

role models

inspiring LGB*
people in the
civil service





Great deeds
are often inspired by
great leaders.

**Great leaders can often be described as
role models.**

A role model is someone you
admire
or wish to reflect the behaviours of.

**It can be someone who has
driven you to achieve more.**

Contents

Foreword	4
Introduction	5
Terri Parker	6
David Merritt	7
Emma Cappie	8
Richard Heaton	9
Charlotte Jackson	13
Simon Tapson	14
Cath Tomlin	15
Sir Stephen Wall, CMG, LVO	16
Nicole Davidson	18
Sam Myers	19
Ken O'Flaherty	20
Emma Deadman	21
Gavin Thomas	23
Michael Contaldo	24
Karl Lötter	25
Oliver Entwistle & Kate Scott Hughes	26
Russ Greenwood, MBE	30
Lisa Pinney, MBE	31
Madeleine Lasko & Kate Mortimer, MBE	32
Peter Lewis	34
Dr Niall Goulding	35
Ros Goodfellow & Catherine Little	36
Mark Bennett	38
Sam Evans	39
Marjorie Roome	40
Matt Smith	41
Stephen Waring	42
Dr Justin Varney	45
Nathan Phillips	46
Alexandra Norrish	47
Mary Smeeth	48
Robin Tamlyn	49
Hugh Harris	50
Derek Bradford	51
Stuart Sims	52
Andrew Wilson	53
Karina Stibbards	54
Paul Phipps-Williams	56
David O'Connor	57
James Henry	58
Zoeie Keogh-Bennett	59
Conclusion	60
Acknowledgements	61

Foreword

We are really pleased to be publishing the first Civil Service wide role model guide that features lesbian, gay, bisexual, and other staff with a minority sexual orientation (LGB*).

The Civil Service, like the wider society it serves, has come a long way in its attitudes towards sexual orientation equality. It was only as recent as the 1980s that the Civil Service ended its practice of not promoting staff that openly identified as LGB* to senior positions. The fact that some thirty years later, we can publish a role models guide that celebrates the positive role that LGB* civil servants play across the whole Civil Service is great progress.

We also think that this role models guide sends a clear, visible, signal to all civil servants that it's okay to be yourself in the Civil Service. It is important that everyone understands that you can be LGB* and be successful in your career; that you can be LGB* and be open, if you wish, about your life outside work; and that you can be LGB* and be a leader. As Stonewall says, people do perform better when they can be themselves in the workplace.

The role models featured in this guide are from a broad cross-section of Departments and their arm's-length bodies, though they are also volunteers so if your Department is not featured then that is not because LGB* role models do not exist within your organisation. We have also tried to reflect the diversity of the Civil Service in this guide. This means we have role models from across the grades, across locations, across job functions, and of course, across different sexual orientations – including allies.

We hope that you enjoy reading this guide and we would like to thank all of the role models who have contributed to this guide but who also act as visible champion of LGB* equality in their day to day work.

This will be a living document, and more role models will be added to the online version of this guide over time, so if you want to be included in a future update please contact us via the details provided at the end of the guide.



Sue Owen

Permanent Secretary - DCMS

Civil Service Sexual Orientation
Champion



Oliver Entwistle

CSRA Chair

Introduction

What is a role model?

A role model can be anyone. Simply, a role model is someone that leads by example in their day to day life. It is someone that is authentic. It is someone that inspires you.

Why are LGB* role models in the Civil Service important?

Every lesbian, gay, bisexual, or person with a minority sexual orientation has to make a decision about whether to be open about their sexual orientation in the workplace. This isn't a one off event either. Each time they move to a new job, recruit new staff, or engage with stakeholders, they have to decide whether to be open or not. This can be a difficult process for some.

Stonewall's "Peak Performance" research in 2008 identified that LGB* people are more effective when they can be themselves. The burden of not being open about your sexuality can have a negative impact on your productivity at work.

Having visible LGB* role models is therefore important because it sends a clear signal that in the Civil Service you can be yourself. You can be authentic. You don't have to worry about the impact of disclosing your sexual orientation on your career.

Do you have to be senior to be a role model?

This is a question that is frequently asked. The simple answer is no. Role models can be anyone that leads by example. You do not need to be senior. For example, if you look at departmental LGB* networks, virtually all of these are led by people who are not in the Senior Civil Service. They are still, however, role models. They champion LGB* equality in the workplace. They help create a safe environment for other LGB* staff. And, they are authentically themselves.

Why does this guide only cover LGB* role models, not Transgender role models as well?

This guide is primarily focused on role models who have a minority sexual orientation. Transgender is about gender identity not sexual orientation. There are some role models in here that identify as trans but they are in here because of their sexual orientation rather than their gender. We have also included a small number of allies, who are heterosexual, as they have been role models for those in this guide.

Terri Parker



My name is Terri Parker. I work for DVSA. I am a Driving Examiner. I don't really like to label myself, but I do identify as bisexual. I think that it's not just about sexual orientation, but more who you fall in love with. I am in a civil partnership with my lovely lady Donna. We have been together for 8 happy years.

It hasn't always been an easy path for me. Being twice married to men, both of who had very successful careers. Finding myself not only struggling to bring up my four children, but also by myself. At times earning a living and keeping a roof over our heads took priority. I was a driving instructor for 12 years. I enjoyed this immensely and got real satisfaction from teaching people to drive.

As my children have grown up I was more aware of a need within me to find a more stable career. I decided at the age of 51 to apply to become an examiner. I was concerned on two levels about my success in the Civil Service. Firstly my age, and secondly my gender. I need not have worried at all, as the Civil Service is an equal opportunities employer. From the first interview, and on-going into employment, I have been treated fairly.

At the initial interview I declared that I was in a same sex relationship and when I started my training I was also open about it. This for me was a big step as in the past I had been discreet. Not because I was ashamed but just to avoid possible discrimination. The office I work in is male orientated but my colleagues have been nothing but supportive of me. I have worked in two different test centres and in both felt accepted and part of the team. Even though my present colleagues told me recently that after almost two years I am "now one of the boys!"

I feel that no matter what or who you are, whatever age or sexual orientation you can have a successful career. And a happy life. Sometimes you just have to be honest with yourself and also other people. From my experience you are accepted for you. I have nominated myself as a role model, to tell my story, in the hope that it will be of help to others in similar situations.

David Merritt

I joined the Civil Service in October 2013 after a career in the private sector. I had spent most of my working life up until then with blue chip companies and I was hungry for a fresh challenge and a change of direction.

I had known from my early teens that I didn't have a great deal of interest in the opposite sex, it wasn't until my early twenties before I accepted myself and my mid-twenties before I was ready to let the rest of the world 'in' and let myself 'out'. I had spent a lot of time wrestling with my true self and several failed attempts at relationships in the process. Growing up in a relatively geographically isolated environment didn't help either. When I recognised that I needed to be comfortable in my own skin before I could hope that others would accept me, I knew that by doing I could be truly happy about who I was. No more hiding, no more cover stories, no more half-truths.

It's an awful lot of work trying to cover alternative tracks and now, thankfully, that energy is placed in more productive arenas. Coming out in my previous career was almost a non-event, as was informing my friends and family; some of them announcing to me the conclusion before I told them during my pre-scripted build-up speech.

Starting a new career in the Civil Service was a mixture of excitement with a pinch of nerves. I joined the Corporate Strategy Unit in the Cabinet Office, but was faced with the prospect of coming out again at work. I had become confident about who I was over the years and I had not seen the prospect of telling other people who I was as an issue. However, colleagues were supportive and welcoming. Since joining the Cabinet Office I have become a member of the LGB* network, walked with the Civil Service in Pride London for the first time, instead of watching it go past me, and built a network of colleagues who are also LGB* across Whitehall.

Great deeds are often inspired by great leaders. Great leaders can often be described as role models. A role model is someone you admire or wish to reflect the behaviours of. It can be someone who has driven you to achieve more. It is important that the modern Civil Service creates an environment for LGB* staff to feel comfortable and where role models can help other staff be the best that they can be. Happier colleagues make for more effective colleagues and if positive LGB* role models can drive colleagues to realise their true self and therefore to achieve their true potential, then a more inclusive and diverse Civil Service has to be the way forward.



Department

Cabinet Office

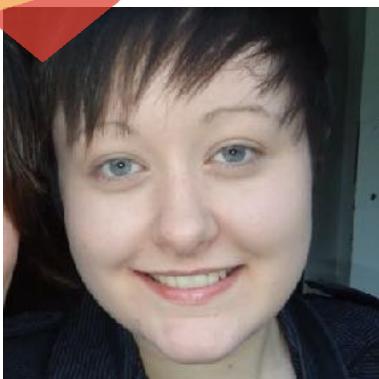
Location

London

Role

Portfolio Manager

Emma Cappie



I began working with HMRC in 2006 for the Tax Credit Overpayments Unit ; in 2008 I then transferred to the Debt Management Telephone Centre where I am currently based in the Cumbernauld office, near Glasgow. As well as telephony work, I have various duties within the department such as a DMTC Mentor, Complaints handler, SPOC for tax credit compliance cases and Assistant Officer for the LGB* Network.

Why do you think LGB* role models are important in the modern Civil Service?

Role models are crucial in such a large organisation as we serve and employ a vast range of people who all have different views and requirements. Having an LGB* specific role model educates and introduces possibility and opportunity, without which opportunities may not seem as visible/achievable to those who seek development. Portraying a range of individuals with different traits, skills, mannerisms, beliefs etc and by creating a supportive, welcoming environment we enable confidence, creativity and potential for open expression and individuality, enhancing productivity and fulfillment in a safe work space.

How do you think you might be a role model for others?

I am heavily involved in the organisation of events for the network locally and liaise with other organisations such as LGB* Youth Scotland and the Equality Network to support our needs and obtain relevant materials. I also contribute as a member of the PCS Scotland LGB* Committee. I worked with LGB* Youth Scotland as well as the LGB* Centre for Health & Wellbeing on a voluntary basis for some time last year, developing my own knowledge of the transgender youth and adult groups. I am open to colleagues about the work I do within and outside of the office, raising awareness of upcoming events, significant dates, discussing issues and challenging assumptions.

Who has been a role model for you in your career?

During my studies, I encountered an arts lecturer who was fairly open about her sexuality and had an understanding of my expression of LGB* issues through art. Her success, perception and honesty inspired me to pursue my goals despite the obstacles in place, and to challenge inequality in every aspect of my life, using research and knowledge to fuel my desires. If I could do one thing to improve the Civil Service, I would create more opportunities for local LGB* related job roles/programmes, regional events, social gatherings, and information sessions and encourage support/involvement from non-LGB* individuals, ensuring that LGB* issues/briefings reached all members of staff.

A close-up portrait of Richard Heaton, a middle-aged man with short brown hair and a beard, wearing dark-rimmed glasses, a light blue striped shirt, and a dark suit jacket over a patterned tie. He is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. The background is a warm, out-of-focus indoor setting.

Richard Heaton

Permanent Secretary
Cabinet Office

In developing the CSRA Role Models Guide, the Chair of CSRA, Ollie Entwistle, interviewed Richard Heaton, CB. Richard is the Permanent Secretary for the Cabinet Office and First Parliamentary Counsel. He also happens to be one of, or possibly the, most senior out gay man in the Civil Service.

Richard, thank you for agreeing to appear in the CSRA role models guide. You have been in the Civil Service since the 1990s. What made you join?

In 1990 I was a newly qualified barrister. For various reasons I was beginning to think that I was in the wrong job. I wanted to use my legal qualification in some public policy area, and I wondered about applying to be a Foreign Office lawyer.

At the same time I really wanted to come out, though I was finding that a difficult step to take. Anyway, I rang the London Lesbian and Gay switchboard (from a phone box on Fleet Street) - the first time that I had done anything like that. I asked them whether being gay in the FCO was going to be a problem. They didn't know. They said they'd ask around and get back to me. A couple of days later, they got in touch. I was told that an openly gay man would fail the security clearance, because homosexuality was viewed as a character defect and a blackmail threat.

That was a hell of a jolt.

