



### Who are you and what is your role?

- Clarisse Smith – Team Manager / Member DEI Steering Group

### Apprenticeship Title

- Branch Manager Apprenticeship Level 4



### What do you think other people have noticed that's different about you since starting your apprenticeship?

*I think other people have noticed my increased confidence. Before the apprenticeship, I had been suffering long-term with anxiety and self-esteem issues. The people around me, especially my family, knew that doing this apprenticeship might be a lot for me with these underlying challenges. At first, I knew they worried about me as they would check in with me frequently and support me the best that they could. I think they have seen that I have grown in confidence and now encourage me to pursue new things to help me grow further. I feel overcoming my battle with anxiety, as well as increased confidence, has strengthened my relationships as I am more outgoing and self-assured than I was 18 months ago. My apprenticeship, my trainer and my colleagues/store manager have supported me the whole way through and benefit from my confidence as I have become a strong pillar for the store.*

### What have you found to be the most beneficial aspect of your apprenticeship?

*The most beneficial aspect of my apprenticeship has been the networking opportunities. Before my apprenticeship, I felt I was in the background, isolated and craved challenges. I was unaware of the opportunities that were around me. The apprenticeship has opened doors of communication with stores and departments that I may not have otherwise had and increased my rapport with different people in the company. Through these new connections, I have been able to start pursuing other apprenticeships within the company outside of retail.*

### What would be in your top ten tips for being an apprentice?

1. Ask for help if you need it. Friends, family, store manager, trainer, mentor etc. all want you to succeed and will willingly help where they can.
2. Don't feel guilty for taking time to do your apprenticeship at work.
3. Don't take too much work home; make sure you do your apprenticeship hours during work hours.
4. Log as much as you can, when you can, in your journal. Whether it's small or big, it all adds up!
5. Maintain a work/life balance so that you don't burn out.
6. Try to embrace any opportunities that present themselves to you and/or seek opportunities that help achieve your goals.
7. Observe and learn from others as much as possible, not just from trainers/superiors, but also colleagues, family, customers, and the wider community.
8. Try to see your job as helping towards your apprenticeship rather than as 2 separate jobs.
9. You may encounter imposter syndrome. Remember that you deserve to be where you are.
10. Set achievable goals, both short and long term, to keep focused, motivated and on track.