

## The benefits of being an Apprentice



From Travel to Tots – how Kim successfully switched careers

**“Since leaving school I realise that you have to study if you want to get somewhere. Perhaps I should have done it at school, but I’m older now and realise what it takes to get on.” Kim Wills, Childcare Supervisor, Cannock House Day Nursery.**

**Financial necessity drove Kim to leave school at age 16, although she admits that it wasn’t a difficult choice.**

**“I needed to get a job and begin paying my way,” she says. “Although as I hadn’t enjoyed school and it was no hardship to leave after GCSEs.”**

### **A walk on the right side**

Getting a job wasn’t difficult either for Kim, now aged 20. She walked down her local high street and went into every shop to enquire about vacancies. When she asked the local travel agent for a job, they took her on and she stayed for 18 months.

“It was a good job and they offered me the opportunity to do an Apprenticeship in Travel and Tourism,” she said. “I recognised it was a good opportunity so I took them up on the offer and completed my NVQ Level 2. When I’ve finished I felt that I’d really achieved something of value.”

### **A change of direction**

Soon after she completed her Apprenticeship, however, the company decided to close the shop and offered her either a move to their shop at Eltham, or redundancy. It was an easy choice for Kim: She chose redundancy.

“The closing of the travel agent’s shop came at a good time for me personally,” she explains. “I’d always really wanted to work with children and having completed my NVQ2, and with some redundancy money to see me through, I decided to look for a job in a nursery.”

"I love working with young children, when they are just starting to walk and talk"

## Practical approach

With her usual, practical approach to finding another job, Kim visited the jobcentre and found a job at Cannock House Day Nursery close by. She went for the interview and was offered the job.

After two months, the nursery enrolled her as an Apprentice and linked her up with a training provider called Smart Training. Two years later and she hasn't looked back.

"I'm now completing my NVQ 3 in childcare," says Kim. "I attend Smart Training one Saturday a month – the same as for my NVQs 1 and 2, the only difference with NVQ 3 is that it covers subjects in more depth and is more time-consuming, but I do enjoy it. Perhaps when I've completed this I'll look at other relevant training courses."

## Come a long way

Kim admits to have come a very long way since leaving school four years ago with no career plans. She's now a Supervisor at Cannock House Day Nursery in charge of Apprentices who have just started their training.

"I love working with young children, when they are just starting to walk and talk. Helping them express themselves through art and other creative activities supports their development which is really enjoyable to observe."

## Learning in a practical environment

"I realise, now, that you have to study if you want to get anywhere, and I'm lucky to have found a job I enjoy and to have discovered that I'm also very capable of learning – especially when I can apply it in a practical environment."

"I'm happy and settled at Cannock House Day Nursery, so much so that my partner and I are saving up for a deposit on a home of our own."



If you would like further information about Apprenticeships in South London call the Apprenticeship Hotline on 0800 169 4824 or visit [www.apprenticeships.org.uk](http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk)