

Keep Young Talent in Haverhill Campaign

As part of ONE Haverhill's work on the Haverhill Community Budget a new Youth Skills Manager was appointed in 2013 to work with colleges and businesses in the town to set up more Apprenticeships and work experience places for our young people. The goal is to encourage local businesses to take on local home-grown talent and enable more young people to stay in the town by offering Apprenticeships. Apprenticeships help young people learn a trade on the job while being paid.

Find out more about ONE Haverhill's Keep Young Talent in Haverhill Campaign at www.onehaverhill.co.uk/apprenticeships

When Danielle Eady from Hundon left college 18 months ago she had no idea what she wanted to do for a living but an Apprenticeship at an independent estate agent in Haverhill has not only given her a career and training but she has just been promoted.

Danielle, 19, left Samuel Ward Academy and went to West Suffolk College for two years to do Sport. After leaving college she registered with the Job Centre but did not know which path she wanted to pursue. The Job Centre told her about an apprenticeship at Morris Armitage estate agent in Haverhill, run by husband and wife team Chris and Beckie Jai-Bahadur. Morris Armitage run an Apprenticeship scheme across their branches in Suffolk, Norfolk and Cambridgeshire at offices in Newmarket, Burwell, Downham Market, Cambridge, Kings Lynn and very soon Bury St Edmunds.

New recruits are taken on board as Trainee Agents and are taught all aspects of the business including lettings, sales, valuations, and negotiations. The apprentices work towards NVQs while they are learning the ropes on the job. Danielle is one of three apprentices at Morris Armitage' Haverhill office with former Castle Manor students Kathryn Suffell, 19, and Luke Jenkins, 18.

Chris said: "Unlike other agents, we took the approach that we wanted our apprentices to learn the whole business not just one aspect. Very often you see companies recruiting for trainee negotiators or trainee sales agents. We think it is valuable to young people and for our business for them to be taught and all aspects of the business."

"Having young people here reinvigorates the business and we learn as much from them as they do from us."

The scheme has been so successful at Morris Armitage that three former trainees who started at the Newmarket branch were offered the opportunity to become Directors and Partners and went on to set up the now successful Cambridge office.

For Danielle, the Apprenticeship has meant that she has learnt the property business from the bottom up and learned a valuable profession while being paid and remaining in her hometown. She has gained her NVQ 3 and NVQ 2 and just been promoted to Assistant Lettings Manager.

She said: "I didn't have a clue where to start when I left college and joining Morris Armitage has given me a career and I haven't had to leave home. I think there are lots of benefits to businesses too as we can bring enthusiasm and fun to the company. There's



Chris Jai-Bahadur, from Morris Armitage in Haverhill, with apprentice Danielle Eady.

an eagerness to learn especially when you are starting from the beginning as I was."

For Morris Armitage, they reap the benefits of new young blood in the town, teaching them how they like to work as agents this has enabled them to grow their business with knowledgeable and experienced employees.

Chris added: "Having young people here reinvigorates the business and we learn as much from them as they do from us. For example, we have learned a lot about IT from Luke from what he was taught at Castle Manor. He has changed the way we work with spreadsheets and as a business benefit from what they know and have learnt at school or college, we can then incorporate these new initiatives in to the day to day running of our business.

There's also an incentive for young people to stay and progress within the company. They know our business inside out and one of the aspects we pride ourselves on is that our staff are knowledgeable and professional. We know they are because of the comments we receive from our clients which shows that as a team we have worked well together from the beginning."

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For Symtech plumbing and heating in Haverhill, taking on an apprentice has helped them to grow their relatively new company and plan for the future.

Business partners Leighton Symonds and his brother Danny took on former Castle Manor student Dan Allen, 20, in September after liaising with Haverhill Youth Skills Manager Karen Chapple.

Symtech took advantage of the Government's Apprenticeship grant scheme to help with the costs of taking on an apprentice. The funding will help with Dan's training and equipment he may need for the job.

Leighton said: "We are a new start up company but have managed to obtain work through various contacts and been able to take on apprentice to help grow the firm in the future.

"Apprenticeships will help grow the economy in the future. Nothing can compare to on the job training and experience. If more Haverhill firms took on an apprentice it would grow the local economy, getting more young people into jobs and helping Haverhill become a better place to live."

Leighton says the costs of taking on an apprentice has been greatly helped by applying for the Government's grant scheme in which businesses can apply for £1,500 to assist employers who commit to offering 16-24 year olds employment through an Apprenticeships programme. The grant is available until the end of 2014 and companies can take on up to ten apprentices and receive £1,500 per apprentice. The grant is in addition to the training costs of the Apprenticeship which are met in full for young people aged 16 to 18 and 50% for those aged 19 to 24.

