



**Link** LGBT+  
Insurance  
Network

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ROLE MODELS







Link was formed to improve diversity and inclusion in the insurance industry and to help businesses within the insurance industry attract and retain LGBT+ talent. With an LGBT+ lens, Link aims to speak up on equality for everyone.

We find that many businesses wish to create an LGBT+ friendly environment, and the main issue is 'how'. This is where we help. We act as an access point for knowledge, resources and advice on everything from policies to best practice. We also understand the importance of connecting people and creating opportunities for regular, fully inclusive networking across England.

Benchmarking against other industries is important. At Link, we partner with experts to gain the insights we need to provide impactful priorities and focus.

Since Link's launch in 2013, the Link membership has grown to over 800 individuals, which is something we are very proud of. We are very happy to be celebrating our five year anniversary this year in the knowledge that the network has had an impact and with the energy of its current members is set to continue to create change well into the future.







When I look back, I think of how much difference a network like Link could have made to me in the early stages of my career. I felt I couldn't be myself at work to the point where I banned my partner from phoning me at work in case people found out I was in a same-sex relationship. Sadly, I am sure there are still many people today who feel like I did – we still have so much more work to do – but the fact a network like Link exists today, that provides support to so many, shows how far we have come.

Five years ago Link was a dream; now it's 800-strong and working with more companies than ever in the Stonewall Index to help people working in insurance to feel confident about who they are, and helping companies understand how to get the best out of their people.

Link's work has a number of important business benefits. It helps secure the sort of diverse workforce insurers need if they are to remain relevant in rapidly changing markets. It helps attract the best talent we need to compete, which we can only do if we source employees from the widest talent pools possible.

At Lloyd's, we are trying to be a diversity role model, and Link has helped us in that respect. It has always been strong on promoting the idea that we can all be a positive role model for change by increasing our understanding of the barriers to diversity, and by showing commitment and support to LGBT+ colleagues; and that if you are not consciously trying to be a role model, you should be aware that people are observing your behaviour, whether you realise it or not. Positive and visible role models play a really important part in changing the business culture, and Link should be commended for bringing this idea into the mainstream.

Perhaps the highest praise I can give is that Link has itself become a role model as a pioneer of employee-driven, cross company networks - the growth of individual LGBT+ networks and Ally programmes is evidence of that. I am delighted Link is having a growing influence over the insurance sector – it needs it. Long may the good work continue!



Dame Inga Beale, CEO Lloyd's







## WHAT IS A ROLE MODEL?

A Role Model is a person whose behaviour, values or success is something to aspire to. They inspire us to reach our full potential and give us extra confidence when we need it.

## WHY ARE ROLE MODELS IMPORTANT?


Being the first can be daunting. Active and visible LGBT+ Role Models, whether they are LGBT+ or Allies, show us it is safe to be out at work. Senior Executive LGBT+ and Ally Role Models show us we can be out at work and reach the top.

It is proven that not being out at work negatively impacts wellbeing, productivity and efficiency. Having actively visible LGBT+ and Ally Role Models to encourage everyone to be out if they want to be is good for individuals and good for business.

## WHAT DO ROLE MODELS DO?

LGBT+ Role Models speak up and advocate for equality. They share their own experiences to demonstrate the need for change, empowering others and actively influencing the environment around them.





"Being out has allowed  
me to really bring my  
whole self to work."

"Be yourself!"


"Find your 'tribe' or be who  
you authentically are and 'your  
people' will appear."

"I look to be a visible ally to anyone."

"When people can be themselves they  
are more engaged, more productive and  
happier at work."

"The commercial dividend from  
having a diverse and inclusive  
workforce is hard to measure but  
easy to feel"

"Understand what is important to you and find  
the courage to act upon it."



"Make an effort, show  
you care, speak out,  
give respect."

"By having an environment where everyone is  
included, people worry less about what others might  
think about them as individuals and focus more on how  
to be the best at their job."

"Being a role model isn't about being  
perfect it's about being authentic."

"Continue to be open and accepting  
whilst challenging where required."



"A life lived in fear is a  
life half-lived."

"Employee  
engagement suffers  
by up to 30% due to  
unwelcoming work  
environments."



# Abigail Ball

Link has helped us along the way with our QBE pride network – helping me to look at things I hadn't even considered.

## Abigail's story:

I started my working life as an office junior and knew quickly that I wanted to be a PA, so worked my way up through various companies until I finally got there working for HSBC. I joined QBE in 2014 as PA to Direct of Canada and Middle East. In 2015 Pride was formed and I signed up straight away to become an Ally. I became so involved that I joined the committee and was elected co-chair in February 2017.

## What was your first motivation to be involved with the LGBT+ community? How has this most positively influenced your experience?

I have family members and many friends who are part of the LGBT+ community. From a very early age I have heard many different stories, and experiences that people have had when coming out or being around people who are not tolerant. It has never entered my head that anyone should be treated differently just because of who they are. When I had the chance to be involved with QBE Pride I jumped at it as I felt passionately about making a difference and this was the chance to do so.

## Can you tell us how the business has been improved by LGBT+ people bringing the best of themselves to work?

When people feel comfortable at work, when they don't have to watch what they say when asked what they did at the weekend, morale and performance are helped. This is why QBE Pride and similar networks are so important to employers and employees.

## Do you have any advice for someone who isn't out at work yet?

I initiated a rainbow lanyard scheme last year, to promote a visual support for colleagues in the LGBT+ community. If your company has a similar scheme, my advice would be to seek out someone wearing a lanyard if you feel comfortable to doing so.

## Can you describe the moment you realised you were a role model?

When new joiners have told me that they were so pleased to find the QBE Pride network and how it has helped with their life at work. And when a colleague left the company and told me that he wouldn't have stayed at QBE as long if it wasn't for the QBE Pride Network and that how I had supported him and made him more confident to go on to bigger, better things.

## What are you doing outside of your organisation to be a good role model?

I often talk of QBE Pride outside of work, sometimes I'm challenged, people are interested, don't understand, a mixture of reactions. It's all about understanding, communicating and to keep talking about it.

## What advice would you give to your younger self?

That you can't change the world – I have to remind myself of this – although I do still try to change the world!



PERSONAL ASSISTANT



### Andrew's story:

I was born in Yorkshire and educated in London and The Netherlands. I was a Graduate for the RSA and my second job was at Hiscox and I never left.

I've been at Hiscox since 1997, I came out six months after joining. I'd hidden my sexuality as a Graduate Trainee for the previous two years. Office banter was torture because I lived a lie. I had a girlfriend called Stephanie who was actually a boyfriend called Stephen.

### What factors allow you to bring your full self to work? How does your environment make you feel involved and included?

Being at Hiscox for 20 years and getting to where I am now wasn't an accident. I've always been trusted, empowered, and accountable. I've worked incredibly hard, taken risks, and genuinely enjoyed my work (most of the time!). I've represented Hiscox all over the world and have enjoyed working in three completely different roles. I love people – I enjoy coaching and mentoring and I am passionate about great customer service; so working for a company that values people and is focused on being there for customers means Hiscox and I have been a really great fit.

### Can you tell us how the business has been improved by LGBT+ people bringing the best of themselves to work?

It's important because feeling comfortable about who you are and what you do at work is really important and we all need to keep working hard at improving that. We spend our lives at work and sometimes we don't always really know what makes the person next to us tick. We are all human and I think we become better human beings when we understand each other a little more.

### Do you have any advice for someone who isn't out at work yet?

There are many people who have been in the same situation in the past so it is good to seek out someone who can act as a sounding board and guide.

### What advice would you give to your younger self?

So what advice would I give a younger me? Understanding my history, I'd probably get pretty choked and say "You are doing just fine Andrew.....stay focused, crack on and never look back

### Can you describe the moment you realised you were a role model?

I think I realised that I was a role model when I became Chair of NGIN. Leading a committee of 15 people and a group of around 50 Advocates meant that all of a sudden I had people who were looking to me for decisions and leadership.

### What advice would you give to someone who wishes to be a good role model?

The best way to be a good role model is to be supportive. Everyone has a unique and important perspective. Have no assumptions and make no judgements.

# Andrew Sellers

We are all human  
and I think we  
become better  
human beings when  
we understand each  
other a little more



GROUP HEAD OF CLAIMS  
SUPPLIER MANAGEMENT

  
HISCOX



# Chris Mousley Jones

LGBT+ identities don't have to be parked at the corporate office door.



HEAD OF CORPORATE DATA  
PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT  
and INTEGRATION



## Chris's story:

I've been working in project and programme management for the past 25 years or so, in a mixture of technology and organisational change initiatives (frequently both at the same time), mainly in financial services. I was a professional actor for a while in my twenties and believe I'm one of the few people in AIG to have an entry in the Internet Movie Database (IMDB). My degree is in English, which means that, whilst I don't always understand what people are trying to say, if they are speaking English, I generally understand what they actually do say. It also means I can tell jokes in Anglo Saxon, which is less useful.

**What was your first motivation to be out at work and how has being out most positively influenced your experience?**

Seeing the work of the LGBT+ Employee Resource Group, and wanting to be part of that change initiative. My experience at work reflects my wider personal experience that, generally speaking, people can be surprisingly accepting of difference when they associate it with a specific individual they actually know.

**What advice would you give to someone who wishes to be a good role model?**

Be yourself – call out presuppositions (gently, at first) based on assumptions that everyone thinks or lives or identifies in the same way as the speaker.

**What are you doing outside of your organisation to be a good role model?**

I actively cultivate an open mind, and answer questions as openly as I can.

**Can you tell us how the business has been improved by LGBT+ people bringing the best of themselves to work?**

Hopefully, we are helping to dispel the perception that insurance is not an attractive place to work and, hopefully, we will be better able to sell our products to an increasingly diverse customer base.

**Do you have any advice for someone who isn't out at work yet?**

You'll be surprised at how much energy is released when you can relax about being your authentic self in the office.

**Can you describe the moment you realised you were a role model?**

When the Head of HR messaged me to say she admired my courage in talking openly at work about my non-binary gender identity.

**What do you do on a day to day basis to be a positive role model?**

I am co-chair of the STEP LGBT+ Employee Resource Group. I wear my rainbow badge every day – small visible signs of support can contribute in subtle ways to building an inclusive culture.

**Who is your most memorable role model and why?**

My late mum, whose wonderful funeral had me asking, "what changes in my life do I need to make to ensure I have a funeral as good as this one?"

#### Emma's story:

I've worked in customer facing roles for 17 years in the insurance sector - customer service, sales and now claims. I have a passion for encouraging people to be their true selves in the workplace so created the mental health network for Swiss Re which has launched in the UK and Zurich.

#### How does your environment make you feel included?

I feel included, listened to and respected. Three things which are hugely important in really being your true self at work.

#### What are your ideas for improving inclusion in the workplace?

Education, knowledge sharing, more engagement from allies – even starting off a conversation with someone about why you believe in something can go a long way.

#### Can you tell us how the business has been improved by LGBT+ people bringing the best of themselves to work?

There seems to be more creativity and innovation within the business. When people are truly themselves at work and they're not worrying or trying to conceal parts of themselves they can truly engage with the task in hand.

