

MEET THE TEAM AT HITACHI

Business and Administration Apprentices
Hitachi Capital Vehicle Solutions



Newbury College

Hitachi Capital Vehicle Solutions, a division of Hitachi Capital (UK) PLC, is one of the UK's leading contract hire and fleet management companies. Its history of providing funding for cars, HGVs and specialist vehicles spans over 30 years. Operating in a competitive, dynamic market, Hitachi Capital understands that its success is dependent on its employees and has continuously invested in its workforce to ensure customers get the expertise they need.

Embracing apprenticeships

Hitachi Capital uses a Level 3 Business Administration Apprenticeship Scheme to help train and nurture new employees. The company, currently on its second scheme, employs 11 young people based across its two offices in Newbury and Trowbridge.

"Our first apprenticeship scheme provided so much value to the business that there was a real desire to run a second programme," explains Isabel Edwards, Hitachi Capital's Rental Solutions Manager in charge of running the scheme. Isabel's job is to act as mentor to the apprentices, and to ensure that they receive consistent on-the-job training and support.

During the 23-month programme, Hitachi Capital rotates the group of apprentices around three departments within the business. Each placement allows the apprentice to fully engage with the activities of the team, providing valuable experience in customer service and administration, whilst allowing them to develop key skills at the same time.



Left to right - Phoebe Cottrill, Lucy Griffiths, Katie Pryor, Isabel Edwards and Ella Hines.

Apprentice Lucy Griffiths, 17, describes the impact this exposure gives her, "Working in the different departments provides a good overview and allows me to gain knowledge of the business as a whole. I really enjoy the fast-paced environment of working in the Rentals department."

Earning whilst learning

Apprenticeships combine on-the-job training and experience with study towards a nationally recognised qualification. Hitachi Capital's Apprenticeship Scheme in Newbury is delivered in partnership with Newbury College. During the scheme, the apprentices work towards an Advanced Apprenticeship in Business Administration. The College provides assessors to guide

and support the apprentices to complete and build up the number of units required for the qualification and assess their competence in the workplace.

"The units are designed to complement the work experience, and I haven't struggled balancing the coursework whilst working full-time yet," explains apprentice Katie Pryor, 19. The apprentices receive 1 ½ hours per month during work time to complete assignments and meet with their assessors.

The scheme allows apprentices the opportunity to communicate with both internal and external customers. Apprentice Phoebe Cottrill, 19, describes why that's an important part of the scheme, "By talking to customers on



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the phone, I've been able to actively implement what I've learnt about providing good customer service and my confidence in this area has increased significantly."

Increasing productivity

Running the Apprenticeship Scheme has had a positive effect on employee productivity, "The apprentices are not afraid to ask why we do things in the way that we do and will often challenge the reason for doing so. We encourage that challenge as it helps us to ensure that our processes are as efficient as they can be, which in turn has a positive impact on our teams and the service we provide to our customers," explains Isabel.

"Apprenticeships are a fantastic mechanism for young people to transition from education to the workplace," continues Isabel, "it allows them to find out if they are suited to and enjoy working in an office environment and at the end of the scheme they are able to apply for a permanent role."

Employees Tom Purser, 22, and Helen Gardner, 23, both joined Hitachi Capital after completing their apprenticeship on the company's first scheme. Tom explains why he decided to join the company full time, "During the scheme I discovered that I really enjoyed working in a customer service role. On a daily basis I was dealing with different people and handling

different situations, I was never bored. I hope to continue in my customer service role here at Hitachi Capital and hopefully, one day, manage a customer service team."

Helen talks about how the scheme helped obtain her job of choice at the company and what her future aspirations are, "Having always wanted a job in a corporate workplace and to make a career for myself, Hitachi Capital's Apprenticeship Scheme seemed like the perfect way of settling myself into this environment. At the end of the scheme, as I'd had experience in every department, I was able to apply for a job in a team where I wanted to work. Eventually I'd like a career in account management, possibly working alongside other apprentices so I can offer them the same level of support as I had."

Benefits all round

From an employer's perspective, Isabel is very impressed with how well the scheme has worked and how much value it's added to the business, "Having completed their apprenticeship, we know that when employees like Tom and Helen make a decision, it's an informed one – that benefits the company and the team. The scheme has also inspired other team members to want to learn new skills too."

Apprentice Ella Hines, 18, agrees that the scheme has benefits all round, "I think an apprenticeship is a great way of getting

started in the working environment – it's an opportunity to earn a living, gain a qualification and learn new skills. It benefits both the business and individual by encouraging new ideas, fresh talent and great experiences."

Apprentice Robert Sanderson, 19, would recommend the scheme to others, "It has opened the door for me in terms of being able to get a job. I know many people, who after university, have struggled to get anywhere due to a lack of work experience. The opportunity at Hitachi Capital has put me a step ahead in that regard."



Original scheme apprentices, Tom Purser and Helen Gardner, have continued their employment at Hitachi Capital.

HITACHI

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■ Catering NEW	■ Engineering	■ Motor Vehicle
■ Child Care	■ Hairdressing NEW	■ and more...
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If you'd like to become an apprentice, check out our current list of vacancies on the website: www.newbury-college.ac.uk/apprenticeships or call the team on 01635 845229.



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