

Chris Card, Compass Academy Apprentice
Ruislip, Middlesex



Chris Card joined Compass Group UK and Ireland, part of the world's largest catering company, eight years ago straight after finishing school. Of the five apprentices we met, he is the longest serving Compass employee.

It was in 2008 when Chris successfully gained his place on the Compass Academy programme, a two-year apprenticeship scheme which builds on the Government's Apprenticeship Framework, embarking on a special opportunity that would offer an array of opportunities.

When we last caught up with Chris, he was learning about the different sectors in which Compass operates, and visiting client sites to experience event organising, life in the kitchen, logistics and financial aspects of the business.

The progression Chris has been offered has been phenomenal, and he can now proudly say that he has experienced the management aspects in such diverse from RAF bases, to universities, to retail.

Chris has been passionate about catering and hospitality from a young age, and working in such varied organisations within hospitality has offered him an invaluable range of skills.

People 1st speaks to Chris on a day when he is based at an RAF base. Army planes land and fly out and the background noise make his place of work quite different and unique.

"It's great being part of a team here. The team on-site becomes crucial and the skills you get from working and work shadowing different professionals become a real source of knowledge for my development.

"I recall getting involved in a special event to support the client's fundraising for 'Help the Heroes.' We raised loads of money and worked with the team, which gave me a real sense of achievement and pride to have been involved."

As part of the Compass Academy programme, Chris is working on his final major project which will illustrate his recommendations for alternative ways of operating the client sites within he has worked, and business ideas for Compass as a whole. Also as part of his training, this year Chris has completed courses such as client management, profit protection and gross profit, all of which have given him the confidence to operate at the level of an assistant deputy manager and take on responsibility successfully.

"The most interesting aspect of the programme is that it has enabled me to be exposed to more than one side of the business. My ambition is to be a site manager or project manager, so I am enjoying being hands-on and experiencing all drivers of the business; it all stands me in great stead for being a Compass manager in the future. Having procedures and systematically following them on the Academy has also helped me be disciplined and professional, and always demand more from myself.

"My relationship with my employer, Compass, is mutually beneficial and very strong; Compass has invested in my future and I put trust and dedication into the Compass business and add value on a daily basis", says Chris.