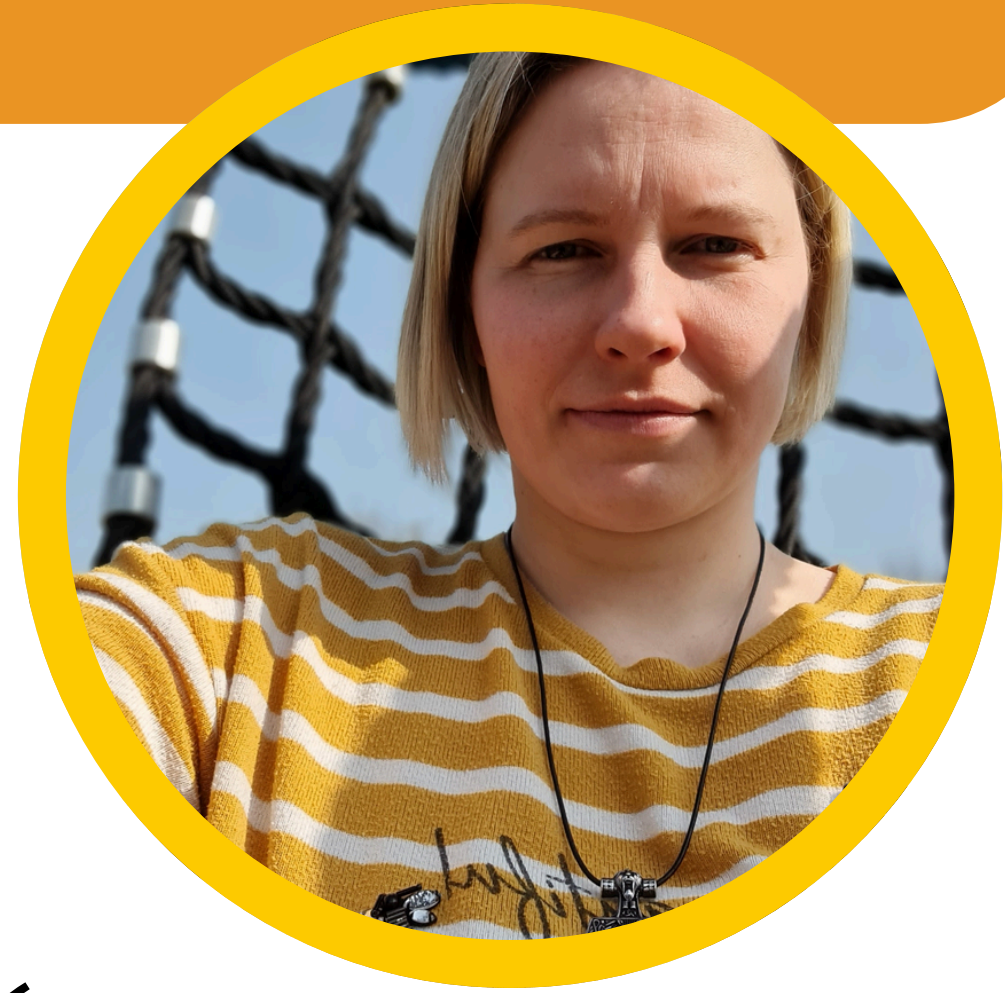


# L4 Data Analyst Apprenticeship experience

## Neringa's story



Hi, I'm Neringa and I'm a **Level 4 Data Analyst apprentice**. I joined the Environment Agency just over a year ago and this is my story about how I got here.

I graduated with a BSc in Public Administration in 2009 back in Lithuania, however since then I have mostly worked in charities and other Non-Governmental Organisations that offer social services to their local communities.

During my parental leave I decided to change career path and teach myself programming skills. I always enjoyed working with technology and I was aware that the demand in IT skills was growing rapidly.

**“ Every time I completed assignments, it was extremely rewarding and kept me motivated ”**

I signed up for several introductory courses on edX and Coursera and have been learning C, Python as well as SQL and Advanced Excel. With no previous programming experience, it has been challenging to study on my own, however every time I managed to complete the assignments it was extremely rewarding and kept me motivated. I realised that I enjoy the process of analysing the problem and looking for different solutions in a creative way.



After finding out more about SQL and Python, I started exploring careers that use these skills. That is how I discovered Data Analysis and decided to pursue the career. I have never looked back since. I decided that doing an apprenticeship would be the best way to learn and still have relative freedom of making mistakes. My goal was not only to become a Data Analyst, but also do a meaningful job in an organisation that cared more about their important mission than making a profit.



I applied to the Data Analyst Apprentice role at Environment Agency and was successful. I was always enthusiastic about the environment and sustainable development so working here seemed like a great fit.

Choosing to take on this apprenticeship turned out to be the best decision. Not only did I get paid while learning the ropes of a Data Analyst, but I also had dedicated time to complete the apprenticeship coursework; this included attending workshops, building a comprehensive portfolio, and working on diverse projects that highlighted the breadth of my growing skill set.

One of the most exciting aspects of this apprenticeship journey has been the opportunity to explore different tools (PowerBI, Python, SQL, DataBricks), learn new concepts (data manipulation, time series analysis, modelling, machine learning, web scraping, and APIs), and work with a variety of datasets.

The idea of "telling a data story" resonated with me. At some point in our lives, we've all found ourselves staring blankly at spreadsheets, trying to make sense of their contents.

Data analysis, however, unravels complexities, delves into relationships, patterns, and extremes; ultimately providing insights.

Creating impactful visual narratives from data not only provides immediate insights but also embodies the timeless saying that a picture is worth a thousand words!

I've been fortunate to have the guidance of experienced colleagues who generously share their expertise, supporting me in my journey. I am part of the Integrated Environment Planning within the **Water Resources** team. The collaborative and friendly nature of my colleagues creates a positive and supportive working environment. Flexible working is important to me as a parent and the EA is incredibly supportive of that.

**Making a positive impact in a world where data becomes more valuable than ever**

As I continue this apprenticeship, I am excited about the prospects of developing my skills further, taking on more complex projects, and, most importantly, continuing to unravel the stories that data holds. It's more than just a switch in careers; it's a journey of exploration, learning, and making a positive impact in a world where data becomes more valuable than ever.

I remember a tip given by somebody that proved to be invaluable: 'Measure your progress by comparing where you started to where you are now, rather than comparing yourself to others.' There will always be people who have more experience, knowledge, and expertise than you. Concentrate on your own journey and enjoy it!

***Written by Neringa, Data Analyst Apprentice at the Environment Agency***