not going to deal with whatever question marks there are related to my sexuality. It's only when I went abroad to Hong Kong, that classic story of going as far away as possible from home and kind of finding yourself.

Definitely from a younger age. When I was born partially deaf, you're always a bit different. You have to educate people on what being disabled, being partially deaf is, what it means. Just that initial snap judgment that people make when they know an aspect of your identity.

When I left university, I did have some questions relating to how will I deal with the transition. I initially wanted to look at opportunities that could allow me to continue to explore, definitely on a global scale. So I literally googled global graduates scheme, and then Aviva came up as one of the options.

In that interview process, I definitely got the feeling that Aviva was an inclusive employer. For me personally, I talk about my disability as an in to gauging whether people are accepting of DNI. I'm partially deaf: how would that impact my life at Aviva? I got good reassurances.

Coming out at work has impacted my behaviour, my mentality. If I looked at the first five months of being scared to come out, you just waste so much mental effort and energy. Will I be seen at the gay one or the deaf one? However these days I just bring it up in everyday conversation. People can't shut me up about it.

I would say that everybody has a journey that they have to go on, regardless of how slow it is for you, just take your time, don't feel pressured into anything. As corny as it sounds, you have one life to lead. So ultimately you have to do what's right for you.