

SPOTLIGHT

ON HANNAH BEDDOWS



Angela Wilkins shines a light on our very own Shawston squad via the Spotlight series, a series of informal chats with key members of staff talking candidly about their roles within the Shawston group and how they have developed. It's simple really, aim the light and watch them shine.

At Shawston our People First approach and commitment to personal growth means we are huge fans of on-the-job learning. Watching our team members develop is a privilege and one shining example of this process is Hannah Beddows.

Hannah has recently celebrated a promotion to Credit Control Supervisor after joining Shawston as an Apprentice four years ago. We have been fortunate to watch her grow and develop with the

business. So now seems like the perfect time to catch up with Hannah to find out why she decided to join us as an apprentice.

An Alternative Route

After finishing my A-Levels, I was looking for alternative routes to further full-time education. I found that a lot of jobs wanted experience which is a

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challenge for young people, as they need a job to get that initial experience. I then noticed that Oldham Training Centre was advertising apprenticeships. This seemed the perfect fit, as I could earn money whilst still gaining skills and getting that all-important work experience. It also meant that I wouldn't leave with the debt I would have gained going down the University route.

A Personal Development Plan

It has enabled me to gain valuable work experience, built my confidence, and helped me hit the ground running in my working life. I had no idea what I wanted to do, but my apprenticeship at Shawston gave me a path and a goal to work towards. Once I completed my apprenticeship, Shawston continued to support my journey by offering me further opportunities for growth.

Benefits Along The Way

A huge benefit to this apprenticeship was being able to progress once I'd completed it. When starting my apprenticeship, I saw it as a steppingstone into the role I wanted to be in – I never imagined I would progress beyond that and then be mentoring others too.

I also realised throughout that I needed to understand what I was being asked to do and why – this realization helped me greatly when completing assignments. A lot of the time in business, people become complacent about why they are carrying out tasks and the reasoning behind them.

My apprenticeship has given me the confidence to always ask questions, understand why I am doing various tasks, and most importantly, to

speak up if you don't believe it's correct or helpful. I believe this has helped me massively in my progression throughout my 4 years at Shawston.

Self-Reflection

Shawston took me on when I had no knowledge of business and no experience of a working environment. I felt like they believed in me more than I did throughout the apprenticeship. Shawston supported me with all my studies; allowing me time to go to college and revise for exams. It was never an issue.

The business allows a lot of freedom in decision making which I believe helps you learn massively. If you are unable to make decisions and risk making some mistakes, you are never going to learn and progress. Also, because we are all co-owners, I firmly believe this helps to drive the decisions being made – we all want the business to be a success.

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I have got to where I am today - Credit Control Supervisor - with the ongoing support from Mandy Collins. Mandy has supported me from the start. No question is ever too stupid to ask (even when I thought one of our customers' names was procurement!) Mandy has invested so much time and energy into getting me to where I am today and that is something for which I will always be grateful.

Mandy has been there through everything over these past 4 years both professionally and

personally and if I can have half the work ethic she has, I'll be happy. Mandy has always pushed me to trust myself and my own judgment – what a fantastic mentor to have in my life.

Looking Forward.

The outlook is bright, I want to keep working hard and improve my knowledge and experience in my role. We all benefit by gaining expertise from a diverse set of people, the whole Shawston team, which is hugely valuable in my opinion.

I'm frequently asked whether I would recommend starting an apprenticeship. Absolutely! When you can learn, gain new skills, and apply them immediately, an apprenticeship is a no-brainer! ♦

Shawston has so many more amazing examples of meritocracy – sponsorship of MBAs, graduate development schemes, and a strong record for internal promotion to name just a few. And the common theme is that all these people made a choice – the choice to improve, to be better, to progress, and to shine. And that's the essence of Employee Ownership. We encourage a freedom of expression rarely seen in business, we push people to be better versions of themselves, and we give them the space to make choices.

So, if you're interested in a career with Shawston, make the choice to email us your cv and a covering letter to hr@shawston.co.uk or [visit our website](#) to read more about

