

Richmond and Wandsworth Councils
Better Services Partnership

Graduate Development Programme

Applicants Information Session 2026

Jan Elkin – Organisational Development Lead – Early Careers and Apprenticeships

Milly Brand – Organisational Development Adviser

Where we work We are UNIQUE!



- Twickenham Civic Centre
- 44 Richmond Rd, Twickenham TW1 3BZ



- Wandsworth Town Hall
- Wandsworth High St, London SW18 2PU



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Graduate Development Programme - Key Features

- **2 year fixed term contract**, starting salary **£31, 586** (pay award pending) 32 days holiday plus Bank Holidays.
- Annual recruitment – start date **Monday 21st September 2026** (not negotiable) you are required to attend the 5 day induction programme.
- Placements on projects in **Richmond and Wandsworth Councils** e.g. Cost of Living Crisis, Climate Change, Events, Elections, Adult and Public Health, Children’s Services.
- Undertake a relevant work- related qualification (likely to be the Level 4 Associate Project Management qualification) time allowed in work for study, workshops, tutorials. We expect the qualification to take you around 18 months. [Associate project manager / Skills England](#)
- Support system includes Grads in the year above, Placement Managers, Supervisors.

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What are we looking for?

- Applicants who want to make a **career out of working at Richmond and Wandsworth Councils.**
- **Applicants who have an open mind about their career plans - this is not** the right opportunity for you if you have a specific career in mind such as Surveying, Accountancy, Planning, Public Health, we have other opportunities – keep an eye on website.
- **A wide range of graduates** – who have **excellent communication and time management skills** to work with a wide variety of people in a range of different contexts. You should strive towards continuous self- improvement by trying out new things and taking yourself out of your comfort zone.
- You must be within **two years of graduating** from your **first** degree (summer 2024) if you are completing a Masters then you still need to be within 2 years of graduating from your first degree.
- *If you are care-experienced or declare that you have a disability then you are guaranteed an interview providing you meet our minimum criteria (please see Later slide on the shortlisting process).*



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Recruitment Timeline:

Closing Date: 11:59pm on Monday, 25th May 2026

Assessment Days: 29th and 30th **July at Wandsworth Town Hall**, (you will be invited to select your date preference) from **9.00 am – 5.00 pm**. Unfortunately we are unable to pay any interview expenses. You may be able to leave earlier if you have finished all the tasks.

Prior to the Assessment Day you will be asked to prepare a powerpoint presentation, you will also be given a task on the day for which you will need your laptop.

Please let us know if you have any specific needs on or before the assessment day.

We invite around 12 people to each Assessment Day – we are likely to recruit 4 Grads

Start Date: **Monday 21st September 2025** (not negotiable) Induction Week



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The shortlisting process

It is really important to us that we have a fair and transparent shortlisting process which adheres to our equality and diversity practices. Currently we follow these principles

- **We do not close the applications window early if we have received enough applications.** we keep to the closing date.
- **Applications are anonymous** – we do not see your names or the University you attended or the degree you undertook, we are completely open minded about this.
- **Every application is read by at least two trained members of staff**, who score applications separately, then they meet to agree scores, the scores are then moderated by two moderators, if they disagree with the initial scoring then the process may need to be undertaken again.
- **The Graduate Steering Group** meet to confirm the final shortlist.
- **The whole process can take around 6 weeks from the closing date.**



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The shortlisting process

Part 1

- **Question 1 is read first** –many applications don't get past this stage because applicants have not fully answered the question, answers contain too many grammatical or spelling errors, and/or answer relies too heavily on AI (over 30% of the answer appears to be AI generated)

Part 2

- We then score the further questions and advise you to use the STAR method to answer each question.
- Then we read your personal statement which addresses the person specification.
- A total of 20 marks can be achieved in the whole process, generally applications need to score 19 to be invited for interview.
- Last year we had around 400 applications and appointed 4 grads

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Graduate Development Programme – the Assessment Day

- The Assessment Day consists of a pre-prepared presentation, writing a short briefing paper and an interview. We are not trying to “catch you out” at any stage of the process. Grads recruited in 2026 are around all day to support you and answer any questions.
- We make the day as friendly as possible and recognise it is a two way process (you may have other jobs you are applying for).
- The Interview panel is likely to be 4 people, including a senior manager and an Asst Director. The panel is mixed in terms of age, gender, ethnicity etc which follows our EDI protocol. We have standardised questions asked to all.
- You will be asked to let us know in advance if you have any specific needs that we need to take account of on the day.



