CASE STUDY

Daniel Andrei
Level 3 Business Administration
Apprentice
Thurrock Council

WHAT MADE YOU APPLY FOR AN APPRENTICESHIP ROLE?

I am always keen to develop my knowledge and skills and I saw the Helpdesk Apprentice role as an opportunity to study, but also to play a part in supporting users of systems in Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care. I know that anything I do to make their use of systems more efficient will allow them more time to work with those vulnerable adults and children they support.

WHAT IS YOUR ROLE AT THURROCK COUNCIL?

I work at Thurrock Council as an Information System Support and Data Quality Officer in the Performance Quality and Business Intelligence team (PQBI). I am also a student at the University of Bedfordshire, studying a BSc Software Engineering.

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

Our team enables stakeholders to access accurate information and intelligence to help them make strategic decisions. We also solve any queries or issues that arise, either internally, or through the involvement of external suppliers. Over the last 11 months, I have completed over 1,500 requests and solved complicated issues. I also recently created a dashboard in our 4me system, which enables clear sight of current open issues and the date/time raised to help myself and my colleagues prioritise our time accordingly.

HOW HAS COVID-19 IMPACTED YOUR ROLE/APPRENTICESHIP?

I started two days before the first Covid-19 lockdown. Initially, it was difficult to feel part of the team as I was working from home and the systems I was going to be working on were complex and hard to understand. It felt like a nightmare at first, but I have learned to be perseverant and resilient in this learning journey and I have built good relationships because of my eagerness to learn and hard work.

WHAT'S BEEN THE MOST REWARDING PART OF YOUR APPRENTICESHIP SO FAR?

Because of my hard work and my adaptability to integrate into the team and at college I won the internal Apprentice of the Year Award 2019/2020. I was pleased that my efforts had been rewarded. But it's a reward in itself to meet so many new and interesting people.

WHAT IS YOUR BIGGEST ACHIEVEMENT SINCE BECOMING AN APPRENTICE?

I have really developed my problem-solving skills. One of the analysts was having error problems when trying to build in COVID-19 changes to a project they were working on. I volunteered to look at this and succeeded in solving the problem. We pay to for any external supplier time needed to support tasks we are not able to resolve in-house so my colleague and our Strategic Lead were really pleased. I was glad I could be useful and I became more confident with the system after this. As a result, I have been assigned to help with this implementation.

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

This apprenticeship has opened new doors in my life. My previous job was repetitive, but I now work in a remote "office" environment which is completely different. One big advantage of this apprenticeship is that I have gained lots of experience in Business Administration and I have been exposed to the Thurrock Council business culture. Now that I have seen first-hand what benefits an apprenticeship provides, I've urged all my friends to try it.

WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO ACCOMPLISH CAREER-WISE IN THE COMING YEARS?

I am proud of working in the PQBI team and look forward to working here in the future and would like to make a career here at Thurrock Council alongside such supportive, smart and hardworking people.

FEEDBACK FROM DANIEL'S STRATEGIC LEAD:

I have received feedback from my Strategic Lead saying that she has been extremely impressed with my proactivity, eagerness to learn and the speed in which I have been able to learn new things and expand my knowledge base. Also that my commitment to improving other's learning through training sessions to a fellow apprentice and documentation of processes has been a great asset to the team. Feedback: "Well done you – I'm very impressed."