

NEW COLLEGE GETS IN ON THE APPRENTICE ACTION

After years of teaching apprentices from local companies, New College Swindon has decided to take advantage of its own success by taking on and training apprentices of its own. This autumn the College began offering vacancies in the accountancy, business administration, customer service and IT departments with an apprenticeship attached.

Leader of the College's Apprenticeship Programme, Leanne West, explained that potential apprentices usually approach the College in one of two ways - some have jobs already and have been sent by their employers and some need help to find an employer.

"We decided it would be great to offer vacancies within college as apprenticeships and benefit from our own success!" said Leanne. "It's a great opportunity for those students that prefer to be more hands on and not follow the traditional A level route. We have a high success rate and a large proportion of our students go on to do Advanced Apprenticeships or continue to improve their job skills in other ways. From the College's point of view, it has enabled us to attract some high-quality recruits"

One College apprentice is Anne-Marie Long, 18, from Swindon, who is studying for an NVO 2 in Business Administration, whilst working at College as a Business Administration Apprentice. Anne-Marie left school with 11 good GCSE results and began AS studies before deciding that, for her, purely classroom-based learning was not for her.

She said: "I realise now that I prefer to learn in a working environment, being more hands-on and practising the things I have learnt in a classroom straight away. Last year I was studying AS Levels and decided it wasn't the type of learning I preferred because it was simply writing notes from a board and revising these for an exam. I feel that doing an Apprenticeship has been far more successful for me - I am making more progress than last year and I think that I'll be able to find a job a lot more easily."



Anne-Marie is enjoying what she is doing so much that she fully intends to progress to levels 3 and 4 in Business Administration when she has finished her initial apprenticeship.

"I want to go as far as I can to further my skills in business because I believe that having the combination of both experience and qualifications will enable me to have a better career," she said.

John Chudley, South West Director of the National Apprenticeship Service, welcomed New College's decision to train its own apprentices. "Apprenticeships are an excellent way of training young people on the job and more and more organisations and businesses are now choosing to go down the Apprenticeship route," he said.

"I am delighted New College is taking on its own apprentices as well as training others. The benefits, for all concerned, are manifold - the college will gain from employing young people who are eager to learn and the apprentices will gain from training in a real working environment where theory can immediately be put into practice."

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