Then a few months later a different opportunity arose, this time in the Home Office. So I rang the switchboard again and got a different answer. The Home Office were thought to be more relaxed. And so, I applied, and got the job - and I'm glad I did, and I've enjoyed every year of my Civil Service career since then.

I've been reflecting on that setback, back in 1990. Mostly, it makes me realise how far we've come since then. Civil servants parade together on the pride march. Gay

rights have massively moved on at Westminster. And in Whitehall, the FCO permanent secretary himself is the Civil Service champion for diversity and inclusion.

I also look back with mixed feelings on how I responded to the setback. Was I too meek in accepting the security ban? Would a braver person have fought that battle, rather than just withdrawing? Maybe. There's often a choice when you're confronted by a barrier - remove it, climb over it, or just go round it. Just try not to be defeated by it. If in addition you can make life easier for those that come after you, that's heroic. But we're not all heroes. I wasn't one in 1990.

Today you are an openly gay senior official, were you always open about your sexuality?

My early Home Office years were a period when I grew in confidence as a gay man. Basically, I think I had enough confidence in the Civil Service and in the people around me to believe that that I wouldn't encounter prejudice. So I was reasonably relaxed about it. But, although I was "out", I didn't make a big deal of being gay. I didn't particularly want it to be the first thing people knew about me.

But when I started to move between departments, it dawned on me that the Civil Service has a broad range of roles, across many different locations and cities, and not every gay, lesbian, bisexual or trans person has a positive experience. And I saw that as a senior civil servant, I probably ought to be more visible to those colleagues who weren't as lucky as I'd been. Being a role model became part of the leadership deal for me. So I began to talk more about diversity and included my own story. As a Director General at DWP a few years ago, I posted quite a personal biography for our intranet pages. I remember writing that nobody's sexuality makes them unique or special, or a better or a worse civil servant - it's just part of who we are, our humanity.

It was really great that you joined the Civil Service walking group on Pride this year. I know that your involvement meant a lot to members of staff.

That's good to hear! I've always loved the Pride march, and I've always been proud to be a civil servant. So I was very happy to walk with a unified Civil Service group this year. I didn't realise that it would be such a big thing, carrying the banner with Sue Owen (Permanent Secretary at DCMS) but afterwards I saw a lot of Twitter coverage and yes, it was good to have done it. I hope it helped. And a big thank you to CSRA - you were fantastic. Let's also remember that for many years, it was the trade unions that provided the only visible Civil Service presence at Pride.

I guess it confirmed for many that you were a visible role model. How do you think you act as a role model for people?

I hope that being open about my sexuality at a senior level might help others conclude that it's all right in the Civil Service to be yourself, and that you can flourish without having to fit any particular mould. Beyond that, there's a leadership style I aspire to and admire in others, and it includes honesty, authenticity, and a degree of emotional openness.

Whether I achieve that, I don't know.

What do you think it takes to be a good role model?

You have to be yourself - it's not going to work if you're putting it on. But you do have to work at it, particularly at being visible. You may also have to put more of yourself into the public domain than you're instinctively comfortable with.

Don't be exclusive: your story may resonate beyond your own group or your own community. You may never know who will be encouraged by what you've done.

And keep learning and listening!

And who has been a role model for you?

In my final year at university, I was an elected officer in the student union. This was in the mid-80s and there was nobody visibly gay at that time at my college. Homosexuality was only present in the form of mild, slightly archaic, homophobic banter. I was presiding a bit smugly at a debate, when a gay first year student stood up and made an articulate, well-reasoned speech saying that the college needed to grow up and support its lesbian and gay students. It was an incredibly powerful speech, and of course it carried the room. I suppose he was my first gay role model – and the point is that you don't have to be senior to influence people or carry moral authority.

At work, I've certainly had role models – not, for the most part, lesbian or gay. Dame Juliet Wheldon was the first woman to head the government legal service, and she was my boss for several years. She was both inspirational and infuriating. I hugely admired her independence of mind and her determination.

Turning to the future of the Civil Service, the Talent Action Plan was recently published. How do you think that will help staff from minority backgrounds?

It's deliberately called the Talent Action Plan, because the focus is on the Civil Service removing the barriers that stop talented people joining us, realising their potential, being promoted, and being effective. And although "talent" often means "top talent", I wouldn't read it so narrowly. The truth is, every wasted or unsupported talent is, for us, a failure and an opportunity missed.

Expect to see much more mentoring, much better awareness among managers of how to recognise and put aside unconscious bias, and better information on the barriers faced by different groups. Incidentally, that last task

will be much easier if people declare their sexuality, ethnicity and disability status. So let's all do that.

Finally, if you had one message about role models in the Civil Service, what would it be?

I think my message would be for anyone whose job it is to lead people, and for anyone who is in a position to lead others by influence. Please regard your potential to be a role model as part of your responsibility as a leader. And therefore as part of your day job.

Do what you can to encourage talent, by mentoring colleagues, by challenging cliques and lazy “who you know” promotions, and by going out of your way to understand and make the case for inclusion.

Charlotte Jackson

I think I always had an instinctive understanding that I was 'different' to other girls, whether it was my childhood obsession with wanting to be Calamity Jane as portrayed by Doris Day, my teenage crushes on Belinda Carlisle and Kim Wilde, or my curiosity to visit a gay club with my friend Holly when I was 16 - which advertised itself as a safe haven for gays, lesbians, bisexuals, transsexuals, transvestites and theatrical friends! Seeing as we both studied A-Level Theatre Studies, we thought 'theatrical friends' was apt. Of course, the truth of the matter was that we were also both gay women – a fact that neither of us had admitted to ourselves or others.

I properly came 'out' in my first term at university and have never looked back, even in the face of negativity and challenge from those close to me. For me, being young and gay in the 1990s was a charmed time. It was a burgeoning time for LGB* visibility, both politically and socially. I lobbied outside Parliament on lowering the age of consent; I got involved in helping the local LGB* group when I spent a year in Sweden; I took part in Pride marches in both London and New York; and worked in one of Soho's oldest gay venues. I have also happily been in a civil partnership with my partner Beth since 2006.

I joined the Civil Service in 2008, after working in communications and PR in the private and voluntary sectors. My experience as an out gay woman has been varied, from extreme positives where the workplace feels wholly inclusive, to a more challenging environment where homophobia is rife. More than once I have been the victim of perceived 'friendly banter' from colleagues, usually based on stereotypes about how lesbian and bisexual women should behave and look, as well as instances of unconscious bias where someone's deep-rooted view of LGB* people has affected their treatment of me.

These experiences led me to take an active role in promoting LGB* visibility in the workplace and my role as Women's Officer for CSRA. This extends to my day job as an Employee Engagement Adviser, where I work closely with Diversity and Inclusion colleagues to provide insight on the experience of staff from diverse groups as well as being a member of the MoJ Equality Forum.

I am proud to be a role model as it makes a strong point about the value of being open about our differences and demonstrating authenticity. I believe it is our responsibility to help implement change and break down stereotypes that may exist; to challenge homophobic language and behaviour; to help staff who may need support; and to show there is a rich diversity of LGB* staff across the Civil Service.



Department

Ministry of Justice

Location

London

Grade

HEO

Simon Tapson



Department

UK Trade and Investment

Location

London

Grade

HEO

I joined the Civil Service as a clerical officer in 1983 at the age of 21 and worked as an Accommodation Officer (now facilities management) within the Insolvency Service HQ, based in Islington. I then spent six years as an International Trade Advisor, clocking up many miles on company visits before moving back to London and tackling more policy orientated work. I currently work on Outward Missions and Market Visits.

What have been the achievements in your time in the Civil Service of which you're most proud?

I have been in the Civil Service for over thirty years now. During that time I have done a variety of jobs – ranging from facilities management, International Trade Adviser, through to managing major procurement projects. I was responsible for the relocation of Insolvency Service HQ from Islington to Victoria, and then from Victoria to Bloomsbury. Two major moves involving many late hours, weekend working and project management involving numerous internal and external bodies. I was so pleased and relieved when both moves were completed on time, to budget, and with only minor issues to resolve. When it came to the actual move – we were issued with mobile phones – then in their infancy. It was like carrying a brick around with you – and to be honest, a brick might have had better communications reception.

Have you been able to be open about acknowledging your sexuality in the workplace?

I came out in the office only a year or so ago. Up to then I had been married and considered myself straight. Upheavals in my life allowed me to take a close look at myself and to finally understand and accept that I was gay. It was such a relief and at the age of 51 – as though I was starting life afresh. I do admit I was nervous when first coming out to colleagues and friends, but the reaction has been totally positive and supportive. I couldn't have wished for a better response – some simply turned round and said "well of course you are". I am now so much happier and more comfortable with myself.

In your experience as an LGB* individual have you felt valued within the Civil Service?

My sexuality has never been an issue within the Civil Service. Straight or gay, I have always been treated the same, by peers and senior management. I do feel valued as an individual, and I hope that it is for the work I do and the contribution I make to the Department.

Cath Tomlin

Tell us about yourself in terms of your career and background?

I'm a hydrogeologist by training and have worked for the Environment Agency in a variety of roles since 1996. These include Water Resources, Groundwater Protection, Contaminated Land, Diffuse Pollution, and Incidents and Emergency Planning. I've moved locations around England, and have worked in our Area Operations and in Head Office. I've worked with European partners and other UK Agencies writing guidance on European Directives and managed implementation of EU legislation for the UK and within the Environment Agency. Most recently I've been involved in our response to flooding and the aftermath – it's been an interesting year!

Why do you think LGB* role models are important in the modern Civil Service?

LGB* role models are hugely important. I think the Civil Service can sometimes appear stuffy (I'm thinking "Yes Minister", and showing my age!), and a modern Civil Service needs to show it values people from all backgrounds. Role models are essential in making this visible, showing it can be vibrant and dynamic, and demonstrating that people are free to be who they are.

You have been identified as a role model for others, why do you think this is?

It took me until I was in my thirties to truly become comfortable in my own skin, and although years ago I sometimes struggled to challenge inappropriate behaviour and language, I've always been out. I've been involved in the Environment Agency's LGB* Network since it was set up in 2005, and joined the Committee leading on Monitoring. In 2011, I became Head of the Network and carried out the role for two and a half years. During this time, I tried to be as visible as possible both inside the Environment Agency, and out. I feel passionately about LGB* diversity, and try my best to champion it.

Who has been a role model for you in your career?

I've had the pleasure of working in an organisation with Lord Chris Smith as its Chairman, and was privileged to meet with him – including supporting his visit to Somerset last winter. He is an incredibly inspiring leader, living his values. As the first openly gay MP, his courage opened the door for us to follow. If I could change one thing in the Civil Service, I'd like bust the myth I often hear - that being openly lesbian, gay or bisexual can harm your career prospects. I think not bringing your whole self to work can be detrimental to your career and your relationships with people at work.



Department

Environment Agency

Location

West Midlands

Grade

Grade 7

A close-up portrait of Sir Stephen Wall, a middle-aged man with short grey hair and glasses, wearing a light blue shirt. He is looking slightly to his left with a faint smile.

**Sir Stephen Wall,
CMCG, LVO**

Formerly of the Foreign Office

Sir Stephen has worked for over 30 years in the Civil Service, serving as ambassador to Portugal, and then as the UK's Permanent Representative to the EU from 1995 to 2000, before finally becoming European advisor to Tony Blair at No10. His time in Brussels certainly gave the most job satisfaction – an intellectually challenging role negotiating serious issues, with huge domestic significance and responsibility. Despite official retirement, he is still working within the Cabinet Office to produce a valuable history of the UK's relationship with the European Community drawing upon past ministerial and cabinet papers.

However, a distinguished professional career nevertheless still made it difficult to be open about sexual identity. When Sir Stephen joined the Civil Service in 1968, homosexuality had only just been de-criminalised, and for many subsequent years it was unthinkable to apply for and achieve higher levels of security clearance at the Foreign Office and be openly gay. The shadow of John Vassall, who had been blackmailed by the Soviets, loomed large and fed paranoia around espionage. During the 1970s and 80s the public climate remained unwelcoming, and problems with vetting remained. Sir Stephen believes that even as late as 1995 he doubts whether, if had been open about being gay, he would have been appointed as he was to Brussels. The Civil Service retained a risk-averse and disrespectful attitude to LGB* men and women. It was easier to suppress doubts and throw oneself into hard work instead.

