

# **News story: Investing in apprenticeships**

We asked one of our current apprentices, Emily Clegg, based in our Programme Management Office, to share her experiences to mark National Apprenticeship Week.

Emily is studying at Sheffield Hallam University on a 4 year chartered manager degree apprenticeship (CMDA).

## **What made you choose the apprentice route?**

For me, the option to study and gain experience was a no-brainer and the way of learning suits my practical learning style.

The chartered manager degree apprenticeship (CMDA) programme stuck out because it includes a degree, practical application and professional accreditation all in one.

The added benefit is knowing that I won't have all the university debt before I even start my career.

## **Would you recommend doing an apprenticeship to other people?**

Certainly! There is a perception that apprenticeships are only for young people – they are not!

Our university group has mix of people ranging in age from their early-20s to mid-40s, who are from various industries from manufacturing to pharmaceuticals. It's really interesting to have different perspectives and experiences during group discussions.

I joined Sheffield Hallam University's Apprenticeship Ambassador Scheme, which asks students to consider an alternative pathway to university and highlights the option as part of professional development. Degree apprenticeships in particular avoid the high cost of university fees and breaks the 'job/experience' dilemma often faced by graduates, whilst also bringing benefit to organisations.

## **Is there any down side to being an apprentice?**

Having the self-motivation and commitment to learning is really important on an apprenticeship and managing time between work, study and personal life is a challenge at times. But the Coal Authority is very supportive through this journey and it's important to recognise that it is an investment for the future.

## **How have you applied what you've learnt on the apprenticeship?**

Because the assignments are based on my own working environment, what I'm

learning is always relevant in some way.

For my most recent module, I was able to combine results from questionnaires and interviews with academic literature to put forward recommendations for the PMO strategy our team is working on.

This is just one example of how the programme encourages you to apply learning in context whilst also bringing relevant ideas and fresh perspectives into the business that are underpinned with theory.

### **What format does your apprenticeship follow?**

On my programme, 17 modules are delivered in blocks over the 4 year period. This typically involves 3 to 4 full days at university to go through key content and be introduced to the assignment in a workshop/informal seminar type environment.

Essay/report based assignment timescales vary across the modules; the shortest being around 5 weeks and the longest being 4 month for research project deadlines.

I'm also building a portfolio of evidence that demonstrates application of knowledge, skills and behaviours in the workplace context. This is in preparation for applying for professional accreditation towards the end of the programme.

Understanding how the delivery of the programme suits you is important when considering an apprenticeship. This differs from programme to programme so is worth investigating.

### **Discover more**

Find out more about apprenticeships and National Apprenticeship Week on Twitter @Apprenticeships

If you're interested in finding out more about apprenticeships with the Coal Authority, please contact our Learning and Development team.

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## **[Press release: Additional year to deliver ambitious court reforms](#)**

HM Courts & Tribunals Service is extending its reform programme. Subject to cross-government approval the proposed finish date of the programme will be a year later, in 2023.

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## Press release: Additional year to deliver ambitious court reforms

Learning from the services that we have already delivered and the feedback received, including from the Public Accounts Committee and the National Audit Office, we have decided to re-order aspects of the programme. This will allow more time to develop some of the shared systems that sit behind our next set of online services, working to an updated finish date of 2023.

The reform programme is both essential and ambitious. It will transform the administration of justice by shaping it around the needs of its users, and we are determined to deliver it effectively in the interests of all.

Existing services, which are already providing quicker and easier access to justice for many – including divorcing couples, executors of wills and people appealing decisions about their benefits – continue to be available and will have more elements added to them in the coming years.

With the leadership of the government and the judiciary, the HMCTS Reform Programme is increasing the accessibility and efficiency of the justice system by shaping it around the needs of those who use it.

The £1 billion reform programme has already delivered:

- A pilot of fully-video hearings in the tax tribunals.
- The national implementation of a new in-court system to record the result of cases digitally and instantly.
- A pilot of a new digital system providing shared case information in criminal cases to the police, Crown Prosecution Service, courts and legal professionals.
- A Civil Money Claims service with more than 51,000 claims made since it first launched in March 2018, with the fastest claim being lodged and paid under two hours. Almost 90% of users say they are satisfied or very satisfied with the new service.
- An online Divorce Service, with more than 31,000 applications made since it launched in April 2018. The online form takes half as long to complete as the paper form, and has reduced the error rate.
- Online Probate Service with more than 12,000 personal applications made since July 2018.
- We opened two new Courts and Tribunals Service Centres in Stoke and Birmingham in January 2019, which are dealing with digital cases in the Single Justice Service, divorce, Social Security and Child Support and some probate services.
- Support to help people use online services if they choose to.

