



 Class of 2020

**EAST OF ENGLAND  
APPRENTICESHIPS**

### JOB ROLE

Commissioning and  
Monitoring Officer

### COMPANY

Hertfordshire County  
Council

### COMPANY SIZE

1000+ employees

### APPRENTICESHIP

Level 4 Associate  
Project Manager



## ■ INTRODUCING KAMI CHAHAL

Having spent the majority of her working life in the private sector, Kami was seeking a change of pace and in that search, found herself on the Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) team. As a Commissioning Officer within the Community Support Commissioning Team, she wanted to push herself further and was delighted to discover that apprenticeship programmes were a potential opportunity.

Kami spent some time researching and attending lunchtime sessions before the Associate Project Manager apprenticeship caught her eye. The programme covered a broad range of skills that aligned perfectly with the tenders that she would work on regularly, and the apprenticeship model would allow her to develop and formalise these further alongside her current role.

Since starting the apprenticeship programme, Kami was promoted last year and now holds a permanent role as a Commissioning and Monitoring Officer within the Strategic Partnerships team. Working on housing related support and complex needs, she now has additional responsibility and is much more involved with reviews, writing reports and the formal monitoring of services.



## ■ THE PROGRAMME

The programme itself provided the foundations for broad approaches of project management, covered by both theoretical and practical exams. Self study is a large part of the programme too, so Kami was faced with balancing this and her daily role. Joining a cohort of masterclasses made up of other HCC staff members - from varying departments, she benefitted from the shared experience and learning, stating 'it really helped to have people to go to for information that were in the same boat'. She also praised the tutor in helping her to cement her understanding with certain concepts.

It is also worth mentioning that this cohort were the first to undertake the programme in this region, so it was important to break down each element of the syllabus to ensure all of the assessment criteria was met along the way. The programme was also extremely flexible and based on the individuals needs, allowing apprentices to submit or undergo different segments of the examination process when they were ready.

In terms of skill development, Kami also found that her writing skills were developed by having to formally summarise and report on her learning experiences. Time management also played a significant role in Kami's success on the programme, and she is grateful for her line managers understanding and support, ensuring that she 'strictly stuck to the "20% off the job" rule'.





In hindsight, Kami would have spent more time developing her portfolio during the process of the course, as it was difficult to “pull it all together” towards the end. In addition to the portfolio submission, there was an examination phase of the programme which included an APM PMQ exam paper and a face to face interview. Achieving 78% on the paper exam, Kami was really surprised having been convinced she had failed! This was definitely a milestone along the way and a moment Kami looks back on with pride.

As a mature learner that didn't attend university, Kami didn't mind admitting that she felt she could have achieved more academically during her career. Given that her children are now “all grown up”, this was the right time to commit to education again. Having felt like there was a ceiling on her progression within the private sector, Kami finds it refreshing that HCC as an organisation is taking such a dynamic approach to skill development, and didn't allow age to limit her aspirations.

Originally based in a team that commissioned services for elderly people, Kami was given a small project to pilot a new day service and was involved with the team from day one. They researched day service users and spoke with staff and healthcare colleagues. From this information, they were able to create a programme that provided a truly valuable service and gave family carers a break. It gave certain individuals the opportunity to enjoy a safe environment outside of their own home and mix with other people - an area of huge importance for mental well-being. They were also introduced to the internet and given enjoyable ways to exercise, one individual from the programme went as far as volunteering for the day centre to stay involved with the team.



## ■ TODAY

Today, Kami is starting a huge procurement project within her team to ensure that adults with complex needs facing homelessness receive the right support. Working in a localised and targeted way based on individuals needs, her team support people from all walks of life with entrenched needs.

Local authority work was a “whole new world” when Kami started her career with HCC. However, since joining and through her apprenticeship experience, she has worked within multiple roles and met varying groups of people. With a range of roles available, people are encouraged to look at new opportunities and move sideways within the business.

**“I AM LEARNING ALL OF THE TIME AND I THINK THAT IS THE BIGGEST PERK TO TAKING AN APPRENTICESHIP”**

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