That era has happily passed, and Sir Stephen is pleased that things are different now for the more recent generation. His role as Chair of the governing Council at University College London in 2008 led to his championing LGB* rights in the academic sector, and he finally felt brave enough to come out and improve visibility for minority rights. This move was well received, and Sir Stephen marched in London Pride as part of the CSRA group in 2014 for the first time. He believes that the push overall from universities has ironically

been one of the drivers for Civil Service reform – high-calibre graduates risked simply not applying unless their prospective employer showed an appreciation for who they were, and took LGB* and diversity issues more seriously.

Sir Stephen agrees about the importance of strong role models in the workplace, whoever they are and whatever their background. He cites Robin Renwick and Nicko Henderson, both former ambassadors to Washington, as having provided him with inspiration. Particularly for showing leadership and for fiercely standing up for their teams and for individuals under all circumstances if they felt they were good at their jobs.

Today Sir Stephen is reassured that the Civil Service has the right policies in place when it comes to LGB* employment rights, and compares well against other employers. However, he thinks more still needs to be done to embed thinking more consistently within departments. The onus needs to remain on senior managers to understand that diversity is not just left at the door of HR, but should be a priority for every department at all levels. Senior staff need to be pro-active in setting a visible lead for others to follow.

This article was written by Michael Contaldo following an interview with Sir Stephen Wall

Nicole Davidson



I was rather surprised when I recently received my 25 year-long service certificate, signed by the Foreign Secretary. Seriously, I have no idea how that happened. It is symptomatic of how much I have enjoyed my time in the Foreign Office, though, that time has just flown by. In that time I have had a wonderful range of jobs and a number of different postings in completely different environments (South Africa, Bangladesh, Ukraine, China), all leading me to my current position as Deputy Head of Mission in Zagreb, Croatia.

What is it like being open about your sexual orientation in the Civil Service?

When I joined the Foreign Office, it was not permissible to be LGB* or T - much has changed since then. It took me a few years to be comfortable being out, mainly because I was still getting used to the idea that it was acceptable and permissible. I can honestly say that being open about my sexual orientation in the Foreign Office has never held me back and has not been a defining part of my career. Obviously, I have had to choose my postings carefully and there are places where I personally would not choose to serve, but I am fortunate in that it can be my choice, and these are not limitations that have been forced upon me. If you are thinking of going on a posting one thing I have learned is to do your research thoroughly and don't be put off - Post Reports are still far from perfect and some posts have not had the experience of a gay officer serving there, so be tenacious in your research so that you can make the best decision for you.

Why do you want to be a role model?

I am delighted to have been asked to become a role model - when I joined there was no such support mechanism and it is just one of the many ways in which the Civil Service has changed. It is important to me to feel that I can help people who may be worrying about how being LGB* or T will affect some of the choices they are likely to make. In short, I would like to be able to provide something that I didn't have.

What would be your advice to a new LGB* member of staff just starting out in the Civil Service?

Just be yourself. Attitudes in the Civil Service have changed hugely for the better and being LGB* is just another aspect of diversity.

Sam Myers

What have been the achievements in your time in the Civil Service of which you're most proud?

I'm most proud of the variety of interesting jobs I've had, the impact I've been able to make and the professional skills I've been able to develop. They range from being Private Secretary to a BIS Minister through to promoting British science for the Foreign Office in Asia. I'm currently part of the Government Communications Service, working to enhance relationships with key BIS customers and improve the Department's service. Being open about my sexual orientation and accepted for who I am has certainly influenced my enjoyment - and therefore success - in them all. It has also enabled me to make some good friends and meet my partner along the way.

Have you been able to be open about acknowledging your sexuality in the workplace?

Yes. When I first entered the Civil Service in 2001 I wasn't sure whether I should be open about such a personal issue with my new colleagues. I soon learned that hiding it took quite a lot of effort - referring to my boyfriend in a gender-neutral way and feeling awkward in conversations about plans for the weekend. I was inspired by a visible gay role model within my Directorate to be confident and open about my sexuality with workmates. I'm pleased to say that I've had only positive experiences since.

In your experience as an LGB* individual have you felt valued within the Civil Service?

Yes. During my whole career I have felt protected from bullying and harassment. I believe the Civil Service has been at the forefront of society's increasing understanding and acceptance of LGB* people and issues. I have just become the proud father of a beautiful baby boy with my closest lesbian friends. The positive comments and support I've received from colleagues has been fantastic and reminds me what a great place the Civil Service is to work. Ministers also deserve praise for pioneering Civil Partnerships and more recently Equal marriage.



Department

Department for Business,
Innovation and Skills

Location

London

Grade

Deputy Director

Ken O'Flaherty



I joined the FCO in 1996, and have worked in a wide range of roles covering EU, Middle East, economic/ trade policy, immigration and security issues. I worked at our embassy in Paris twice (as Second Secretary on foreign policy issues and then as head of the internal team). I was also the first UK secondee to the French Foreign Ministry's EU department. I worked at UKREP Brussels, and then MENAD as Head of Department for Iran and Iraq. I arrived in Tokyo last October, as Counsellor for Prosperity.

What is it like being LGB* in the FCO?

I have been out for the majority of my time in the FCO. It has had little impact on my career, and colleagues have always been supportive. That notably includes my time working on the Middle East in London, despite homosexuality remaining illegal in many of the countries for which I was responsible (and which I often visited). I strongly considered postings in the region thereafter, and know that hiring managers are very open to applications from LGB* staff. One particular positive for me has been FCO support for my participation in the Stonewall Leadership programme. I was initially sceptical about this, and concerned at any implication that there might be a specifically LGB* way of leading (to reassure: there's not!). But it really helped me to reflect and develop my own leadership style.

Why do you want to be a role model?

There are still relatively few LGB* colleagues in the senior levels of the Foreign Office and the Civil Service - although that is changing - and I am always glad to share my own experiences with those who have joined more recently. It's important for the FCO and the Civil Service to be a diverse and inclusive place to work, and for everyone to know that they can develop their career in line with their skills and abilities.

What would be your advice to a new LGB* member of staff just starting out in the Civil Service?

My advice to LGB* colleagues would be as for any other: try a wide range of jobs to see what suits you best, keep challenging yourself and developing new skills, and have fun! I would also recommend finding a coach or mentor as early as possible - the coaching which I have received in the Office has had by far the most powerful impact on my own development. If you are working in the Foreign Office, then FLAGG, runs a specific mentoring programme for LGB* colleagues, and the FCO provide a range of support for different grades and needs - or ask someone directly if they would agree to be your mentor. They can only ever be flattered by the request!



Emma Deadman
AO
Home Office

A large, abstract graphic on the left side of the page consists of numerous overlapping triangles in various colors, including blue, yellow, orange, red, green, and purple, creating a complex, layered effect.

It doesn't matter if you're straight, gay, lesbian, trans or bi; it does not change your personality and who you are. I am me, Emma and it took a long time to find that person when I was younger.

I was very unsettled with who I was up until the age of 18 but then I went to work at Camp USA. I found that I could be me and I didn't have to hide, and that's where I developed into the real me. Then my life really began. I started feeling comfortable with all the normal stuff such as clubbing, dating, college, work, falling in love and then being heart-broken and bouncing back from all of it. It just became everyday life and was such a relief that I didn't have to hide it from anyone and could just be me.

I'm not saying all this was easy though. Yes there was the bullying and name-calling, and it did hurt to start with but then I ignored it with the support of my family and friends.

Over the last few years I have been working in a lot of other sectors and then 15 months ago I joined the Civil Service. I feel that I have made the best career choice not just for what I do on a day to day basis but because my team and the management accepts me for being me and not some token lesbian on the team. I get included in all of the team activities and never side-lined just because I am a lesbian - which includes the boys nights out although someone needs to keep them out of mischief sometimes.

In May I married my wife and was proud that my team joined us to enjoy our perfect day which was something I never thought I would ever see in any of my other jobs as I have always had to hide the real me from public show.

Since I have been working in the Civil Service I have joined CSRA and Spectrum and have been given the opportunity to attend this year's Spectrum conference in Croydon. Being given these opportunities makes me proud to be a part of the Civil Service. Not just because I don't have to hide the real me, but because I know that if I ever needed it they would be there to support me and not judge me.

Gavin Thomas

My family are originally from St Helena. I have six siblings and was born on Ascension Island, where I spent my childhood. Later, I trained as teacher on St Helena but decided to emigrate to the UK in 1989 and have lived here since. For ten years, I had a number of roles working in residential care: from support worker to deputy manager and registered manager. One of the highlights of my career as a practitioner in the mid-1990s was advocating for service users' rights to equality and recognition of respect and understanding of diversity for vulnerable people; particularly those with learning disabilities. Since 1999, I have worked in inspection and regulation, and now work at Ofsted as a Social Care Compliance Inspector.

LGB* role models are important in the modern Civil Service to help advocate for equality, valuing diversity and celebrating differences. They play a vital role in helping shape policy and in doing so; contribute to positive change in attitudes and fair employment rights for all. I strongly believe that creating a safe space for everyone at work is a key ingredient to a successful work environment. To achieve this, establishing positive relationships and networks are important. I am now involved with CSRA to help strengthen, develop and sustain regional networks. I have started making positive links with the regions, while forming positive relationships to help encourage dialogue and extend the ethos of creating a safe space for members.

I think I was identified as a role model because I am adaptable, I have a proven track record in working with and engaging with people at all levels and once committed to a task, I do my utmost to see it through. I believe in effective communication and relationship building. I believe these qualities are visible and have made a lasting impression.

As an LGB* role model, I would do more to raise the profile of networks within the Civil Service by encouraging, facilitating, funding and celebrating their work. This would help break down barriers of isolation and instead, provide learning opportunities and grow unity and harmony. I would use CSRA as the basis for 'leading by example' and ensure that the skills, knowledge and expertise within CSRA are used more widely through the Civil Service.

**Department**

Ofsted

Location

South-East

Grade

SEO

Michael Contaldo

**Department**

HM Treasury

Location

North-West

Grade

Grade 7

Tell us about yourself in terms of your career and background?

The majority of my career has been spent in the Treasury, which I joined after York University and the LSE. I've had a mix of policy jobs dealing with both domestic spending and international affairs. Most recently I worked with the EU and OECD to ensure the UK retains a competitive corporate tax environment. I am also proud of helping the early stages of the London Olympic bid take off, and assisting Lord Heseltine to produce a report on the future of Liverpool. I have also spent time outside Whitehall working on economic development in the North West. I have been in a civil partnership with my partner Sebastian since 2013.

Why do you think LGB* role models are important in the modern Civil Service?

Role models set good behaviours that the rest of us can reflect upon and ideally imitate or learn from. They inspire us to push ourselves to do better – not just working harder, but developing a wider set of skills around leadership, collaboration, and professionalism. LGB* role models, specifically, reassure us that we can be open and honest about who we are while still being valued as a part of the Civil Service.

It was thrilling ten years ago to work with Gus O'Donnell to develop a diversity plan for the Treasury, out of which subsequently emerged a dedicated HMT LGB* network. And I'm pleased to be playing a part today to make the Civil Service a good employer, working in the CSRA central team to ensure consistency of practice across departments. This year I actively took part in the London Pride parade as part of the CSRA team, and wish I had done it before.

Who has been a role model for you in your career?

Unfortunately I've had few openly gay role models. There is still a lack of visibility of LGB* people at the senior levels of the Treasury which I hope will improve over time. It would be great one day to see senior managers casually making references about their same-sex partners in team meetings and communications, the same way that heterosexual senior managers quite comfortably and frequently do. One exception was Andrew Olive, who sadly died last year. He advised me that you don't "come out" once, but again and again when you join new teams. And after a while you get used to it!

Karl Lötter

I have previously worked in defence, law enforcement, education and welfare-to-work sectors before joining the Civil Service. I started with DWP within their Work Services Directorate over two years ago as a frontline adviser at Redbridge JCP. Currently, as a member of the External Relations Team at our East London District Office, I am responsible for Low Value Provision, Flexible Support Fund Grants and Fresh Start for prison leavers.

