



Retail & Customer Service

Job Information Sheet

What is Retail?

Organisations in the retail sector range from huge department stores or supermarkets to small boutiques. Modern retail offers a wide range of career paths and excellent opportunities to progress.

When we are out shopping most of us do not stop to think about what goes on behind the scenes in any shop or large store. It all starts with the original concepts and designs of a store. It is a responsibility of the staff to ensure that the products and services are consistent with the demand, they are easy to find and to buy. This is a people driven industry, so you must enjoy having contact with the public and have excellent communication skills, remembering that you must have patience especially with demanding customers.

Within the retail industry you will be required to work the weekends and possibly with early starts or late finishes. Because of the nature of the job, the work can be very physically tiring - many staff spend most of their time on their feet.

Are there jobs for 16-19 year olds?

There are plenty of opportunities for young people in retail. Some retailers ask for GCSE's but good personality, smart appearance and good communication skills are usually more important. Many of the supervisory positions are open to those who show potential.

Most stores recruit graduates for trainee management positions, but these are sometimes available to those who are entering with A Levels (or the equivalent). Many managers start as sales assistants and work their way up. Below is a selection of jobs that could be available to 16-19 year olds living in Central London. Further details of these and many other jobs go to nextstep.direct.gov.uk and click on *Browse our job profiles*.

Jobs for 16-19 year olds in retail

- **Sales assistants** are the face of the company and are in direct contact with the public. They must be enthusiastic, enjoy working with people and have excellent knowledge of the product they are selling. The work can involve, assisting the customer to make a decision on a product, offering them advice and information, packaging the merchandise, taking the payment, arranging displays, monitoring stock levels as well as general house keeping. You can work on a full time, part time or temporary basis. There are no specific requirements to become a sales assistant, although some employers require GCSE's.
- **Shelf Fillers/Replenishment Assistants** are responsible for cleaning, restocking, and maintaining the displays mainly in large supermarkets, stores and superstores. This position is often part-time and can involve night time work.
- **Warehouse Assistants/Operatives** ensure that there are sufficient goods to stock the shelves, without holding surplus stock which may be perishable or taking up space, as well as sending transporting the goods. They help load and unload lorries, keep the warehouse tidy, order and maintain stock – often using a computerised system. Employers will sometimes ask for good GCSEs, but usually good literacy and numeracy.
- **Store managers** are responsible for the day-to-day running of a store. Their goal is to improve commercial performance, and job involves making sure that sales targets are reached, attracting and keeping customers, and staff management. Most retailers have a retail management training scheme. These are often aimed at graduates but some take those with A Levels or the equivalent. It is also possible to move into management by starting as a sales assistant and proving yourself.
- **Call centre operators** work in company call centres helping to sell goods or services, or dealing with enquiries. They might also phone possible new customers to persuade them to buy the company's products or services.
- **Builders' merchants** and workers in DIY stores sell building and do-it-yourself products to the building trade and the general public. They stock thousands of items such as timber, tools and electrical supplies, as well as kitchen and bathroom units and garden furniture and equipment. Employers will sometimes ask for good GCSEs, but usually good literacy and numeracy.
- **Florists** design and make up floral arrangements, bouquets, wreaths and floral tributes, and sell them to the public. They also usually sell cut flowers and pot plants, as well as dried and artificial flowers, gifts and decorations.
- **Visual merchandisers** follow the instructions of a display designer to decorate displays in shop windows and inside stores. Employers usually ask for a relevant art or design qualification.
- **Employment agency resourcers** match people who are looking for work with employers who are looking for new people. Resourcers find candidates to fill the vacancies and the work includes talking to candidates and keeping records up-to-date. Good communications skills are essential and employers normally ask for good GCSE grades.

This information sheet covers jobs for 16-19 year olds in Central London. It does not cover graduate jobs or jobs that are rare in Central London. For details of the whole range of jobs in business and finance go to nextstep.direct.gov.uk and click on *Browse our job profiles*.

Retail Apprenticeship Vacancies (on 5th January 2012)



For more details and to apply go to apprenticeships.org.uk and select Search for vacancies under Apprenticeship Vacancies. Search by vacancy reference number using the Ref No from the first column in the table. When this information sheet was published the following vacancies were available:

Ref No	Framework	Business	Borough	Weekly Wage	Qualifications Required	Closing Date
126612	Customer Service	Recruitment	Islington	£150	None	9 Jan 2012
112524	Telesales	Property	Camden	£150	GCSE grades C+ in maths & English	10 Jan 2012
129427 129685	Purchasing & Supply ^{AA}	Recruitment	Lambeth	£120	A Level grades C+	13 Jan 2012
114720	Telesales	Media	Southwark	£200	5 GCSEs	16 Jan 2012
116686	Customer Service	Training	Southwark	£102	GCSE grades C+ in maths & English	Jan 2012
125291	Customer Service	Training	Southwark	£126	GCSE grades C+ in maths & English	Jan 2012
115465	Retail	Fashion	Throughout London	£140	GCSE grades C+ in maths & English	Jan 2012

Any vacancies marked ^{AA} are Advanced Apprenticeships leading to Level 3 qualifications, all others are Intermediate Apprenticeships leading to Level 2 qualifications.

To apply for any of these vacancies you will need to register (if you have not already) at apprenticeshipvacancymatchingservice.lsc.gov.uk/navms/forms/candidate/PreRegisterCandidate.aspx (you will need a valid email address in order to register). You can get further help on using the site and making applications at apprenticeships.org.uk/sitecore/content/avtm/Candidate.aspx

Kensington & Chelsea Apprenticeships



The following Apprenticeships are from The Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea, but are open to applicants from any borough:

Apprenticeship	Weekly Wage	Qualifications Required	Closing Date
Telemarketing	£2.60 per hour + commission	Good maths & English	30 Jan 2012

For further details and an application form email EBPApprenticeship@rbkc.gov.uk

Other Vacancy Sites

Retail employers don't only employ young people. Many will look for people with experience and/or qualifications. Because employers recruit people of all ages many vacancies will not be on the LOIS site (which is just for young people) but on the sites listed below. In addition the Evening Standard has some suitable vacancies from Monday to Thursday.

In retail.co.uk (www.inretail.co.uk)	This site offers a search engine for positions with companies such as River Island, Gap, Tesco etc.
Retailcareers.co.uk (www.retailcareers.co.uk)	This site is specifically for Retail jobs where you can specify, position, salary and location in a search engine.
Workthing.com (www.workthing.com)	This website offers a search engine for jobs within the Retail Industry, full time, part time and casual.
Retail Choice (www.retailchoice.com)	This site offers a search engine for numerous retail jobs for companies such as Elizabeth Arden and Pepsi.

Part-Time and Temporary Work

Retail employers in Central London are constantly recruiting part-time and temporary staff. Many vacancies are never advertised but are filled by people who call into the store or apply online. For hints on how to look for part-time and temp work, as well as a comprehensive list of recruitment websites see the Part-Time and Temp Job Information Sheet at www.centrallondonconnexions.org.uk.