#### Do you have any advice for someone who isn't out at work yet?

Find someone to confide in. Even telling one person can help... Most great companies have the right support in place to help someone who hasn't come out yet. Witnessing someone coming out in the workplace and seeing them flourish is wonderful.

#### What advice would you give to your younger self?

Don't be afraid to ask questions if you don't understand. This is where a lot of stigma, prejudice and bias comes from.

#### Can you describe the moment you realised you were a role model?

Someone who had, in the past, not taken any interest in the LGBT+ network asked to meet me for a coffee and chat a few things over. He said he didn't understand a few things and as I seemed to 'get it' could I help him out. Seeing that change in mind-set in someone so unexpected was pretty great.

#### What advice would you give to someone who wishes to be a good role model?

Be open, be curious and ask questions. If you don't understand something – ask. Don't just ignore or shy away. Education around LGBT+ topics is so important for people to understand and accept.

#### How has the Link network helped you?

The Link network has helped me hugely. It inspires me to continue to work on ensuring Swiss Re is an inclusive employer. The network has given me the opportunity to meet some fantastic and motivating people that make me want to improve further what we do here.

# Emma Freeman

Witnessing someone coming out in the workplace and seeing them flourish is wonderful



**CLAIMS SPECIALIST and CHAIR  
OF SWISS RE'S MENTAL HEALTH  
NETWORK**



**Swiss Re**



# Greg Lowe

You have to do your job well and you have to stand up for what you believe.



GLOBAL HEAD OF RESILIENCE  
AND SUSTAINABILITY

**Aon**

## Greg's story:

I started my career as an investment banker, which I didn't particularly enjoy. I didn't come out until my last six months working in banking. Eight years ago I found an exciting opportunity in insurance that brought together my interests in finance, economics, climate change and policy. I made a decision to come out from the get go this time and haven't looked back.

I'm in my third role in the insurance industry and get to meet all sorts of amazing people from around the world and influence how Aon approaches the topics of climate and disaster risk finance.

## What factors allow you to bring your full self to work?

There is a clear culture of inclusion set from the top. When your CEO, both global and country level, speaks about these issues it empowers you to feel open and included. I work with colleagues around the world so this is really important.

## What was your first motivation to be out at work and how has being out most positively influenced your experience?

I felt trapped not being out at work. I was out since I was 18 and never held this back until I started my first job in banking. Going back into the closet, even if only at work, was difficult and probably contributed to my frustration with my job. I decided I would look to other opportunities outside banking and that gave me the courage to just take the step and come out to my colleagues as I had nothing to lose. When I started my first job in insurance at Aon, I brought it up with my manager right away as I wanted to make sure that didn't hang over my head like it did before. I was free to focus on my work and be myself, which gave me a huge increase in confidence.

## Can you tell us how the business has been improved by LGBT+ people bringing the best of themselves to work?

All organisations work at their best when people are at their best. You can't be on top form unless you feel you don't have to hold back any part of yourself. It's impossible for your personal life not to come up if you want to forge genuine relationships and partnerships with your clients, colleagues, and other contacts. When you feel confident and don't have to hold back, there is more trust, the discussions are more lively, and the opportunities clearer.

## What advice would you give to your younger self?

People want you to be relaxed and human to feel comfortable working with you. That means being you and being open about your life with people you work with.

### Erik's story:

I was born in Canada and a dual UK/Canadian national. Before I started in insurance I boarded at the Winnipeg Ballet School and danced professionally for a few years before an injury sent me off to university where I completed a BComm (Distinction) in Finance, Risk Management and Insurance. I joined Marsh and worked as a Client Manager in Calgary before moving to London to complete an MSc Insurance and Risk Management.

I joined Deloitte and worked on M&A and strategy projects in insurance and then moved to work in Strategy at Lloyd's. I was lucky enough to be involved with Link from the start, being one of its Co-Chairs and getting to work with a dedicated group of volunteers who have built Link into a successful and influential cross-market network.

A recent highlight for me was leading the project team that delivered the largest new Lloyd's syndicate start up in over 15 years.

### What was your first motivation to be out at work and how has being out most positively influenced your experience?

When I moved to London and learning from my experience not being completely out at my first job in insurance I decided that I wanted to be out from before I started. This was made easier for me as I moved to London with a partner, so ensuring that he felt comfortable coming to work events with me gave me added incentive to be out.

Being out at work has enabled me to avoid any fear or insecurity of being 'outed'. This is very empowering. If you are in the closet you are giving other people power to make you feel uncomfortable or threatened. By being out you take away that power, which is incredibly empowering.

### What advice would you give to your younger self?

Don't wait to come out at work, be out at work from the start. Often, you being nervous or uncomfortable about coming out is just that, you. Remember, most people don't care if you are LGBT+ so give them a chance to accept you for who you are from day one.

### What do you do on a day to day basis to be a positive role model?

I am myself at work, I talk about my work with Link and other diversity networks with colleagues, business partners, and service providers.

I invite my partner to work and industry events.

I put myself forward as a volunteer for leadership roles in market organisations, so that others can see that being LGBT+ is not a barrier and engaging with people in the market who may not have had much exposure to gay people.

I encourage other people to get involved in market talent and diversity initiatives.

# Erik Johnson

Don't wait to come  
out at work, be out  
at work from the start



CORPORATE DEVELOPMENT  
MANAGER

PIONEER  
UNDERWRITERS



# Laura Pepper

Find allies that you  
can trust and support  
you.



CLAIMS ADJUSTER

*RenaissanceRe*

## Laura's story:

Working at RenaissanceRe was my first job in the (re)insurance market, initially starting as a claims assistant and then progressing onto trainee adjuster and then adjuster. I'm one of those that just fell into the (re)insurance market, finding out about the industry after graduating from Exeter with a Law degree and attending a graduate 'meet the market' hosted by the then Catlin. It was surprising to hear so many people talk about their work and the industry they worked in so excitedly, and I realised then I wanted to join. I again ended up in claims by accident, but the correlation it has with my legal education and background means that it feels like a perfect fit.

## What was your first motivation to be out at work and how has being out most positively influenced your experience?

I have never really had to 'come out' before, until I started working full time so it wasn't really a big decision for me, I just continued to be myself. I also realised that if I wasn't then I'd never be able to fully relax and actually focus on my work and career. Besides, it would be hard work keeping up with the different things you've told different people about your weekend plans on a Monday morning if you weren't fully 'out' or yourself.

## Do you have any advice for someone who isn't out at work yet?

Don't go through it alone. Find allies that you can trust and support you. If it feels unnatural to just 'come out' and say it in a work environment, or you're worried about someone other than this particular person overhearing, suggest a coffee or a drink in a place where you feel more comfortable and can relax.

## What advice would you give to someone who wishes to be a good role model?

Listen, not only to what someone is saying, but what they may be trying to say between the lines. If they appear uncomfortable, put yourself in their shoes and try to understand where they are coming from. Not everyone is a natural communicator or confident speaker so bear this mind. Also remember that you do not know their background or what they may have been through, so be compassionate.

## How has the Link network helped you?

It's helped me realise that as fortunate as I have been in being 'out', this isn't the case for everyone, and that there are a lot of different experiences in the (re)insurance market. It's helped me understand that there is a long way to go to ensure that everyone can have the experiences they deserve and be as comfortable as possible in their work environment.

#### Benjamin's story:

I'm originally from Newcastle and ended up working in insurance following an internship whilst I was at university. I had never considered joining the industry before I got a taste for it in 2013. I wanted to work in a global environment where I could work and communicate with a wide range of people. I joined the Marsh graduate development programme and worked in a number of areas including SME proposition development and as a project manager in the Corporate CEO's office. I've always been interested in technology and the ways in which it is changing our world. I got the opportunity to join our Communications, Media and Technology Industry Practice to lead our research and thought leadership and have more recently added client management to my role.

Outside of work I am Chair of the Next Generation Insurance Network (NGIN) which helps to connect young professionals working in and around the London Insurance Market. It's so important to develop a strong network of support and friendship and being involved with NGIN has opened up so many opportunities and more importantly I've met some fantastic people through it.

#### What are your ideas for improving inclusion in the workplace?

I think insurance still can be a daunting place for some people as there is still an element of people who all look, act and think in the same way. Whilst the industry has changed for the better over the past few years, improvements can always be made. One of the best ways of changing this is accessing people who haven't yet "bought in" to the diversity and inclusion message. One of the things we have found works well with NGIN is to provide a space for people to learn about what the benefits are by being more inclusive. By engaging with these people and showing that it isn't about turning the world upside down to their disadvantage, a big step can be made to having a more inclusive industry.

#### How has the business been improved by LGBT+ people bringing the best of themselves to work?

Any business stands to gain a lot by everyone, including LGBT+ people, bringing the best of themselves to work. NGIN has benefitted from a variety of thoughts and perspectives which help us to shape the events which we host and helps us to make sure that our events are as welcoming and accessible to the widest audience possible. By having an environment where everyone is included, people worry less about what others might think about them as individuals and focus more on how to be the best at their job.

#### What advice would you give to your younger self?

I would tell my younger self to be brave and get out of your bubble as quickly as possible. The world is a much more interesting and exciting place when you're open to all the different perspectives and possibilities!

# Benjamin Hindson

The world is a much more interesting and exciting place when you're open to all the different perspectives and possibilities!



CLIENT EXECUTIVE

 **MARSH**



# Iain Gibson

I have never not brought my whole self to work. This has been challenging given the times I have lived through, the 80s / 90s were not the most gay-friendly years in the UK."

## Iain's story:

I have worked in a number of areas including IT and Hospitality Management before landing on a career in HR in my late twenty's. I returned to University in my home town of Glasgow aged 29 to study HR and have since worked as an HR Business Partner, Head of HR and now as HR Director. I have worked for a number of very different and diverse organisations such as Scottish Power, Santander, Prudential, Buro Happold, Royal London Group and now Marsh.

## What are your ideas for improving inclusion in the workplace?

We need more role models across all the spectrum of diversity and we need more dedicated resources to help raise awareness; to educate and to help set the internal agenda for us. We need to move more of the activities we currently do out of London and into the regions and we need to find local partners to help us move our local agendas along.

## What was your first motivation to be out at work and how has being out most positively influenced your experience?

I am a 48 year old gay man and I have never not brought my whole self to work. This has been challenging given the times I have lived through, the 80s / 90s were not the most gay-friendly years in the UK. During the course of my working life I have encouraged others to come out at work and discuss / display their differences. I think in my own small way, I have helped enable some to come out and be themselves by showing them you can progress in your career and be out.

## Do you have any advice for someone who isn't out at work yet?

Yes, come out. All organisations have policies, practices and help for you. If you come out, what is the worst thing that can happen? You leave an organisation that does not support you and find another that will and that will allow you to be you, and relax and focus on your job and not on the exhaustive pretence of being someone you are not. Change always happens, come out and shape your change to make yourself happy, no one else can do that for you.