I am both bisexual and polyamorous (or ‘bipoly’). I am attracted to both men and women and prefer, although not exclusively, relationships that include both as primary partners. The relationship I share with each of my partners can be physical, emotional and/or intellectual, or change over time. My attraction to others can be fluid and is often regardless of gender. I am at ease with my sexuality and lifestyle and confident in my ability to love others through committed mutually supportive relationships based on honesty, trust, openness and effective communication.

It is difficult to talk about your private life, your holidays, your responsibilities or your activities away from the office – you feel the need to be something or somebody else when you shouldn’t have to. You simply cannot share things about your life with your partners and family as others would about theirs. You often see the confusion on people’s faces, their obvious discomfort, sometimes dismissive attitude, improper comments or baffled silence. I often try to explain, but it can be difficult to articulate.

I am out to a handful of people at work now, but I worked hard to get my relationship with them to a point and prepare them for it. I shouldn’t have to prepare anyone or undertake all the effort, but it is something you have to do, just to feel at ease talking about even just everyday things. I guess it is natural to fear the reaction of others, but I try to manage it by challenging people’s values, by offering them information and seeking to develop their knowledge – it’s an ‘if we don’t, they won’t’ approach.

I am a member of Stonewall, the Civil Service Rainbow Alliance and PCS Proud. I am taking active steps to improve my life and the lives of people like me and around me.

I am a bisexual and I am invisible; and when I am not invisible, I am a negative stereotype, I am excluded, denied, marginalised and discriminated against every single day. If this were happening to you would you not do something about it? If you are concerned about this then find out why it happens and how you can help. If this describes you then do something about it!



Department

Department for Work and Pensions

Location

London

Grade

EO



Oliver Entwistle
CSRA Chair



Kate Scott-Hughes
CSRA Vice-Chair

In developing the role models guide, we thought it would be good to feature the Chair and Vice-Chair of CSRA, Ollie Entwistle and Kate Scott-Hughes, so that you can understand what motivates them to do the work that they do on sexual orientation equality. Michael Contaldo interviewed them both at the same time.

Ollie and Kate, it is great to be interviewing you side by side. You are both very visible and passionate about LGB* equality in the Civil Service - where did it all start?

Kate – It took me ages to realise that I was a lesbian, I grew up in a village in the Home Counties and just as I moved up to senior school Section 28 came in to force. This had something of an impact on my awareness of sexual difference, maybe I was naive or maybe the legislation worked as it had been designed to, but I just was not aware of different sexual orientations. I just wasted a lot of time and mental energy trying to understand my emotions. That didn't really happen properly until I went to university and started to experience a life where I could make more choices for myself, and where I could reflect on my sexuality. Eventually I admitted to myself that I was a lesbian. That experience made me realise just how much damage not being in an accepting environment can do.

Ollie - In some ways, I have always been a leader on equality issues. When I was 14, I took the brave (some may say foolish) step of coming out at secondary school. It was a rough ride but ultimately the right choice. I lost some friends, gained others, and got a whole lot of abuse. People from school used to shout homophobic statements at me when I was out in town and they used to try to attack me in school. But, as much as all of that was designed to wear me down, it never did. It actually made me stronger. I used this experience to get involved with the first LGB* youth project outside of London, called Breakout, where I helped organise our

participation in a float at London Pride. I also was in the gay rights movement in Southampton. As part of this, I remember appearing in the audience of Question Time and getting to ask the very first question about homophobia to one of the main political parties, following a news story at the time – that was daunting but fun!

So you've both spoken about teenage life, how about your time in the Civil Service?

Ollie - When I came to the Civil Service, one of the first things that I did was get involved in the Treasury LGB* network and over time with developing CSRA as an organisation. Again Pride was part of this – organising the Civil Services' first ever participation in Euro-Pride. I did this because I passionately believe in the mantra that the Civil Service needs to "reflect the people that we serve" and we need to be visible in doing that. Since becoming Chair of CSRA, I have tried to ensure that, as an organisation, we support anyone who identifies as lesbian, gay, bisexual or any other minority organisation within the Civil Service.

Kate - When I joined the CPS, I was still not confident about being out at work. I told one person in the office about six months after I started but it wasn't until I got a job on the diversity team that I felt I could start to be myself a bit more at work.

That coincided with the CPS LGB* Network being set up. Somehow at the first meeting I ended up on the committee as a 'driver'. I've been one ever since, mostly with my foot pressed hard to the accelerator! I've been Events Officer, Secretary, Vice-Chair and chair of the CPS LGB* Network. I have also been Secretary and Vice Chair of CSRA, and it has been and continues to be an amazing journey. It has been so much easier since I've been open with my colleagues, been confident about being openly gay and able to talk about myself and my partner,

although it probably helped that my wife and I (I still love that I can say that!) met through working on our staff network committee.

As the Chair and Vice-Chair of CSRA, many people will see you as role models. How do you feel about being a role model?

Ollie - As Chair of CSRA, I recognise that some will see me as a role model. I therefore want to try and be the best role model I can be. I know that many people really struggle within themselves to accept that they are not heterosexual. I also know that prejudice based on sexual orientation still exists. It exists at work. It exists in places of education. It exists at home. It exists on the streets. So as someone who is “visible” about being gay, I want to do what I can to break down that prejudice and help LGB* people find their voice. Being the Chair of CSRA gives me the chance to do that.

Kate - Even if I wasn't comfortable with being a role model, I don't think I would have a choice, I feel passionately about fairness and equality and that kind of passion gets you noticed! And everything I have achieved in the CPS and in CSRA has been as an EO. I think this really demonstrates that being a role model isn't about your grade or your position; it's not about where you went to school or what route in to the Civil Service you took. Instead, it's about knowing yourself, accepting yourself and living your life in a way that doesn't compromise you or your values. It's about being authentically you.

And practically what do you do as a role model?

Kate – One of the reasons I joined the Civil Service was to make a difference and being known as someone who is a leader and prepared to speak up has enabled me to really do that. I've been instrumental in getting changes to policies (or even getting them written in the first place), I've won awards for setting up new units dealing with

victims and witnesses and hate crime panels that review and feedback on casework, and I've provided briefings and advice for four different DPPs. For CSRA I've helped to change the way we are viewed as a network by the service as a whole. I was instrumental in setting up the CSRA conference in October 2013 and through the success of that recruiting the team of volunteers that changed our small band of five people to a task force of thirty. I meet with and support staff at all levels, from AO up to Permanent Secretaries. I couldn't have made those differences if I wasn't able to be myself.

Ollie – I lead from the front in different ways. Sometimes, I do this very visibly by organising or speaking at events for LGB* staff. Sometimes, I do this in a less immediately visible way by engaging with senior managers about the issues we face in work. And sometimes, I engage with individual members of staff to support them with their personal circumstances. But however I do it, I do it authentically and I do it with passion. Since coming out at 14, I have been myself and it has been great. I want other people to be able to be themselves. Yes, it takes courage and yes, sometimes it might not be easy. But, as the song goes “I am, what I am!”

Role models often have people that have inspired them along the way. Who has been a role model for you?

Kate – Rather than having one specific role model I tend to take traits I admire from different people, and not all of those people identify as LGB*. So for example my parents are role models in that I admire my mum's work ethic and passion to make a difference and I am completely in awe of my dad's ability to persistently work at something until he has mastered it – but I don't have his patience!

In terms of LGB* role models they are many and varied. Some of them I met at the Stonewall Leadership Programme that I went on seven years ago, some of them I have met

through the CPS and some of them I have met through CSRA. But what they all have in common is that they know who they are and what their values are, they are comfortable in their own skin and they keep that in mind, whatever they are doing. I don't think I would feel comfortable naming them – there's a danger that I might miss someone out!

Ollie – there have been a few role models in my life. Some have identified as LGB*, some haven't. I think if I was to single out one person, it would have to be Tony Petersen. I first met Tony when I came out aged 14. My mum put me in touch with Tony and his partner Dave. Tony and Dave, at that point, had already been together for a long time. Career wise, they had good jobs - Tony as a Chartered Surveyor and Dave as an interior designer. I think my mum wanted to make sure that I knew people that would look out for me as I developed as a young gay man.

For me meeting them was like a breath of fresh air. Most of the gay people that I had met, or that were portrayed on TV, were not very stable or in lasting relationships. The fact that they were, that they had good careers, and that their love for one another was long lasting was an inspiration. As I got to know them better, Tony provided me regular tit bits of guidance about all the things you need to know – from structuring a career, to sorting out your finances, to finding a good partner. All of this was very welcome and incredibly useful.

Unfortunately in life, sometimes you get dealt a bad hand. Tony unfortunately did. In his 59th year, he was diagnosed with a brain tumour. Despite the best efforts of the Doctors, there was no cure. Shortly after his 60th birthday, earlier this year, he died at home in the arms of Dave. But even when facing death, he did so with graciousness that epitomised his character.

Tony was a man that was so full of kindness and warmth. He was, and still is, an inspiration and role model to me. And, if I can be half the man that Tony was, I will be very happy!

We are near the end of the interview now, so as a final question I wanted to ask you both what challenges do you think the Civil Service faces in terms of sexual orientation equality? And how will you as Chair and Vice-Chair of CSRA help tackle them?

Ollie – for me I think the biggest challenge is ensuring that the Civil Service supports all its staff, wherever they are based. There is a tendency to forget that if you don't work in a large city like London, then it is not as easy to be yourself as an LGB* person. I am also aware, from CSRA members, that prejudice and discrimination still exists. Sometimes that comes from members of the public that staff deal with, sometimes it comes from other civil servants. So what can I do about this as Chair of CSRA? Firstly, I can help raise awareness and get staff thinking about LGB* issues. This includes making sure that senior managers think about how decisions will impact on LGB* staff when they develop things like the Talent Action Plan. Secondly, I can ensure that CSRA supports LGB* staff wherever they are based through our regional and devolved administration team. And thirdly, I and the CSRA team can, and will be, playing an active part in the development of the report into sexual orientation equality in the Civil Service, commissioned as part of the Talent Action Plan.

Kate – I would agree with that. I would also add that there is work we can do around effecting societal change. As civil servants, we need to give some consideration to influencing the society we serve, and, how we can be role models for wider society. In the CPS, we have focussed on community engagement and that has really started to make a difference on issues such as Hate Crime. But we could do more of this. After all, we are all part of the public we serve, so highlighting role models, highlighting good practice, and highlighting the issues LGB* people still face is important.

Russ Greenwood, MBE

What have been the achievements in your time in the Civil Service of which you're most proud?

I am proud to have established and chaired the Defra LGBA&T staff network over the past 10 years. During that time I've helped the Department to develop and maintain a visible and open culture of support for lesbian, gay, bisexual, asexual and transgender staff. We've run awareness-raising campaigns, worked with HR on a wide range of policy issues, supported people in distress and worked with other staff networks to help make Defra a great place to work for everyone. Some of the things I'm most proud of are:

- producing network responses to all the government equality legislation consultations since 2002;
- taking a lead role in tackling and getting a significant reduction in unauthorised removal of our network literature from staff noticeboards, and working with HR and senior management to signal this behaviour was against diversity behaviours expected of Defra staff; and
- launching an initiative asking for suggestions and stories from Defra staff about supporting LGB* colleagues at work. We had a great response and the overriding message from our colleagues is that it makes no difference to them what your sexuality or gender identity is and importantly, that they would challenge anyone who they witnessed being aggressive to or bullying an LGBA or T member of staff.

Have you been able to be open about acknowledging your sexuality in the workplace?

Yes, but I didn't always feel so comfortable. I had an unpleasant homophobic encounter on a train over 10 years ago. For me that was a turning point. I thought 'what I can do to make a difference?' No-one in my department wanted to run a LGB* staff network, but I was anxious about putting myself forward to do it. What did I know about running a network? Did I have the nerve to be openly gay to the whole department ? Could I engage heterosexual staff about the issues that we faced and shared? The answer to me was surprisingly 'yes' and since our network started in 2002 we have achieved more than I could have ever imagined. And I've received nothing but support from managers and colleagues – in fact, last year, I won an award in our annual team awards for my work to promote diversity in Defra after staff from across the department voted for me. Separately I was awarded the MBE.



