



Richard Stevenson

Contracts Project Manager at Leeds City Council

Richard's story

Richard Stevenson is a shining example of how dedication, determination and ambition – combined with the right support – are key to carving out a successful career.

The 34-year-old has risen through the ranks working for social housing services across Leeds over the past 13 years with five promotions seeing him move from an administration assistant to become a key member of the Housing Leeds Property and Contracts Team.

In addition, Richard now has a host of additional qualifications and accreditations under his belt, having completed a series of courses and academic programmes with Dutton Fisher Associates – which provides bespoke and interactive training programmes.

But things could have been very different for Richard, who lives with his partner and at their home in Leeds. He left school with only a handful of GCSEs, his prospects for the future hanging in the balance.

Determined to set himself on the right career path, he enrolled in a local sixth-form college where he studied for a GNVQ qualification in business, and, after a number of part-time roles, finally went on to secure a job as an administrative assistant at Leeds City Council in 2001.

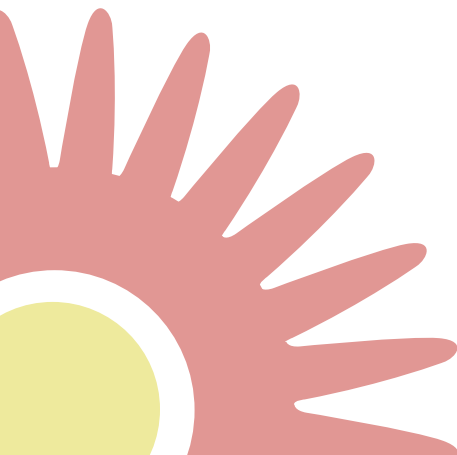
"I really wanted a job that could provide me with the platform to learn, but also somewhere I can develop my career in the right environment."

Following a series of restructures of Leeds City Council's housing service, Richard moved on to work for a number of Arms-Length Management Organisations (ALMO) across the city.

After a short spell at Leeds East Homes (LEH), the housing stock was restructured and his role moved to East North East Homes Leeds (ENEHL) where he spent a large part of his career. During his time at the various ALMOs he fulfilled roles including responsive repairs coordinator, performance and improvement officer, performance and improvement manager and business development officer before progressing to his current position as contracts project manager.

In October 2013 the housing service was brought back in-house to once again be run by Leeds City Council.

These restructures are amongst the many challenges that Richard has faced in his career, having also helped teams adapt to the changing economic climate, with Councils being challenged to deliver better services with less money.



Gaining skills

Richard believes the key to developing a successful career and overcoming the challenges he has faced has been the commitment East North East Homes Leeds (ENEHL) showed to training and development.

During his time at the ALMO, ENEHL worked with Dutton Fisher Associates to ensure Richard has the skills to both survive and thrive at work.

"I've been offered so many opportunities to get involved in further training with Dutton Fisher Associates," added Richard. "I've always jumped at the chance to gain more skills and do more than what is included in my job description. I think this has been a big factor in helping me get promotions and move onto new roles."

Through a number of training courses or programmes with Dutton Fisher Associates, Richard has amassed an impressive collection of qualifications including Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) Level 2 and 3, Institute of Leadership Management (ILM) Level 5, and a Foundation Degree in Housing Service Management.

Dutton Fisher Associates provides a unique approach to professional development and training, bridging the gap between education and the workplace to ensure that employees develop in both the classroom and the boardroom.

The company's blended learning approach means that the training is often taken away from the classroom, allowing Richard to balance his studies with his day job.

"I'm a person who enjoys finding solutions to problems – interactive learning and intensive tuition in small groups works really well for me and so I benefited from how Dutton Fisher Associates structured their training courses, there was also a good balance of self-study too.

"Without doubt this training has greatly boosted my personal development, which has been of great value and has assisted me with gaining my promotions.

"The Foundation Degree I completed with Dutton Fisher Associates really motivated me to study for my BA (Honours) degree in Housing Studies – and I did this as a top-up to my Foundation.

"Completing my degree is a fantastic achievement and it has bridged a gap between housing theory and the practical parts of my day-job. I've also learnt how to self-study."

Opened doors

Richard has no doubt that the training he has received has had a direct impact on both his own career and the team around him, and despite several restructures Richard has been selected for a number of promotions.

The training he received on his ILM course has helped Richard work with departments to become more efficient and find new ways of working in austere times.

He said: "The training I have undertaken to date has provided me with a competitive edge over others when applying for new roles. I would definitely recommend Dutton Fisher Associates' training, and although I'm really enjoying my current position, I'm certain it will continue to open more doors for me in the future."

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