

As an apprentice research officer my role is to support colleagues who are researching different social issues (e.g. ethnic groups, environmental waste) within Sandwell. I receive the information that has been collected and format this onto specialist computer programmes so that it is understandable. I have also used the computer to help colleagues collect data for the research they are currently doing. Projects always have deadlines so the work can be pressurised at times. I enjoy looking at the data that has been collected and seeing the trends in different areas.

After my GCSE's I went to college to do A' levels. While studying I worked part time in a shop. This helped me develop a number of important job skills and improve my confidence. At school I was also a senior student; helping out at school events and parents evenings. When applying for this job I think both the subjects that I studied at school and my experience were important in helping me to get the apprenticeship as I was able to give actual examples to support what I was saying in the interview.

I am studying towards an NVQ 2 in Business and Administration. I am allocated office time to work on my portfolio, but I also spend about an hour a week on it at home. Additionally, I have completed internal courses in advanced excel, access, databases and interpreting data.

I am not sure what I would like to do in the future but I think the apprenticeship and NVQ will help me; as it will give me a recognised qualification and the actual work experience which many employers look for. It also shows I am willing to learn new skills and develop.