

**John Pickup - City of York Council**  
**Previous Project Management Apprentice**  
**Higher apprenticeship (Level 4) with QA Training**

John left **Bootham School** with 10 GCSEs and 3 A Levels. He had heard about apprenticeships but knew nothing about what they involved. "I only discovered more information and what they could offer when I researched them myself".

"After completing my A-Levels I grew tired of academic study; the essay writing and exams. I was also very wary of the large debt that came with university, along with the stories of people who obtained their degrees yet still couldn't find work in the area they wanted.

I looked for a job, but many were asking for previous experience which, apart from a summer job, I had nothing of; therefore an apprenticeship was the best option. I could get experience in the workplace, gaining a qualification in a career that interested me, while earning a decent wage.

I spent most of my time as an apprentice working on my main project which was to develop a scheme to encourage and incentivise the use of sustainable transport to apprentices. It consisted of idea development and research, communicating with a range of employers and training providers to establish contacts and spreading awareness of my scheme.

As for the qualification side to the apprenticeship, I had assignments to complete and a portfolio to construct, detailing the work I'd done and how I applied the skills learnt. Being in a workplace environment certainly built on my confidence and made me more motivated and focused.

I'd certainly advise everyone to consider the option of an apprenticeship, especially if you are unsure what you want to do once you leave school, as rushing into a degree you are uncertain of is never a good idea.

I believe it is the best way of getting into the working world and kick-starting a career. The key thing employers are looking for alongside your qualifications is experience. An apprenticeship gives you that, along with a range of contacts and references – and on top of that you're earning a wage as well as being completely debt free.

I'm now considering upcoming roles within my team whilst also looking into opportunities elsewhere, with my apprenticeship providing the flexibility to choose from multiple paths in progressing my career".