Department

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Location

London

Grade

AO

Lisa Pinney, MBE



Lisa is Area Manager (Deputy Director) for Staffordshire, Warwickshire and West Midlands at the Environment Agency, where she has worked in numerous operational and national roles for 17 years. She started as a summer assistant undertaking conservation habitat and fisheries surveys whilst at University. After a number of regulation and management roles she was appointed as the youngest ever female Executive Manager at the Environment Agency in 2007. She is a Chartered Waste Manager and a Chartered Environmentalist and has a degree in Environmental Science, MA in Environmental and Social Policy and an MSC in Environmental Decision Making. Lisa is a Board Trustee at Stonewall UK. Lisa was made a Member of the British Empire (MBE) for services to equality in the workplace in the 2014 Honours List.

Department

Environment Agency

Location

West Midlands

Grade

Deputy Director

Growing up in Cornwall without any visible gay role models Lisa came out in 2001. Concerned about the negative reactions of her line manager and lack of supportive HR policies Lisa worked to raise the profile of LGB* diversity at the EA and, in 2005, launched the LGB* network. Back then the EA had little focus on diversity or inclusion. Lisa's work helped many LGB* staff, those with LGB* family or friends and managers of LGB* staff to get the support and information needed. Lisa gave talks across the organisation about her own experiences and linked in with other private and public sector businesses to share challenges, opportunities and learning.

Working with Stonewall, a LGB* specific development package was developed. Staff not out at work could attend the course using a corporate cover story. A traffic light system of membership helped to ensure members information was kept confidential for those not out whilst those happy to share and network were empowered to do so.

Lisa represented the EA at their first pride in 2006 in London, marching with the CSRA.

After working with a group of special people to set up the network and two years as Head of the Network Lisa became one of two Executive Champions for LGB* diversity at the EA. The LGB* network has continued to grow and now has a sizeable 'friends' membership. It is involved in all relevant aspects of HR and change thinking and policies. Lisa has worked with the EA Women's network, Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic (BAME) networks, disability forum and faith networks. Lisa spends significant time working with other organisations to help share best practice and to encourage organisations at early stages on the diversity and inclusion path to develop. Lisa also works with Janet Hill, Director of Diversity for the Civil Service and organisations such as Radius to help encourage better networking across departments and agencies.

Madeleine Lasko & Ken Mortimer, MBE

Ken

I joined the Civil Service in 1978. I was 19 years old. I hadn't just landed myself a job – this was my long term career. More than anything I wanted to fit in and be successful. I knew that I was gay but I wasn't out. I didn't know any other gay people in the office. There were no diversity policies back then and no network groups. Even coming out to a friend at work carried enormous risks. Negative, homophobic comments and jokes were commonplace so who could I trust with my deepest secret? I hid my sexuality completely for the first 15 years of my career; from family, friends and above all from people at work, making sure that I did nothing that might result in my being found out. I felt so completely isolated.

In 1992 I went to a meeting of a workplace support group for lesbian and gay staff. That day changed my life forever. I met some truly inspirational people who were out at work and who had lived to tell the tale – real role models! I wanted to be like them and to have that level of confidence. Meeting them meant that for me there could be no going back.....and soon after I came out to my first colleague in the office; and he was great about it. Coming out was scary but also incredibly empowering. At last, I was starting to be myself at work – and it felt amazing.

As my confidence grew I was able to talk to colleagues and managers about being gay; and about the barriers and difficulties LGB* people can face in the workplace – something that I've continued to do to this day.

The importance of role models in today's Civil Service cannot be underestimated. Generally speaking we see and hear less homophobia – but it hasn't been completely eradicated. These days most of us would recoil in horror at the thought of a colleague making a homophobic comment – but such behaviour still goes on and this is an area where role models can make a real difference. Role models come in all shapes and sizes –from those who will actively challenge inappropriate behaviour to those who promote a positive awareness of the existence of LGB* people simply by being themselves; talking openly with colleagues about their lives and partners. It's all about having confidence to challenge, believing in people and most importantly being proud of who you are



Department

Cabinet Office and HM Revenue and Customs

Location

London and the North-East

Grade

HEO (D) and SEO

I've been on my personal mission to help create a more LGB* friendly Civil Service for over 20 years and I like to think I've made a difference – from establishing hugely successful network groups and keeping LGB* equality high on the diversity agenda to persuading senior leaders of the merits of signing up to Stonewall Diversity Champions.

Building inclusive workplaces doesn't happen by accident – and good role models are crucial to achieving this. We all have the capacity to make a difference. We all have a role to play!

Madeleine

Tell us a little about yourself in terms of your career and background.

I've spent the last seven years working for Stonewall, the lesbian, gay and bisexual equality charity. Part of my job was working with government departments to support them in their efforts to create an inclusive workplace for all of their staff, regardless of sexual orientation. I've always wanted to work in government, and a large part of my motivation is about doing something useful that impacts on people's day to day lives. Although spending so much time with civil servants made me more aware of the challenges of getting things done in a big bureaucracy, it didn't put me off joining!

Why do you think LGB* role models are important in the modern Civil Service?

Role models are important everywhere because they give us something to aspire to and to emulate. Often it's a specific trait that makes someone a role model to you, but if you can see someone like you - someone that you can identify with - succeeding, it makes it easier for you to picture yourself doing it too. And as well as showing that people from all backgrounds can succeed in the Civil Service, we need to reflect the diverse population we serve, at all levels and in all types of role.

You have been identified as a role model for others, why do you think this is?

Even though I've done a lot of role model and leadership work with Stonewall, helping other people to understand that they are role models, it's still really difficult to apply that to myself! I think I've been identified as a role model partly because of the work I've done at Stonewall, being part of an organisation that has helped to make life better for LGB* people; and partly because of how I treat other people and my attitude to my work, being authentic and making sure my behaviour aligns with my values.

Who has been a role model for you in your career?

I have lots, but I would say my main role model in my career so far has been David Shields, who started at Stonewall at the same time as me as director of Workplace Programmes. As well as living his own life to the full he is really inspiring to work for. He doesn't go in for grand motivational speeches, he just listens to what you have to say and when he makes a decision he makes sure that you understand his reasoning. It means that I was always fully on board with what he wanted to do, and I always felt part of it rather than just doing something because I'd been told to.

If there was one thing that you could do as an LGB* role model to change the Civil Service for the better what would it be?

A lot of good work has already been done, but I would say the main barrier is that a lot of people still don't think that sexual orientation is a workplace issue. We need to share more personal stories to help our colleagues in the Civil Service understand that sexual orientation is relevant at work because it's about identity, who you are as a person, your family, your experiences and your life.

Peter Lewis

As a straight ally, I believe that no-one should feel uneasy about how their sexual orientation might impact their experience at work. That is why the allies programme is so important - because people cannot perform at their best or meet their full potential if they do not feel able to be themselves in the workplace. By demonstrating support for LGB* members of staff, colleagues help build comfortable working environments where individuals don't have to worry about how their sexuality might be received.

The demonstration of support for LGB* members of staff by their peers, managers and senior leaders also shows that the promotion of fairness, equality and respect is something everyone can, and should, be doing. By adopting a collaborative approach, and making inclusivity an issue for everyone, tackling prejudices becomes part of our everyday work. I have worked closely with our own staff network to ensure these issues are prioritised from the top of the organisation.

I have also learnt from experience that lots of people are keen to take an active role in encouraging diversity in the workplace, but are often unsure of the best way to go about it. They might have concerns about mistakenly offending someone, or worry that they don't know enough about how to tackle the issues that LGB* colleagues experience.

The CPS was fortunate to have its own allies in Stonewall, who shared their expertise, experiences and best practice with us, and our staff network, which played a key role in establishing the allies programme. As a result, members of CPS staff now have the confidence to champion the LGB* agenda, challenge inappropriate behaviour and establish a fair and inclusive working environment.

The benefits are not limited to the individuals involved either. People who feel confident at work tend to be happier and more productive, which has a positive impact on the whole organisation.



Department

Crown Prosecution Service

Location

London

Grade

Chief Executive

Dr Niall Goulding

For me, being a role model was something I realised I had been for a long time rather than something I chose to be. I think the meaning does vary somewhat from person to person, but here's my take.

I was never willing to compromise with, or make allowances for, people with homophobic or biphobic attitudes. My identity was never to be carved out, even slightly, by bigots. I've always been happy to use gendered pronouns when referring to partners, talking about the work I do with LGB* organisations and my experiences therein, and challenging perceptions about what people in sexual identity minorities are.

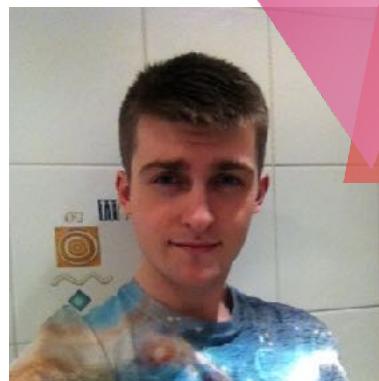
In conjunction with that, I think there's also a necessity to talk about your triumphs and be visible in succeeding. I have been lucky enough to combine both – finishing a PhD while helping to run the University's LGB* society, or becoming a fast streamer using my work with CSRA to demonstrate my competencies. But it's true even in the mundane. This can be a paper submitted by a deadline or meeting a personal objective when the end of the appraisal year comes around – it can be as simple as being out and doing your job!

While being a role model may seem as trivial an effort as just being yourself, the effect of it is far from. We know we have colleagues who are not out, even if we don't know who they are. They may have fears or anxieties that coming out could harm their career. We know the contrary is true – that fear does nothing to improve performance in the work place. Having someone visibly succeed in their job while being out sends the clearest of signals that you can be out at work, and arguably, should be.

It's also really important that we make sure this can happen unheeded. That's why organisations like CSRA continue to have a place in institutions like the Civil Service.

Their very existence sends a clear signal of the value of diversity.

Someone's features or their identity are not an obstacle - they are assets. Simply making that visible is all I think it takes.



Department

Department for Culture,
Media and Sport

Location

London

Grade

Fast Stream

Ros Goodfellow & Catherine Little

Ros

Tell us a little about yourself in terms of your career and background.

I joined the Civil Service Corporate Fast Stream in September 2013 and was posted to a project management role within an analysts team in HMRC. Although, not an analyst myself, my original degree in Mathematics came in very useful in this role. My next posting was within the Ministry of Justice implementing changes to criminal Legal Aid. I am currently on secondment at the oil and gas organisation, Shell in another commercial role. Prior to joining the Civil Service, I studied for a Masters in Law, which included writing a dissertation on possible solutions to ending corrective rape in South Africa.

Why do you think LGB* role models are important in the modern Civil Service?

Role-models are an important part of development at all stages of life. I spent many hours of my childhood playing football (mainly with boys), while playing I had to pretend to be Ian Wright (and other famous male footballers). As I got older, I began to realise the value in role models that you can relate to. Great role models will inspire you to achieve your aspirations. If the Civil Service wants to get the best from its staff then we need a varied set of role models so that every employee can be inspired by someone they can relate to.

You have been identified as a role model for others, why do you think this is?

My ambition is to be a senior leader in the Civil Service and to do this I need to be authentic to myself. One aspect of who I am as an individual, as a civil servant and as a leader is that I am a lesbian. For me meeting senior openly lesbian colleagues gives me the confidence to be who I am and the belief that I can become a senior leader. I sincerely hope that I will in turn inspire colleagues and members of the public who I interact with in and outside of my work so that they can have the confidence to be themselves and one day fulfil their ambitions.



Department

HM Revenue and Customs

Location

London

Grade

Fast Stream

Who has been a role model for you in your career?

On one level I have had a distinct lack of role models or to be more accurate I have had a lack of senior openly lesbian civil servants who I could look up to. In the last few months I have met Cat Little, who is an openly lesbian senior civil servant. It has been helpful (and enjoyable) to share with someone my feelings and concerns about becoming an openly lesbian leader in the work place. And below is a short biography of Cat:

Catherine

Cat Little joined the Civil Service in 2013 as the Financial Controller of the Legal Aid Agency, and is now the acting Director of Finance and Performance. Cat is responsible for financial management, assurance, business planning, performance management and the Agency's business change and IT teams.

