

Rebecca Darlow

Finance Trainer, University Finance Division

Interviewed by Marie Synakewicz

Right after finishing her A-levels in three arts subjects, Rebecca did not want to be unemployed and took the first job that came along - a job in finance with Lloyds TSB. That particular direction was entirely accidental and not planned at all, yet it determined her future career. For some time she was working in the private banking sector and later on she started training Lloyds employees on a regional level. Her duties involved a lot of travelling, which impacted negatively on her family life. Looking for employment elsewhere, she subsequently became a trainer for the University Finance Division..

The change came with its own challenges: every department has their own way of doing things, basically each being its own small, individual business. She has done multiple teaching qualifications since and is now responsible for a large amount of the training provided to departments by the Finance Division. "Even though I have been here for 10 years now in the same job, it is the people that I come across, that make the job", Rebecca says. Should she get itchy feet, her boss finds small projects which she can do alongside her normal duties.

Rebecca and her husband first adjusted their working hours when their son started nursery. At the initial stages, her mother was able to take up a lot of the caring responsibilities. Three days a week Rebecca worked long hours and her mother stayed with their son. The other two days, she worked fewer hours to be able to drop off and pick up her son from the nursery. Last year, Rebecca applied for a formal arrangement for flexible working because her son was to start school. The application process was rather confusing as some documents did not appear to be relevant due to their wording. She called HR a few times to clarify and worked out a detailed plan with suggestions and specific hours before she approached her line manager. She is now working from home on Mondays to be able to do the runs to school without too much of a commute. She has also been supplied with a work laptop that gives her access to the University networks and all relevant files. On Fridays, Rebecca starts later so that she is able to drop her son at school and her husband, who doesn't work with the University, works flexible hours as he collects their son at the end of the normal school day. The rest of the week, when most of her training courses are scheduled, her son goes to breakfast and after-school club.

If Rebecca had been asked about career progression before her son was born, she would have said that a career was very important to her. These days she does not have the urge to climb up the career ladder. In her free-time she helps out at the school a lot by organising events and performing duties within the parents and teachers association. Some colleagues are amazed that she is happy to "plod along", but it is what she wants at the moment. Rebecca's line manager is very supportive of her flexible working along with any study that Rebecca wishes to start when the time is right. Once her son is older and more independent she will most likely change her mind because she always needs a challenge.