**Tyler Lowe -
1st Line Support Engineer**

At Evolve, we pride ourselves on cultivating a company culture where people are our greatest asset. That's why we recently renewed our commitment to nurturing new talent by exceeding our 5% Club pledge, with 9.24% of Evolve's employees enrolled in apprenticeship programmes in 2024.

To shine a light on what an apprenticeship at Evolve looks like, we sat down with Tyler Lowe, Apprentice First Line Engineer, to tell us about his experience with us.

How I came to Evolve...

I've always had a logical and creative mind, and in fact, when I was younger, I wanted to get into the game industry. This led me to the University of Bradford, where I studied game design and development. After leaving university, I looked into various ways of getting into the industry and hoped to get a role as a Junior Game Developer or Junior Software Developer.

Unfortunately for me, a lot of the big game companies at the time were laying off their staff and not taking on new people, so I quickly realised there was no opportunity for me to progress in that career path.

At this point I took a step back and re-evaluated what my options were. I looked at what aspects of my university course I enjoyed and was best at and decided to look for an alternative career option that would enable me to use my problem-solving and technology skills while also having a clear path of progression.

This led me to Baltic Apprenticeships, the largest independent training provider in England, who work with Evolve to offer a range of apprenticeships. I got in touch and told them that I was interested in a role that covered both IT support and programming elements, and they directed me to Evolve.
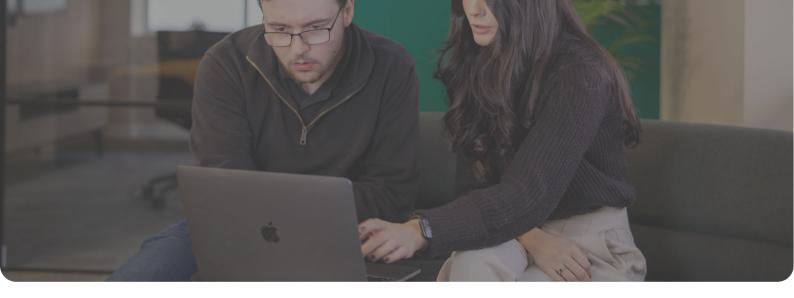
Apprentice life...

As an Apprentice First Line Engineer, my job is basically to deal with the initial IT problem presented by the customer, ask questions and decide what the best course of action is to get the problem solved as quickly as possible. A typical day for me means coming into the office, sitting with my team of engineers, and learning from them based on the work that they do. I often watch my manager deal with an incoming IT ticket and then go away to practice that type of ticket by myself to ensure I've learnt it properly.

My apprenticeship will last for around a year in total and started with two weeks of shadowing a colleague, learning the work they do and the IT tickets they get. I asked a lot of questions and eventually moved on to individual tasks where I used my own initiative and built my confidence – with proper management oversight, of course!

As the weeks went on, the scheme gradually progressed to enable me to take on more tasks as I grew in confidence and knowledge. The biggest challenge for me has been that everything in the role is new – but that also makes it fun and exciting.

I've even had the chance to experience some really interesting projects and visit some cool places: we had a one-off project for a long-term customer that involved me going to America with the network team to stage, build and package a new network of over 300 items. This was one of the highlights of my apprenticeship so far, and I really learned in detail how the network team works and how it complements the IT team that I work in.

What I've learned...

During my first couple of weeks at Evolve, I was very nervous to answer any of the many calls we get as first-line IT engineers. My team supported me to slowly take on one or two calls to learn the ropes and help build my confidence, initially passing callers on to relevant team members and eventually being able to deal with the problem on the phone myself. Not long after this, I was recognised as the person with the greatest number of calls answered at Evolve, which was huge progress for me.

Overall, my apprenticeship at Evolve has helped me to develop the skills and confidence I need to set me on a positive path for the future. In a relatively short space of time, I have become one of the most knowledgeable people in my area, and people now come straight to me with questions about it. It's a great feeling to know how far I've come since my first day as an apprentice.

I believe that my role is so enjoyable because I talk to real people every day and help them to solve a problem – Evolve is a people business, and that really shines through. It's been an interesting experience for me, especially being 25 and older than many of the other apprentices, but it has taught me that you can come to an apprenticeship at any point in life, and it will always be an opportunity to learn new skills and get on a new career path.

What the future holds...

After university, I felt like I had been dropped with no real guidance on how to progress a career and secure a good role. Since being at Evolve, I've become confident that I have an abundance of choice in my future and that the next five years of my career will be great. My manager is a constant support for me in this, as she is always helping me to think ahead and understand what all my options are. The whole Evolve team has reassured me that I can explore what is best for me, ensure that I am on the right path, and that I will be supported to get there.

If anyone reading this is interested in doing an apprenticeship in IT, or any other apprenticeship at Evolve, I would say go for it.

It's a lot easier to get started in an apprenticeship than you may think – you don't need to have all the answers straight away; you are being taught what you need to know every day to do the job well.

If you're not sure about where to go in life or what to do, and have even a small interest in trying out an IT and tech career, I believe it's one of the best routes you can go down.