## What do you do on a day to day basis to be a positive role model?

I am not gay first and foremost; rather I am an HR professional, a senior leader and try to be a patient and compassionate person. I challenge where I see issues and call out other senior leaders who are not creating the environment to get the best out of all our colleagues, LGBT or otherwise.



HR DIRECTOR



#### Joe's story:

I came into the Market via the first Hiscox Apprenticeship Scheme in 2016 straight after my A Levels. I studied History, Politics and Sociology. A few family members work in Insurance and I gained work experience at Ageas for two weeks during 2014, so I had an idea what insurance was all about and was determined to get a role within the Lloyd's market.

#### How does your environment make you feel involved and included?

Coming straight from school into a new environment is challenging. Being so used to everyone knowing your 'full self' to then having to build new relationships can be challenging, especially when being gay. However, Insurance is far more open minded and accepting than people may assume, and I have never been made to feel uncomfortable when discussing my partner and I'm treated no differently to anyone else. Diversity is a huge market-wide topic currently, I feel I have been welcomed as a member of a minority with events such as Dive in Festival contributing to this.

#### What was your first motivation to be out at work and how has being out most positively influenced your experience?

I've been open about my sexuality for a very long time and always knew I would be open at work. My first opportunity to speak about my partner came very early on in my career when I discussed him with another individual on my apprenticeship scheme. I was initially nervous to speak about it with my team members, but my manager mentioned his partner who happened to be the same sex. This really put me at ease and I explained to him how I too had a same sex partner. Although this was a really positive coincidence, I was always going to be open with my team either way. It's not the easiest thing to bring up the first time but once you have there is weight taken off your shoulders and you can now build a great working relationship with that person, rather than only bringing part of yourself to the table.

#### Do you have any advice for someone who isn't out at work yet?

Do whatever makes you comfortable. Personally I feel uncomfortable trying to avoid talking honestly about my life outside at work so an initial uncomfortable conversation (which probably is only uncomfortable for you!) means a more enjoyable experience at work. Don't force yourself or let others push for you to do anything, do what you feel most comfortable and therefore allow you to perform at your best.

#### What advice would you give to your younger self?

Don't be so worried about others think of you! Don't over-think people's perceptions of you, as long as you believe you are striving to be the best you can be that is most crucial thing to both yourself and others.

## Joe Clayton

Being a closed book at work can really hinder your performance



UNDERWRITING ASSISTANT  
Property

  
HISCOX



# Dame Inga Beale

It lifted a weight  
from my shoulders  
and I felt free. It's  
remarkable to be  
able to be yourself  
at work



CEO

**LLOYD'S**  
LLOYD'S OF LONDON

## Inga's story:

I started working in insurance in 1982, a lone female in a male dominated world. My first same sex relationship came after about 10 years of working and I realised the enormous challenge of being different at work. But I got through, and had the courage to take on new roles and new challenges before I ultimately became CEO of Lloyd's in 2014.

## What are your ideas for improving inclusion?

I think there is improvement needed. We have got to communicate the business case. We have to communicate that we mean it, and that it matters. The reason why I say this is because people don't trust business at the moment. We have got to communicate that we mean this and earn that trust. We have got to create charters and codes of conduct for businesses to sign up for. We should put in place targets and score cards and measure ourselves against them. Policies have to be up to date and support inclusive and flexible workplaces. We should provide training on how to create diverse teams. We need to encourage employee resource groups to tackle the bad behaviours. We should discuss the real issues and get the issues out on the table and celebrate success and diversity.

## Do you have any advice for someone who isn't out at work yet?

Think about how you are being negatively impacted by not being out at work. Think about the positive impact you would have on others if you come out. Think about the positive impact you would have on yourself. I think you will find that you would be supported by the employer and your colleagues.

## Can you describe the moment you realised you were a role model?

We are all role models at some stage and often don't realise it. The first time that I was thinking about how I was a role model was when I attended a woman's network event. I was the most senior person in the company that attended. Later, I got an email from a young associate to thank me for turning up. Just because I showed up - they felt that I was as supporting women. That was the first time that I realised that even just showing up can make such a positive impact.

## Who is your most memorable role model and why?

For me, quite recently, it is HSBC's Antonio Simoes whom I heard speak at an LGBT+ event at Davos. It was remarkable to see a CEO of a serious financial services business talking about his sexuality and it was very inspirational.

## How has the Link network helped you?

It has helped me in terms of having someone - now I guide people to Link. I have people that come to me that need some advice and I am able to show them Link and encourage them to go along. It's a positive thing.

#### Guillermo's story:

I studied Economics and was always passionate about investment markets.

The most important factors that got me here are:

Passion for what I do. Focus on value generation. Take career risks and speak my mind. Accept challenges. Recognize my own mistakes and forgive others. Respect people. Listen. Be curious. Being honest with myself.

#### What was your first motivation to be involved with the LGBT+ community?

My goal is to learn first-hand the difficulties that community members experience in order to have a happy life and achieve their potential in their professional life.

#### Do you have any advice for someone who isn't out at work yet?

Just take the chance (and the risk) to let people know who you are, as in most of the cases it will pay off with their trust, which is a key factor for all kinds of personal and professional interactions.

#### What do you do on a day to day basis to be a positive role model?

Listening with attention and empathy to the people, focusing on what we have in common rather than our differences.

#### What are you doing outside of your organisation to be a good role model?

I support a charity in Argentina which provides temporary homes for vulnerable girls.

#### Who is your most memorable role model and why?

My parents, as they taught me to live life with integrity and subject to their values.

#### How did you feel coming to your first Link event?

I felt really excited to have the opportunity to meet great people and learn from them a different perspective, stimulating a change in beliefs and an opening for new opportunities.

# Guillermo Donadini

Trust yourself and live based on your beliefs and values



CHIEF INVESTMENT OFFICER FOR  
APAC, EMEA and LATAM





# Miriam Reason

Be patient with those who would like to engage with D&I but need some education and help understanding the issues at hand

## Miriam's story:

I am openly bisexual (although upon starting I was initially one of the 62% of graduates who go back into the closet when they start working), and am an advocate for intersectional diversity in my organisation and in the wider industry too. Noticing a gap, I co-founded XL Catlin's London LGBT+ network, am part of a mental health working group and am a member of the women's network. I am also a member of the Insurance Cultural Awareness Network (iCAN) and recently have become a Mental Health Champion for the London insurance market.

## Where do you think inclusion in the workplace can be improved?

Not everybody enjoys the positive experience I have had, which I believe to be a right not a privilege. There is much work to be done to raise awareness and understanding of why D&I (not just in the LGBT+ space) is important and why managers need to care about it. I think the goal is for everybody to have the same experience I have had. I think effective training of all managers in this is critical to making this improvement. Quite often senior leadership are fully on board but middle management can sometimes be left behind, especially when they are under pressure to deliver results.

## How has the business been improved by LGBT+ people bringing the best of themselves to work?

There are many stats available illustrating how positively enabling LGBT+ people to bring their whole selves to work impacts businesses. One of the most hard-hitting is that employee engagement suffers by up to 30% due to unwelcoming work environments (Cost of the Closet and the Rewards of Inclusion, Human Rights Campaign Foundation). At it's most basic level, allowing LGBT+ people to bring their best (and whole) selves to work simply means everyone being accepting and treating them with the same respect and dignity as they would a non-LGBT+ person. This makes for more engaged, productive, happy employees who are proud to work for their organisations.

## Do you have any advice for someone who isn't out at work yet?

Start with the people you trust – they may be people you work closely with every day or people completely separate to you in the organisation and go from there. Alternatively (or in addition!) I would suggest going to industry events (for example, Link's monthly drinks). These are attended by people from a range of (re)insurance companies and it is a good way of meeting other LGBT+ people in the market and building a support network outside your own organisation.

## What advice would you give to your younger self?

Don't be afraid to proudly be yourself and don't feel like you have to hide behind the persona you think you should be. Be patient with those who would like to engage with D&I but need some education and help understanding the issues at hand.



PROJECT ANALYST



RPC

Proud to have been there from Day One



Five years on we're as determined as ever to make insurance as inclusive as possible.



# DiVERSITY

We believe that building an open and inclusive workforce is crucial. Diversity leads to diversity of thought, which leads to better outcomes for all of us. XL Catlin is a proud sponsor of the Link Role Model Guide

**MAKE YOUR WORLD GO >>>**



# Chris Anelay

I would not have come out (yet) if the head of my division was not openly gay.



INSURANCE ADMINISTRATOR



## Chris' story:

I attended an all-boys state school in Hertfordshire and subsequently I went to University at Southampton where I studied Biomedical Science. I realised at the end of University that I did not want to carry on in a medical research field and was introduced to insurance through my sister.

My sister was selected for the Lloyd's of London Graduate Scheme in which she was placed in Lockton for 6 months in rotation. When I finished University, and after I spent a month travelling, my sister was able to arrange some work experience for myself for 3 months. Lockton were kind enough to offer me a full time position with them after my work experience completed.

## What are your ideas for improving inclusion in the workplace?

I would not have come out (yet) if the head of my division was not openly gay. Lockton is trying to arrange an LGBT+ initiative so hopefully this will gain momentum. I actually think "waving the banner" for LGBT+ is sometimes not a good idea and people are not interested if you make a song and dance about it. I do think companies need a straight ally initiative as well, especially in regional offices as it's easy to get cut off in comfort in the London "bubble".

## Do you have any advice for someone who isn't out at work yet?

I think if someone is not out and they want to be out, it is not a matter of announcing it. In all honesty, I think most people will be suspicious about it and they probably feel more awkward talking to you about it even though they really want to.

I think it is good to give indicators to people and of course there is going to be someone else in the same position as you.

## What advice would you give to your younger self?

Actually none – Every mistake is a learning curve and you need to make mistakes and have bad times to appreciate the good. I never considered myself gay until I went to University. Perhaps I wish that it was more apparent to me at an earlier age but in reality I do not think so too much.

## What advice would you give to someone who wishes to be a good role model?

A good role model should be able to understand everyone's situation is different.

## What are you doing outside of your organisation to be a good role model?

Outside of LGBT+, I am part of the London Market Group (LMG) London Insurance Life. This role allows me to be an ambassador for the whole insurance market.

### Dominic's story :

An enormous amount of luck – inspiring colleagues, patient clients, great leaders and shared values. For the record, before entering this industry my previous job was a road sweeper. In May 1984 I moved to London, no flat, no job, no connections and an overdraft – could have been tricky!

### What advice would you give to your younger self?

Always work with people who inspire you and for individuals for whom what they do is core to their purpose. Care more than your competitors, look to get out there the whole time and thrive at any level. Like the best clients, welcome the new and respect tradition. Don't try and do it all by the time you're 30. Manage your energy and be lucky. You will surprise yourself.

### What do you do on a day to day basis to be a positive role model?

Just engage, be confident and comfortable with whomever you are with. I try to take an interest in whomever I am with. I think it is important to remember that you don't have to be aggressive to be effective. Always ask questions, seek to learn and look to understand.

### What advice would you give to someone who wishes to be a good role model?

Make an effort, show you care, speak out, give respect.

