# 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 since 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 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 composition skills as well as giving me opportunities to perform. 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. However since my nervous breakdown I have moved back in with my parents. While I think this was the natural and correct response, I feel a threat is that I may 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 would like to complete a PhD for the company, and find an area of software research that I can contribute to.