

**INDUSTRY:** INFO & COMMUNICATION

**PROGRAMME:** APPRENTICESHIPS

**ACTIVITY:** CAREER INSIGHT

**BUSINESS:** KYLE OF SUTHERLAND



**BETH SIMCO**

## BUSINESS MANAGEMENT GA

Nineteen-year-old Beth Simco, who lives in the Scottish Highlands, works at Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust (KoSDT), which supports the sustainable development of the region through community projects, windfarm and renewable energy and employment opportunities.

Beth's employment journey began when she was in her final year at school, when she enquired to Business Gateway for some work experience – landing a part-time role with the Trust. Beth's hard work led to an offer of a two day per week role as a contracts officer, before progressing to a full-time position as contract officer.

Day-to-day, Beth's role varies, and is dependent on the different projects supported by KoSDT. Recent work has included the renovation of an old barn into a 'business barn' in Ardgay, as well as managing the renovation of an old school in Embo.

The contract team of which Beth is a part also has the responsibility of managing the company's assets, which include the Falls of Shin Visitor Attraction and the Post Office and adjacent house.

## FOR BETH, THE IDEA OF AN OFFICE JOB WAS NOT FOR HER...

Beth enjoys being out in the rural Highlands helping manage the construction or renovation of community assets, where she's able to bring creativity to her tasks. She's also in the process of developing a digital and cyber security project that will help the local community understand more about these ever-changing areas.



Alongside Beth's day-to-day tasks, she's also studying towards her graduate apprenticeship degree in business management. Through this, her learning has been supported by a number of training opportunities, including the HIE #hellodigital project, Digital Trends with Google Garage and courses on Microsoft Project and Commercial Awareness.

Before beginning her graduate apprenticeship, Beth took advantage of the many learning opportunities that are available, including two modules with the Virtual Learning Academy – Project Management and Digital Marketing, equipping her with skills including search engine optimisation and social media marketing.

Despite travelling round the rural Highlands daily, Beth also makes time to attend industry events, including the Scottish Rural Awards at Dynamic Earth and the Highland Business Awards, where she won **Highland Apprentice of the Year**.

Despite not opting for the university path, Beth believes her route into employment has brought many opportunities to her at a young age, including the delivery of capital community projects at just age 19.



### What have you learned in the last 18 months?



*"I've learned everything from the management of rural communities through to learning how community assets work with local associates. I've also learnt about the fast-paced world of business, finance and budgeting as well as the different roles within project teams and how everyone can work together."*

### What do you love about living and working in the North Highlands?

*"I love the business network in smaller rural areas as I find it can be easier to approach and get to know people quickly - making closer successful connections. The Highlands is one of the most beautiful places to live and we are very fortunate to use the rural remote locations to our best abilities."*

### What's your advice for anyone considering an apprenticeship?

*"Look at carrying out work experience to see what is for you and more importantly what isn't for you. University is so exciting for some while for others, it's not the dream. Look at your own path and create a story out of passion. Graduate Level Apprenticeships combine the benefits of university with earning at the same time, and not forgetting the amount of work experience you will have in comparison to regular degrees."*

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