### Who is your most memorable role model and why?

In the business, James Mee. He is a very successful guy but in one of the very first meetings we had he spoke to me with an honesty that few people have. I learnt so much. Outside the business, my wife for many reasons.

### How did you feel coming to your first Link event?

I was fortunate I was with people I knew. It's harder going to any occasion on your own – but the Link event culture is very warm and friendly.

### How has the Link network helped you?

It has helped my understanding and sensitivity.

### What do you think Link can do in the future to best serve the new generations?

Keep going at it. You are making a difference. You are already achieving great things. Imagine how brilliant it will be if a truly fair and self-assured environment could be established for all.

# Dominic Christian

Make an effort,  
show you care,  
speak out, give  
respect.



GLOBAL CHAIRMAN

**Aon**



# Geoff Godwin

Being a role model provides me with huge motivation to help others and leave a legacy for the next generation.



UK CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER



## Geoff's story:

I have worked in the insurance industry for 25 years. I have spent most of my time working in Claims. I studied law. I have held a number of different leadership roles in the last 2 companies I have worked in. I thrive in a changing environment and so have been able to adapt myself to the different environments I have worked in.

## How does your work environment make you feel involved and included?

The environment feels inclusive as we have recognised networks and people are allowed to express themselves and challenge how things are done.

## What are your ideas for improving inclusion in the workplace?

We need more role models to champion being yourself and more allies to explicitly voice how important it is that everyone can bring their whole selves to work. We need to have a robust approach to educating middle managers as they are the key link to making people feel safe and empowered at work.

## Can you tell us how the business has been improved by LGBT+ people bringing the best of themselves to work?

We are able to retain talent and also drive innovation with having people at the table thinking differently to get the best outcome for our customers. I also believe that they are excellent at assessing risk given that is what they have to do every day. This is a perfect match for an insurance company as that is our core activity.

## What advice would you give to your younger self?

Be more visible as a role model from an earlier age. Nothing bad will happen and the industry is a relatively safe place to be.

## Can you describe the moment you realised you were a role model?

I realised when I started to be approached for advice on how to come out at work and hearing people talk about you as someone senior who is willing to be stood up and be counted.

## What advice would you give to someone who wishes to be a good role model?

Be visible. Speak up to ensure everyone feels included and listen to people's challenges and act on them to show others it is worth speaking up as people will act.

## What are you doing outside of your organisation to be a good role model?

By attending events, winning awards, and being part of Outstanding List of Top 100 Executives and sitting on charity boards. I also explain about Diversity and Inclusion whenever I can and the impact it has on our business.

#### Henrietta's story:

Qualified litigation solicitor for the last 17 years: 14 spent in private practice and 3 within the Financial Lines Claims team at Chubb. Acting with absolute integrity and being an Ally to all employees to ensure that everyone feels able to bring their whole self to work is integral to my working life. I also co-chair the Awareness and Engagement network which is a Diversity and Inclusion network at Chubb. The network's objective is to cultivate, develop, and promote the benefits of an inclusive work environment and the benefits this brings within Chubb.

#### How does your environment make you feel involved and included?

At Chubb we have an Ally program which works to create a welcoming and supportive working culture for all our minority groups, including LGBT+. Its aim is to ensure that everyone feels able to bring their whole self to work and to create visible Allies within Chubb to provide support to all employees to help make this possible.

#### Can you tell us how the business has been improved by LGBT+ people bringing the best of themselves to work?

It makes for a more diverse and inclusive atmosphere and culture which of itself means that everyone is able to be themselves and the benefits reaped are for both the LGBT+ community and all other employees. It is a positive statement that whoever you are we embrace you and any kind of prejudice in any guise will not be tolerated.

#### What was your first motivation to be involved with the LGBT+ community?

I have been fortunate enough to be born and raised in London which is a city that embraces a great cultural mix of people including the LGBT+ community. The LGBT+ friends that I have always felt able to be themselves in this city. I have therefore always sought to foster and be proud of these roots and to protect the rights of all individuals.

#### Do you have any advice for someone who isn't out at work yet?

Look to explore the support networks within your organisation and if there isn't one, reach out to Link or Stonewall and look to explore setting up an LGBT+ network within the company.

#### Who is your most memorable role model and why?

The Dalai Lama – I have been to see him speak twice. He has a presence beyond that of an ordinary human being. He seeks to influence and bring about great change in individuals and the wider world through peaceful means.

# Henrietta Gordon

Be a good listener.  
Identify goals to  
improve on the  
status quo.  
Don't procrastinate  
get active!



SOLICITOR AND SENIOR CLAIMS  
EXAMINER

CHUBB

# James Little

I came out at work and at home and haven't looked back.

We can all be our unique selves as long as we respect each other.



ASSISTANT EXTERNAL  
REPORTING ACCOUNTANT



Liberty  
Specialty Markets

## James's story:

In school I learnt a lot of things; being gay wasn't normal. I learnt to divide myself into two different people; public James and private James. When I graduated with a 2:1 in Economics with Banking, I made a deal with private James that the next chapter (and those thereafter) were going to be his. It was after a year at Liberty that I came out at work and at home and haven't looked back. I have been at Liberty for 2 and a half years and am now an assistant accountant where I mainly work on Lloyd's syndicate reporting.

## What factors allow you to bring your full self to work?

The Finance team at Liberty is very diverse, and I am fortunate enough to work with managers and senior leadership who are also gay. We respect each other for who we are and we all work towards the goal of being the best we can be and doing the job well.

## Do you have any advice for someone who isn't out at work yet?

Not having to leave the question of sexuality to rumour and being upfront and open with your work colleagues, you feel confident in yourself. If you are confident in yourself, without the nagging anxieties of hiding who you are, you can focus on what really matters, doing the job right. I have found people are more receptive to my ideas when I present an authentic, confident person.

## What advice would you give to your younger self?

Hang in there! The jokes and mean things people say may hurt now but they will make you the person you are today. You have friends and family who love you for you and never doubt that.

## Can you describe the moment you realised you were a role model?

I wrote a Unique Perspectives piece to be published onto my company's intranet page. It was the first time I'd ever publicly reflected on who I am and I was quite nervous about sharing it. The response I got from people saying how inspirational the piece was to them, both gay and straight, it made me realise that I was setting a good example for others.

## What advice would you give to someone who wishes to be a good role model?

Being a role model sounds scary and there is often an assumption made that you must always be a 'champion' for the community but actually just being visible in your daily life fulfils this need for leadership.

## How did you feel coming to your first Link event?

I would say, I was very apprehensive about attending. Actually everyone was extremely friendly and welcoming, I was amazed by the amount of support complete strangers.

## How has the Link network helped you?

Link has made me more confident in myself as a gay person in insurance. I have access to resources and people that I would never have gotten with being part of the network.



#### Josh's story:

I majored in political science and promptly moved from North Carolina to Washington, D.C. I spent eight years working in U.S. politics before my husband and I moved to London in search of some sunshine. Instead I found Lloyd's and became fascinated by the insurance industry. Today I work in the Lloyd's Performance Management Division.

#### How does your environment make you feel involved and included?

Leadership and visible allies are the key ingredients that allow me to be my full self at work. I am not 100% there – I still struggle with self-doubt and courage – but I can say it's certainly better now than it has ever been before!

#### What are your thoughts on how we improve inclusion?

We need to facilitate more honest conversations. Being tolerant of the LGBT+ community is not the goal. Being silent at work while voicing your views on social media is counter-productive and stagnates the pace of change we can make in the insurance sector. We need to have more awkward conversations where we empower people to speak their mind.

#### What was your first motivation to be out at work and how has being out most positively influenced your experience?

Because I just could not answer any more questions about my wife!!! Being out with the folks around me means that when people talk to me about my life, I don't have to wiggle around topics. In reality, I will be coming out for the rest of my life, but when a colleague knows and is comfortable – it's a great feeling.

#### Can you tell us how the business has been improved by LGBT+ people bringing the best of themselves to work?

I don't know about the business (but there are a ton of stats that demonstrate the benefits of allowing your workforce to bring their full selves to work) but for me personally, I am more productive, I am more trusting of my colleagues and I am more loyal to my employer.

#### Can you describe the moment you realised you were a role model?

The moment I was nominated for this list!

#### What do you do on a day to day basis to be a positive role model?

Visibility and honesty. No one is perfect, but if you hold yourself up both when you get it right and when you get it wrong, you don't know who else might be looking and learning from you.

#### What are you doing outside of your organisation to be a good role model?

Challenging homophobic language at my rugby club. Being brave enough to say husband and not just partner whenever I meet new people. Be a good judge of intent – not just of language.

# Josh Brekenfeld

I am more productive, I am more trusting of my colleagues and I am more loyal to my employer.



OVERSIGHT MANAGER

**LLOYD'S**  
LLOYD'S OF LONDON

# Karen Graves

I really believe that it is important to be able to be your true self at work, as this just allows you to bring your personality into what you do and that frees people to be successful.



HEAD OF OPERATIONS EMEA  
HUB and GROUP BCM

**SCOR**  
The Art & Science of Risk

## Karen's story:

I come from Leicester, via a comprehensive school education, and moved to London when I was 18 to study Politics and Government. I also have a Post Graduate Diploma in Law and am currently studying for an MA in Art History which is purely for pleasure but a passion of mine. I fell into the insurance industry in the City by chance when I started temping for a broking firm after I got my degree. My most enjoyable role was being the MD of a Managing Agency: I loved this as we were able to make fast and focussed decisions. The pace of decision making and being reactive to opportunities is a way of experiencing the more creative side of this business.

## Can you tell us how the business has been improved by LGBT+ people bringing the best of themselves to work?

Business and decision making are improved when you have a mix of people working together. Ideas are refreshed, and LGBT+ colleagues help get companies involved with networks and organisations that allow the business to be revitalised by new attitudes. Working with people who can feel that they can express themselves fully is creative and fun.

## Do you have any advice for someone who isn't out at work yet?

Lots of organisations these days have LGBT+ networks etc, but it is the first step in anything that is always the hardest. Look around at the people you work with, not necessarily those in your same team, and find that person you feel you can talk to. It is important to talk as it puts things into perspective: problems and fears become manageable once shared.

## What do you do on a day to day basis to be a positive role model?

I try to act in a way that represents my beliefs. I call out prejudice when I see it happening and that can be from a LGBT+, gender, racial or other perspective. One of the advantages of age is that you get less bothered by how you appear and you can have a voice. It's important that we use our voices to generate changes in attitudes and opportunities.

## What advice would you give to someone who wishes to be a good role model?

Be authentic, and if you see prejudice try and find a way to change it. Work out what it is that really fires you up and go and be positive to encourage change in that area. Be approachable and learn to listen. Sometimes these days in a world that is racing along we need people to listen, not necessarily with a goal to provide answers, but to just hear what's being said. Solutions often come from that simple act.

## Who is your most memorable role model and why?

I have a huge admiration for Mary Wollstonecraft as a writer and philosopher. In 1792 she was stressing the importance of women having an education equal to men. I try and promote the importance of education whenever I can.