As a major government project HMCTS reform is subject to a cross-government approvals process, which is ongoing.

## Notes to editors

Figures are drawn from management information and are not official statistics.

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# News story: Army robotics receive £66m boost

The Defence Secretary has committed £66m of defence's new multi-million-pound Transformation Fund to fast-track military robotic projects onto the battlefield this year.

It was announced today at the Autonomous Warrior Exploitation Conference at the Science Museum, Kensington that the British Army will benefit from:

- New mini-drones, providing troops with an eye-in-the-sky to give them greater awareness to outmanoeuvre enemies on the battlefield.
- Systems to fit Army fighting vehicles with remote-control capability, so they can be pushed ahead of manned vehicles and used to test the strength of enemy defences.
- New autonomous logistics vehicles which will deliver vital supplies to troops in warzones, helping remove soldiers from dangerous resupply tasks so they can focus on combat roles.

### **Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:**

This announcement is a clear demonstration of how our Armed Forces are reaping the benefits from our new multi-million Transformation Fund. Each of these new technologies will enhance our Army's capabilities whilst reducing the risk to our personnel and I'm delighted we will be revolutionising frontline technology by the end of the year.

The MOD has always embraced pioneering technology and this fund will ensure the UK stays at the forefront of global military capabilities and ahead of our adversaries.

The injection of funding from the new £160m Transformation Fund will see some of this equipment set to deploy to the likes of Estonia, Afghanistan and Iraq before the end of the year. The Defence Secretary will also look to make a further £340m available as part of the Spending Review.

The investment comes after the Army tested a range of projects as part of the biggest military robot exercise in British history at the end of last year,

Exercise Autonomous Warrior.

Yesterday, the Defence Secretary visited 16 Air Assault Brigade in Colchester which will be among the recipients of the new battlefield technologies. He discussed how the new equipment will benefit troops on the ground to help increase their safety and combat effectiveness.

The Brigade is specially trained and equipped to deploy by parachute, helicopter and air-landing. Its core role is to maintain the Air Assault Task Force, a battlegroup held at high readiness to deploy worldwide for a full spectrum of missions.

**Chief of the General Staff Sir Mark Carleton-Smith said:**

Rapid adaptation is an essential ingredient for success on the battlefield. The fielding of the next generation of armoured fighting vehicles and ground-breaking robotic and autonomous systems will keep the British Army at the cutting edge of battlefield technology, improving our lethality, survivability and competitive advantage.

**Assistant Head of Capability Strategy and Force Development, Colonel Peter Rowell said:**

Robotic and autonomous systems make our troops more effective; seeing more, understanding more, covering a greater area and being more lethal. They unshackle them from the resupply loop. These are game-changing capabilities; and not just for combat operations. They are equally useful in humanitarian and disaster relief operations.

After securing an extra £1.8bn for defence and overseeing the Modernising Defence Programme, the Defence Secretary has dedicated millions of pounds to transforming defence, arming the British military with innovative technology through fast-tracking new projects.

The MOD is embracing transformation at an ever-faster rate and the Transformation Fund is focused on investments in truly high-tech innovation that will create the armed forces of the future.

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**[News story: Fish exporters urged to](#)**

# register now to use new digital exports services

Businesses wanting to export fish to the EU after 29 March 2019 should sign up to the new digital services to make sure they are able to continue trading fish with the EU in the event of no deal.

Leaving the EU with a deal remains the Government's top priority. This has not changed. However, should the UK leave the EU without a deal, UK exporters will be required to obtain a validated [catch certificate](#) for most fish and fish products exported to the EU (excluding some aquaculture products, freshwater fish, some molluscs, fish fry or larvae).

Catch certificates prove that fish has been caught in line with established conservation and management measures. All non-EU countries are required to present catch certificates when trading with the EU.

To be ready for leaving the EU, fish exporters should familiarise themselves with the new services to generate the necessary export documentation, including:

- catch certificates
- processing statement
- storage document
- prior notification form
- pre-landing declaration

To access the service you'll need to sign in or create a new Government Gateway user ID. Make a note of your Government Gateway user ID and password so you can sign in next time. You'll then need to create a business Defra account using your business contact details. You'll only need to register once.

To register, visit the [gov.uk guidance page](#) on creating a UK catch certificate.

Registering early gives exporters time to test the new service before the UK leaves the EU. Any sample documents created before 29 March 2019 will not be valid for export.

To check what documents you need to export fish to the EU if there's no Brexit deal, visit the [gov.uk guidance page](#) on exporting and importing fish if there's no Brexit deal.