

“Be confident, open-minded and remember that the interviewers were once interviewees!”

Introduction

Cornwall Council is the unitary authority for Cornwall (except for the Isles of Scilly, which has its own council). The Council provides a wide range of services to more than half a million residents, and is the biggest employer in Cornwall. It is responsible for schools, social services, rubbish collection, roads, planning and more. Dana has been an apprentice with Cornwall Council since September 2013. She supports the work of the Council by participating in and contributing to the delivery of services and projects allocated by her supervising manager. Dana is employed in the Communities & Organisational Development Directorate in the People Management, Development & Wellbeing Service which deals with the following areas; Employment, Reward and Diversity, Employee Relations, Resourcing and Safeguarding, Health Safety and Wellbeing, Learning and Development and Strategic Development and Organisational Development.

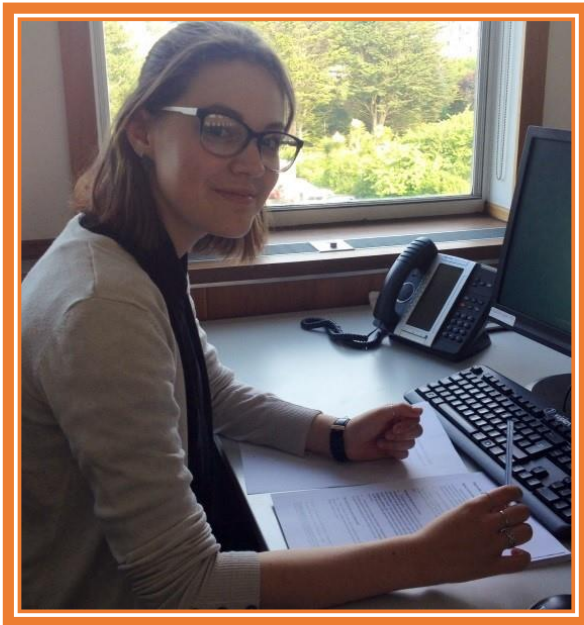


Image: Dana Varah, Apprentice HR
Safeguarding – Cornwall Council

How did you get started in your career?

As an alternative educational path from my A levels in College, I have always been interested in Safeguarding and I thought this Apprenticeship was a perfect opportunity to ‘earn’ and ‘learn’ whilst gaining a foothold in Safeguarding.

Can you outline a typical work day?

Our team in particular deals with DBS (criminal record) checks for schools and organisations so although it is very interesting, it’s also very busy. I deal with schools and external/internal individuals everyday via the phone or email providing customer service and advice and guidance.

What do you enjoy most about your job?

The fact that, no matter how big or small a task, I am, in some form, protecting, safeguarding and preventing a vulnerable adult or child against harm.

What skills are important for anyone wishing to start in your profession?

On the qualification front, it’s important to have a basic level of literacy, numeracy and IT. However, employers often look for communication skills, a willingness to learn, team worker, respectfulness and organisation.

What main personal attributes do you think is important for your type of job?

On the qualification front, it's important to have a basic level of literacy, numeracy and IT. However, employers often look for communication skills, a willingness to learn, team worker, respectfulness and organisation.

Do you have any tips or suggestions on how young people and adults can enter your industry?

Be open-minded, look on the main national Apprenticeships website and don't be afraid to go for something that interests you. What have you got to lose? If you get an Apprenticeship – brilliant, if you don't – then you just gain more experience and drive to go for the next one.

What career progression opportunities are available in your business/sector?

I started as a NVQ2 Business and Administration Apprenticeship with no guaranteed continuation job at the end. After working for a year and really enjoying my work, I was offered to carry on as a NVQ3 Apprentice and jumped at the opportunity. I think it goes to show that, if you are enthusiastic about a job and aim to grow in a business, there will be somewhere along the line; an opening to further your career whether this is in your current role or in a different department. The Council is a continuously changing organisation and there are always vacancies opening up which are available to all.

Why is it important for your sector to attract and train young people and new entrants?

To provide opportunities to the next generation.

What trends do you predict for your industry within the next 10 years? E.g. is it a growing market requiring more young entrants

The Council is currently going through a restructure which means although there are fewer jobs; there will be new roles and vacancies opening up which could mean more Apprenticeships.

General words of wisdom

Be confident, open-minded and remember that the interviewers were once interviewees!

Further contact/information

If you would like to speak to Dana further about her work at Cornwall Council as an Apprentice then please email her dvarah@cornwall.gov.uk

For further information on the work of Cornwall Council, or to view their latest vacancies visit <http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/>