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Applying for work with us..... **Top Tips**

- Plan **sufficient time** to complete the application process – one grad said they allowed themselves 2 weeks (applied whilst working full-time), you can submit up until the last day. **Don't rush to submit early.**
- Even though you are **asked to upload your CV it cannot be read** by our short-listing team as all applications are anonymous until the very final selection stages.
- Read the Advert the **Job Description and Person Specification and the advice for applicants** carefully. You will need to explain **how you meet each one of the Person Specifications** criteria.
- **Answer the additional questions on the application** and read them thoroughly.
- **Question 1** is used for the first part of the short-listing process i.e. if you do not address this question well, then your whole application will be rejected.
- **Be concise** (focus on the STAR method when necessary (Situation, Task, Action, Result))
Make sure you fully explain the **action YOU took and the Result.**

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Applying for work with us..... Top Tips

- Ask someone to **read through and check your answers** (University Careers Service, friend, family etc.)
- **Double check your punctuation and grammar** (write your answer on a **word document** first to ensure you have written enough, check your grammar and punctuation)
- **Be sure to SUBMIT your application on our system before the deadline – you should get an automatic email confirmation, that your application has been received.**

Everything should be in your own words – we will check for the use of AI

Make sure you keep a record of the applications you have made, your account ID and the dates listed on the advert.



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- We are seeing a huge increase in the use of AI in applications they all use similar phrases which are generally not in everyday use and are generally meaningless. We understand that **AI applications** can be helpful however we check to see how much of your content is AI generated, if the application is **over 30% AI generated we will reject it automatically.**
- As **we shortlist anonymously**, we cannot answer individual emails asking about the progress of your application.
- We email all applicants after **Part 1 shortlisting to let you know if your application has progressed through to Part 2 shortlisting stage.**

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As well as our grad programme we recruit a range of graduates to other vacancies for example:

Housing Trainee Scheme –

Trainee Fraud Investigators –

Pensions Administrators – several posts undertaking Pensions Administration qualifications

Management Accountants – 2 posts now undertaking Level 7 CIPFA qualifications

Marketing and Communications Officers – various posts – undertaking Level 3 Digital Marketeer

Customer Services Officers – regular vacancies

Internal Auditor – IA qualifications

Trainee School Business Managers – regular recruitment

Teaching Assistants/Learning Support Assistants -ongoing

Qualified Social Workers – regular recruitment

Project Officers – to work in different departments across a range of different directorates.

Keep an eye on our website!



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Examples of Previous Graduate Project Officers Completed in 2024

Akeem – supports residents into employment

Hayley – Planning Officer

Callum – Contract Compliance Officer within Leisure and Recreation

William – HR Adviser

Oliver – Community Project Officer

Milly – Organisational Development Adviser

Completed in 2025

Emelia – Policy Officer –permanent role

Sharon – moved to Southampton – works in data analysis for private company

Stephanie – Democratic Services Officer (Elections)

Pavlos – Mobile Outreach Co-Ordinator

Maap – Cabinet Support and Leaders Office

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And finallywe wish you every success with your application, we know that it is a tough job market at the moment.

If you have any further questions please contact us on the following email address
earlycareersandapprenticeships@richmondandwandsworth.gov.uk

The next few slides will give you an idea of previous successful applicants and what they are doing now on their career journey.





Alaina

Children's needs are changing. So are we.

Sept 2019 – May 2021
Completed my A-Levels in Politics, Sociology and BTEC in Applied Science at Grey Court Sixth Form, Richmond

Sept 2021 – May 2024
Completed my BA (Hons) in Politics at Queen Mary, University of London

Sept 2024 – Now
Graduate Project Officer at Richmond and Wandsworth Councils

Policy and Review & Corporate Performance

Wandsworth Children's Services



It seems like there's lots of amazing services for families.

