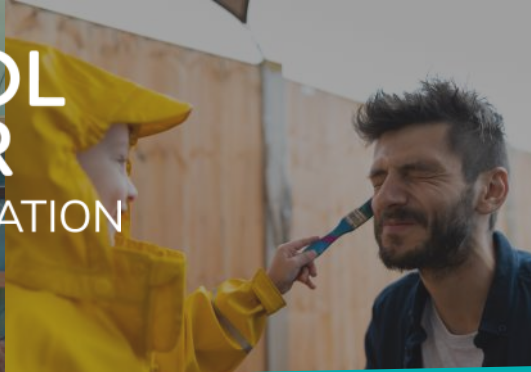




**BRISTOL  
WATER**  
THE FOUNDATION



# Careers in water



It all starts with education.

# Careers in water

## So you want to work in water, huh?

Well even if you don't, the chances are you don't yet have many professional contacts to learn about the world of work from.

Many of these roles are not specific to water, either. Who knows, it might just inspire you to think of a new shiny career path!

If you're viewing on a screen rather than a printout, this is an interactive PDF so use the links below to select a profile, and once done, simply click on the Bristol Water Foundation logo to return to this menu page.

### Career profiles

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# Laura

## Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

### What do you do day to day?

As CEO, I oversee the business and think about our strategy and direction.

It's about turning challenges into successes by working with the entire business. I work with all teams – whether that be how we look after our people (HR) or tackle leakage, for example, as well as looking at facts and figures to understand where things can be changed.

We have to balance investing in the right projects and spending the right amount of money while keeping customer bills low and ensuring excellent service.

### Tell us something exciting

As health and safety is really important to us, I recently did a health and safety visit to Durham Down Water Tower. It's one of the highest areas in Bristol and we took a lift up some scaffolding until we got to the top. The views were amazing across the whole of Bristol. Going down, we climbed down a very long ladder inside the water tower – I'm scared of heights!

### What is your career background?

I did a history degree at University but wasn't sure where it would take me, so I trained as a

chartered accountant and practised for 11 years with Deloitte. I then moved to work in various finance teams: from an international mining company in London to smaller local businesses like right here at Bristol Water.

### What did you want to be when younger?

A barrister. Certainly not an accountant!

### Best career memory?

I worked in finance for a mining company and went down a platinum mine in South Africa! We had to crawl on our hands and knees. It was interesting to see where expensive jewellery starts its life.

### Exciting fact about yourself?

I once performed at the Proms at the Royal Albert Hall!

### Tips for younger people looking to get into senior leadership?

*"I cannot do everything, but I can do something. I must not fail to do the something I can do."* – Helen Keller.

Study something you enjoy and are good at – it will show in the results. Greater results have been more important than subjects in my career.



# Steve

## Head of Lakeside

### What do you do?

Let's be honest if you're a department head you spent too much time looking at boring numbers! But I'm well known as Happy Steve. I love spending my days managing our beautiful lakes. This could mean using ecologists to enhance our biodiversity, to supporting our community led services at the lakeside like our fisheries and bird watching programmes, to stewarding the lakes and then some.

### Tell us something exciting

I've helped our community yacht club at Cheddar Reservoir to develop into a modern watersports club to now offer paddle boarding, kayaking, canoeing to dinghy sailing and windsurfing – wicked! I've also appeared on regional TV sharing why it's not safe to swim in our reservoirs.

### What was your job before this role?

I actually studied electrical engineering at University and joined what is now BAE Systems on a graduate scheme. I was looking at future weapon concepts for future defence and security challenges for 14 years. I've always loved the lakes and decided to make a total career change,

taking me to Bristol Water!

### Tell us some stories

I was on holiday and had a load of missed calls from work. That was odd, so I looked into it. It was about the tiny island off Chew Valley Lake being sold to someone famous as a holiday home! Turned out the local gazette had ran an April fools day story and it wasn't true! Thank goodness as it's an important place for local wildlife.

### Tips for young people wanting a job like yours?

Well, I spend 15 years and a degree in an unrelated discipline! But I do have this: find an older person that has seen life and knows you. Ask them what you might be suited to. Whatever they say, it might just get you thinking about who you really are and where you want your journey to start – try to keep an open mind along the way.

### Exciting facts about yourself?

I won bronze and silver medals at World and European masters level sailing! I'm also an excellent salsa dancer!



## Rob

# Head of Communications

### What do you do?

I take boring stuff and try to make it interesting, sometimes more successfully than others. We use things like social media, video, the press, adverts, blogs, graphics and events to make everything water seem fun, like our Bristol Water refill fountains dotted around Bristol.

