

Case study

Dan Williams

Case Manager

JLT

Throughout school going to university was always 'Plan A', but after spending a summer working in a leisure centre, going back to school I felt like I'd outgrown it. I still wanted to learn, but I didn't see school as the right environment.

School friends were slightly jealous that I was leaving, but my family's reaction was different. I remember my mum crying when I told her I was leaving the sixth form, but I was lucky that my dad and stepmum were pretty supportive.

I felt that some of my extended family were secretly disappointed, and while most came across as supportive, they did have concerns at the time. I think, looking back, their perspectives have changed, although my dad did an apprenticeship himself so he knew the value of going down that path.

I feel that the apprenticeship had tangible outcomes in skills and qualifications, but more than anything it gave me a platform to demonstrate my potential, the skills I had and what I could do.

The ability to apply the skills you're learning in a practical environment worked really well for me, although it is a personal thing and some people benefit from a greater degree of theoretical learning.

Looking back, after ten years, at friends from school who went down the uni route, we all now have similar level roles and similar salaries. They spent a lot of money going to university and had some great experiences; I've gone about things in a slightly different way, but I think we're on a pretty level playing field.

“Starting from the ground up you learn an awful lot about the business and its inner workings. That way you get a really good idea of what it takes to progress beyond that.”

Neil Williams, Dan's Father



“More than anything, the apprenticeship gave me a platform to demonstrate my potential.”

Dan Williams, Case Manager, JLT

Case study

Leigh McGonagle

Underwriting Assistant

The Channel Syndicate

So many different things made me choose an apprenticeship over university. One was the fact that I wanted to get out in the real world – I wanted to earn and learn. University fees were a factor. Did I want to walk away with a £30-50k debt that I would have to pay off?

The Lloyd's of London apprenticeship application process consisted of an online test, a phone interview with competency-based questions; and an assessment centre of 4-5 hours.

I didn't get any guidance from school. I felt slightly neglected and went off teachers' radars.

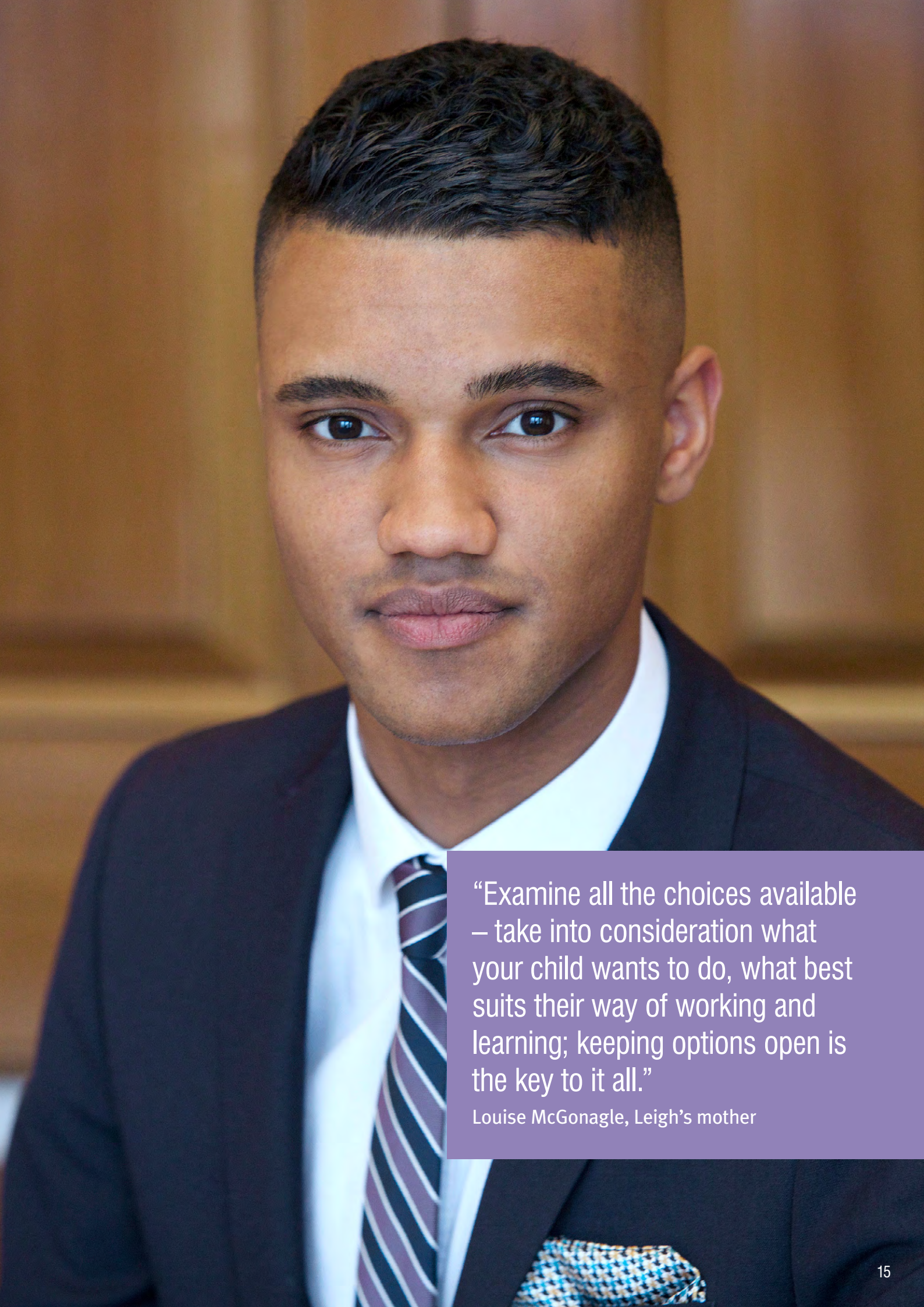
When I first contemplated telling my parents that I wanted to choose an apprenticeship over university, I made sure I collected all the information I needed to hold a strong argument. I know my mother was a little worried because I didn't apply for university.

