

Lived Lives 1 – Actor’s Voice



Interview Transcript

I have worked for the council for about 9 months, as a white cis-gendered woman I would say overall that my identity and others like it are tolerated and even celebrated. However, I seem to be afforded more respect and understanding than other members of the wider LGBTQIA+ community.

There is a lot of general dismissal of people identifying as anything other than the binary male/female genders, and cis-gendered. I had a colleague say jokingly that he identified as an Apache helicopter and another colleague saying he might like to identify as a rocket ship. This is demeaning and devalues the experiences and identities of marginalised people – contributing to feelings of shame and invalidation.

One colleague on hearing I have a same sex partner said ‘oh I assume you won’t be having children then’ this is a misconception with unspoken implications attached to it that someone in a same sex partnership should not have children – which is something that many same sex couples get told on a regular basis, either directly or through beliefs perpetuated through the media/churches/schools/ that inform our society and culture.

I have witnessed straight male colleagues 'acting gay' as in, limp wrists and other stereotypes - These harmful stereotypes form part of the 'banter' mentality prevalent in every workplace. The problem with these stereotypes and others like them is that they dehumanise the individuals they target and make them figures of ridicule.

A senior member of staff described another colleague to me as 'gay, but not one to rub it in your face or go on about it' - as though if you are anything other than straight the best thing you can do is to hide it so that you may appear 'normal', and not make your straight colleagues feel awkward.

Another colleague told me he thought that 'men dressing up as women is fine, but what about when they want to use the women's toilets?' This is a persistent rhetoric in the general population, but this narrative has been repeatedly discredited and trans people are in fact statistically much more likely to be victims of abuse in bathrooms.

These experiences are common and on the face of it do not equate to outright homophobia but do reinforce a subtle sense of shame and feeling of difference that a person within the LGBTQIA+ community must navigate every day.

I would also like to say though that most of my colleagues when hearing me talk about my same sex partner have been mostly respectful and positive.