Before joining the Civil Service Cat spent 11 years working in professional services at PwC where she worked predominantly with government and public sector organisations on a wide range of finance and assurance projects. She is also the MoJ Head of Finance Professionalism and leads the professional and capability strategy for finance teams across the Ministry of Justice.

Cat is the LGB* senior diversity champion for the Ministry of Justice and in this role has represented the LGB* community on a range of subjects and campaigns. She regularly gives talks about her experience of being a female, lesbian senior leader and what she has learnt about leadership and diversity. Cat is also passionate about personal resilience and what this means for managers and leaders in the Civil Service. Her key learning points have been to always be true to yourself and your values, trust your instincts, and to do things on your own terms.

Cat is marrying her long term partner in October this year.



Department

Legal Aid Agency

Location

London

Grade

Acting Director

Mark Bennett

I am a lawyer in the Public and Civil Law Team in the Attorney General's Office. I trained as a solicitor in the Government Legal Service, in what was the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, and have worked in TSol, DCLG and HMRC.

I am open at work about being gay. A lot of colleagues came to my civil partnership to Doug and it was great to be able to share the day with people from all aspects of my life, including people I work with. I know that I may be lucky in this, but I have not come across hostility to me in the work place based on my sexuality at any point in my career. All the colleagues I have come out to have been supportive or, and in many ways even better, not very interested in my sexuality. Despite that, I used to be cautious about telling people I am gay in a way that I am not anymore. I wanted to do it and was never really worried that something bad would happen if I did, but I still had a nagging feeling that it wasn't the right thing to do.

My life – not just at work – is better for being open about my sexuality. It is an important part of who I am but it's not the only part. When I would keep quiet in some work settings about being gay, it almost took on too much significance in my head. At the same time as feeling I shouldn't tell people, I felt that every time I had done something to hide the fact I was gay – using the gender neutral "my other half" when talking about Doug was a favourite – I had missed an opportunity and had not done myself justice.

Those conflicting feelings didn't do me any harm as such but they didn't make me feel great either. I am definitely happier now that I am at a stage where I have got past them. I no longer have to deal with the distraction – and wasted effort – of remembering who I have told what about myself and worrying about whether I have let something slip. And I feel like I can hold my head higher. Doug is no longer my unnamed, gender neutral, other half and being honest about that gives me a stronger sense of personal integrity.



Department

Attorney General's Office

Location

London

Grade

Grade 6

Sam Evans



Sam's Civil Service career spans 26 years, six Government Departments and agencies and a secondment to the voluntary and community sector. She has undertaken a range of roles, including frontline operational delivery (mainly in Social Security benefit delivery), management of Parliamentary business and complex, cross-cutting change programmes and leading improvement projects spanning the Criminal Justice System. She has held a range of roles in policy delivery (including three years with NOMS/the National Probation Directorate), led the CJS Fairness and Confidence Unit in its pioneering multi-agency work on tackling Hate Crime and has also done some international work including leading the UK delegation to the Council of Europe negotiating the Convention on action to tackle trafficking of human beings.

Department

Ministry of Justice

Location

London

Grade

Deputy Director

Currently a Deputy Director in MoJ HR she is the Head of HR Operations with responsibility for a diverse portfolio of HR issues and services. She is an accredited career coach and runs the MoJ's very successful Career Transition Service. She is also a qualified workplace mediator, the professional lead on Mediation for the Civil Service Mediation Service.

Sam is one of the MoJ's recently appointed Diversity Champions and has sought throughout her career to celebrate diversity and tackle inequality and unfair treatment. She has worked extensively to tackle bullying, harassment and discrimination and set up the HR Working Group looking at these issues. She is also a representative for the First Division Association (FDA), leading for the MoJ Branch on Equality and Diversity issues and specialising in personal case representation. Overall, she is an effective ally for LGB* equality.

Married with two grown-up step-children, Sam lives on the West Sussex coast in a village called Angmering.

Marjorie Roome

Being an out bisexual can seem to make you an outsider in both gay, lesbian and straight company. We know there is a lot of prejudice against bisexuals: you all know that we're greedy fence-sitters.

I suppose I'm lucky in that that never turned into any gross prejudice against me, in the Civil Service, or my private life.

At work I think some of that is that the departments where I've worked take a positive approach to supporting diversity. I think it also helps if you have a positive attitude about yourself.

I see myself as something of an accidental activist at work. I now represent bisexual people for CSRA having come along to a social event.

Although there are lots of bisexual people out there they often disappear into the woodwork. After all, in the right company you can just act gay, lesbian or straight and that may seem easier than being out. I don't do that. And it's great to not feel like I have to hide at work.



Department

Department for Energy and Climate Change

Location

London

Grade

Grade 7



Matt Smith



I began my career fresh out of university with the National Audit Office, where I trained as an accountant. I then ‘jumped the fence’ to join a large private firm for a few years, which accompanied my relocation from London to Manchester. I’m now back in the public sector, working within the Education Funding Agency’s Risk Analysis Division.

I’ve never had any problem with being out in the workplace. In fact I’ve found it really important to be out and to be myself. A conversation about the weekend becomes a little stilted when you can’t mention how you’ve got friends visiting for Pride weekend. A conversation about holidays becomes awkward when you can’t mention how excited you are about spending quality time with your boyfriend. A conversation about family becomes a nonsense when you have to pretend that half of it doesn’t exist. For me, it’s just easier to be myself.

It’s also been easy for me to get involved with LGB* networks in the workplace. These networks have often given me great things to be proud of – whether it’s an improved ranking in the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index, the chance to help local LGB* community groups with donations of time and money, or the knowledge that a colleague has felt more welcome and comfortable by being along for the ride. These networks have also given me the opportunity to make some great friends, who are on hand for chats, drinks and holidays years down the line.

Department

Education Funding Agency

Location

Manchester

Role

Analysis Officer



Stephen Waring

Director of Assurance

Department of Health

Stephen Waring is the Director of Assurance in the Department of Health (DH), based in London. He is also one of the Co-Chairs of the DH network “PRISM”. He is seen by many as a role model, because of his visible commitment to supporting LGB staff.*

Stephen was interviewed for this guide by the CSRA Chair, Ollie Entwistle and the CSRA Vice-Chair, Kate Scott-Hughes.

Stephen, thank you for agreeing to be interviewed for this guide. Perhaps a good place to start would be with a little bit of background about your career to date.

I began my career in Local Government in the 1980s, in three inner-London social services departments, where I managed a range of direct care services, including a multi-disciplinary HIV service. In 1993, I moved to the NHS, working for about six years as a commissioner responsible for HIV/AIDS, drugs and alcohol, health promotion and, later, primary care development. This phase of my career was inspired by the death from AIDS of my first significant partner in 1989. After that, I joined the Department of Health in 1999, where I have been ever since, except for a two-year secondment to NHS Sutton and Merton. During my time in DH, I have held various posts including Private Secretary to the Secretary of State for Health; Head of the National Cancer Programme and Deputy Director of Group Capability Development. I am now the Director of Assurance, as well as being one of the Co-Chairs of PRISM.

And have you always been able to be open about your sexual orientation in the workplace?

I have always been open about being gay. During my working life, I have been in long-term relationships with men and never shied away from talking about my male partners. Whilst in the middle part of my career, I may not always have shouted from the roof tops about being gay, I never denied who I was. It is important to be yourself.

Now that I am more senior both in grade and in years, I have reached the point where I think that I am old enough and ugly enough not to care. Also, career wise, I think that I have got to the point where I am sufficiently senior that people would not say anything homophobic to me. Though, I do recognise that this is not the experience that everyone has in the Civil Service.

You are the Co-Chair of PRISM and you also played an active role in the 2013 CSRA conference including leading our panel discussion on mental health in the LGB* communities. What inspired you to get involved with LGB* rights?

I think one of the most important motivations was my experience of being a young gay man in Britain at a time when young adults were being prosecuted for gross indecency. The age of consent was 21 at the time. It was an awful feeling to know that you were breaking the law simply by expressing your love and affection to someone else consensually. I had, at the time, a best friend who was arrested under the gross indecency laws. He was prosecuted. It went to court. He was found guilty and “bound over” to keep the peace (essentially released on the condition of good behaviour). Unfortunately, as you would expect, this was a deeply traumatic event for him. He struggled to come to terms with his sexual orientation as he felt the state had said at that particular time it was wrong. He had a history of depression and sadly killed himself. It was, and is, very sad. I tell you this because it made me feel very strongly that we, collectively, need to “normalise” sexual orientation diversity in society.

And similarly, were there similar reasons you chose to get involved with PRISM and CSRA?

Working in health, especially my job in mental health policy, made me understand the difficulties people experience coming to terms with their sexual orientation and gender

identity. It is a fact that LGB* people are significantly more likely to experience mental health problems. Indeed, the World Health Organisation still classifies gender dysphoria as a psychological disorder. So when I came to the Department of Health, I felt that I wanted to get involved. If I could help colleagues in even a small way, it was worth doing. I guess you could say, I felt a sense of responsibility to help my community.

As a member of the Senior Civil Service and the Co-Chair of a departmental network, many people consider you to be a role model. How do you think that you act as a role model?

I am open about my sexual orientation at work. I recently spoke about my personal experience of coming out, what it is like to be a gay man in the Civil Service, and how the Department of Health's LGB* staff feel, at the Department's senior management team. Normally, I don't find public speaking at all difficult but I found it surprisingly stressful, and a bit emotional, but I thought it was important to speak up. Thankfully, the Permanent Secretary, Una O'Brien, was very supportive. She said that I had shown real leadership and that it was important that the senior leadership team was reflective of the patients that the NHS serves.

I also make a special effort to welcome new members of the network and to organise a range of events for our members. Not everything we do is LGB* or T specific. As a group we will take part in the Civil Service walking challenge to raise money for charity, we will go to the theatre and we will go bowling, to name some of what we do. We do of course go out on the "gay scene" but it is not all that we do.

Have you encountered any prejudice because you are open about your sexual orientation?

Within the Civil Service, I don't think I have. From wider life, I can think of two incidents which were actually based on a perception of

my sexual orientation rather than the person knowing. The first was a teacher who called me "Dorothy" in front of the whole class. The second was more recently when, about two years ago, a man shouted homophobic abuse at me in Soho. They are moments that I remember and they do make me emotional but they also make me more determined to tackle prejudice in society.

Role models often have people that have inspired them through their careers. Are there particular individuals who have been role models for you?

I would say that there are three people that have been role models for me. The first is a former senior manager in Social Services in Hammersmith who was in charge of the HIV unit and was openly gay. His authenticity was inspirational.

The second was David Panter, who was the CEO of a Health Authority. He was also openly gay. As an avid bike enthusiast he would turn up to meetings in full leathers and as he took his helmet off, he would shock people with his 20 or so earrings. He didn't care what people thought about his sexual orientation. It was what they thought of his effectiveness that mattered. This was delightful.

The third role model would be someone who currently works in the Department of Health and helps with the PRISM network, Cris Sowden. He is very dedicated. He is frank, open and honest. Basically he is just his own person and I find that impressive.

Finally, if there was one thing that you could change about LGB* equality in the Civil Service, what would it be?

I would like to get more allies to speak positively about equality. I think it is, in some ways, more powerful when they speak up so that the messages don't just come from people within our community.

Dr Justin Varney

I joined the Civil Service through Public Health England after six years in local government and eleven in the NHS. It was a bit of a culture shift. Early in my career I had been told that I would never become a senior civil servant medic because I was openly gay and worked on LGB* health issues as part of a broad career covering lots of minority issues... I wonder what those individuals would make of me now as an SCS grade.

My experience of being 'other' has been a useful tool in developing my understanding and response to the inequalities in society, some of which affect LGB* people, some don't, but that 'otherness' is a common experience at its core and I have kept it as a common core to my approach to my work and my understanding of the potential impact we can have as civil servants.

