



**Hope Smith**  
**Senior Contracts & Service  
Development Officer**  
**Suffolk County Council**

## **WHAT MADE YOU APPLY FOR AN APPRENTICESHIP ROLE?**

I wanted to improve my skills and develop in my career. I chose to do an apprenticeship because I could continue in my current role and career while gaining a higher education qualification. I spoke to our HR Talent and Skills Advisors who explained the process and what apprenticeship would most suit the qualification I wanted to do.

## **HOW DO YOU BALANCE WORKING AND STUDYING AT THE SAME TIME?**

I try and manage my workload so I can take half a day each week to study and complete coursework, which really works for me and my manager has been so supportive to ensure I get the study time I need.

## **HOW HAVE YOU FOUND THE EXPERIENCE OF BEING AN APPRENTICE IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT?**

It has allowed me to develop my skills and improved my confidence whilst being able to apply the apprenticeship learning to the job. Undertaking the apprenticeship course within local government has helped me in gaining a promotion to a more senior role.

## **WHAT DOES YOUR TYPICAL DAY LOOK LIKE?**

A typical day in the role of Service Development and Contracts is daily support to our provider market for both home care and care homes. Support to our operational social work teams and elements of service development which supports our local neighbourhood teams. Supporting and following up on safeguarding and quality concerns alongside contract management activity. During covid 19 the role has extended to support providers alongside government guidance and support in business continuity situations where needed.

## **HOW HAS COVID-19 IMPACTED YOUR ROLE/APPRENTICESHIP?**

I still completed my end point assessment in my Level 3 and then started my Level 5, while still being heavily involved in the COVID-19 response.

## **HAVE YOU BEEN INVOLVED IN SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCILS RESPONSE TO COVID-19?**

As I am part of the Contracts & Service Development Team this has meant being heavily involved in the COVID-19 response. On a daily basis, we are supporting providers to help them manage outbreaks and maintain safe & quality services within Care Homes & Home Care settings.

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

It never feels too much on top of your current workload and each tutor I have had has been so understanding and really helped push me to achieve the best possible results in the apprenticeship qualification and in myself. The apprenticeship has allowed me to develop my skills and confidence by applying what I have learnt to my role in SD&C.

## **WHAT MAKES APPRENTICESHIPS A GOOD DEVELOPMENT ROUTE FOR YOUR CAREER?**

Completing an apprenticeship has helped me grow as a person, to undertake a more senior role with line management responsibilities and in my job role. It has given me confidence to aspire to higher management roles.

## **WHAT IS YOUR BIGGEST ACHIEVEMENT SINCE BECOMING AN APPRENTICE?**

I have become a valuable member of the team and gained an enormous number of new skills which have been supported and developed by both the organisation and the apprenticeship programme.

## **HOW WOULD YOU PROMOTE 'WORKING FOR A LOCAL AUTHORITY' TO OTHER POTENTIAL APPRENTICES?**

Would absolutely recommend, it never feels too much on top of your current workload and each tutor I have had has been so understanding and really helped push me to achieve the best possible results in the apprenticeship and in myself.