My friends think it's great. I've got a very close group of friends who were on my apprenticeship. We've all finished now but we all meet a lot. We had so much exposure around the market to different areas we have now got completely different jobs.

If you want to build a career and work the way you want to work and earn money I would suggest doing an apprenticeship – it puts you ahead of the game, not behind.

“There are no bad points to taking on Apprentices. You have keen, excited individuals who are willing to learn all there is to know about their chosen profession.”

Sophie Cavanagh, Business Support Manager, The Channel Syndicate



“Examine all the choices available – take into consideration what your child wants to do, what best suits their way of working and learning; keeping options open is the key to it all.”

Louise McGonagle, Leigh’s mother

Case study

Satveer Kaur-Singh

Solutions Analyst

AXA

Before I started my apprenticeship I didn't know much about them. I left college with my A levels and worked for a couple of months in the family business.

I did consider university fees when making my decision. I discussed it with my parents and I was in a good position whereby they could contribute. The fees weren't something that affected my decision.

To be honest, I wasn't really confident with my decision. All my friends were going to university and I felt like I was missing out.

I started the apprenticeship with three other graduates. We've had the same opportunities, we're on the same pay, there's been no difference.

Looking back, my friends have come out with a degree, they're finding it difficult to get jobs. I've got a salary, I'm on a career path of my choice and I'm enjoying the job. I'm so glad that I took an apprenticeship.

The highlights so far have been the job promotion, the salary and working with people of all ages.

