

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 – Josi's Story

Hi, I'm Josi. My pronouns are they and them and xe/xem/xir, and at Aviva, for the past years I've worked in annuities, but at the moment I'm on what's called a Tap Into Talent in our Inclusions team.

I was educated in Germany, both school and university. I didn't come out. I didn't really understand my identity. It wasn't really a topic growing up. I moved to England more or less on a whim. When I moved here, I first started working in retail, although there unfortunately I did experience some homophobia.

Then for a friend, I came to Aviva and I've been here for seven years. It actually felt quite nice for the first time in my life to be open because I wasn't at school, I wasn't at university, so this was the first time I could actually be myself and that felt really liberating.

Something that I do is that I develop and deliver LGBTQ+ workshops around the business. So for Pride Month 2022, I did a companywide digital workshop called Breaking the Stigma about Asexuality, and we also have an asexual group at Aviva. That's something that's brought me great joy.

I've always been non-binary, but I just didn't have the words to describe myself. I felt like I'd finally found something that resonated with me. I finally found a way to put into words how I was feeling. I first came out to a few friends and then eventually decided I wanted to be out at work as well.

From that moment on, I really felt like I could be myself and I kind of made it my mission to bring more education and awareness to non-binary and trans identities at work, together with many of my fantastic colleagues.

A couple of years ago I became one of the steer co-members of our Aviva Pride Steering Committee. I think it's opened a lot of doors for me and especially I've been able to establish a fantastic network of people and learn so much myself about other people's stories, about other people's identities and backgrounds. So it's been an incredible learning journey for me. There is a lot to do still across the entire industry, but there has been an increase in understanding and trying to implement a culture to see difference is valuable.

I am neurodivergent as well. It is something that I think has taken me the longest to come out and understand, but I'm at a point now where I really embrace it.

Don't be afraid to be fully yourself, to embrace the strengths that you have. Also, be honest about the support that you need. Don't feel that you have to put yourself in a box that confines you any part of your identity, whether it is LGBTQ+ whether it is neurodivergent, whether that's your socioeconomic background.

I don't think that it has to hold you back. Actually. If you bring your full, authentic self to work, that is how you thrive and everybody benefits from it as well.