

Alison Noble, Compass Academy Apprentice



Alison Noble is now in the second year of her Apprenticeship with the Compass Academy, Compass Group UK & Ireland's flagship apprenticeship programme. People 1st caught up with her to see how the past year of the programme has aided her development ...

In the first year of her Apprenticeship, Alison experienced a mixture of classroom, management and finance training, along with working at her allocated Compass catering site. This year, Alison is based at Compass' office in Birmingham, working as an employee relations (ER) coordinator in the human resources (HR) department.

In addition to helping the ER managers on a variety of different legal matters, Alison has been backing up her knowledge with vocational qualifications: "I've done my NVQ level 2 and am about to start my level 3," she says. "I'm also doing a certificate in personnel practice – this is something I've decided to do myself, to help with the HR aspect of my job."

Alison has always wanted to work in HR, so when her mentor told her about the opportunity in Birmingham, she jumped at the chance. When asked how her Apprenticeship has prepared her for the role, she says: "I've learnt that it is good to network and have the confidence to put yourself forward and try new things. I've also been able to work with different departments and meet different types of people – if I hadn't got that kind of exposure, I honestly don't think I would understand what the business does, or how far it is possible to progress within it."

Alison stresses that her understanding of Compass as a wider business has really helped her in her new role: "Working at different Compass client sites has really helped me to understand the issues that our managers raise from an HR perspective and get to grips with what different job roles entail be it a customer services assistant, a chef or a manager at one of Compass' sites."

"Even if it's only something small, I am able to have an input because I've had the experience and gained knowledge of the roles. I wouldn't have been able to do this without the experience I've had in the past year and a half."

When asked to describe the highlights of her Apprenticeship, Alison says that working at events was both, "thrilling and tiring," and that it opened her eyes to the realities of frontline hospitality.

"It's amazing how quickly you have to make everything happen and the level of service you have to deliver. Seeing how a team can pull it all together and be so flexible in order to meet the clients needs was great. That's probably been the biggest and most exciting challenge."

It is clear that Alison is extremely grateful for the opportunities that have been given to her by Compass and the investment the company has made in her career development: "I don't want to take what I've learnt over the past year and a half and go to a different company where I don't understand what they do – it would be nice to stay with Compass, especially as you get to know people and you all help each other."

Speaking to Alison, her drive to succeed is clear, and it is a great advert for the motivation of apprentices. She says: "I want to get far, I want to enjoy my career, and I want to make the most out of it – I'm willing to take the extra step to get what I want."

She feels that her Apprenticeship has enabled her to achieve these goals at a faster rate than she ever imagined: "I've always wanted to go into HR, and I've made it, but I didn't think I would get here this quickly. To have had this much exposure to the working environment, is just brilliant. If it wasn't for my Apprenticeship, I wouldn't be here."