

## Copeland apprentices on track

This week is National Apprentice Week, and a great opportunity to hear from four of our young apprentices, four months after they joined us.



**Robbie Armstrong**, 19, is from Workington and has joined us as a finance apprentice.

He said: "I'm enjoying working with the team, they're all really great. My confidence is building and it's good to put it to the test."

When Robbie joined us we were focusing on recovery work following a serious cyber attack. "There were some systems we couldn't access. But now, I am getting access to the different systems and doing a wider range of things. No two days are ever the same."

Robbie studied A-levels in business, English language and psychology before working in an HMRC call centre. "That got me used to a working environment: making suggestions, working things out," he said. "Then I worked in the HMRC in

Lillyhall, where I began getting a range of skills, like dealing internally with a business, and different types of customers."

As part of his apprenticeship Robbie is studying for an Association of Accounting Technicians Level 2 Foundation Certificate.

"I've discovered that a career in finance is something I'd really like to do, and it's something that I have skills in," said Robbie. "I like the team here and I'd like to prove my worth to them. They all have specialist knowledge and I hope to do that too. I also want to build my confidence, and in the future pass qualifications, and help other new starters if I can."

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**Harry Wolfenden, 18**, lives in Couderton and has joined our IT team.

He says: "I'm settling in well. My tasks change from day to day – I do helpdesk tasks, for example replacing PCs, moving phones, setting up a switch for the Market Hall office."

Harry studied for an A-level in product design and B-techs in double IT and applied science before joining us in October.

"I'm enjoying the challenge and I'd like to think I'm pretty good at it," he said. "I really like the people, and the team I'm working with."

"My skills have definitely improved. In a work setting you have to go out and talk to people, so your confidence quickly grows."

Whilst completing his apprenticeship with us Harry will achieve a Level 3 Diploma in IT user skills.

His hopes for the future include getting a permanent job in IT. "I'm particularly interested in systems support," he said.

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**Leah Mason**, aged 18 and from Whitehaven, has joined our Revenues team.

She has really enjoyed the first few months of her role. "I have been shadowing colleagues to learn the various skills and processes involved. Recently we have been issuing council tax and business rates bills."

As with all our apprentices, Leah's on-the-job experience is being supplemented with other training. "I've been on various courses and training days," said Leah.

Leah completed a year of sixth form after her GCSEs and then began an NVQ level 3 in business studies at Lakes College.

"I find the job interesting," she said. "Everyone's really friendly and willing to help me. I am thoroughly enjoying it."

Leah is optimistic about her future career path. "My number one thing is to hopefully progress here after the apprenticeship is over, but if not I'll still have the experience and skills that the apprenticeship has given me," she said.

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Benefits apprentice **Sophy Leece** is 19 and from Millom.

Sophy gained A-levels in biology, chemistry, geography and general studies at Millom Sixth Form Centre before taking up the apprenticeship opportunity.

She said: "I've been working alongside other staff members to learn the ropes. I have also been completing some courses like an introduction to benefits, customer service and Excel."

Sophy has embraced the step from academia to the world of work. "I'm enjoying being in a work environment – it's different to school. Also, it's a friendly place and everyone is very helpful.

"I'm hoping to progress and finish the

apprenticeship," she added