

When I was growing up I had ambitions to be a fighter pilot or an astronaut or something like that, so when I was really young I had lots of ambitions like lots of people at that time to do something like that, so I never really envisaged I would be working in a council or not even a Corporate Director. So some very different ambitions then but as you grow and as you get into work those ambitions change.

When I was going through school I sort of decided towards the end of my normal school career that I didn't want to stay on at sixth form, I wanted to get into work as quickly as I could, but I was quite academic, so at that time it was very similar to an apprenticeship, it was called a Youth Training Scheme in the 1980s when I was looking to get into work and I wanted to get into a position where I could learn but also work and effectively bring some money in as well, so it was the best of all worlds that I was looking at.

I started off in a council at Sedgefield Borough Council, where you learn very quickly the different types of jobs you can do in a council. What I learnt a lot was how to work with different people but it was also supplemented with a college and studying for vocational qualifications and it just gets you used to the world of work, it gets you lots of different things and as I've said you can go to college and supplement that with some sort of formal qualification.

I think in terms of Durham what we can offer, we are big council, we are the biggest council in the North East, one of the top ten councils in the country in terms of providing services and there is such a broad range of things you can do if you come to the council to take on an apprenticeship role with us. We offer services right across the whole gambit from children's services, leisure, the area where I work in terms of finance, legal those types of services and the opportunity is there to get involved in anything you really want to get involved in. When I started off I didn't think I would end up where I've ended up now but the opportunities I had, I'm sort of living proof you can start on an apprenticeship, get some really good experience and work your way right through the organisation. As I've said the opportunities in Durham are absolutely fantastic, it's a great place to work and we've got some really good opportunities coming up and if this is the thing for you there's probably no better place than Durham County Council to start your apprenticeship journey.