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Graduate Case Study

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Associate Profile: Katie Riches

Name: Katie Riches
Qualifications: BA Honours Sociology and Social Anthropology,
MSc Social Work
Current Role: Consultant for Portsmouth City Council
Location: Portsmouth

IN MY KTP I...

My KTP was between the University of Portsmouth and Portsmouth City Council. The original objectives of the project were to develop a set of indicators for children's needs. However, as the project began, central Government was in the final stages of consultation to produce a National Indicator Set (NIS) which aimed to increase focus on outcomes and against which Local Authorities and their partners would be expected to report annually. To avoid duplication, we decided to focus on gaps that remained in outcome indicators that were priorities in Portsmouth's Children and Young People's Plan.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE PROJECT WERE...

I think the real achievement and challenge for me was working with both partners, the university and the business, and overcoming difficulties together. I had to manage and negotiate both partners' expectations and keep them happy. The university was used to spending considerable time on background work and preparation to shape ideas, and the business needed quality products and processes that could move from idea to implementation within months in order to take advantage of the current situation. One of my key roles was to ensure that both partners were happy with the procedures and the quality of work. After months of work to develop an evaluation framework and many meetings aimed at assisting colleagues to understand the importance of a thorough approach, it was wonderful to attend meetings and hear senior managers putting it into practice.

THE BEST THING ABOUT BEING A KTP ASSOCIATE IS...

The best thing about being a KTP Associate is working directly with senior managers. You are at the heart of decision making and have opportunities to influence it. It would have taken me ten years in normal circumstances to have this kind of opportunity. The other great thing about a KTP is the academic input that you receive. We would not have been able to achieve what we did without it. Without this type of Partnership in place, we would have relied on what had been done before or what other councils had done. The input from academia meant we were able to use innovative ideas and solutions to achieve our objectives.

FROM KTP I HAVE LEARNT...

I have learnt lots of specific skills, such as how to analyse data for which I received formal training from the university. Six months after my KTP started, I began my professional doctorate in social work because of the encouragement and training I had from my Academic Supervisors during my KTP. I also learnt about general project management, planning and negotiation skills.

LIFE AFTER KTP IS...

Completing a KTP has opened up lots of opportunities for me. I have maintained my core social work skills, so I have the option of going back into social work, but I would now be looking at management level; KTP has really fast-tracked my career. Due to my KTP, I have built up my research skills which means I could go into a more academic, research-based position, or I could work in policy and strategy for local councils or authorities. KTP definitely opens doors!

I WILL RECOMMEND KTP BECAUSE...

I would certainly recommend KTP. It gives you control over your training budget, which really focuses your mind on what you need to do the job and so provides truly personalised development. You get the chance to see how decisions are made at a high level and be part of that process, an opportunity not to be missed!

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Knowledge Transfer Partnerships is one of the largest graduate recruitment programmes in Europe and is managed by the Technology Strategy Board. KTP uses the knowledge and skills of high calibre graduates and their academic supervisors to inject fresh ideas into UK businesses.

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