

## Weightmans Apprenticeships

We talk to Denise Wright, Graduate Development Adviser at Weightmans and Matthew Chorley, Apprentice Solicitor, about what apprenticeships bring to their business and the apprenticeship experience.

### The Employer Perspective:

Denise Wright, Graduate Development Adviser

**Q.** How has your organisation benefitted from recruiting apprentices?

**Denise:** At Weightmans we invest heavily in our people. That is reflected in the time we take in up-skilling and employing apprentices. We have thought heavily about how our programmes make the most well-rounded, business ready and commercially aware individuals. We seek to learn and support at all levels of the business. We believe that in doing so, we create the best working culture with a highly adaptable, engaged and motivated workforce. We find that by spending time developing others, we reap great rewards that filter down to a highly skilled, productive and empowered collective of people who provide success for our clients.



Denise Wright

**Q.** What advice would you give to potential apprentices wanting to join your business?

**Denise:** To be an apprentice you must be ready for a challenge, to push yourself to learn and achieve. The apprenticeships will be an intense path, so we are looking for those who are passionate about law and committed to a career as a solicitor. You will need to show that you are a resilient individual, with the drive and determination to succeed. You have an excellent opportunity to apply what you already know and to make these links to your workplace to develop further. At Weightmans, we encourage you to become the best that you can be. We will be there to develop and support you through your time with us, not just up until you complete your apprenticeship. At Weightmans we work best when we work together. With us, you can work, earn and learn to be a great lawyer.

**Q.** What advice would you give to other businesses who are thinking about recruiting apprentices?

**Denise:** To recruit an apprentice, you must really evaluate your overall strategy and the mind-set that you have towards your people. Apprentices are not investments in the financial sense, they are people that are keen to become their best professional selves and you must have the resources (time, energy and infrastructure) to support them through this process. This is co-operation, it's nurturing others and it is maximising potential. To get the best out of people you have to give them the tools they need to achieve and in return they will help drive the success of your business. Placement is key in the success of an apprentice, both with the mentor you choose and also the future prospects in the role.

### The Apprentice Perspective:

Matthew Chorley, Apprentice Solicitor

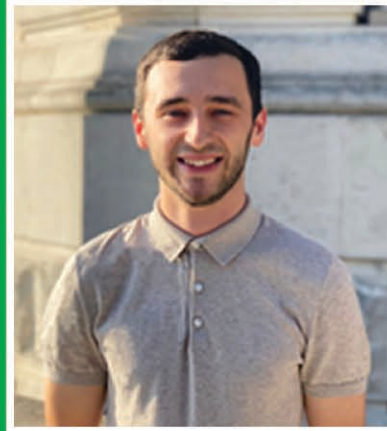
**Q.** How did you find out about your apprenticeship?

“

I chose this route following the announcement of the new “Weightmans Apprenticeship Academy” at Weightmans, where I was an existing employee. I saw the internal communications regarding it and thought that it sounded perfect for where I was.

I had already been to university to study Sport and Exercise Science, but I ended up working in law and really enjoying it. This route allows me to study towards a degree at no cost to myself, gain a wealth of experience in multiple different teams and earn a decent salary along the way. It sounds too good to be true!

”



Matthew Chorley

**Q.** What's being an Apprentice like?

“

My experience as an apprentice, so far, has been very positive. Many of my colleagues have been extremely helpful and have given me their time to assist me settling into my new team. At the moment, I am assisting solicitors with various different jobs which is helping learn the basics of employment law. I think there is a bit of a stigma when it comes to apprenticeships, that being, they are seen as the “lesser” qualification. I think this is wholly untrue, it is just a different way of learning. Whilst academic study has its benefits, apprentices will have a wealth of practical experience upon completion, and this is invaluable. I think this is getting better over time, but this can be accelerated through organisations such as this.

”

**Q.** What advice would you give to someone who is thinking about becoming an apprentice?

“

Weigh up all the positives and advantages. Think about how you wish to progress and learn. My sixth form was very keen for me to go to university, as it is seen as a more prestigious route. A lot of people have degrees, so I would encourage you to think about how you can stand out. Apply for a number of different things. You will learn about each different qualification and route during the recruitment process. At Weightmans you have the chance to talk to the graduate recruitment advisors and existing employees about their experience, which is very helpful.

”