What I enjoy about working for Richmond and Wandsworth

- Impactful work
- Engaging with the community
- Ability to work with a wide range of colleagues in the organisation
- Ability to easily have a conversation with Executive Directors and senior managers
- Space for sharing concerns and innovative ideas with colleagues and SMTs



Top tips for the application process:

- Take your time with the application
- AI is NOT your friend!
- The interview panel will support you throughout the process
- Showcase your individuality

Access For All

Our ambitious [Access For All](#) scheme will break down barriers and make sure all residents have an equal chance to access local opportunities, including sports, leisure and other essential services.

Wandsworth Moves Together is an ambitious strategy to help people in our borough become more physically active.

The offer is open to **Wandsworth** residents only. Please see the [eligibility requirements](#) prior to accessing offers.



Why I joined the Graduate Scheme?

I live in Richmond and have worked in both Richmond and Wandsworth; I wanted to give back to the community in meaningful way and to make the borough I live in a better place.



Archie's Career Journey

- Educational Background- School, College and A-Levels
- **Loughborough University** **2019-2022**
- Gap Year - saving, travelling
- **Full Time Work** – working in a warehouse, volunteering at the **African Child Trust**, Redundancy!

- Richmond and Wandsworth Graduate Development Programme, **Graduate Project Officer**, 2024 – current
- Placements in **Organisational Development and Refugee Services**, Level 4 Associate Project Manager.



Milly Brand



2018
Library Assistant in the Richmond Borough



2019 - 2022
Cardiff University to study BSc (Hons) Sociology



2019, 2022 and 2024
Polling Station Clerk



2022 - 2023
Richmond and Wandsworth Councils
Graduate Project Officer



2023 - Present
Richmond and Wandsworth Councils
Organisational Development Adviser

What do I like about working for R&W?

- 1) Working for the local authority in the area I live allows me to see my projects have a positive impact on the local community.
- 2) The flexible working arrangements and generous annual leave.
- 3) The people are generally very nice!

What do I not like about working for R&W?

- 1) Having to work in two offices (Richmond and Wandsworth).
- 2) Some decision-making processes lack clear communication.



Isaac

How I Got Here



2019-22
BA History, University of Exeter

2021
Summer Intern, Baringa Partners

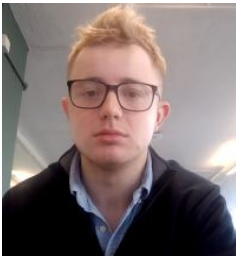
2022
Summer Intern, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS)



2022-23
MA Public Administration and Public Policy, University of York

2024
Three Month Internship, All-Party Parliamentary Group for Freedom of Religion and Belief

2024- Now
Graduate Project Officer, Richmond and Wandsworth Councils



How I'm Doing

What I've Done

- Helped launch the Tooting Family Hub by acquiring IT equipment
- Redesigned the IT internal website
- Assisted with AI Copilot trial
- Worked on disability transport and event access
- Speechwriting
- Research on useful applications for staff use and polling

What I Like

- Very friendly and supportive staff and community
- Interesting and diverse workload
- Opportunities to learn on the job
- Flexible working- plenty of opportunities to WfH and not a hassle to take days off if necessary or desired

What I Don't Like

- The dual offices- can be difficult to remember which is which!
- Can be hard to find the right person to talk to or the right information for a particular task

Kyle



Accounting and Management 2.1 (67%)
Queen Mary University of London
2019-2023

Trustee- Expressions with Art
2023-Present

Graduate Project Officer- Richmond and
Wandsworth Councils
2024- Present

Why I joined the Grad Scheme

- Network with a range of professionals
- Ability to shadow senior government officials
- Exciting projects e.g. Tooting Hub, Apprenticeship Week



What I like about R&W Councils

- Flexible Working
- Generous pension scheme and annual leave
- Wandsworth resident

RICHMOND &
WANDSWORTH
BETTER
SERVICE
PARTNERSHIP



What I don't like about R&W Councils

- Industry uncertainty
- Bureaucracy

Advice on applying

Be honest about why you want to work here and avoid using AI

Expressions with Art **Hopetown Art MURAL**
Invite you to view and celebrate
AN AMAZING COLLECTIVE ARTWORK

MONDAY
28th July 2014
11am-Midday

HOPETOWN Hostel
60 Old Montague St
LONDON E1 5NG

For more information,
please contact:
Tel. No 079 563 919 13
expressionswithart@yahoo.co.uk

