

CASE STUDY



Apprenticeships

National Apprenticeship Week
7th to 13th February 2022

Bradley Farthing-Kiff, Business Administration Apprenticeship (Level 3), West Suffolk Council

My name is Bradley Farthing-Kiff, I work for West Suffolk Council as a Trainee Business Administrator for the Planning, Regulatory and Growth services. I joined West Suffolk Council on 13 January 2020 as a Business Support Apprentice until 1 January 2022.



Why did you choose an apprenticeship?

I chose the apprenticeship route because I wasn't sure what I wanted to do as a career path, with going to West Suffolk College for four years prior, undertaking courses in Business, Tourism and Events Level 1, Business Level 2 and Travel and Tourism Level 3. After that I was still unsure of what I wanted to do. I don't have any regrets with choosing this path as this will still give me a qualification in something else. Never did I think I would be working for my local authority, but I am glad I am.

My manager Dawn Hale said Bradley is a valued member of the team who has a positive nature and "can do" attitude.

What do you think are the benefits of an apprenticeship route?

There are so many opportunities to take advantage of as an apprentice. You can shadow different departments to give yourself a taster on what you want to do. Staff are always on hand for help and advice. I did a stint in retail for four years before applying for a job at West Suffolk Council. I worked in Matalan for two years and Waitrose for 2 years. Both of which I had responsible roles in, I gained some valuable experience with dealing with customers, telephone queries, overseeing checkouts. But this wasn't what I wanted to do forever.

How have you found the experience of being an apprentice in local government?

When fitting work time and study time into my working week, it was somewhat challenging with the workload and being in a busy department, but I managed to fit it all in. I just wanted to get as much study done as I could when I could. COVID made a huge impact on this, during the first lockdown I was able to do lots of studying as we were so quiet in the department but when we come out of the first lockdown and went into others, it was increasingly busy but I still managed to fit it all in as and when I could. I also suffer from ASD and Type 1 Diabetes, so having that on my shoulders to deal with as well as everything else - but it didn't stop me from carrying on.

What does your typical day look like?

My typical day starts with checking my emails, then prioritising work that needs doing first and I try to touch base with everything being full time. I seem to learn something new everyday and want to continue to learn new aspects of the job as it does interest me. By the time I leave I am tired but who isn't? I just love a busy working environment that changes each day, you never know what you are going to come into the next day.

What is your biggest achievement since becoming an apprentice at West Suffolk Council?

My biggest achievement in becoming an apprentice is getting that permanent role. I was also nominated for the West Suffolk Council apprentice of the year in 2020, I didn't win but it felt great getting that far. I also took two exams as part of my diploma for the course and scored very well. The most rewarding part of the apprenticeship programme is learning many new skills and overcoming challenges.

Why would you recommend an apprenticeship in local government to someone considering one?

I would recommend apprenticeships in local government to anyone because it's a great way to give you a taster on what you may want to do as a career option(s). You also get to earn whilst you learn too and gain a qualification at the end point. Also working for a local authority, you get so many perks such as an excellent pension, discounts at your high street stores, you can also work flexibly around you. I had to get used to working flexibly when I started here because in retail, I was always used to strict rota'd hours, but here it's very relaxed!

Do you have any advice to offer anyone considering an apprenticeship role in local government?

The advice I have for any apprentices wanting to pursue an apprenticeship with a local authority is to grab every opportunity that comes your way with both hands as opportunities like these don't come very often.

What do you hope to accomplish career-wise over the next five years?

I am pleased with how my career path is progressing, I am certain that I would like to stay at West Suffolk Council, so with this new permanent role I am in, I can explore different paths, I feel that I haven't been there long enough to decide what I want to do, but I am hoping to have a plan in the future!