

The Body Shop

Dorchester

The late Anita Roddick would have been proud of Claire Jones, manager of The Body Shop in Dorchester, and she'd have been grateful to nearby Kingston Maurward College for helping the shop's staff develop their careers.

Claire has just been put in charge of the branch after three years as assistant manager, and she attributes at least part of her success to the flexible attitude of the college towards training.

"You can't always spare people for an hour or so, particularly when budgets are so tight at the moment, so they let us take our tests in the shop and sit upstairs with an invigilator instead of having to go into the college," she says. "There were a few times when I had to ring up and say we're too busy and they were fine about it and booked us in for another day. They're really flexible."

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Claire, who is doing a two-year advanced apprenticeship in retail but expects to have completed it in just over a year, says the NVQ assessors understand the needs of a busy shop and are happy to stand discreetly in the corner and take notes while the staff get on with their work.


"The training has increased our confidence in what we do. We've learnt about customer service and security – things I hadn't covered in other roles.

"It makes you question things you do when you break your role down. It's a qualification based on what you do and it's nationally recognised – and it makes you realise you can do things when you've been out of education for a while."

Emily, one of the shop's customer consultants, finished her training in six months instead of a year.

"This all shows that the Body Shop supports staff and encourages them to learn," says Claire, who has just started work on an Open University degree in geosciences.

"We've had a lot of support from our area managers, it's been good fun, and the people at Kingston Maurward are so flexible and supportive. That's why we picked them!"



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