#### Marc's story:

I was born in Barcelona, Spain and studied law at the University of Barcelona. I moved to London in 2002 after finishing my law studies (even though I always wanted to be an actor!) in Barcelona to start a Masters Degree in International Business Law in London. During my studies in London I worked in a couple of West End theatres as an usher. This was one of the best personal experiences I have ever had. I was studying in the morning and working at the Albery Theatre (now Noel Coward) and the Donmar Warehouse. I spent a total of almost 3 years working in the West End. That is when I decided to take acting lessons in London and write my own scripts. This was a great time. I met so many people involved in the theatre and the arts and I learnt so much.

However, while trying to be an actor in London, I also needed to pay my bills so I found a job as a paralegal at a City law firm within the Insurance and Reinsurance Department. This is how I ended up in Insurance!

#### How does your environment make you feel involved and included?

I have always felt that Beazley had an inclusive, collaborative and safe environment that supports respect and equality for everyone regarding of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. Since the first months, I felt I could be myself and I have actually been myself without fear of being discriminated against. Beazley's environment has made me feel comfortable enough to be out to everyone and being able to develop my career.

#### What are your ideas for improving inclusion in the workplace?

Beazley didn't have an LGBT+ network and I believed it was time to set up one. We are in the process of setting up PROUD@beazley LGBT+ Network. Every company needs an LGBT+ network for visibility, inclusion, support and commitment to the LGBT+ community in and outside work. We need to show all employees and prospective employees that we are an inclusive and diverse company which promotes a safe environment and cares about its employees and the community.

Every time I started a new job, I had the fear of being discriminated against, fear of exclusion, fear of not having career opportunities. This is very stressful and no one should feel this fear anymore. We need to work together to avoid that fear.

#### How has the business been improved by LGBT+ people bringing the best of themselves to work?

Employees are more proactive when they are out at work and feel more comfortable and themselves. As I said earlier, when your work environment allows you to be yourself, you are more confident, motivated and efficient. Being inclusive and showing it, makes a company more profitable.

## Marc Martin

When your work environment allows you to be yourself, you are more confident, motivated and efficient. Being inclusive and showing it, makes a company more profitable



HEAD OF SPECIALTY LINES  
WORDINGS

beazley



# Marianne Skinner

Being out at work makes a huge difference to me to be able to come into the office and be able to chat about my life the same as anyone else.



REAL ESTATE UNDERWRITER



## Marianne's story:

I'm relatively new to both London and insurance, having joined Zurich's general management graduate scheme in 2015. Since completing the scheme in 2017, I've been working as a real estate underwriter in London, which is both challenging and a lot of fun.

## What factors allow you to bring your full self to work?

It's actually very hard to pinpoint. I've been fortunate to work with a lovely group of sensible, non-prejudiced people, who make being myself at work very easy. Knowing that I have the support of my colleagues also means that I feel comfortable. There is definitely room for some improvement in the industry. Small touches in offices would help let someone new know that it is a welcoming environment, for example rainbow ally lanyards are a really nice touch that some companies have adopted. I also think internal company networks could be better advertised during recruitment.

## What was your first motivation to be out at work and how has being out most positively influenced your experience?

I was determined that after the headache of coming out as a teenager I wasn't going to allow myself to get back into that situation. I've been out since the start of my career. For me, I can't imagine not being out at work; it makes a huge difference to me to be able to come into the office and be able to chat about my life the same as anyone else.

## Do you have any advice for someone who isn't out at work yet?

You are not alone in this. It can be incredibly daunting and quite lonely. Speak to someone you trust, whoever that might be, so that you're not struggling by yourself. It's also completely your decision to come out or not. If you're not ready then that's okay too. But when you are, I guarantee there will be so many more people who will be ready to support you than you'd ever have expected.

## What do you do on a day to day basis to be a positive role model?

I'm not a high profile member of the insurance industry, and so my platform to be a traditional role model is limited, but I always try to be open, genuine and approachable. If seeing me around, or being able to talk to me about LGBT+ life, could have even a small impact for one person then that's enough for me. I also try to do what I can to support any LGBT+ initiatives happening in the industry.

## What advice would you give to someone who wishes to be a good role model?

I personally think being a role model is something that happens naturally through your actions. You have to be genuine, find something you really believe in, and do your best to fight for that, then I think you'll become a role model without realising.

### Mark's story:

I've always worked in and around the motor industry since leaving school. I started as an apprentice and my initial career progression was forced by redundancy! I moved into the commercial vehicle industry, where I progressed from Fleet Leasing into Commercial Vehicle manufacture, ambulances and just about anything specialist, with or without wheels on it.

For the last 16 years my career has been in the Insurance sector, but as with many claims based roles. It's very much one foot in Insurance and the other in the Motor Industry. My progression has been fed by my inquisitive and tenacious nature. I now see my career as not only keeping myself the top of the game with my technical knowledge, but to also pass on my knowledge to the next generation. For this reason, I have taken on Education and General Council roles in the Institute of Automotive Engineer Assessors. I am one of the few 'out' LGBT+ members.

### How does your work environment make you feel involved and included?

AIG have been a real breath of fresh air. Their employee induction introduced me to STEP, AIG's Employee Resource Group for LGBT+ staff. For the first time in 30 years of working, I felt open enough to be completely honest in sharing my sexuality with others. The events and the networks it has opened me up to have really given me confidence and has enabled me bring my whole self to work. It also introduced me to Link, which has been a great networking tool, proving that I'm not the only gay in the village!

### What was your first motivation to be out at work and how has being out most positively influenced your experience?

One moment especially sticks out: I took a call from a fleet engineer of a large customer of my previous employer. I was asked if it was true I was gay (or to be exact, is it true I'm a F\*cking poof). After asking for the question to be repeated, my response was positive: "Yes I am" That person then asked if I was ashamed of myself.... I said "I was certainly not but was he?!" Nothing more was ever said.

### What do you do on a day to day basis to be a positive role model?

I'm proud to show the AIG STEP laptop sticker and tent on my desk to show I'm am proud of who I am and that AIG support that. I'm far more open to outside suppliers and customers. In a recent meeting I actively corrected someone when they asked "does your wife share your passion for classic cars?" The person was very apologetic, but it was important not to pass it by. Others in the company hear my responses and I hope it gives them confidence to be so too.

# Mark Wells

I was asked if it was true I was gay (or to be exact, is it true I'm a F\*cking poof). I vowed that I would never be perceived as being ashamed.



AUTOMOTIVE MOTOR ENGINEER



# Pamela Thomson Hall

Role modelling is key and showcasing role models in a safe environment is something we need to do more of



MANAGING DIRECTOR OF  
INTERNATIONAL

  
Willis Towers Watson

## Pamela's story:

I have been lucky enough to work for leaders who have valued and sponsored me based on my ability and not my gender. Their trust and confidence in me doing the right things means every day I come to work to do a job, and making it my own, knowing I have this backing. Even so, confidence and courage still play a huge part in me being myself at work and I work at it every day. As a woman in (historically) a man's industry and workplace, I have learned techniques that get my voice heard and make my messages impactful. Those have stood me in good stead throughout my career so far.

## What was your first motivation to be involved with the LGBT+ community? How has this most positively influenced your experience?

I was immersed in a diverse team on all fronts but as a manager became shockingly aware of the complex web of lies and subterfuge of a colleague who had hid their true self at work – out of fear, out of family loyalty, out of shame. For complex reasons, I found myself having to respond to this colleague's request to join in their pretence – in supporting this I struggled initially to understand why it was necessary. Why in this day and age you wouldn't be yourself. What a loss of time and waste of effort. Through this colleague and others I developed a deep understanding for the hidden challenges. It's easy to be seen as a minority or different as a woman in a man's world and work to correct. Not so in the complex world of LGBT+ issues.

## How has the business been improved by LGBT+ people bringing the best of themselves to work?

The commercial dividend from having a diverse and inclusive workforce is hard to measure but easy to feel. People are more energised and actively engaged in everyday business activities, generating enthusiasm and creating an innovative environment that people want to be part of. Clients feel it and we feel it. From walking into our main office of 4000 people in London and standing in the lift, we see and hear the diversity that has been developed; it is being remarked upon and we owe that in large part to our visible leadership sponsorship of LGBT+ and other diversity initiatives and activities.

As part of our global Pride campaign - #BeYouatWTW - our focus was on creating a culture at work where everyone can be themselves and their best. In 2017 we introduced a UK Gender Transition policy to support and embrace colleagues who are considering gender transition or already in the process. We are committed to having a culture at work where everyone can be themselves regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

## What advice would you give to your younger self?

Trust your instincts and focus on the things you can change – build on your strengths, and don't get too distracted by your weaknesses.



### Mickey's story:

I started life at Zurich as an information analyst, but I've always held a candle for graphic design. I decided to make the move into this and eventually started working as a freelancer. After having my son, I had a radical career change and joined the internal communications team, finding my niche as a graphic design and creative specialist. Switching to something I felt passionate about gave me the opportunity to examine what else I was passionate about, and that's when I started working with our LGBT+ network, GLEE.

**What factors allow you to bring your full self to work? How does your environment make you feel involved and included?**  
Zurich is very open and vocal about our Diversity and Inclusion commitments, and our employee networks are very well supported. Chairing the network allows me to have conversations with people that I wouldn't otherwise meet, and I've been fortunate to be supported to develop those relationships. I'm able to travel to other locations to meet people within GLEE, and my managers have always been able to support me in allowing me the time to develop the network.

**What was your first motivation to be out at work and how has being out most positively influenced your experience?**  
I'm bisexual and married, in an opposite sex relationship. I also have a kid. This makes coming out an 'event' for me, as I can't casually come out by referring to my partner, as to the outside world I look totally straight. I wanted to challenge the assumptions we make based on a person's current relationship status. When I started getting more involved in GLEE it was a great opportunity to come out more widely, and hopefully it makes people stop and think about the assumptions they make about others.

**Can you describe the moment you realised you were a role model?**

It was after filming a video about inclusion with our company CEO, which was shown to all employees. I realised that if I could find a way to get my voice into the boardroom, despite being an ordinary working mum – not a manager, not someone with power – just someone with passion, then surely I could inspire others to speak just a little louder about what they care about.

**What are you doing outside of your organisation to be a good role model?**

As a mama, I'm trying to make sure that my son sees me making a positive change in the world. We support our local and national LGBT+ organisations by attending events and rallies, and I also offer my time and skills as a designer to help out local groups – most recently helping promote the Hampshire Pride parades in Winchester. I want my son to see that we all have a voice, and it's important that we use it.

## Mickey Elliott

When we truly start to see people as people, and no longer judge or pigeonhole by gender or sexual orientation, I think we'll start to see massive change for everyone



**GRAPHIC DESIGN AND CREATIVE  
CONSULTANT**

 **ZURICH**  
INSURANCE

# Annette Andrews

Remember that you can never truly stand in anyone else's shoes.

