



When I first started work over 20 years ago I was completely open with colleagues about my male partner and about the fact that I was a father but I could tell that some people were a bit embarrassed about asking all the obvious questions and so were avoiding including me in some personal conversations as a result..

I understood instinctively that the issue was not necessarily prejudice, but embarrassment in case they said/asked the wrong thing, or maybe that was how I chose to view it, either way it opened the door for an open conversation that continues to this day. I think by being open it enabled other people to appreciate the lived experience of some gay people and enabled them to appreciate some of the issues we can face in the workplace.

A few years ago our staff survey results indicated LGBT staff were not as confident as their peers about being afforded equal treatment in terms of career progression. It seemed many of the perceived barriers were based on the assumption that LGBT staff were not progressing because they were not visible, particularly at the top of the organisation. As a senior manager working across Northumberland County Council and Northumbria Healthcare, making myself visible helps LGBT staff see that I faced no bar to career progression because I was an out gay man who was passionate about equality and diversity.

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