# Personal Statement

I was born in Edinburgh, and lived there until I was 19. I completed a degree in music at the University of York, having worked very hard at my performance and improvisation. I suffered a nervous breakdown in 2012 following the death of my grandmother and a lot of anxiety about my future. As a result I moved to Brantham to be supported by my parents, and I have begun a Software Development Apprenticeship with BT.

I am a creative person: I learnt to play jazz music during my three years at university and I learnt to write music both at school and at university. I have a lot of experience programming computers and creating software, since I have investigated and experimented with computer programs for as long as I can remember. I kept exploring software development throughout my time at university, while striving to become a professional musician. Now I work full time as a software developer, and I play the saxophone as a very rewarding hobby. I have discovered I am quick to learn and very adaptable: I feel my coding style has dramatically improved within the year I have been with BT, in response to working with an encouraging team.

I enjoy my work at BT, and I am working with a team where on-the-job learning is a high priority. I think these two factors are key to the satisfaction I currently get from my job. I am learning to write useful software that is easy to maintain and change. One of my weaknesses is poor time management: when I was studying in York I would work haphazardly and waste my time. During term-time I often swung from overconfidence in my ability to complete a task, to panic as the deadline approached. Having a full time job has structured my time management. Working as part of a small team is also very helpful, as other members of the team will correct and coach me when I am over-confident, and rally round when time is short. As a result of these experiences I believe I am someone who feels stronger when working within a reasonably strict timetable.

Outside of work I play music with the Hadleigh Orchestra and sing with the Brantham Choir. At orchestra members can contribute their own compositions, so this is an opportunity to develop my musical skills. I assist with a youth group at my local church, and there are opportunities here to develop my leadership and coaching skills. Since both my work and my hobbies are indoor activities I would like to develop more habitual exercise to counteract this threat to my long-term health.

When I moved house to study at York I proved to myself I could be independent, and this is a valuable strength to have. However since my nervous breakdown I have moved back in with my parents. While I think this was the natural and correct response, another threat is that I become too dependent on my parents, who have been very supportive. So I would like to become independent again and move out to somewhere close to my work.

As an apprentice I have many opportunities: for example, I am looking forward to spending four months in BT’s research department. My long-term goal is to contribute to solving a computing problem whose solution will positively affect people’s lives. Ideally I’d like to complete a Phd for the company, and find an area of software research that I can contribute to.