## Anette's story:

In short I have lived and worked all over the world. I only came to live in the UK in my early teens – going to a boy's boarding school near Cambridge. I was one first girls to go into the school. I was different as I had moved from Jamaica – I had a Jamaican accent, never worn a school uniform let alone shoes and I had been home schooled before I arrived in the UK, so had not spent time with groups of other children in a close knit environment. For the first time in my life I was exposed to some shocking behaviour – it was very lonely / alienating and I changed so I could conform and blend in. I could not be me. I was still different when I went to University but the difference there was that I met and became very close friends with others that were different too: Many that were more comfortable with who they were than me but who accepted me for who I was. Many were exploring their sexuality and being able to be themselves for the first time in their life. It was very eye opening for me but also what turned out to be one of the most supportive environments. It taught me a lot about unconscious bias, the value of authenticity and true friendship. It also opened my eyes to a just how judgemental some people can be and the damage this can do. It also gave me strength and insight to be true to what I am and to know that allies are key for all of us.

## How does your environment make you feel involved and included?

I work with team that I have built and developed – it is my other family. That means I feel a huge sense of responsibility and pride. Also great accountability.

## How has the business been improved by LGBT+ people bringing the best of themselves to work?

I'm an HR Director so of course I am going to say that the more open and authentic we all are then the more of ourselves that we bring to work. If we can create an environment where we can actively support and encourage people to be themselves then we enhance our ability to attract, develop and retain talent. Plus reduce the stresses and strains associated with someone not being able to be authentic. For me personally – it just makes sense that it adds more to all we do

## What advice would you give to your younger self?

Remember that you can never truly stand in anyone else's shoes .....



HR DIRECTOR

**LLOYD'S**  
LLOYD'S OF LONDON



# The Insurance Institute of London

Chartered Insurance Institute

Working together supporting inclusion and diversity

**PRIDE**

MARSH & McLENNAN COMPANIES



The diversity of our people is a fundamental pillar of our culture and,  
we believe passionately, our success.

SOLUTIONS...DEFINED, DESIGNED, AND DELIVERED.





# Pauline Miller

When people can be themselves they are more engaged, more productive and happier at work and at home.



HEAD OF DIVERSITY  
and INCLUSION

**LLOYD'S**  
LLOYD'S OF LONDON

## Pauline's story:

I am a single mother with two adult children. I am the first person in my family to go to university. After a work experience stint at the London Stock Exchange at age 14, I was dead set on working in HR. After graduating, I started out my professional life in training and development before moving into Diversity and Inclusion over 10 years ago.

## What was your first motivation to be involved with the LGBT+ community? How has this most positively influenced your experience?

I've been an Ally since 2005/6. When a group of LGBT+ colleagues and Allies wanted to launch an LGBT+ network, I was inspired to support it. Their stories that were shared at our opening event, especially that of Sarah Weir, had me hooked! Helping to set up the LGBT+ network was one of my early steps in moving into the field of Diversity and Inclusion and I've not looked back since.

## Can you tell us how the business has been improved by LGBT+ people bringing the best of themselves to work?

I am in the very lucky position to engage with colleagues at all levels across the organisation. When people can be themselves they are more engaged, more productive and happier at work and at home. Seeing non-LGBT+ colleagues take the time to learn about the barriers and speak up for their LGBT+ colleagues makes our business a better place for everyone.

## Do you have any advice for someone who isn't out at work yet?

I understand that coming out at work is a personal journey and for some can be a difficult next step. My advice would be to start by seeking support from someone you trust, a close colleague or a mentor for example and/or join a network like Link so that you can build a support network around you.

## Can you describe the moment you realised you were a role model?

I sit on an advisory council for a UN Foundation project and in 2014 I travelled to Ethiopia to meet women and children refugees. It wasn't until day 3 of our 5 day trip that I realised I didn't need to be a celebrity or a life-long campaigner to make a difference to the girls and women I met.

## Who is your most memorable role model and why?

Nelson Mandela, he embodies the very spirit of humbleness and greatness. I visited his home in Johannesburg and the prison in Robben Island a few years ago and learnt of the suffering he and many others endured, but he never gave up and fought each day for peace and harmony.

**Prashant's story:**

I'm new to the insurance industry. I've been working at QBE since November 2016, and I came in as a Graduate. I studied Earth Science at university

**What was your first motivation to be out at work and how has being out most positively influenced your experience?**

I talk to my colleagues far too much to be able to keep up a lie, so I pretty much automatically came out. I don't feel like I would've been able to make natural connections speaking to people in the workplace if I was holding back a part of myself.

**Do you have any advice for someone who isn't out at work yet?**

I'm sure people are worried about the negative aspects/reactions of their colleagues. The way I see it, it's equally important to be aware of any negativity so you can deal with it, rather than not knowing what you're dealing with.

**Can you tell us how the business has been improved by LGBT+ people bringing the best of themselves to work?**

I don't see how someone could perform at their best unless they're happy and comfortable at work.

**Can you describe the moment you realised you were a role model?**

I was probably a little concerned that it would come across as smug to refer to myself as a role model. I spoke to a friend and she responded with all the ways I am a role model. I am part of the Link committee and also part of the QBE Pride network or speaking at an events.

**What advice would you give to someone who wishes to be a good role model?**

Be friendly and welcoming. Act on anything you notice in the workplace that isn't inclusive (even if it means just bringing it up in conversation), and create more opportunities that don't discriminate.

**What do you do on a day to day basis to be a positive role model?**

It is important to understand the different struggles people face and not judge them. Be open to discussions in a friendly open manner.

**How has the Link network helped you?**

I've been delighted to meet everyone I have at all the events. I've spoken to such a wide range of people, some with similar backgrounds to me and others very different

# Prashant Mahendran

I don't see how someone could perform at their best by hiding part of themselves.



**CATASTROPHE RISK ANALYST**



# Rose St Louis

Understand what is  
important to you and  
find the courage to  
act upon it.



**HEAD OF STRATEGIC  
PARTNERSHIPS**



## Rose's story:

I'm the second daughter of Caribbean immigrant parents. Initially the four of us lived in a one bedroom flat in north London then spent most of my life up until the age of 18 in Bedfordshire until I left to study Public Administration and Management at the University of Kent.

I've worked in Financial Services for over 20 years and my first job was telesales for Endsleigh Insurance for six months and then I spent the next eight years working as a financial adviser. I completed my professional qualifications and won a Young Financial Adviser of the Year award. I've worked in asset management and outsourced investment processing in senior roles running teams. I joined Zurich in June 2015 and I am currently Head of the Strategic Partnerships team, a Trust Executive for Zurich Community Trust and a spokesperson for the company regularly commenting on savings, insurance and pensions for Zurich.

I'm a strong campaigner for greater diversity and inclusion chairing Zurich's Women's Innovation Network (WIN), which helps to grow and nurture in-house talent which has over 700 members across the UK of which 22% are men.

## How has being involved with the LGBT+ community most positively influenced your experience?

I am a diversity champion so I believe in fairness which stems from my own intersectionality and is far reaching so being involved with the LGBT+ community is simply part of what I believe. My diversity is visible (black female) so I have had to react to people based on what they see and what they believe. Being involved in the LGBT+ community has given me an appreciation of a managing something that is non-visible and in some instances personally crippling, and therefore made me think on how I communicate to diverse audiences.

## Do you have any advice for someone who isn't out at work yet?

Understand what is important to you and find the courage to act upon it. You are who you are and you should be proud. People who are not supporters have little or no place in your life. Find your 'tribe' and be who you authentically are and 'your people' will appear.

## What do you do on a day to day basis to be a positive role model?

I go about my business in a Rose St Louis way. I stay true to my values and am clear about my objectives. At work I have successfully found a role where I can align my personal goals to the business goals, so I feel confident in what I am doing. How I do it is just as important as it is my intention to create a brand which individuals aspire to and want to emulate. I try to ensure that my 'what' and my 'how' are equally authentic and things to be proud of.



### Samantha's story:

I was brought up in the North East of England in a time way before the wonders of the Internet. Everyone around me seemed to believe that I was male however this was not how I felt. I ended up following a traditionally male dominated engineering path leading me to a career in the offshore oil and gas industry. I became so good at playing the part that had been assigned by others to me that over a period of time I became an Offshore Installation Manager, the highest position attainable in the offshore environment. However I was not being authentic, ultimately my true self surfaced and with support I transitioned and brought my whole true self to the fore. I transferred my skill set to the London insurance industry enticed by the promise of global travel offered by my current Global Risk Engineering role at Marsh. After hiding my true identity for so long the chance to travel, meet people, experience other cultures whilst offering clients the benefits of my engineering knowledge, feeling valued as my true self is liberating.

### What was your first motivation to be out at work and how has being out most positively influenced your experience?

Having been hidden for so long the thought of being my self was a dream which for a long while I thought was unattainable. I lived a fractured life, almost two discrete lives, my work mask and my personal face therefore I was never bringing all my passion and energy to my workplace. This over a period of time creates mental health issues which can impact upon performance, I overcame this fracture by, with the help of allies, finding the strength to overcome the programming of my upbringing, realising being me was not unacceptable, I had to value myself and by doing so everything seemed to fall into place.

### Can you tell us how the business has been improved by LGBT+ people bringing the best of themselves to work?

People from minorities have fought personal battles and overcome obstacles which whether they realise it or not have given them strength, problem solving skills and perspective. When these characteristics are truly included within business the diversity of thought vastly improves outcomes, positively impacts the bottom line and helps people develop a feeling of belonging which assist recruitment and retention.

### What do you do on a day to day basis to be a positive role model?

I am authentic, visible, vocal and always have time to listen to others. I don't have the answers but I am willing to both share and learn. My passion is to help others be the best versions of themselves they can possibly be. Being involved with developing PRIDE@Marsh in conjunction with the Committee, Community members and Allies, assisted by the Marsh D&I team, has been extremely satisfying, and together we have brought some wonderful ideas to life.

# Samantha Jayne Nelson

Communicate more openly and search out authenticity, friendship, support.



RISK ENGINEER ENERGY



# Sarah Booth

"Be yourself"  
We can be anything  
and a successful  
career is ours for the  
taking.



SENIOR RISK MANAGER

beazley

## Sarah's story:

I'm from Glasgow and spent the first few years of my working life there in a call centre. I decided to study risk management at university and like many of the risk management degree alumni I made my way into insurance.

## How does your environment make you feel involved and included?

I think most would agree that we are in an industry which has historically been very male, white and middle class. I identify as female and I had a very working class upbringing so there could have been challenges for me. Thankfully I work for an organisation that has moved on quite significantly from the traditional status quo so I've never felt like I couldn't be myself or didn't have a voice here at Beazley.

## Do you think there is improvement needed? What are your ideas?

We should always strive to improve. The work is never done. Until every organisation in the corporate world has diversity at every level then improvement will continue to be needed. And even when we get there, we need to remain engaged in the topic so we don't go backwards

## What was your first motivation to be involved with the LGBT+ community?

I have several people close to me who are part of the LGBT+ community. I've been privy to some of the challenges faced by those individuals – at work, at home and during their education simply because of their sexual orientation. To me that's a massive injustice.

## How has this most positively influenced your experience?

Seeing some of the changes in recent years has been the most positive thing for me. People I personally know beginning to feel as though barriers to them coming out are being removed, allowing them to be open about their lives and relationships.

