



Kathleen at PCC

Who is Kathleen?

Kathleen is a Legal Degree Apprentices with Portsmouth City Council.

Kathleen's apprenticeship

I was originally recruited on a level 3 apprenticeship at Highbury College. I have now moved on to a level 6 and by the end of this, I will be a Chartered Legal Executive. I have been on this apprenticeship for 5 years and have worked in many different teams – I started off in property, moved onto contract law and I have been involved with prosecutions.

I did not go to college as I don't like the classroom environment and did not want to go to university. I like the idea of working, and a career, I like the apprenticeship because learn and can use what you learn in real life.

Soft skills Kathleen has developed

I have developed team building and independent thinking. The biggest thing is my confidence. I am not a confident person by nature, I have always struggled with that. Doing this job meant being surrounded by a lot of great people and being asked to do things that I would never volunteer for. For example, going to court makes me uncomfortable but I was told "this is part of the job, you have to get on with it". If I hadn't had that push, I never would have done it.

I think a lot of personal development is doing things that scare you or are out of your comfort zone. A lot of people are scared to ask for help but in an apprenticeship, you don't really have a choice. You need the confidence to ask for help – this is another thing I have developed.

Advice for applicants

Don't get too stressed. The nature of an apprenticeship is that interviewers understand that you are likely to be young, you're likely not to have had lots of real-world experience and they expect that. When you're answering questions, draw from everything – it doesn't necessarily have to be professional. Just be yourself; they want to know why you want to do the apprenticeship, what interests you and what sort of person you are so they can assess how you will fit into their existing team.

Hopes for the future

I have just finished the academic part of my apprenticeship, so I have to do another year's work experience and then I will qualify as a lawyer. I have just been given a permanent contract, so I hope to stay with the Council because it is a great place to work.