

It's National Apprentice Week this week, so we've been celebrating the wonderful Hazel who has been our apprentice since September.

An Apprentice is a paid job where the employee learns and gains valuable experiences. Alongside on the job training, apprentices spend at least 20% of their working hours in a classroom with a college, university or training provider. It will ultimately lead to a nationally recognised qualification.

An apprenticeship includes:

- Paid employment with holiday leave
- Hands on experience in a sector or role that interests you
- At least 20% off the job training
- Formal assessment which leads to a nationally recognised qualification

Who can apply for an apprenticeship?

An apprenticeship is a great paid work opportunity for people over the age of 16 in England who are:

- Early in their career
- Looking to upskill in their current job
- Looking for a career change
- Not in full time education

Hazel is doing a Business Administration Level 3 apprenticeship with us, and we chatted to her about how it's going.

I'm really enjoying my apprenticeship so far. It's made me realise that I definitely want to work in health and social care, and I am already learning so many new skills that I'll be able to take with me into the future.

Why did you decide to take the apprenticeship route rather than going to university or seeking immediate employment?

I had to drop out of Uni a few years ago so an apprenticeship is giving me the opportunity to work within a sector I'm passionate about, while I learn things 'on the ground' to back up and expand my knowledge. It's helping me to build my confidence again.

It's giving me the opportunity to learn through experience; not just learning theory, but seeing theory in action.

What are your top tips for anyone thinking about an apprenticeship?

You need to find the right organisation for you. Don't just go anywhere. If you have an idea of where you want your career to head, seek an opportunity within an organisation that can help fulfil your apprenticeship but also point you in the direction you want to go.

I've been really lucky to land in EK360. They are very supportive and it's a relaxed, friendly atmosphere. I would recommend looking for an organisation that has an ethos and values that align with your own, it makes coming to work a lot easier!

Any surprises along the way?

I didn't realise how varied my role would be. Also, some things that I thought weren't very me, such as graphic design, I really love! It's definitely helped me to try out new things.

I didn't appreciate how quickly I would settle in. I was made to feel welcome from the moment I first stepped through those doors!

Best bit so far?

I wouldn't say that I have a particular 'favourite moment' as I'm just enjoying everything that comes my way. In a general sense, what I'm getting the most enjoyment from is being a part of a team where each individual genuinely cares about the work they're doing and making peoples' lives that bit better.

Have you considered an apprenticeship?

There are so many apprenticeship opportunities available. You can get more info here

<https://www.apprenticeships.gov.uk/>