It is essential that I have trust with the people I work with, and

trust works both ways

If I didn't bring my full self to work, we could never have that degree of trust. Working in an open environment where I am able to fully express myself means not only feeling comfortable at work, but also being able to fully achieve my potential.

Laura Martin
Government Digital Service – Pride 2017

Bringing my whole self to work is something I risk taking for granted now. But there was a time when I wasted energy policing the persona I presented to the world, to keep parts of the real me bottled up inside. I felt that the real me wasn't a person other people wanted.

And all that wasted energy was a distraction from doing a better job, having a bigger impact and being the best that I could be. And that's why an open and inclusive environment matters:

being my whole self means I do better, at everything

Rory Smith
Government Digital Service – Pride 2017

I joined GDS around the time everyone was getting ready for Pride 2016 and the window vinyls, rainbow bunting, laptop stickers and posters have been around ever since. Several new joiners have told me how positive the environment makes them feel.

GDS is a place where

I've never hesitated to be completely open, honest and happy

and I'm really proud to be part of an organisation that not only values diversity but wears those values on its sleeve.

I feel confident enough now to do more to help everyone, not just people like me, feel included and supported in the same way.

Laurence Berry
Government Digital Service – Pride 2017

I feel immensely privileged
to work in and contribute to
such an open and inclusive
environment here at GDS.
There's no way to do your best
for such an important cause
when you're not yourself.

As a gay and gender non-binary
person in a leadership role,
I've never felt pressured to
conform to a dominant culture
– our dominant culture is one of
fairness and inclusivity.

It's important to be visible and
open – even when you're not
certain about your own identity
– so that others can feel as free
as you do to be themselves.

We can only have fairness if everyone takes part

Lou Downe
Government Digital Service – Pride 2017

I want the people I work
with to be comfortable.
In a modern society,

we shouldn't have to concentrate on concealing who we are

– it's distracting, it's tiring
and it makes us unhappy.

Having an environment that's
consciously inclusive is a big
part of helping people to feel
comfortable at work but it's
something we have to actively
work at all the time. Visibility is
really important and I've seen
GDS is getting better at this.

Alan Maddrell
Government Digital Service – Pride 2017