

CHARLOTTE BURVILLE

Level 4 Commercial Procurement and Supply



We recently spoke to Charlotte Burville who is a Commercial Procurement and Supply apprentice at Solent NHS Trust. She spoke about her experiences of apprenticeships.

WHAT DOES YOUR ROLE INVOLVE?

My role involves the following tasks:

- Arranging signature of contracts.
- Reviewing and circulating commercial opportunities – this is where we might submit bids to win business and bring funds into the Trust.
- Assisting with running procurements where we are looking to purchase goods and services such as a new digital menu system for patients to order food in hospitals.
- Running reports and analysing data on spend and the status of our contracts.
- Producing papers and minutes for meetings.
- Managing the renewals of apprenticeship contracts.
- Assisting in team projects and improvement processes relating to creating cost savings, improving team morale, and creating capacity for staff to focus on development opportunities.

WHAT SUBJECTS DID YOU STUDY AT SCHOOL?

- GCSEs:

Maths, English, Science, PE, History, Italian, French, Food & Nutrition, and Business Communication Studies

- A Levels:

Biology, Maths, and Sociology

WHY DID YOU CHOOSE TO DO AN APPRENTICESHIP? AND WHY DID YOU CHOOSE THIS OPTION INSTEAD OF GOING TO UNIVERSITY?

I had secured a place at the University of Bath but decided I needed to take a year out to decide if university was really the right decision for me. I knew I wanted to work during my gap year and also knew I would like to come out of it with a set of transferable skills that I could use to start my career after university. I found a Business Admin Apprentice role at Solent NHS Trust and knew it was the perfect opportunity.

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After 10 months on the course, I had to decide whether I was going to take my place at university or carry on with the apprenticeship. The opportunity to earn and learn had me hooked and excited, which is not something I had felt when considering the university option, so I decided to stay.

HOW DID YOU FIND OUT ABOUT YOUR APPRENTICESHIP?

I found my apprenticeship on the [NHS Jobs website](#). After my first apprenticeship, the Solent Apprenticeship Team helped me to find my next apprenticeship within the Trust – I am now on my third one.

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO STUDENTS WHO ARE TRYING TO CHOOSE BETWEEN UNIVERSITY AND AN APPRENTICESHIP?

For me, the main draw of an apprenticeship is the opportunity to earn money whilst gaining A-level or Degree equivalent qualifications. I have always been happy in my decision knowing that I can still get a degree if I would like to, but without the student loans and debt to repay.

HOW DID YOU FIND THE ADJUSTMENT TO WORKING LIFE?

At first, it was difficult as my sixth form college hours had been short and there were plenty of free periods and breaks throughout the day, whereas at work, the day is much longer. The first few weeks were very tiring as the environment was completely new and there was so much to learn. As I settled into the role, it became easier and before long I was completely used to it.

HOW CAN PARENTS BEST SUPPORT STUDENTS THROUGH THE PROCESS OF APPLYING FOR AN APPRENTICESHIP?

Applying for an apprenticeship can be very different to applying for a college or university place as you are applying for a job as well as a study programme. Parents can support students by assisting in the 'job application' side such as CV writing and interview skills as this is often something students have never had to do before.



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WHAT IS THE BEST PIECE OF ADVICE YOU GOT FROM YOUR PARENTS/CARERS?

A degree is not the most valuable thing that employers look for. Experience and transferable skills are much more important.

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE YOUR PARENTS/CARERS TO HAVE DONE DIFFERENTLY?

I think they could have introduced me to the idea of an apprenticeship earlier, perhaps at secondary school. Otherwise, they were supportive of whatever decision I made and were not pushing one way or the other.

WHAT ONE THING SHOULD PARENTS DO TO EDUCATE THEMSELVES ABOUT THEIR CHILD'S APPRENTICESHIP JOURNEY?

Understand that completing an apprenticeship is hard. Working a full time job alongside completing a qualification is full on, however the opportunities that come out of it are incredibly valuable.

AT A GLANCE

Commercial Procurement & Supply
Apprenticeship Standard

- Typically takes 24 months
- Sales, marketing and procurement route
- Apprentices will undertake a Level 4 Diploma in Procurement & Supply with the Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply (CIPS) as part of their apprenticeship.