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WHAT HAS IT BEEN LIKE STARTING A DEGREE APPRENTICESHIP DURING THE PANDEMIC?

I started the course in late September 2020 and the learning has consisted of entirely online learning with lectures and seminars being delivered quite often by Zoom. There were some teething issues at the start with internet issues and getting used to the online format, but they were soon sorted.

Most of the other apprentices on the course with me are also employed by various local authorities, although 5 apprentices do come from the same local authority. Unlike attending a University course pre-pandemic, it has not been as easy connecting and networking with the other apprentices, however, given that everyone is in the same boat we have adapted and tried to do the best we can.

HOW DOES A DEGREE APPRENTICESHIP WORK?

In terms of formal assessments at University, I have no exams this year, but I submitted my first formal assignment last week with another assignment due next week, so the holiday break and council closure was a busy period. It has been around 6 years since I was last at University, so I am nervous about getting used to assignment writing and the results, so fingers crossed for the next couple of weeks!

HOW DO THE COURSE AND YOUR JOB WORK TOGETHER?

The course itself has been interesting and has supplemented my work in the Planning Team at the Council. The Degree Apprenticeship model has also meant that I must proactively identify opportunities for expanding my knowledge and skills set within the wider department, not just allowing me to remain comfortable within my specific role. Whilst this has meant that I get a better level of knowledge and experience across the wider department, there are some challenges that must be addressed. However, I have found that planning out the opportunities early on as well as the support of the management team in Development Management has significantly helped me to overcome the obstacles I have faced.