## Can you describe the moment you realised you were a role model?

I joined our diversity and inclusion steer co 18 months ago. We all have a part to play in inclusion. I think it's easy to assume that someone else is taking care of it. That it should sit with HR or the leadership team and those were my thoughts until I got my position on that committee. But actually, we are ALL responsible and that makes us all role models. We all need to display good behaviours in order to continue to drive an inclusive culture.

## What advice would you give to someone who wishes to be a good role model?

Sometimes people do or say something you don't think is quite right. Call them out. But call them out supportively. We are all on a journey and all at different stages. Create the inclusive culture but do it in a way that helps educate and not alienate – that's the spirit of inclusion. Not everyone understands that certain behaviours or language can be harmful.

### Stephanie's story:

I grew up and gained my qualifications as an Occupational Therapist in Australia, but have now lived and worked in London for almost 14 years (yes, despite the weather!!). I met my – also Australian – husband here 8 years ago and we have a 2-year-old son and baby number 2 due in April. I've worked for Swiss Re for almost 10 years in the area of life and health disability claims, where my team's focus is on helping our clients to help people recover and get back to work. What I really enjoy about my job is the need to be innovative in how we Link best practice in the medical and rehabilitation fields, into the business environment of re/insurance claims. Helping people at a low point in their lives is at the core, and the creativity comes in how best to do this in a way that's equally clinically sound, customer-focused, and cost-effective.

**What was your first motivation to be involved with the LGBT+ community? How has this most positively influenced your experience?**

One of my team members and another department colleague are proactive founding members of our company LGBT+ network. I have gay friends and relatives. I wanted to become an Ally to visibly show my support for my colleagues, family and friends. It wasn't until I attended a talk from Stonewall that I realised it's not necessarily enough to be accepting of the LGBT+ community (as this isn't necessarily visible to others) – it's more helpful and powerful to be a proactive and vocal supporter.

**What do you do on a day to day basis to be a positive role model?**

I aim to be true to myself, although I admit I definitely have room to improve on always bringing my own true self to work. I try to treat everyone fairly, and I don't think that this always means treating everyone the same – I think it means treating each person as an individual with unique needs and preferences.

**How did you feel coming to your first Link event?**

Link Christmas Party 2017: I felt proud to be supporting colleagues who I respect, and also to be part of a community that is doing such positive work in the industry. What I also really like was how encouraging and supportive the group was: the welcoming atmosphere was palpable. There was a banner that struck me, with words along the lines of, "It takes more energy to be someone you're not than someone that you are." (The Barberfellas were also great entertainment!).

# Stephanie McCahon

Striving not to perpetuate stereotypes – I've noticed how easy it is to slip into doing this, whether it's relating to sexual orientation, gender, disability, religion, or ethnicity



CLAIMS MEDICAL MANAGER



Swiss Re



# Steven Thomas Copsey

Being out has allowed me to really bring my whole self to work

## Steven's story:

I started working in the insurance industry 12 years ago at a small brokerage in the Yorkshire Dales. I left my first role after six years, started working at Aon in Leeds in 2013 and moved to Arthur J Gallagher in 2015 and in 2017 I began working at Jelf.

## What was your first motivation to be out at work and how has being out most positively influenced your experience?

Working in my first job in a small business within a small local community, everyone knew. Moving to Leeds, I went back into my shell and I didn't truly feel comfortable with my sexuality until 2015 when a visit from Aon Risk Solutions then CEO Jim Herbert made me realise that I was working for quite an inclusive organisation. I can be my whole self at work, which in turn has really allowed my career to blossom. In the last five years I've gone from being shy and nervous to having one to one meetings with some of the biggest names in the industry.

## Do you have any advice for someone who isn't out at work yet?

Contact a role model. Everyone in this guide is here for a reason. There's a good chance we'll know someone personally within your organisation, someone we can connect you with, to help make things just that little bit easier. They might be able to act as a confidante, a mentor or even a friend.

## Can you describe the moment you realised you were a role model?

There wasn't really a moment for me. I have so many people in my life that I look up to in one way or another, it's only natural that some other people are going to look up to me. It's the way of the world. We all influence each other to some degree and I think that makes every single person I know a role model.

## What are you doing outside of your organisation to be a good role model?

I'm a Co-Chair of Link, LGBT+ Insurance Network. I sit on Marsh's National Inclusion and Diversity Committee as well as Marsh's Pride Committee. I recently qualified as a mental health first aider and I sit on the council of the Insurance Institute of Leeds as their Diversity Champion.



SENIOR BROKER

**Jelf**

### Suzy's story:

Born and raised in Bristol, on to University in Birmingham. Berlin via a brief stint in Istanbul, moved to London, then back to Bristol, now living and working in York.

### What was your first motivation to be out at work and how has being out most positively influenced your experience?

I went back in the closet after university and while I was working at Friends Life. We were bought out by Aviva in 2015 and the Aviva Pride group was advertised on the intranet, where Friends Life had had nothing before. When I came out I was amazed by how relieved and engaged I felt, and how positive (or neutral, which is also good) peoples' responses were.

### Can you tell us how the business has been improved by LGBT+ people bringing the best of themselves to work?

Not only do LGBT+ people perform better once they're out of the closet, but a critical mass coming out creates an environment where straight people can talk about their mental health, or relationships, in more nuanced ways, and feel accepted as well. It's been a step change for the whole organisation.

### Do you have any advice for someone who isn't out at work yet?

It's not up to you to bear the burden of keeping a secret. Put it out there and let other people spend their emotional energy processing it. Their reactions are their problem. You have the right to speak your truth and get on with your one wild and precious life.

### Can you describe the moment you realised you were a role model?

When I was able to tell people things they didn't already know. For a surprising amount of my family, friends and colleagues I'm the first out bisexual they've met. Giving answers to genuine questions has been instructive for others in getting a bisexual perspective, and also for me in understanding typical gaps in others' knowledge.

### What do you do on a day to day basis to be a positive role model?

I'm an ally to the other letters of the LGBT+ alphabet, and to all diversity strands. Championing visibility and acceptance for anyone.

### How has the Link network helped you?

I've heard speakers from Terrence Higgins Trust on two occasions at Link events, which has really helped me understand more about HIV and AIDS. It motivated me to run a World Aids Day event at Aviva, where we had an incredible HIV positive speaker and activist.

# Suzy Robinson

It's not up to you to bear the burden of keeping a secret. Put it out there and let other people spend their emotional energy processing it. Their reactions are their problem



**BUSINESS ANALYST**

 **AVIVA**

# Theresa Farrenson

Trust yourself more.  
Fear less. Be more  
demanding. Do not  
settle. Keep learning.  
Laugh lots.



TECHNOLOGY BUSINESS  
PARTNER

**Aon**

## Theresa's story:

I have the honour of being Co-Chair for Link as well as being a Technology Business Partner at Aon. I started working at a software house, Sherwood, providing IT systems to insurers and brokers. I worked my way up through the IT structure and ended up as a business relationship manager for Aon Affinity, National and Global and Specialty business units. Aon started on its own diversity and inclusion journey, starting business resource groups. I volunteered to be a founder member of Aon Pride Alliance and after a few years became co-chair and chair. Four years ago, I had the great honour to step up into a leadership role. One of my proudest moments remains the launch of Link Up North, not that I can lay claim to any of its successes, that lies at the feet of it's fabulous leaders, but it is the first step of achieving one of my original goals: To provide a professional networking opportunity and community for those not working in London.

## How does your environment make you feel involved and included?

A key factor is that Aon provides a positive culture. There are frequently stories that celebrate the events and successes of Aon Pride Alliance on the company intranet. Additionally, with initiatives such as Dive In, you hear the conversation across the insurance sector and know that it's not just your own firm that is striving to be more inclusive.

## What was your first motivation to be out at work and how has being out most positively influenced your experience?

I came out pretty early in my first job: I was part of a graduate scheme and amongst peers so it was relatively easy. As soon as I knew I was accepted as myself there was no reason to move to a job where that might be threatened, so I just asked at subsequent interviews. I won't lie, it was scary and 20 years ago was not a particularly usual question for a candidate to ask in an interview but it did mean I went confidently into further roles.

The latest thing I'm grappling with is that of my gender identity. Through finding out more of the various identities and have recently come to recognise myself as gender non-binary. It is weird to find myself coming out all over again.

## What do you do on a day to day basis to be a positive role model?

I have always tried to lead by example: To own things and ensure they are delivered. I also take care to give credit. By being open and honest and visible I try and be a positive role model to everyone. By seeking opportunities to improve the reputation of the insurance industry I hope to be a good role model for new entrants.

## What do you think Link can do in the future to best serve the new generations?

Keep fresh and keep listening. Keep giving opportunities to anyone who wants to give their energy and ideas.



### Yvonne's story:

I've worked in financial services for over 20 years, after starting my career as an academic researching criminal law in Germany. I left academia to work as a capital markets lawyer at the Wall Street law firm Cleary Gottlieb and at the investment bank Goldman Sachs. My British partner and I had meanwhile moved to London.

My next move was into policy and regulation, by joining the Financial Services Authority, the forerunner of the FCA, working in policy and public affairs. I joined the ABI in 2006 and since then have led our work in different areas.

### How does your environment make you feel involved and included?

As a member of the ABI's five-person executive team, I am in the position to shape our culture to make sure that our environment is welcoming to all, and as a representative organisation, we can help set the tone for our sector.

### Do you think there is improvement needed? What are your ideas?

In our society as a whole, there has been great progress for LGBT+ people in the past two decades or so, although financial services have not exactly been in the vanguard of change. But now progress is being made, particularly when businesses realise that their bottom line is affected by a lack of diversity. It is fantastic to see some of the ABI's members, such as Aviva, leading the way on this issue. And groups such as the ABI's partners OUTstanding and Link have a key role here in educating companies about the "return on equality" that comes from investing in LGBT+ staff and in embedding genuinely inclusive cultures.

### Can you tell us how the business has been improved by LGBT+ people bringing the best of themselves to work?

There is obviously a psychological cost to LGBT+ people who feel unable to be themselves at work - and that will affect their productivity too.

Employers also gain hugely by employing those who are outside a mainstream culture - an ability to see beyond societal "norms" can lead to fresh insights that are greatly beneficial to organisations.

Finally, if employers want to attract young talent, having a diverse and inclusive culture is key - millennials in particular look for diverse and inclusive employers.

### Can you describe the moment you realised you were a role model?

Probably when younger members of staff confided in me, at social events. It made me realise that they have benefitted from a senior member of staff being out, and supportive, at work.

### What advice would you give to someone who wishes to be a good role model?

Be true to yourself and be kinder to others than necessary - everyone you meet is fighting some kind of battle.

# Yvonne Braun

A life lived in fear  
is a life half-lived.



ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH  
INSURERS (ABI)

||| ABI

# Martin Chalons- Browne

Link has helped me with guidance on starting up an internal network in my company.



RISK MANAGEMENT  
EXECUTIVE



## Martin's story:

I started off in industry after graduating in Engineering, and then morphed into risk management and insurance. Eventually this led me into more strategic risk management and business resilience work, which tends to be my main focus now.

