



Jessie Harald
Housing Apprentice
Stevenage Borough Council

WHAT MADE YOU APPLY FOR AN APPRENTICESHIP ROLE?

I joined the council in September 2020. I chose to go down the apprenticeship route as it allows you to work whilst gaining a qualification. I am a school leaver and university didn't seem like the right choice for me at that point in my life. As an apprentice, I spend four months with different departments learning and gaining as much knowledge from each department as I can. So by the end of my apprenticeship I should know the inner workings of multiple departments. I have just finished my first placement and am onto my second one.

HOW DO YOU BALANCE WORK AND STUDY AT THE SAME TIME?

With the apprenticeship you also get to do a qualification, I am doing my CIH level 3. So far I have done one assignment. Doing this qualification you get 20% of your work-time to complete it. I take every Monday as my study day as this has been plenty of time to complete the assignments. I have a great tutor who has really helped me in finding my feet with these assignments. I can use my everyday work as part of my evidence for my qualification which is great!

DO YOU HAVE ANY ADVICE TO OFFER ANYONE CONSIDERING AN APPRENTICESHIP ROLE IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT?

I thoroughly enjoy working at Stevenage Borough Council and I can't wait for the next year of my apprenticeship. If I had any advice for someone deciding whether to do an apprenticeship or not I would say just go for it! University isn't for everyone and many people feel that it is the only route you can go down, as I used to feel the same, but an apprenticeship is a great alternative! In terms of the future honestly, I don't know where I want to go, but then at this age, many people don't. All I know this that the skills I am learning in my apprenticeship will help me wherever I end up!

WHAT IS YOUR BIGGEST ACHIEVEMENT SINCE BECOMING AN APPRENTICE?

I have been at the council now for five months, during this time I have been mainly working within the Specialist Support area. One of my biggest achievements as an apprentice is running the Special Accommodation side of Specialist Support for a week, it was a tough week taking over the mailbox but it taught me invaluable skills and I had lots of help from the team. The most rewarding part of my apprenticeship so far is working in the field within the schemes and talking to the elderly who have been lonely for a long time, so it is nice to see a smile on their faces.

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

I think one of the big benefits of the apprenticeship route is that you can learn and study at the same time, gaining vast experience within the field which most people don't get to do. Experience is always a valuable asset to have when applying for jobs so it can really kick start your career. The council have been amazing in terms of getting me settled in and started. During these times it can be so hard to feel included especially if you are new and they have done a superb job at keeping me involved with everything!