For Leighton, who also went to Castle Manor School along with his brother Danny, taking on an apprentice made sense because he was himself once an apprentice.

He said: "I learnt that way and it helped me to gain experience whilst working and earning. I started with my dad when I was 21. My brother Danny and I both did a four year Apprenticeship at West Suffolk College and gained our Gas Safe qualification as well as our Level 2 and 3 NVQs. You could say plumbing is in our family as my grandad, cousin, uncle, dad and my brother have been or are plumbers.

"We want Dan to become Gas Safe after the total college period of four years. But in the first two years he will get certificates in plumbing Level 2 NVQ and then progress to Level 3 and eventually Gas Safe.



Leighton Symonds with his apprentice, Dan Allen.

"My brother Danny and I owe a lot to our dad for giving us our opportunity to do our apprenticeship. Hopefully our experience and knowledge we can pass on to Dan."

Symtech has been in business for just eight months but in that time the company has secured an ongoing contract as well as other regular business and is now growing steadily.

The company carries out plumbing and heating work from oil to gas, installing, servicing and repairing new gas and oil boilers. They install unvented cylinders and underfloor heating, carry out heating upgrades, power flushing, new heating installations and install new bathrooms/showers and wet rooms. But they also carry out small jobs from moving radiators to changing taps.

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For apprentice Dan, who lives in Haverhill, it is a great way to earn and learn on the job. He said: "It will give me the experience I need and I'll gain a qualification at the end."

For Symtech taking on an apprentice has been a very positive experience.

Leighton added: "I would encourage other Haverhill businesses to do the same. By creating more Apprenticeships in the town

I think we will as local businesses be giving our young people a sense that their talent and skills they learnt at school are appreciated and it will help youngsters to be more integrated into society, giving them a sense of worth and achievable goals to strive for."

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It was while working out at the gym at Haverhill Leisure Centre as a customer two years ago that zoology student Joe Miley started to consider a career in health and fitness.

After deciding that animal studies was not the career for him, his weekly workouts started a passion for learning about fitness and helping others fulfill their health goals.

While working out in the gym one day he saw an advertisement for a part time Fitness Instructor and asked for more information. He was told that he would need qualifications and so Joe got himself on a Fitness Instructor NVQ Level 2 intensive course and, still determined to get a job in fitness, he went back to the Centre. The staff provided him with advice about getting into the industry and he was encouraged to apply for Abbeycroft's Apprenticeship programme where he would be supported in gaining his Personal Training NVQ Level 3.

Joe, 21, started as an apprentice Fitness Instructor at Haverhill Leisure Centre in June 2013 and loves getting on the job practical experience while studying for NVQs and earning a wage.

As an apprentice Fitness Instructor Joe helps customers at the Centre with individual exercise programmes to help them to improve their health and fitness, regularly changing them to make fitness fun and interesting. He also runs inductions, showing new users of the gym how to safely operate the fitness equipment, and carries out basic health checks such as testing blood pressure, weighing, and histories of illness and injury.

He said: "The huge benefit of being an apprentice for me is the chance to spend time working in a gym to gain practical experience and interacting with the customers.

"Employers look for experience these days, particularly in the leisure and fitness industry, and although qualifications are needed there is nothing like working in the environment you are studying."

Joe says that he has no single mentor, he has many. All of the gym staff members help and support him and he learns new skills every day.

He said: "I am constantly being shown new things by the team, one of whom is a former apprentice who is now full time and he has really helped me by telling me of his experiences while he was training."

For the former zoology student, working in a gym is a world away



Joe Miley instructing gym member, Emily Carr.

from animal studies but it is now human studies that interest him most.

"I love interacting with all the different people at the gym. The people that come here are of all different ages, sizes and levels of fitness. Some come with real challenges such as high blood pressure or mobility problems. It is really interesting to hear their stories and it helps me plan their programme and goals," added Joe.

He said: "There is a real sense of achievement for me when they reach a goal or do something they were not able to do before. It is such an interesting job and one where you need experience of meeting people to get the best out of people. You have to learn how to talk to people, how to encourage them and help them build confidence in their abilities.

"I would recommend doing an Apprenticeship. You get hands on experience which is ultimately what employers are looking for. It's not all about qualifications now."

Abbeycroft Leisure, which runs Haverhill Leisure Centre in partnership with St Edmundsbury Borough Council, has been running a successful Apprenticeship programme for five years and currently has five apprentices in total across the facilities it manages.

Matt Hickey, Abbeycroft's Health, Fitness & Physical Activity Development Manager, said: "Apprentices are passionate, hardworking young people that often would rather gain experience in a career now than stay in higher education; realising that often skills, knowledge and qualifications can be gained on the job."