**Maise:** I’m Maisie and I’m working at Hertfordshire FA as a Football Development Officer for equality and inclusion.I’m doing a Sports Business Management degree apprenticeship.My mum saw an advertisement for two degree apprenticeships that were open at Hertfordshire FA. My mum sent them to me and told me that I should apply immediately really, and that’s what I did and I don’t regret it one bit.

At Hertfordshire FA, we look after and oversee all the football that happens in Hertfordshire. I’m looking at how we can make football in Hertfordshire more inclusive, more diverse. I’ve always had a football background, so I knew I always wanted to work in the football industry when I was older. Being deaf myself, equality, diversity, inclusion is something I’ve been around for quite a long time. I’ve been around people who are, maybe have similar opportunities to me, been through similar things to me. If I can be in a position where I can change those experiences, then that’s what I’d like to do.

I do my actual degree learning at Hertfordshire Uni. I’m there once a week on a Monday for lectures, seminars. I quite enjoy being in the office, being around the other people. It’s also a very friendly environment to be around. I have had people asking me if there is anything they can do to make my life easier, which is really nice to know that there are people thinking about how they can make it the best opportunity and the best experience for me.

Everyone should feel like they can play football, everyone should feel like they can be involved in some way, shape or form.

Apprenticeships are a great alternative to universities. You do at the same time still get a degree, whilst also taking a more proactive role and being more involved in everyday life really.

My advice for other people would be to kind of trust your own instincts and trust yourself, because at the end of the day, you know yourself best. Always keep the door open for taking your degree apprenticeship route, because I think it will really open up your search and really open your eyes wide to see what is out there.