I married my husband in August and it was freely discussed with colleagues at all levels. I am fortunate to work in an organisation where I am not the only openly lesbian or gay senior civil servant and I hope this helps others in the organisation feel comfortable to be themselves. PHE has a LGB* network and a national executive champion, who supports our work. I supported the move to corporately establish a policy encouraging staff to attend diversity networks during work time and have been visible across the organisation, writing about the LGB* parts of my work and promoting events like LGB* history month. We also have a stand at our annual conference and a time set aside for members to network with our executive champion.

I have volunteered in the LGB* community over the years, as a receptionist in an HIV support organisation, as a chair of a community network in south London, as an independent advisor to the met police, there are loads of ways to get involved and sometimes when my day job was really tough this volunteer aspect of my life kept me sane, vibrant and engaged.

It's important to fundamentally be yourself, if you can't be true to yourself in your job then it's the wrong job. If someone has a problem with my sexual orientation then I probably don't want to work for them. The Civil Service is full of exciting opportunities and I'm really pleased to find that being gay hasn't been a barrier to accessing them.



Department

Public Health England

Location

London

Grade

Deputy Director

Nathan Phillips



Nathan joined the Civil Service after 10 years as a strategy consultant for PwC and then KPMG, where he worked with UK and international Governments and corporates to restructure energy markets, commercialise and grow businesses and deliver public private partnerships. He joined the Department for Business Innovation and Skills first as a secondee, then as a fixed term contractor and now a permanent civil servant where he leads the team overseeing the UK's civil nuclear decommissioning programme and the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority. He recently became engaged to his long term partner.

Department

Department for Business,
Innovation and Skills

Location

London

Role

Executive Director

What have been the achievements in your time in the Civil Service of which you're most proud?

My biggest recent achievement has been in the set-up of a new investments function, combining civil servants and corporate bankers, to oversee and deliver Government's array of housing investment programmes. This will deliver significant new affordable housing, protect the taxpayer and demonstrate innovative new means of securing policy outcomes in a challenging fiscal environment. As part of this my role involved finding, securing and on-boarding senior secondees from the private sector, using experience of my own transition to support their entry to Central Government. The project demonstrated the power of the Civil Service to get extraordinarily complex things done on accelerated timetables through the power of networks, relationships and mixed teams of multiple backgrounds.

Have you been able to be open about acknowledging your sexuality in the workplace?

Absolutely, from Day 1 I have felt completely relaxed to be entirely open with both direct colleagues and broader stakeholders. Colleagues have always treated me and my partner no differently to anyone else, which I appreciate significantly. This is demonstrated by a very warm reaction to my recent engagement. Nevertheless, there aren't many high profile LGB* officials in my area so there is possibly more work to do in ensuring that others are similarly comfortable.

In your experience as an LGB* individual have you felt valued within the Civil Service?

From my initial secondment onwards I have felt welcomed and at home in the Civil Service, with my sexuality never being an issue or consideration in any of my interactions. In particular, I received very significant support and sponsorship of my management team through my SCS application and assessment.

Alexandra Norrish

I started as a Fast Streamer in the Department of Health, and I've done a whole range of jobs since then, initially in DH, Cabinet Office and No.10. I have fond memories of wheeling the first business case for the Olympics through 70 Whitehall on a trolley: it ran to 12 boxes and it nearly broke the lift!

After that mini tour of Whitehall I got time off for good behaviour, and I spent a fantastic year in the US, as a Harkness Fellow in Health Policy and Practice at Harvard. Since returning to London I've headed up the NHS Strategy and Delivery Unit, and been Acting Director of the NHS Group within the Department of Health.

The Civil Service has been incredibly important to me in the process of coming out both at home and at work. I was working at Cabinet Office when I finally came out to my parents; the next day I went looking online for the Cabinet Office Rainbow Network, and discovered that both of the convenors were working on my floor. I emailed them, and one of them dropped everything to take me out for the most desperately needed lunch-break ever. They were fantastic and we became close friends; 5 years later one of them was an usher at my civil partnership.

Since that experience, I have been convenor or honorary chair of the Cabinet Office Rainbow Network, and then PRISM in the DH. I also helped organise CSRA's first ever participation in Euro Pride in 2006 and then became CSRA's first Women's Officer.

I strongly believe that staff networks have a role to play that no formal HR policies or corporate strategies can replace – sometimes, they don't even need to be terribly active, but it is incredibly important that they are there when people need them.

That said, the organisational policies are vital as well and generally my sense is that the Civil Service does well in this regard. I also think that (contrary to what some people fear) it gets easier as you go higher up the organisation as you have more of a role in defining what is acceptable. I've been out all the way through working in CO, No 10 and DH, and I'm entirely out to all of my team, and I think that as a leader you can have a very powerful role in setting the norms and culture of your organisation.



Department

Department of Health

Location

London

Grade

Deputy Director



Mary Smeeth

**Department**

Department for Business,
Innovation and Skills

Location

London

Grade

7

I came relatively late to the Civil Service – joining after having worked in academia, the voluntary sector and private sector. My first civil servant post was working in the Women & Equality Unit which was based in the Cabinet Office. It was not at all what I was expecting – the term Cabinet Office evoked a small wood panelled room which I would occupy alongside the PM with whom I would take sherry. I was quickly disabused of this fantasy.

When I started work at the Cabinet Office, in 2003 my second child was just 2 years old. As I write this, I am conscious that these are not words one might expect to read in a gay role models handbook. But, as it turns out, being gay does not actually have to mean being childless. This is not to say it has not been a complicated journey – but parenthood always is. I was very proud, recently, to be able to make a programme on Same Sex Parenting and was struck, whilst doing so, how far we have come in a relatively short time. For example, when my children were born I was not allowed to put my partner's name on the birth certificate. Now, I would be. The programme was not made as part of my job although I did seek permission, from my line manager, to do so. This was granted on the condition that the broadcaster was reputable – as it was Radio 4 that was deemed acceptable!

During my time at the Cabinet Office civil partnerships were introduced and I remember how careful everyone was not to use the 'M' word – who would have thought...? A few years later I made a speech at a CP. My friend, who was terminally ill, was able to make a public and legal commitment to a partner after years of moving furniture and talking about being 'flat mates' with every parental visit. The very same parents were there and I was so proud to have been part of something that made such a huge difference to people and granted dignity and public recognition where it had never previously existed.

I do feel privileged to work in the Civil Service and have a strong public service ethic. The Civil Service is not perfect but it is full of wonderful, talented people and is an organisation that wants to do the right thing by those who work within it – even if it sometimes needs help with spotting what exactly the 'right thing' is. I am co-chair, alongside the gorgeous Ian Shaw, of the BIS LGB* network – but this is in addition to a demanding day job in the Better Regulation Executive. We want to do a lot more than time and resource currently allows so we are always very happy to welcome anyone who wants to be part of it and make their own contribution.

Robin Tamblyn



An asexual person is a person who does not experience sexual attraction” – The Asexual Visibility and Information Network (AVEN)

My name is Robin Tamblyn and I have worked at the Rural Payment Agency's Exeter office as an Admin Officer for the past 15 years. I am also a published author of several works of gay themed fiction and the world's first biography of Hollywood actor Kevin Spacey.

I have been the asexual rep for the DEFRA LGB* Network since 2010 and during this time have made several contributions towards increasing the visibility of asexual issues within the Civil Service. For example, during the RPA Diversity Declaration campaign in 2010 we were asked to update our personal details to include our sexual orientation but the only options originally offered were Bisexual, Gay, Heterosexual, Lesbian or “prefer not to say.” I was able to get this amended so that “asexual” was included, leading to 47 people identifying as asexual. Staff People Surveys sometimes only offer an “other” option and I have also raised this as a concern. PCS Proud voted to allow asexual people (“aces”) to join as full members following my suggestions during a seminar in November 2012.

I have also networked with other LGB* organisations within the Civil Service, such as Spectrum (the Home Office's network) to discuss the possibility of whether they would consider covering ace issues and I attended the CSRA conference in October 2013 where I brought up an issue with one of the speakers over the confusion of asexuality with celibacy.

I have found it very rewarding to network with people on other strands of the LGB&T spectrum and have discovered that asexuals face similar issues to the bisexual community, who sometimes experience discrimination from both gay and straight peers as well as being under-represented by the media. I have not yet met any other people within the Civil Service who identify as ace but am sure you are out there!

I would like to thank Russ Greenwood (the DEFRA LGB* chair) for all his support and encouragement over the years.

Hugh Harris

I'm the Deputy Director responsible for energy, climate change and environment policy in HM Treasury. My Civil Service career has spanned HM Treasury, the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit and as one of the senior civil servants in the No 10 Policy Unit.

Beyond Whitehall I've had stints working in the City and as a journalist. I live in south London with my partner Gaucho and our son Oscar Frederik who was born in August of this year. I set up the HM Treasury LGB* Network back in 2005 in response to a real visibility issue in the building: there were almost no openly LGB* members of staff out of an organisation of over 1,000 and certainly no SCS – and somehow no-one thought this was a problem!

We've come a long way in a decade, with 8% of the Grade 5s in the department now identifying as LGB*, which is great: it shows that bringing your "whole self" to work, as Stonewall puts it, doesn't in any way impede your ability to succeed. In time we'll have openly gay members of staff at all grades here, too. It also means that there are people you can turn to for a quiet word if ever there are issues relating to your sexual orientation and work that are challenging you.

If there was one thing I could do as an LGB* role model to change the Civil Service for the better it would be to encourage the powers that be not to treat LGB* issues as an optional add-on to HR and diversity policies: in terms of representation, for example, gender and ethnicity issues are now treated seriously but LGB* ones trail by some margin. I also want to make sure that the Civil Service responds positively to the next frontier of LGB* rights relating to families: I'm delighted HMT agreed to paid paternity leave but this needs standardising across the Civil Service.



Department

HM Treasury

Location

London

Grade

Deputy Director

Derek Bradford



Department

HM Revenue & Customs

Location

Cumbernauld, Scotland

Role

Debt Manager

I'm Derek and I am very honoured to be the CSRA Scotland Rep and to be identified as a role model. I live in Cumbernauld with my husband George, who is a fabulous Head Chef. We have been together for 11 years and had a civil partnership 5 years ago. We also both live with and love our African Grey parrot 'Mac' who is 14 years old and is such a total character too

I have worked with HMRC since 1983 (obviously I started when I was 2!) I am based in the Accounts Office, Cumbernauld where I currently work as a manager. I am also the joint PCS Proud Rep for Scotland, PCS LGB* and Equality Officer for my Cumbernauld Branch, which is a very big office with around 1500 staff, a member of the PCS Scotland LGB* Steering Committee and also a member of the HMRC Steering Committee led by Steve Hall – the HMRC LGB* Coordinator.

As a role model for LGB* people, I believe it is important to be visible and lead from the front. This is why I was actively involved in the recent Pride season, leading my LGB* colleagues at both Pride Scotia in Edinburgh and Pride Glasgow. I usually always attend Gran Canaria Pride every year with my case full of various costumes but this was the first year in 20 years I did not attend (sad face). I also believe it is important to raise awareness of different aspects of the LGB* communities and so I also play an active role in organising events for Bisiblity Day, Transgender Awareness Day, World Aids Day and one of my favourite months of the year, February, LGB* History Month.

Outside of work, I like to go to the football, to pubs, socialise with friends, eat out in good restaurants and go to the theatre or even participate. Yes I am a bit of a thespian (that's Thespian I said) as I have played parts like The Wizard of Oz and even appeared on stage with Jason Donovan. But I love to travel more than anything else.

Stuart Sims

When I look back, I remember how all I ever wanted to be was happy, in a steady relationship, with my own house and in a good job. When I was first coming out, I never believed it could be possible to have all that.

I was born in Africa in 1962 and grew up in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). From the age of five I knew I was different, by the age of 13 I knew why I was different, I liked boys more than girls. I did not have a word for it, but I certainly didn't feel I was one of 'those' people that everyone talked about and ridiculed!

My schooling and early career in Zimbabwe did nothing to dispel the idea that I should hide my sexuality for fear of ridicule, and despite being in a relationship I tried to hide my personal life. The language of those days was very homophobic and it was far easier to pretend to be something I was not, rather than to be who I was.

When I first moved to the UK with my partner, things didn't seem much better, but times were changing fast and as it became more accepted I began to be more open about my sexuality and my partner.

