

ELBA

A Day in the life of...

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MY ALARM GOES OFF...

When working from the office, I leave for the new Canary Wharf office at around 7.30am, arriving an hour later. The dress code at my company is quite relaxed in that I only need to wear a suit and tie when visiting clients. We started working from home a couple of days a week even before the COVID-19 lockdown. I personally prefer to be in the office, but since March we all got asked to stay at home and I've got used to it: I can sleep a little longer, and get lots of useful stuff done like washing and make more exciting dinners!

I'M RESPONSIBLE FOR...

The team I look after is responsible for speaking to clients and making sure any problems are quickly resolved. We also need to tell our management about how clients are feeling about the services our company offers. This means anything from taking too long

to answer e-mails or making too many late payments. My team is based in four locations around the world so I need to make sure everyone knows what to do, and is correctly motivated.

I JOINED THE PRIDE & ALLIES NETWORK BECAUSE...

When you're spending at least 40 hours of your week in the office with colleagues and clients you want to be able to be yourself, and not have to worry about what people think of you, as it can impact your work. For instance, if someone asks me what I did on the weekend, I don't want to have to lie about it. Some people aren't yet ready to tell people about their personal lives because they don't feel it is safe to do so at work.

What Pride & Allies does, is give a voice to people who are from different communities so that

people they work with can better understand what their experience is like. We think this then makes work life much better as you can be yourself.

BEING PART OF THE NETWORK INVOLVES...

I've been in the network for over seven years in various roles. I'm now a co-chair which means I share the responsibilities of creating the events and initiatives for the network, as well as organising meetings. I'm also part of the global Pride



Financial
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& Allies network which aims to ensure all Societe Generale offices around the world share the same activities and get support from top management in Paris.

THE NETWORK PROMOTES INCLUSIVITY BY...

Being the voice of people who identify as being from the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender + (LGBT+) community. Our main aim is to make sure anyone who works at our company feel they can be themselves. We do this in a few ways, such as: inviting speakers to come and talk about being supportive to LGBT+ people; hosting after-work social events with other banks; ensuring staff can voice their experiences about being LGBT+ to senior managers in an informal setting.

THE BEST THING ABOUT BEING IN THE NETWORK IS...

What I really enjoy is not just being in Pride & Allies, but actually part of the wider conversation with other networks. At Societe Generale,

networks have been setup to celebrate people from all communities, including women and people from Black and Asian minority backgrounds. Understanding and raising awareness of the challenges faced by different groups of people is really important in making sure everyone can thrive.

WHEN I WAS YOUNGER, I WANTED TO BE...

A chef! I've always enjoyed creating things, and certainly didn't have any aspirations to work in an office, and certainly not a bank! What changed was realising that there are so many different jobs in a bank – many of which don't even need maths. I wasn't strong at numbers so this put me off. It was only when I found out from a friend what his job was (working in projects) that I started to investigate more. My advice: you can do anything if you set your mind to it!

MY ROLE MODEL GROWING UP WAS...

A few different people. My dad gave me a good grounding about hard work and doing the right thing by everyone. He worked in the British Library and has always been well-regarded by everyone.

My mum came to London as an au pair and learned English from scratch, then raised me and my sister, took care of running the house, and later worked over 20 years in the Swiss Embassy. I'm really impressed with how she didn't let anyone tell her she couldn't achieve her goals.

AFTER WORK I...

Having more time at home during lockdown has allowed me to be

more creative at dinner: I've tried lots of new dishes including meatballs and some spicy pasta sauces!

Outside of work I'm also part of the Proud Lilywhites, which is a group for fans of Tottenham Hotspur who are from the LGBT+ community. We organise meet ups before games and have even been around Europe for away games in places like Amsterdam, Madrid, Florence and Cologne.

TO YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE PART OF THE LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY.....

The most important message is that you have the right to do any job you like – no matter what your background. No matter where you work, you can only do your best if you feel your best. That means not worrying what people might think, because you'll know that your colleagues will support you no matter what! I also think there is no job out there that someone who is LGBT+ can't do – so don't feel you can only do one kind of job – the world is your oyster!

