

# I'm In! *This is my story*



“*I am originally from South East Poland. I was first generation in our family to go to university. Studying abroad didn't seem like a realistic option but I have now been living in the UK for 15 years.*”

**Marcin Patrzala**  
Associate

## **Q: Tell us a little bit about yourself**

**A:** I am originally from South East Poland and moved to West Poland in 2001 to study Computer Science and Econometrics. In 2002, I moved to Aberystwyth to study International Politics with Law for one year. My wife often asks me why I chose Aberystwyth University and jokes that it was because it was the first on the list! The truth is that the course had a fantastic reputation and a representative from Aberystwyth University had visited my university in Poland. My sister and I were the first in our family to go to university and studying abroad definitely did not seem like a realistic option. However, the university's representative inspired me and made me realise that it was something I could pursue.

My time at Aberystwyth University, whilst a steep learning curve, was a time of fun where I formed many lifelong friendships. I was only meant to be there for a year but as I was enjoying the course so much, I withdrew from my degree in Poland and completed my degree in Wales. I liked the law element of my degree and so, following some work experience, I started my GDL at the College of Law in Birmingham in 2006.

Anyone who has completed the GDL knows that it is an intense year but I was lucky enough to meet supportive fellow students, including my future wife! I went on to study the LPC and worked as a Paralegal before completing my training contract at a regional firm in Worcester. In 2013, I moved to a larger regional firm and moved to CMS in 2015, specialising in Real Estate.

I have lived in Bristol for over six years and love the vibrant and diverse nature of the city. Outside of work, I am teaching myself to play the saxophone, which is very much an ongoing project! I also play football and other sports with my colleagues, and travelled to Europe on a few occasions to take part in the CMS World Cup.

**Q: What does diversity and inclusion mean to you?**

**A:** Diversity and inclusion means treating everyone equally regardless of who they are and where they come from. We should not let differences get in the way of how we treat one another and always be sensitive to one another. It is essentially about being meritocratic and ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to progress and succeed based on merit.

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

**A:** An engineer, computer scientist or economist.

**Q: How do you think you are perceived by colleagues?**

**A:** I hope that I am viewed by my colleagues as approachable and easy to talk to, as well as being friendly, helpful and welcoming.

**Q: Is there anything you do differently that you would like your colleagues to know about?**

**A:** I am a wellness ambassador in the firm and a male ally for the Women in Business network. Having been an immigrant to the UK, I am conscious of others' experiences and try to help those who are alone or feel undervalued or unsupported.

**Q: Do you think CMS is a diverse and inclusive firm, and what could it do to improve?**

**A:** CMS is diverse and inclusive, but there is always room for improvement. I think, for example, that we need to ensure all employees across the UK benefit from the same opportunities, no matter in which office they work.

