

A year in the life of an apprentice

Join our apprentice Joe Boothman in his City of York Council apprenticeship journey.

March 2017

The Blog has been quiet but I sure haven't!

Five months in and what's happened? Since the passing of the New Year I have seen a great increase in my levels of responsibility and the trust that my team have with me. These weeks into the New Year have made me feel that I am fully cemented within my role and I feel capable and happy to take anything on and show how much I can contribute to public health.

Lately as I'm sure as many of you know it has been national apprenticeship week. With this I have had some fantastic opportunities to help out and spread the word on how great apprenticeships are with the council and local organisations.

I've helped with the running of various apprentice events around the council with fellow apprentices; I took part in speaking to local York schools to boost what a great opportunity for a career and pathway that an apprenticeship can be! I even presented in front of two hundred year 10s which went surprisingly well.

Some of my recent work has been in relation to the mental health and wellbeing of students in the city. I've also been working closely with the new Suicide Prevention Lead, Andy Chapman, to progress partnership work around our ambition to make York a Suicide Safer Community, led to the important issue of student mental health within York along with suicide and the stigma behind it.

I have become involved in meetings and groups on ways to increase awareness and talking appropriately about suicide within the community. One of the greatest challenges in relation to both mental ill-health and suicide prevention is combating stigma- encouraging people to talk more openly and non-judgementally about issues which can affect any one of us. I took part in a three hour Safe-talk course recently which covers the sensitive subject of suicide and peoples' suicidal thoughts or plans. It's

so important to recognise when someone might be contemplating suicide and to have that difficult conversation with them in order to keep them safe. This was a real eye-opening experience gave me a much better understanding of such an important subject and the value of good communication skills. I strongly recommend it to anyone – not just people working with vulnerable people. The content is relevant to anyone- in or outside work -and may help saves lives. More Safe Talk sessions are planned for 2017.

With the varied work that I am currently part of I'm sure I could go on, but on that note, I'm looking forward to the next few months as I start to pass the halfway point and move further into my apprenticeship.