## What was your first motivation to be out at work and how has being out most positively influenced your experience?

I was frustrated to be leading a double life and having become an expert in diverting conversations away from my personal life when everyone else didn't even need to think about that. Some positive experiences and relationships encouraged me to be myself.

## What factors allow you to bring your full self to work?

It's tough because I am frequently travelling and meeting new people/clients. There is little visibility of LGBT+ people at work – although it's all perfectly accepting. I would like there to be visibility in the insurance industry as a whole. The insurance press can help with that regarding recruitment. Insurance is a fascinating industry with so many exciting career opportunities. We need to broaden our appeal and get onto career radar of potential recruits. Working hard at diversity and Inclusion will help that.

## Can you tell us how the business has been improved by LGBT+ people bringing the best of themselves to work?

Those that are fully able to be themselves are much more productive, less stressed internally, and contribute fully at work.

## What advice would you give to your younger self?

Don't be intimidated, there is nothing wrong with you! So stand up for yourself and be your true happy self.

## What are you doing outside of your organisation to be a good role model?

I sing in a Gay Chorus, which also does Outreach work in schools; I vigorously challenge homophobia wherever I encounter it.

## Who is your most memorable role model and why?

Sir Ian McKellen. He co-founded Stonewall and is an all-round amazing human being.

## How did you feel coming to your first Link event?

Relieved and really pleased to find an organisation for the insurance industry.

## How has the Link network helped you?

Met some useful contacts who helped me with guidance on starting up an internal network. It is also good to have a work-related LGBT+ 'safe space' for socialising.

#### James' story:

I started working in the legal industry in 1995, joined RPC in 2004 and in recent years have led the creation of RPC's transactional and advisory insurance business. I joined the Link Committee before the formal launch in 2013, and succeeded Erik Johnson as a Co-Chair in 2015.

The Link Committee and network includes so many able, dedicated, talented and good people. Guides like this wouldn't be possible without so many people giving freely of their time and skills. My focus has been on joining up Link with corporate supporters and influencers across the market, and continuing to challenge the Committee on what role Link plays in the market. We've also been working to ensure that the Committee has a succession plan and new members continue to join. Fresh ideas and energy are vital. And, of course, I attend as many events as possible – perhaps the most rewarding aspect of being involved is making friends at all levels across the market.

**What was your first motivation to be involved with the LGBT community? How has this positively influenced your experience?**

To some extent, we all stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before. That's certainly true in my case. My former partner, the late Robin Reilly, was a founder member of Link. He also co-led Accenture's LGBT network (in that time, Accenture became #1 in the Stonewall WEL). Robin pushed me to become involved with Link in early 2013, and also to engage more fully in D&I within RPC. He was correct to say that I needed to use the privilege of my leadership position to help to foster a more inclusive and enabling environment for others – and to be visible in doing so. In doing so, I've learnt a huge amount, been inspired by a good number of people, and made many friends.

**Can you describe the moment you realised you were a role model?**

It was when I was told I needed to do better! I had a position of leadership and influence that I wasn't using as fully as I might. I've tried to remedy that ever since.

**What do you do on a day to day basis to be a positive role model?**

First and foremost, remember one is always dealing with people. Everyone matters. Show respect and do what I can to help others. Many of us in the market are in incredibly fortunate positions.

I speak about Link, LGBT+ and D&I matters regularly. Through my work as well as through Link I spend a lot of time with people right across the market. I try to involve them in what we are doing and support their efforts in return.

## James Mee


To some extent we all stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before.



HEAD OF CORPORATE  
INSURANCE

**RPC**





"Link has helped to join the dots across companies and make me feel a little bit less alone."

"Link is a brilliant signpost for anyone newly joining the insurance industry."

"The friendships and connections I've made through joining Link have literally changed my life."

"The network has helped me understand other people in the LGBT+ community."



"Involvement with Link has for me been educational, enjoyable, social and has driven me on to further challenge myself and others to ensure we always consider different perspectives."

"It's harder going to any occasion on your own – but the Link event culture is very warm and friendly."



"Link has the ability to connect the younger generations with the more experienced people."



"We are all still human and everyone needs somewhere to turn at some time."

"Link does a great job of keeping people connected."

"Link was a great sounding board for us as we launched our LGBT+ network in London and enabled us to learn from other organisations."

"The Link network has been a big help to me. It's a great forum to share ideas and experiences. I've also been lucky enough to meet great people."

"My first Link event was around business travel considerations for the LGBT+ community. I found the community incredibly welcoming and was really impressed by the cross section of the industry."







On behalf of the Link Committee, we would like to thank our four sponsors for their generosity in supporting the Link 5th birthday event and the Role Models Guide.

Since Link formally launched 5 years ago, we have been fortunate to have attracted significant financial and in-kind support from a range of organisations. The sponsors for the 5th birthday event and this Role Models Guide have shown generosity to Link a number of times – too many to mention in some cases – during those 5 years. Their support of Link clearly fits with their wider ambitions in relation to I&D and we are blessed indeed to have them as Link partners. Our thanks go to them at this time, and also to all of our other generous sponsors and supporters over the past 5 years. We've achieved what we have, together.

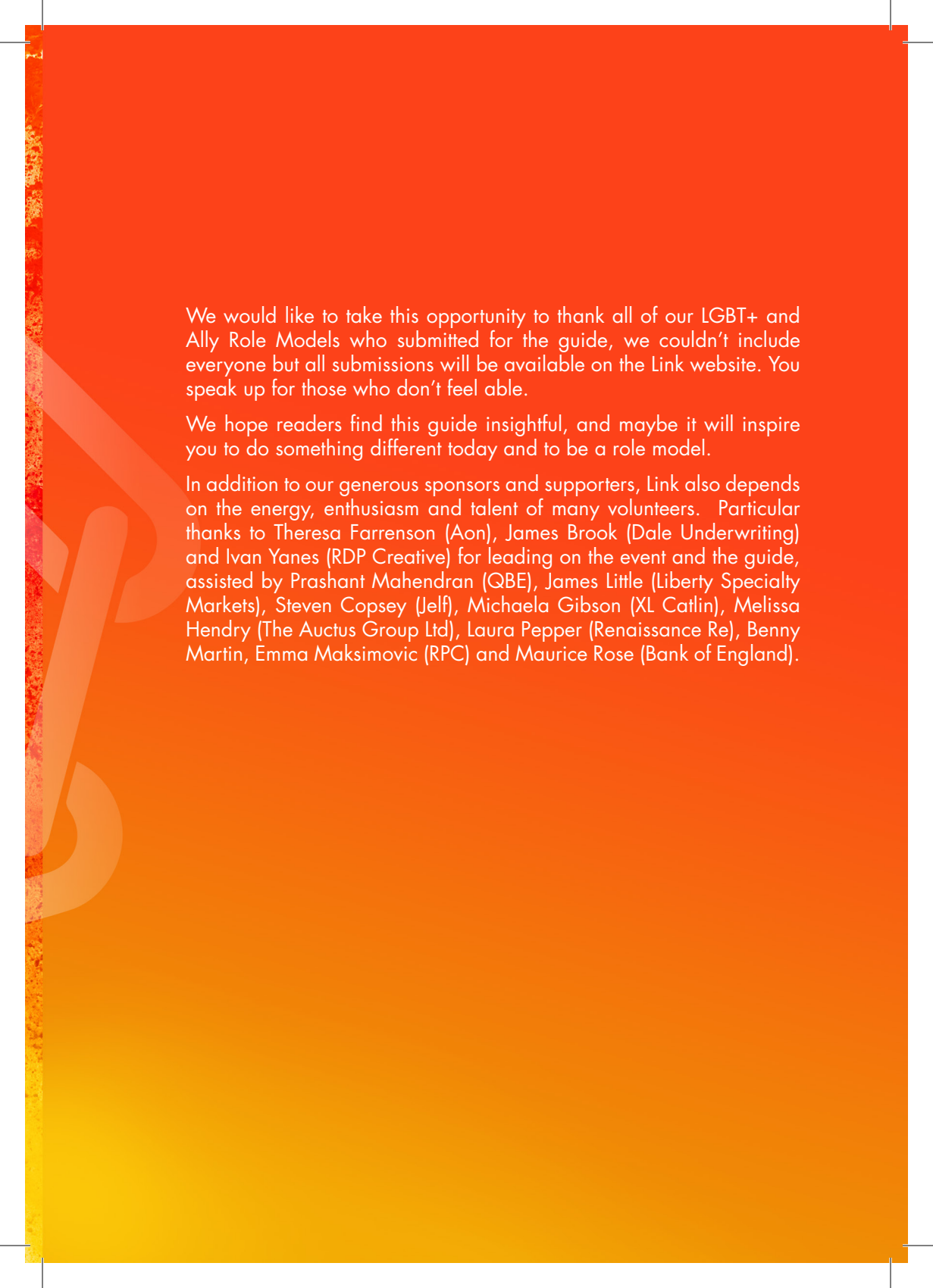
It risks being invidious singling out market figures for their support over the years, but it would be remiss not to mention three in particular who have always been there for us: Dame Inga Beale, Dominic Christian and Paul Jardine. Thank you.

One of Link's undoubted strengths is its appeal across the market – in London first and now in Leeds and Manchester also. As is clear from many of the entries in the Role Models Guide, there is much to do – and for Link to do – to keep driving and shaping the change and the environment we all desire.

Finally, a note of thanks to all of our members who support the many events – thank you for doing so and we look forward to seeing you at many more. Don't forget to bring your friends!

**James Mee**  
Co-Chair





We would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our LGBT+ and Ally Role Models who submitted for the guide, we couldn't include everyone but all submissions will be available on the Link website. You speak up for those who don't feel able.

We hope readers find this guide insightful, and maybe it will inspire you to do something different today and to be a role model.

In addition to our generous sponsors and supporters, Link also depends on the energy, enthusiasm and talent of many volunteers. Particular thanks to Theresa Farrenson (Aon), James Brook (Dale Underwriting) and Ivan Yanes (RDP Creative) for leading on the event and the guide, assisted by Prashant Mahendran (QBE), James Little (Liberty Specialty Markets), Steven Copsey (Jelf), Michaela Gibson (XL Catlin), Melissa Hendry (The Auctus Group Ltd), Laura Pepper (Renaissance Re), Benny Martin, Emma Maksimovic (RPC) and Maurice Rose (Bank of England).





Everyone needs help and support at some point in their lives: whether it's for mental or sexual health, to address concerns about alcohol and drugs or just someone to talk to, the following charities are here for you:

**London Friend**, supporting the health and mental well-being of the LGBT+ community in and around London.

**Terrence Higgins Trust**, supports people living with HIV lead healthy lives and fighting against HIV, improving the nation's sexual health.

**Stonewall**, campaigns for equality of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people across Britain.





[www.lgbtinsurancenetwork.co.uk](http://www.lgbtinsurancenetwork.co.uk)

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Designed by **Ivan Yanes**, RDP Creative.  
[ivan@rdp-creative.com](mailto:ivan@rdp-creative.com)

