

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

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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 – Jordan's Story

I'm Jordan. Pronouns are they/them, he/she. I'm non-binary. I work in Digital as a Product Designer and I'm a graduate. I actually switched school for sixth form. Before that, I went to a school that was very kind of like traditional.

Being gay was such a taboo. Obviously, Section 28 ended in 2003 but the knock on effect was really big. That was like a huge part of everything to do with me in terms of like the way I presented myself, the clothes I wore, The subjects I picked at school. I spent most of my time at sixth form just doing science and technology and maths. And I just thought, this is what's going to make me become like a professional person, you know?

I still didn't feel able to, like, be myself. The only way I'm going to cope with all of this is just to get out, go to uni, go to a city, and everything's going to be fantastic. At university, every single thing had been in my life before immediately repeated. I wasn't out.

I didn't feel comfortable. Every now and again, I'd hear like homophobia, said casually, I went from this high flying student where everything's going fantastic, I was getting really good grades, to like scraping by. Like I failed one of my modules and I just thought, I don't know if I can get through this course.

So it was very difficult for me and I eventually made the decision to take a break from my studies. So I went to Tokyo and sure enough, two or three months later I ended up working as a cleaner.

And the funny thing is like gave me so much freedom and then eventually was led to get to know the gay community there. Everything that seemed so impossible, even just a few months before and I felt like it just clicked, basically. That was kind of the moment I properly started coming out and I started going to pride around the UK, sort of meeting people, started telling my family more about stuff. And I think I was the first time in my life I thought, I don't need to hide any aspect of who I am. I can bring myself into my world and stuff I do.

Then the pandemic came. I graduated. I have no job. I have like no money. I have nothing. And I think on a whim, I just applied for this job at Aviva, like it came up in the search results. I know that I've been to interviews where I've felt like I need to act a certain way. I need to be like straight looking. And I'm also mixed race, but I'm quite white passing. So I just think if I look like a white straight man, I'm more likely to get this job.

And I just thought, I'm going to be me. I'm just going to enjoy this process. And I got the job. I actually got the job. I didn't hide a single aspect of who I was or my personality and they said the one thing that really stood apart for me compared to the other people applying was the fact that I wasn't holding anything back. I wasn't trying to be something I wasn't.

I think around that time was around the time I started thinking about my gender as well. So I'm now openly non-binary and I say that with pride! I do identify as transgender, but not all non-binary people do. The biggest reason I'm able to say this and the reason I'm able to be more open about it now is that Aviva really wanted me to be who I was from the start, and it made a huge difference to my mental health and I started to have those conversations. Once people start listening to you and you start being authentic, then you start feeling more self-confident, and that's what makes the big difference, really.

Don't worry about what they think about you. Think about what you think about them. You know, it's like, do you want to work there? It's not a level playing field, let's not pretend that. But people do get through and people do manage. If you want something, just keep trying. Don't blame yourself. And eventually it will work out.