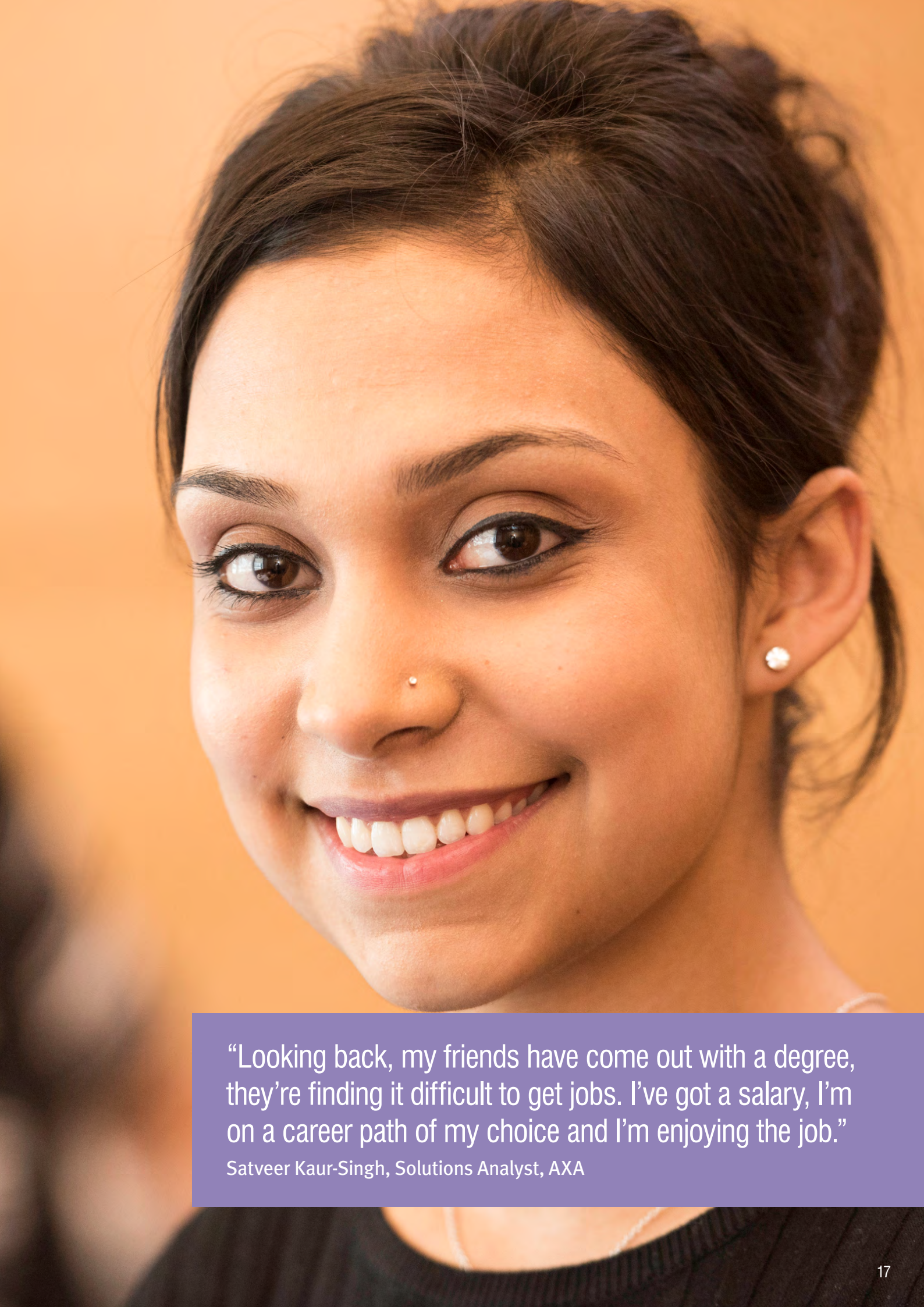
My apprenticeship has helped me massively. Once you've got in to an organisation you've access to many different jobs. Before the apprenticeship I didn't know what a business analyst did!

I want to develop in the role I'm currently in, progressing in to something more senior or managerial and work my way up in AXA.

I wouldn't change my choice.

“Satveer was a very timid young girl before she started the apprenticeship – now she's very confident and has grown into herself.”

Gina Kaur-Singh, Satveer's mother



“Looking back, my friends have come out with a degree, they’re finding it difficult to get jobs. I’ve got a salary, I’m on a career path of my choice and I’m enjoying the job.”

Satveer Kaur-Singh, Solutions Analyst, AXA