

# Apprenticeship Stories



JOHN LEWIS

WAITROSE

# Tony Righelato

## Please share an overview of your apprenticeship experience:

I applied for cohort 2 of the SLMDA level 7 apprenticeship as I had been a Partner at John Lewis for 18 years and decided I needed a new challenge that would stretch me to achieve more and different things. Due to the impact of covid on my workload I took a break in learning and rejoined in a later cohort with new JLP colleagues as well as learners from other industries, I completed my apprenticeship in July 2023, the learning has made a huge change in me and my leadership skills.

## What was the peak and the pit of your learning?

The peak of my learning experience was definitely working with learners from different industries that really questioned my knowledge and thinking of leadership, and also allowed me to test different ways of working. The pit of my learning experience would have to be the impact of covid such as moving to virtual learning which was a new way of working at that point and seeing a lot of my colleagues step away from the apprenticeship due the impacts the pandemic had on their personal and work life

## What is one piece of advice you wish you'd known at the start of your apprenticeship?

Create a very close connection with those on your apprenticeship cohort, they were often a light at the end of the tunnel when deadlines were approaching or there were things I just didn't understand! I've made some great relationships with this group and I will always remember the laughs!

## What have you gained from your apprenticeship journey?

The learning from this apprenticeship has been so valuable, I have changed my style and approach to certain aspects of leadership but also recognised where my strengths were and built upon those. Thrifty the programme I've taken on 2 new jobs and secured a promotion to Head Of Branch.



**Role:**  
**Head of Branch**  
**John Lewis**  
**Newcastle**

**Scheme:**  
**Senior Leader L7**

**Training Provider**

# Lucy Wales

## **Please share an overview of your apprenticeship experience:**

I joined the Partnership in 2016 as a part-time Supermarket Assistant at Waitrose, to get some pocket money whilst I was at college. I had ambitions to go to university, securing an offer at my first choice, but unfortunately suffering from an injury that meant I was not well enough to do so. I was forced to take a different approach with my education and decided to enroll onto the Level 4 Retail Manager Apprenticeship, allowing me to continue to build work experience and earn whilst I learn, still achieving a government recognised qualification. The skills and confidence I was able to gain from this scheme supported two promotions, to an Assistant Team Manager at a different Waitrose branch, and then a Team Manager, moving across to John Lewis. I successfully completed this apprenticeship in March 2022, and loved it so much that I enrolled onto Level 5 Leadership scheme just 6 weeks later. Fast forward 18 months and I am now in my end point assessment period, after securing another promotional career change from Retail into the central Learning and Development team as a Progression Specialist.

## **What was the peak and the pit of your learning?**

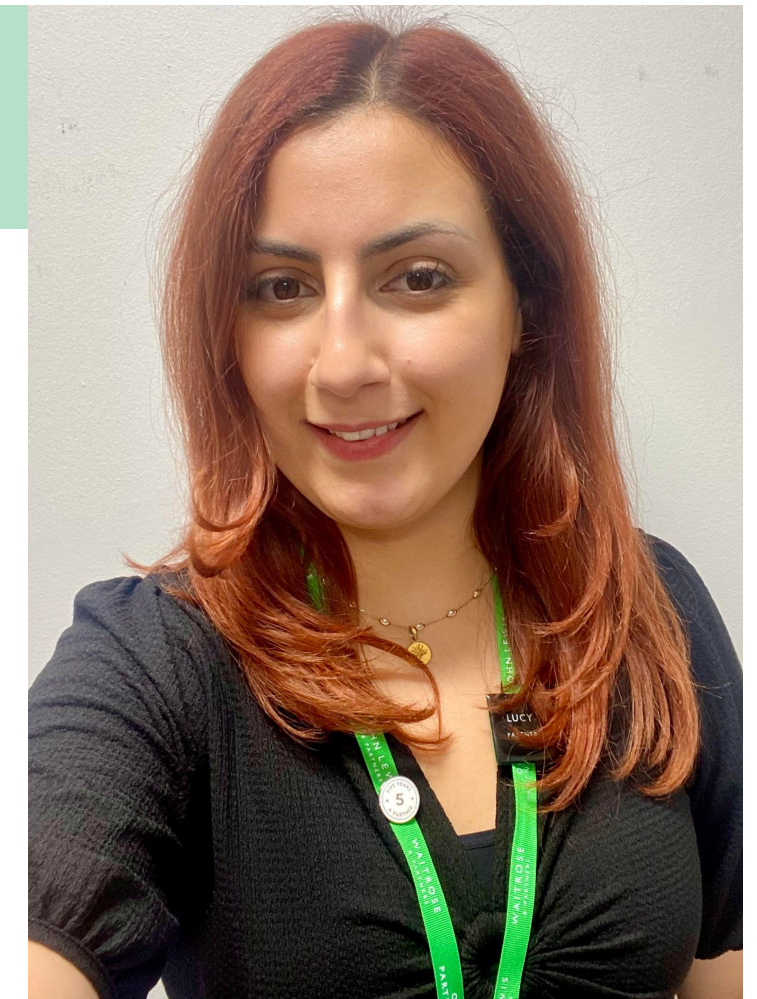
The peak of my Level 5 Operational Leadership apprenticeship was the opportunity to learn about and embed a variety of different project management techniques that supported me in delivering change successfully. As part of my scheme, I implemented a work place project that gave me some brilliant examples to use at interview to secure my secondment in the Progression Team.

## **What is one piece of advice you wish you'd known at the start of your apprenticeship?**

I would encourage others to think about how they can use their apprenticeship as an opportunity to support their career development, always having this at the forefront when writing assignments/completing assessments. That way, you can embed your learning in the workplace whilst also building your CV with relevant examples, getting yourself ready for opportunities - killing 2 birds with 1 stone.

## **What have you gained from your apprenticeship journey?**

I have spent the past 3 and a half years completing apprenticeships, and am such a huge advocate for these that I intend to continue on and complete my Level 7 one day! Being able to earn whilst I learn, building work experience with an established employer, with no costs that you would get with the traditional university route, has been amazing - I am so grateful that the business has invested in my development via the apprenticeship levy. There are so many benefits to this form of education and I have been able to massively progress my career in the past 3 years by putting all my learning into practice.



**Role:**  
Progression Specialist  
Pan Partnership  
**Scheme:**  
Operation / Department  
Manager L5  
**Training Provider:**  
Hart