



Who are you and what is your role

- *Elaine Payne – Branch Manager*

Apprenticeship Mentor

- *Robert Miller - Retail Team Leader Level 3*

What one thing have I put into practice as a direct result of being an apprenticeship mentor?

To take the time to listen.

Whilst on the apprenticeship Rob struggled at times with his mental health, he was finding it hard to balance work, personal life, and his apprenticeship studies. Rob would often be withdrawn and noticeably quiet. As soon as I spotted this, I would suggest a walk around the block together so he could tell me how he was feeling and what was making him feel so overwhelmed. As soon as Rob was able to get how he was feeling off his chest, he was able to cope better and would produce a plan on how he was able to separate work from his personal life and his apprenticeship. There is truth in the saying, a problem shared is a problem halved. Listening can really make an enormous difference to anyone feeling under pressure. I actively practice this everyday thanks to my experience as an apprenticeship mentor.

What do I think other people have noticed about me since I was an apprenticeship mentor?

I am much more confident as a manager.

When I took the role of apprenticeship mentor, I had just been promoted to assistant branch manager and there were a few gaps in my knowledge. Doing the apprenticeship with Rob was a blessing as Rob and I often learned new things together. There were times when Rob would need to know certain information that I did not know. I would then have to seek guidance from my manager so I could learn the process of something so I could then pass on my knowledge. People in the business that have known me since I started have noticed a huge change in me and how much more confident that I come across now. I have even been supporting another new manager in the business and that feels amazing as I would not have had the confidence to do this a year ago.

What have I learned about myself whilst being an apprenticeship mentor?

That it's ok to not know everything and never be shy to ask for help.

I often say to people that, no one person knows everything there is to know, and asking for help is not a sign of weakness. However, having a great support network of people that can guide you is key. I like to think that having passed that handy little bit of advice to Rob during our time together doing the apprenticeship that it will help him flourish. It certainly helps me daily.