

PLACE FOR ALL

EQUALITY

DIVERSITY

INCLUSION

“ My journey in conservation.”

Tayler Davies,
Built Environmental Officer



EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Sharing personal stories and perspectives to foster inclusivity in the workplace

My role is within the conservation and design team in Cheshire West & Chester Council. I come from an architectural background and am used to working on construction sites and historic buildings which tends to mean working with older people, usually men in their 50's and 60's.

Whilst it's not my preference, I adapt myself (I 'act up') to fit in. 'Acting up' means that I tone down what I wear. I would normally wear some pretty 'out there' clothes like brightly coloured shirts, baggy trousers, and chunky-soled boots but I don't want to stand out because I think they'll listen to me more that way.

I'm young for the job I do and feel I have to tone it down a bit to be taken seriously, especially with the people I interface with. Previously, in private practice, I've been told to dress in a certain way (more corporate and conservative) for a particular client.

I've worked for the council for two years now and was in private practice before that. I would love to see more diversity in my field but (building) conservation is an 'old man's game.' In fact, I don't know anyone under the age of thirty in conservation and very few women! There are more women in the ecology side of things, but conservation is allied to construction and tends to be more male dominated. There are more women in consulting outfits, writing reports and

less site-based - it seems to be something about site work that puts them off.

I'm a big guy (6' 4") and not feminine looking but I still hear the slurs on site, masked as banter. It's disappointing but I'm used to it, sadly. I hear that expression that something is 'gay' meaning it's bad or, at least, has a negative connotation. I think it's just how people are programmed or what remains as acceptable, especially for older generations.

Younger generations are more aware of appropriate language and what is, and is not, acceptable. The LGBTQIA+ community is now more significant - in scale and influence. As soon as anyone knows I'm from that community, they stop the 'banter.' Perhaps I should introduce myself as 'gay' up front!

It's definitely an education thing but a lot of people are scared about making a mistake in what they say. There is an emphasis on pronouns; which ones you relate to. I use 'he/him' pronouns on my email signature to help and encourage others, for example a someone who may use 'they/them,' pronouns to identify themselves which is a good thing. Everyone should be clear on their pronouns; not to force people to disclose them but to encourage the conversation. The council is a welcoming place and what you find is that if one person does it, others follow.

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These things, like my rainbow lanyard, act as little ‘cues’ so that people don’t have to say anything. Thankfully, I’ve never really experienced any serious negative harassment but the ‘old boys club’ can still be out of touch on these matters. It’s not the LGBT group that has to do the learning! Sometimes, it’s easy to dismiss minor ‘aggressions’ but it can put people off joining an industry, for example.

That’s why I love working for Cheshire West & Chester Council. It’s a positive, inclusive place where an effort has been made through securing the Navajo Merseyside & Cheshire LGBTIQA+

Charter Mark showing their commitment to understand the LGBT community and understand any needs they have. I am also a member of the LGBTQ+ Networking Group which aims to unite LGBTQ+ members of staff and allies, to support each other and create a positive working environment. People worry too much about offending in what they say but we all slip up now and again – just accept when you’re wrong and keep moving forward!

Tayler Davies
Built Environmental Officer,
Cheshire West & Chester Council