



 Class of 2020

**EAST OF ENGLAND
APPRENTICESHIPS**

JOB ROLE

Store Manager

COMPANY

Pets at Home

COMPANY SIZE

1001+ employees

APPRENTICESHIP

Animal Care



■ **INTRODUCING
GARRY JOHNSON**

Garry has worked with Pets at Home for over seven years, and in that time has worked his way up to the position of Store Manager. Having decided to start an apprenticeship in Animal Care in 2019, Garry has shared his insights into the benefits of completing the programme.

In order for each Pets at Home store to retain their pet licence, it is essential that certain members of the team have qualifications that allow this. This qualification can be achieved as part of the Animal Care apprenticeship programme, so with the aim of being able to train staff members at sites beyond his own store, Garry decided the route would be beneficial to his career.

He had been a store manager for just over three years at the time of taking on the apprenticeship, so was comfortable admitting that certain elements of the syllabus were simple to complete and concerned tasks he deals with on a daily basis. Garry loves working with animals, and particularly enjoys his work with Pets at Home.





With this in mind, it's fair to say that the programme provided more of a theoretical background to skills he didn't realise he was applying in certain cases, like training team members and basic animal care. Garry already had some knowledge around keeping on top of the animals health and was aware of legislation around the care of animals. However, achieving the qualification legitimised this skillset in a sense, and gave him the pride to know that he could complete the apprenticeship with an acknowledgement of this.

In terms of personal development, Garry had no qualms admitting that his organisational skills have benefitted ten-fold from his enrolment on the programme. Where he initially started the course with a 'messy' approach, he quickly gained skills around managing his time more effectively and completing the coursework in a timely manner. As Garry was never academically charged during school, he found that completing his functional skill exams in both maths and English gave him the confidence to keep pushing forward with the programme. A confident person, Garry also found that transferring his knowledge to written communications was always a struggle, so this is an area that he also feels improved significantly too. In terms of hands-on skills, Garry also completed modules around the handling of animals and learnt about the legislation that supports this. He learned about animal welfare laws and had to consider these aspects from the perspective of farmers, home-owners and beyond. Again, this provided a theoretical background knowledge to techniques he was using on a daily basis, and so this was especially useful to understand why certain processes existed within the company.

Garry was particularly complimentary of his tutor/assessor, Jac, from training provider KEITS. Extremely knowledgeable, supportive and helpful throughout the programme, Jac was always available via phone call or email and attended multiple support visits to help guide Garry during the programme. He found her support throughout to be extremely beneficial.

With regards to assessment criteria, Garry particularly enjoyed a case study project he was able to produce around an adoption bunny that had recently been bought in to his store. He followed the progress of restoring the rabbit to full health, before re-homing. There was also a focus on management skills, with Garry completing assessments focused on training other people and supervision criteria. This helped him to feel more confident in his role and improved his communication when training other team members to develop their own skills and confidence.





Looking ahead, Garry has his sights set on an area manager role and understands that he will need additional experience in his current position to achieve this. In the meantime, he is focused on developing his team within store, and open to helping do the same with nearby stores too. He would like to help other store managers achieve the apprenticeship, and mentor members of staff where possible.

His advice to anybody considering an apprenticeship is to take your time, understand and plan out your approach from the get-go. "Once you get used to putting the coursework together, you will find the whole thing much easier". He went on to say that apprenticeships ultimately "broaden your knowledge and really help you with your day job whilst you're getting paid".

**"BROADEN YOUR
KNOWLEDGE
WHILST YOU'RE
GETTING PAID"**

