

# West Berkshire Business Insider Update

## Skills boosted by an apprenticeship

**TWO West Berkshire Council employees have said that they have learned new skills and boosted their confidence through an apprenticeship with West Berkshire Training Consortium (WBTC).**

Kate Toone started with WBC in 2008 in human resources and left to work in the IT department in 2016, before managing a separate project on secondment.

Last year she transferred to a permanent project manager role within adult and social care.

A Lambourn resident, she has just finished a Level 3 Team Leader/Supervisor Apprenticeship with WBTC and is progressing to Operational Departmental Manager Level 5.

The Level 3 apprenticeship gave Mrs Toone a mix of online and face-to-face learning opportunities partnered with off-the-job learning – with the latter forming 20 per cent of the apprenticeship.

She said: “I have gained knowledge, developed my existing skill set and increased the knowledge that I already had.

“It has given me the confid-

ence to be more ambitious, develop my career and look forward.”

Mrs Toone said she enjoyed off-the-job learning elements.

She shadowed meetings at work, that she hadn’t attended before, and she spent an afternoon observing a fellow apprentice – a civil enforcement officer.

She also enjoyed her monthly training sessions that began online during the pandemic and then moved to in-person at the WBTC offices in Newbury.

“West Berkshire Training Consortium have been really supportive,” she said.

“The sessions were very structured.

“Every session focused on a different topic.”

She added: “I really enjoyed spending time with colleagues from West Berkshire Council, but also people from other companies.

“We had a really good opportunity to network and interact and look at other people’s perspectives toward learning and talking about things.

“We supported each other, it was a nice group of people to be working with.”

Mrs Toone, who is also a



Shelley Curtis and Kate Toone at West Berkshire Council

mental health first aider with WBC, said it was easy to take up an apprenticeship with a West Berkshire-based organisation.

She said: “West Berkshire Training Consortium are really supportive of their learners and they really want you to achieve and succeed, which is important.

“I have been really supported by my West Berkshire Council managers as well.”

Also completing her Level 3 Team Leader/Supervisor Apprenticeship is 37-year-old Shelley Curtis.

The mother-of-two teenagers has been working at West Berkshire Council as a reablement coordinator for four

years.

As a part of her apprenticeship course she has been attending training sessions, shadowing people in management roles and learning about employment rights and law.

“The training consortium have been amazing,” she said.

“They made it [the process]

really smooth and eased you into it.

“They tell you what will happen and what is expected of you before you sign up.

“I had regular catch-ups with my tutor and she was always available if I needed her in between.”

She also took her Level 2 Functional Maths skills.

“I didn’t get my maths GCSE,” she said.

“So they have been really supportive with that.

“They were always there when I needed them and they broke things down into manageable sections.”

Mrs Curtis will also be progressing to ILM Level 5 Operational Departmental Manager.

She said: “When I first joined the council, if you had said in four years’ time you’re going to do your Level 5 I would have said no way.

“But this has been great, I have been eased into it and I have been very supported.

“I would really recommend it.”

For more information, contact employer and learner engagement officer, Rachel Eaves at [rachel@wbtc-uk.com](mailto:rachel@wbtc-uk.com) or call (01635) 35975 or 07922 426414.

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