

I'm In! *This is my story*



“*I came out in 1982. I have witnessed homophobia and encountered hostility and prejudice several times in my career. Never here’.*

Adam Greaves
Partner

Q: Tell us a little bit about yourself.

A: I was born in Birmingham, but I am not a Brummie. My parents were living in Sutton Coldfield at the time for my father’s job, but both of my parents grew up in South London during the war. After two years, they returned to the south, to a village called Westerham in Kent, where Winston Churchill lived, and where they still live more than half a century later, and which is where I am from.

After passing my eleven plus test, I won a place to Sevenoaks School, the leading public school, paid for by Kent County Council. Although from a middle class family, it is probably true to say that almost all the other students came from much wealthier backgrounds. It was eye opening to see how many were dropped off to school in Jaguars and Rolls Royce’s – the ones who did not board at the school when I arrived on the bus.

I was the first person in my family to go to university and attended Essex University, which had just launched a new law department. I was one of 36 students in the year and there were students there from across the UK and internationally, from all walks of life. Some were straight from school like myself, and others had worked for a few years and seemed old to me, being at least 25!

Q: What does Diversity & Inclusion mean to you?

A: Diversity and Inclusion for me means to accept all people regardless of whether they are gay or heterosexual. It is not about being judged on things that are irrelevant to your role and having the confidence to be yourself, which makes life interesting. I hope that we can get to a point where young gay men no longer struggle because of their sexuality and are able to live great and successful lives, so that maybe in the future we can see a flamboyant gay man being able to be the Managing Partner of a firm such as CMS. It is also about being open to learning new things and I am genuinely interested in learning about different races and religions, which I have learnt from my friendships in and out of CMS.

Q: Is there anything you have done or do differently from your colleagues that you feel people should know about?

A: I have some experience working for a US law firm, where I believe D&I is discussed more openly. American firms are a lot more politicised and appreciate the differences in people and do not brush it under the carpet.

Q: If you were not a lawyer, what would you be?

A: I developed an interest in becoming a vet, although when I realised that getting A grades in three science A-Levels was going to be unlikely, I decided instead to become a lawyer, for which there were no specific A levels required, so I studied French, English and Economics. I am still interested in economics and in another life, I would be interested in becoming an Economist.

Q: How do you balance your life? What compromises have/do you have to make?

A: It is important for me that I manage my time effectively as my son struggles with his mental health. As a result of his condition he is unpleasant most of the time, which has also caused myself and his mother to suffer. We are regularly engaging with mental health services, which has helped me to gain a greater understanding that people who need help have to be willing to be helped for it to work.

Q: How do you feel you are perceived in society and how would you like to be perceived?

A: As law is a very conservative profession, I am probably perceived as being flamboyant, which may get on people's nerves and I am known to tell coarse jokes. I would like to be perceived as a confident person and a great lawyer and Partner in the firm. I believe we should solely focus on what is relevant as far as the work is concerned and to be seen first and foremost as a person and not a gay person.

Q: Do you believe that CMS is a diverse and inclusive company – how could it improve?

A: I believe CMS is definitely on the right track in building a truly inclusive culture – we need to keep doing the right things and bring everybody on this journey so people who are less engaged can play their part as well.

