



Name: Joe Marples

Job title: Seasonal Gardener

Employer: Sheffield City Council, Parks and Countryside,
<http://www.sheffield.gov.uk/out--about/parks-woodlands--countryside>

Starting your career

What attracted you to a career working in Sheffield's environment?

I knew I didn't want to work in an office.

How did you find out about the career opportunities that were available?

Through Sheaf Training – they gave me good advice.

How did you get your career started?

I went to do Horticulture NVQ Level 2 at Sheaf Training. They advised me of what apprenticeship opportunities were available. Initially I wanted to work at Sheffield Wednesday's ground but they couldn't offer a job at the end of an apprenticeship so I chose the Parks and Countryside option.

Your career path

How long have you been working in the industry?

3 years

What jobs have you done and how did you progress?

This is my first full time job.

Training and skills

What qualifications did you achieve before entering your career?

A-C's at school – this allowed me to go straight onto an NVQ Level 2

What job-specific skills training and development have you undertaken since starting your career?

Machinery and maintenance of cricket and football pitches.

What have you gained from your training and development?

I have gained knowledge to do the certain tasks, but I am always learning on the job.



Your working day

What is a typical day for you?

There isn't one, except every morning there is a litter pick. In summer we spend a lot of time cutting grass and maintaining the sports pitches. In winter the work depends on the weather.

What takes up most of your time?

Litter picking – it can be about 2 hours a day in summer.

What is the best bit about your job?

Mowing, especially when doing stripes on the turf. I like it when you can turn round and look at what you've done and think 'that looks well'. We also get to interact with the regular park users and it is great when they pay us a compliment.

The future

What are your aspirations for your career?

I want to stay in this kind of work. I'd like to start a landscaping business with a friend within 5 years.

How would you like to develop your skills further in the future?

I'd like to know how to do hard landscaping, and would like to get a qualification in this area.

Who has been an inspiration or influence on your career?

All my colleagues, especially those who've been in the industry a long time. I am impressed by how they do their job and how they always know what needs doing.

If you had to "sell" a career in Sheffield's environment in one sentence, what would you say?

If you enjoy working outside, getting your hands dirty, talking to the public and doing something different everyday then you will enjoy a job like mine.