

Natalie Davies

Income collection assistant at
North Lincolnshire Homes – part of ongo

Natalie's story

Income collection assistant Natalie Davies has kick-started her career at North Lincolnshire Homes – part of ongo with an apprenticeship in housing services setting her on the right path to a very bright future.

Desperate to find the right career, Natalie, from Scunthorpe, tried her hand at a number of jobs, including a stint in a care home, before being offered an apprentice role at North Lincolnshire Homes – part of ongo.

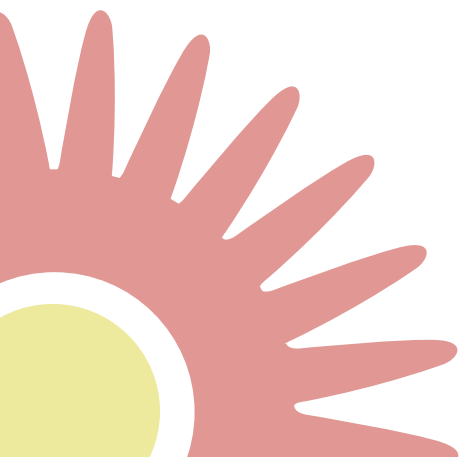
As part of her course, the 21-year-old spent 18 months completing qualifications with training and management consultancy Dutton Fisher Associates. The company specialises in providing a wide range of interactive training courses for the housing sector, and has helped transform Natalie into one of the organisation's rising stars.

She said: "I thought about going to University, but the job with North Lincolnshire Homes was a way of continuing to learn and advance my career without more time in the classroom. This definitely felt like a better option for me.

However, there was a time when Natalie had considered turning her back on continuing her studies. After completing A Level courses in Sociology and Psychology, and AS Level courses in PE, English, RE and Business Studies she became disillusioned with life in the classroom.

"Before I started the job I did not have a concept of what the social housing sector was, but I soon found out there was a huge amount to learn that I'd never thought about."

She explained: "I was a good student, but I got tired very quickly of college. I really wanted to get out of that environment. I enjoyed learning, but I hated sitting in a classroom and being told what to do."



A different way to learn

The housing apprenticeship has seen Natalie work across a wide range of departments from housing management, to income collection and tenancy support, while also studying for an NVQ Level 2 and completing Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) training with Dutton Fisher Associates.

Natalie added: "I've always enjoyed learning but I didn't find intensive classroom lessons very appealing – that's why I really enjoyed doing the qualifications with Dutton Fisher Associates. We had interactive lessons once a month which helped me to blend my learning with the work I was carrying out within my role.

"The teachers who delivered the sessions were fantastic, they made the learning process really fun, and this gave me the confidence to reflect on what I had learnt, while developing my knowledge on my own too. Plus, there was always someone from Dutton Fisher Associates available on the other end of the phone or via email if I had any questions – this really set my mind at rest."

After developing within her initial role at North Lincolnshire Homes – part of ongo, Natalie eventually took on a full two-year apprenticeship within the tenancy support team and has since secured her permanent role as an income collection assistant.

Natalie's role involves dealing with lower end arrears and working with customers to help them to manage their budgets, preventing them from getting into financial difficulties and rental arrears.

Valued contributor

Following her time working and studying as an apprentice, Natalie has embraced further study and – with the support of her employer – hopes to take part in other courses or development opportunities with Dutton Fisher Associates.

The training she has received to date has made Natalie want to enhance and develop her career in housing and she plans to build on the qualifications she has gained.

She added: "I'd like to be a manager and eventually a senior manager one day, so I plan to complete a NVQ Level 3 and then my diploma, building upon the training I've already received.

"My qualifications have helped me to develop my knowledge and understanding of my organisation and the housing sector, I've also learnt so much about housing legislation and the private sector – and how this influences the work that we do.

"My employer has gained from the training I've received from Dutton Fisher Associates, and I'm now a valued contributor, of a confident and qualified team who are helping to drive the business forward."

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