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WHAT WERE YOU DOING BEFORE YOUR APPRENTICESHIP?

Previous to being accepted into the apprenticeship programme, I worked in a local florist. I started early on while at high school, working on a Saturday. Shortly after completing my A levels, I was offered a full-time role. However, I realised that floristry wasn't for me and although I enjoyed using my creative skills, I wanted more. I knew I wanted to work in an academic function and carry on my education.

WHAT MADE YOU APPLY FOR AN APPRENTICESHIP ROLE?

When I was thinking about what I wanted to do, I was encouraged to apply for an apprenticeship as I was advised that they are an excellent way to gain access to a company or a sector you want to work in. With the potential that if you work well and become a valued member of the team it will put you in a strong position when there are permanent job opportunities. As part of my journey, this was true.

WHAT WAS THE APPLICATION PROCESS LIKE FOR YOUR APPRENTICESHIP?

To start my journey, I signed up to the Gov.UK website to keep track of all the available apprenticeships at Tendring District Council. Once my applications were submitted, as part of the interview process, I was required to complete an English, Maths and IT exam. This was to assess my current level of knowledge. Soon after, I entered the next stage of the process – interviews. I was unsuccessful on two occasions, however, I asked for feedback and used this to improve for future interviews. I liaised with Career Track (my training provider) on a regular basis, which continued to help and develop my skills. The Internal Audit Apprenticeship was published on the website, I completed the application and was fortunate to be offered an interview. I had success, enrolled on the course and this is where my learning began.

WHY DID YOU CHOOSE AN APPRENTICESHIP IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT?

I particularly wanted to work in Local Government. I believe when public services are provided effectively, they make a true and measurable impact on individuals and communities. Being able to make a difference and leave a positive mark somehow, is a benefit and not just working for commercial profit-making reasons. This was a key influence when deciding which sector to work in.

WHAT MAKES APPRENTICESHIPS A GOOD DEVELOPMENT ROUTE FOR YOUR CAREER?

Before becoming an apprentice, I did not know what an Internal Auditor was or what the department performed within the Council. This soon changed, as the resources, guidance and support from my team helped developed my understanding. As part of the apprenticeship, I was then given the opportunity to develop my education further and achieve a qualification in ICT level 1 and 2. The course enabled me to learn transferable skills, both personal and in the work place. I was able to attend workshops to develop my learning while interacting and socialising with other apprentices which was a great networking system.

WHAT IS YOUR ROLE AT TENDRING COUNCIL NOW?

I completed the apprenticeship programme in roughly 18 months and shortly after, a full-time position as an Auditor was available. I had the opportunity to apply for the role and take part in the interview process. I wanted to ensure I tried my best prior to the interview, therefore I attended a number of meetings with Career track to talk through interview skills. This stood me in good stead, as I was able to take these skills with me and in turn, I was successful.

My learning hasn't stopped here, I have been given the opportunity to achieve another qualification – Internal Audit Practitioner Level 4. As part of this course, I attend monthly sessions with a tutor from the training organisation and take part in the Institute of Internal Auditor (IIA) workshops in preparation for a final exam. I will then transfer this learning into my professional practice and undertake audits efficiently.

WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE BENEFITS OF AN APPRENTICESHIP ROUTE?

As a reflection, taking the apprenticeship route provides so many opportunities to develop your career. I am one of the lucky people who enjoy their job and without being an apprentice, I wouldn't be in this position.