More by luck than judgment, I found myself working in the Civil Service. To begin with for the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency where I found the environment far more accepting than I expected. There was a clear expectation than everyone was to be treated equally and with respect. I found I was able to be more myself and with that I was also able to grow in confidence in my work. I then moved to the Crown Prosecution Service and I decided that from day one I would be 100% out at work. There have been one or two uncomfortable situations with outside agencies but the CPS has been fully supportive and because I am out I have been able to openly discuss those situations and have the support of my managers.

Being able to be 'who I am' at work has meant that I am fully involved with my colleagues and managers and I am able to give 100% rather than giving less because I'm hiding something. When coming out over 40 years ago, I would never have dreamed I would be working in an all-inclusive organisation, doing a job I love doing, with a partner who I have been with since I was 19, in my own house and as happy as any other couple can expect to be.



Department

Crown Prosecution Service

Location

Exeter

Grade

EO



Andrew Wilson

**Department**

Department for
International Development

Location

London

Grade

HEO

I began working in the Civil Service in October 2012 when I joined the Department for Education's HR group to work on in a Change programme. I later moved across to the Department for International Development's on the UK's humanitarian and development response to the Syria crisis. I work in the international engagement team, which leads on working with international partners to develop a more effective international response to the crisis.

I feel very confident and comfortable being openly gay in the Civil Service and have never faced any issues related to my sexual orientation. The most I have experienced is the odd politically incorrect comment that I've had to correct. I believe this usually comes from colleagues not being exposed to the LGB* community and therefore not knowing the right language to use; not because they're homophobic. LGB* role models are therefore important not just for LGB* members of staff but also for all colleagues.

LGB* role models are critical in the modern Civil Service as a way to demonstrate to all colleagues that sexual orientation should not be a barrier to succeed within the organisation. For those who are not yet out at work, role models can serve as a positive example of how it is possible to work openly, and indeed thrive, as an LGB* civil servant. I was fortunate to grow up at a time and in a place where I felt my sexuality was not an issue and would not be an obstacle to my success. I recognise that I have been lucky in that sense and know that for others across the Civil Service this hasn't been the case. Although I don't think I've ever had an LGB* role model at work, it has always been a great source of reassurance to join an organisation to see LGB* colleagues in interesting and senior roles. I hope that LGB* members of staff feel increasingly confident to work openly and offer their support to those around them; not only to encourage others to follow in their footsteps but let them know that there are individuals in the organisation that they could turn to discuss LGB* issues should they need it.



Karina Stibbards

Deputy Director
Department for Energy and
Climate Change

Background and career history:

I joined the Cabinet Office in 1998 and was part of the first LGB* network there. When Baroness Morgan became the first ever Minister for Equality, I took on a secretariat role, helping to join up all the strands of equality work across Government as they were spread across many different Departments. That co-ordination role led me to recommend that Government set up a sexual orientation team and I went on to lead that team for five years. The SexO team, as we billed ourselves, worked right across Government with a very wide remit, for example we got involved with ODPM (now DCLG) on the repeal of Section 28, Home Office on hate crime and repealing old sex offence laws, DTI (now BIS) on the sexual orientation employment regulations and DH on adoption by same sex couples. We also delivered the Civil Partnership Act and I am most proud of this because I believe that it has driven a huge culture change and shift in attitudes over the last decade. It was also one of the most challenging and rewarding roles I've ever done with a most fabulous team. Since then I've run BIS's Project Pool, held various policy, strategy and project roles in DWP and this year I joined DECC to challenge myself to do something completely different and I am loving it.

Role models:

I believe role models matter because I grew up feeling weird about being different because I couldn't see anyone who looked like me. As a young adult I was hugely inspired by the courageous people who went on demonstrations every weekend (we're talking mid-eighties) to fight for freedom - from apartheid, violence and repression and against laws like section 28. These role models embraced and celebrated difference and I got a real strength from them. Now, I completely recognise that difference is a real asset to me in my career and my life and I am keen to encourage others to embrace difference and be free to be your whole self, we all win when that happens. I recently gave a talk on this at DECC and then I was honoured to be nominated as a role model. I hope to keep motivating and inspiring colleagues to bring all their talents to work, be themselves and shine brightly.

Paul Phipps-Williams

I trained to be a film producer, and have a degree in Film and Video, so the natural thing for me to do afterwards was to get a job in the Government Office for the South East. Since joining the service in 2001, I've been private secretary to four ministers, an expert on Gypsies and Travellers, and persuaded someone to quote the Spice Girls on the floor of the House of Commons. These days, I work in resilience and emergencies – if you see COBR on the news I'm having a bad day. I married my husband Gareth in August 2014, and in my spare time I'm a novelist, and volunteer for a charity which works with children and young adults with learning disabilities.

For me LGB* role models are important in the modern Civil Service because those entering the Service need to know that it's a place they can thrive; where mentioning your same-sex partner at the tea-point won't get you ostracised or harm your career in any way. People work best when they can be themselves, and role models are a shining example of showing that people who aren't straight are an everyday, accepted, part of the modern workplace.

DCLG continually strives to be a great place to work. As Chair of our staff network, I've tried my best to promote the fact it's a great place to work if you're not straight. Whether this is by arranging for the rainbow flag to be flown from our buildings three times, or getting our Secretary of State and Permanent Secretary to publicly promote their pride in our non-straight staff and communities, I've tried to promote the diversity and complexity of the families that work here.

I don't have one single role model, but every time I see one of my colleagues talk about their same-sex partner in open conversation – whether that's in meetings or just general chat – I feel proud and think 'I wish I could be more like you.'

I love working for the Civil Service but if I could change one thing I would promote the fact that policies need to reflect the different types of family in UK society, and ensure that policy makers ensure that non-straight people aren't discriminated against if they choose to be single, or don't have children to support them in later life. We're a wonderful community, and add an immeasurable amount to UK society: a Service that reflects and celebrates this is a Service to be proud of.



Department

Department for
Communities and Local
Government

Location

London

Grade

Grade 7

David O'Connor



I have been working in the Cabinet Office for the past five years, moving to London from Bristol in 2008. After a year working as an Executive Assistant to a Director, I moved into a role supporting one of the Cabinet Secretary's Civil Service management committees. Since 2011 I have been working in the Civil Contingencies Secretariat, I currently work on international engagement, largely with the EU.

Who was my role model?

I can't say that I have had a role model during my career, at least not an LGB* role model. Growing up I did not know any out LGB* people, and it wasn't something that was discussed at school (being a Catholic school at the time of Section 28). When I joined the Civil Service in 2008, I was not aware of any out civil servants. Coming from a background where being gay was not openly discussed, I was wary about being out at work. Fortunately my experience has been positive, and I am now out to my colleagues. While I cannot say that I have not felt a slight anxiety return from time to time when the subject comes up with new colleagues, I have been increasingly able to focus more of my energy on my job, and less on hiding aspects of my life.

Of course not everyone has had the same experience and for some people it does not feel that it is possible to be out at work. Last year I took on the task of re-establishing the Cabinet Office LGB* Network because I feel that there is a need to have a network that can provide support to colleagues, and because it can be a lonely experience when you are not aware that there are others out there who are open about their sexual orientation. Hopefully the increasing number of visible role models in the Civil Service, along with the work of staff networks, will help to demonstrate that the Civil Service is a safe place to be yourself, and that there are people out there who can provide support and who are willing to confront any discrimination that colleagues may be facing.

What one thing would I change?

When I joined the Civil Service it took me some time to realise that it was safe to be open about my sexuality, and that doing so would not have a negative impact on my life at work. Of course for many in the Cabinet Office it probably felt that it was an inclusive environment and that this was apparent to new joiners or those looking in from the outside. As a new joiner however it was not apparent to me, and I know that this is the case for others. Some have also had negative experiences of being out at work. Given all of this it is essential that senior staff, and indeed all staff, do not become complacent, but instead continue to make clear that everyone in the Civil Service is free to be themselves at work, and that they should feel safe, and that where this is not the case any discrimination will be tackled.

James Henry

After graduating from the University of St Andrews, James took up a career in the private sector, working variously with KPMG on a mixed portfolio of roles in Audit, Corporate Finance and Turnaround; managing the audit of BAE Systems' Saudi Arabian Arms contract (Al Yamama – UK PLC's biggest commercial contract); and in the central finance team at Reuters. He also spent time as the Finance Director for Transport for Greater Manchester, and for the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra in the North West of England.

Currently James manages a Division within the Department for Education's Finance and Commercial Group. This delivers the Intelligent Client Function in respect of the outsourced Finance and HR Shared Service. Its principle activity is working with the new private sector supplier to secure improvement to both the quality, breadth and the value of the service provided. Additionally, the division produces Management Information and delivers retained systems, for Finance, HR and Commercial MI in the department. He is also Head of Finance Profession within the department and his division manages training and development of all finance professionals.

Finally, James is the serving Chair of the departmental LGB* group.

**Department**

Department for Education

Location

London

Grade

Deputy Director

Zoeie Keogh-Bennett



Tell us a little about yourself in terms of your career and background

I joined the Ministry of Defence three years ago through the Commercial Graduate Scheme where I was based in Defence Equipment & Support HQ at the Bristol Abbey Wood site. I have recently accepted a post with the Crown Commercial Service in Newport and will be moving across to this department in October.

Why do you think LGB* role models are important in the modern Civil Service?

To those inside the Civil Service, I think LGB* role models are important in order to show those outside of the LGB* ‘world’ that we have characteristics and experiences that others can look to & draw from whilst also showing that identifying as L, G or B is not the only ‘thing’ that is important about us. I also think that to those outside of the Civil Service, having LGB* role models and seeing us being represented at events such as Pride shows that we are representative of today’s society & an inclusive employer which is proud to support all of its employees.

You have been identified as a role model for others, why do you think this is?

As quite an unremarkable person I never thought of myself as a ‘Role Model’! However, I have learnt that by being open and honest, supporting others especially those who are L, G or B I may be seen as a role model. I have also represented the Civil Service in several Pride events and looked to further develop myself both professionally & personally by taking part in a number of conferences and courses in order to develop myself as a leader and someone to look to.

Who has been a role model for you in your career?

All of those involved in the MOD LGB* committee! The committee had gone rather quiet but in the past few years thanks to the hard work and commitment of a number of people MOD now have a network to be proud of, especially after being awarded Stonewalls ‘Most Improved’ title for the last Workplace Equality Index.

If there was one thing that you could do as an LGB* role model to change the Civil Service for the better what would it be?

Create opportunities for more cross-departmental learning and sharing of experiences. We all have a lot to offer to our colleagues and it would be great if we had more chances to work together.

Conclusion

We hope that having read this guide, you have seen the diversity of LGB* role models that exist within the Civil Service.

If there is one thing to take away from this guide, it is this:

**"Anyone, anywhere in the UK Civil Service can be an LGB* role model.
Just be yourself, be visible, and be prepared to lead by example."**

As we said at the beginning, we want this guide to be a living document. This guide will be available at www.csra-uk.com and it will be regularly updated. If you want to appear in the next update of this guide, please contact us at info@csra-uk.com.

Acknowledgements

The production of this guide has been a collaborative effort across the Civil Service and so there are many people that we would like to thank for the role they played in producing this guide:

- John Peart (Government Digital Service) and Niall Goulding (Department for Culture, Media, and Sport who designed the guide and managed the communications around the launch
- Michael Contaldo (Her Majesty's Treasury), Kate Scott-Hughes (Crown Prosecution Service) and Oliver Entwistle (Department of Health) for liaising with all the role models and editing the guide
- The Department of Health reprographics team for printing the guide
- Sue Owen (Department for Culture, Media and Sport) for her support for this guide and her visible leadership as sexual orientation champion
- Sonia Phippard, Mary Jeevans, Jackie Parkins and Russ Greenwood, MBE, for organising the launch event for this guide at their Department (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs)
- And last but by no means least, all the role models who appeared in this guide. Without them, this guide would not have been possible. But perhaps more importantly, we would like to thank them for all that they do to promote equality and tackle prejudice in the Civil Service

This guide was produced in September 2014.

role models

inspiring LGB*
people in the
civil service

csra
civil service rainbow alliance