### Tell us something exciting

I created a water challenge for myself which was kind of fun. It was the only way I could think of making a long-term strategy more interesting.

I had a load of envelopes with different countries in containing the amount of water the average person uses in that country. Every day I opened an envelope and had to live with that much water. One day I had 14 litres of water which basically meant I couldn't flush the toilet. I cycle to work and it was summer so I don't think others in the office were too pleased that I couldn't shower. One day I had to use 400 litres (USA), I ended up washing someone else's car just to use that much! Anyway, it got a bit of traction on social media, so we got more awareness of our business plan.

### What was your job interview like?

Odd – I had food poisoning in the run up to the interview!

I'd been asked to prepare stuff for the interview, and I'd spent a lot of time on it so I knew I was prepared – interviews are easier if you've really researched the role and know your stuff. I've only ever found interviews hard when I just rock up.

### What's your career background?

I started in recruitment. I was rubbish at it, really bad. I think I went 6 months without finding anyone a job.

I then went into central government, working my way up to advising Ministers on what to say in Parliament. I then joined Bristol Water as a Press Officer, working with the press to get stories out there. I now head up the department, looking after our branding, marketing, website, media and internal communications.

### Best career memory to date?

Not the best but it's funny looking back. I once did a radio interview with concussion and blood pouring out my head! I fell off my bike but there was a burst water main and was due to be on air in 30 seconds. I had no idea what was going on – turns out it was one of the best interviews I've done!

### Tips for getting a job like yours?

Learn to make content in as many different ways as you can—videos, writing, photos, anything.



# Ady

## Head of HR

### What do you do?

My job is all about helping the people at Bristol Water to perform to the best of their ability. My team and I look after lots of people related areas, such as: recruitment, training, payroll, wellbeing, managing sickness, employee contracts and helping the company with decision making by being the voice of the people!

### Tell us something exciting

We have a really nice meet for coffee initiative. It's super simple, we randomly draw 2 members from across the business to meet for a real life or virtual coffee! This allows employees to meet people that they normally wouldn't despite working in the same company, learn new things from each other and maybe even make a new friend and professional contact.

### What was your job interview like

Strange! I have probably conducted over 1,000 interviews over my career, but being in the other seat was very different. The interview was an hour long competency based interview (e.g., tell me about a time when...') Remember you should always back up your answers—don't just say yes I'm great at X Y and Z, interviewers want proof! I asked lots of questions which they must have liked as I was offered a role a week later.

### What's your career background?

After studying Psychology at University, I joined an international recruitment consultancy and spent about 11 years there. This involved placing individuals into companies—like a mix of HR and sales. My last role there was Operations Director and I looked after several offices and teams. I decided I wanted to move closer to home (I'm Welsh and was in London!) and didn't want to sales aspect of my role anymore, so took on the role at Bristol Water.

### What did you want to be when younger?

Growing up there was a TV show called Cracker (like an FBI profiler / criminal psychologist) and I wanted that role so chose to study Psychology & Criminology at University. It wasn't until the lecturer said 'anybody here who wants to be Cracker you've made a mistake, there is no such job', that burst my bubble so I had to change plans!

### Tips for someone after a job like yours?

I haven't come from a traditional 'HR' route. Whatever you do initially, it doesn't define your path for life. To get a role in HR, understand how businesses work and the challenges they face. You'll need to be curious, so ask questions.

### Any exciting facts about yourself?

I make a fleeting appearance in Professor Green's music video for Remedy (about 2:08!)



# Rob

## Water Quality Scientist

### What do you do?

Ensure the water 1.2million of us drink every day meets our super high world leading standards for drinking water – every single time.

In Bristol alone, the water we use each year weighs about 8 million double decker buses and by law we must make sure it's top stuff. On a given day I might be collecting water samples at a lake testing for water contaminants, reviewing the chemicals at our treatment plants to ensure the perfect chemical recipe and processes. I could even be responding to customer queries – maybe checking for plumbing issues or testing the water. Or inspecting underground tanks where we store drinking water - and more phew!

### Tell us something exciting

I once collected a water sample from the residence of Prince Charles! Unfortunately, his Royal Highness was not home so I didn't get to do the bow I'd been practicing.

### What was your job interview like?

It was an hour long and I had to give a presentation on what I'd do in the first 3 months of the role and then questioning around how I would manage staff and what I'd do in certain situations. I used the STAR approach (Situation, Task,

Action and Response) for my answers to prevent waffling.

### Tips for getting a job like yours?

There's lots of data involved and you'll need to be able to identify patterns and trends. You'll also need to write reports, communicate well and work with lots of people.

### What did you want to do when younger?

An underwater photographer / nature researcher, I grew up by the sea in Plymouth and love snorkelling and scuba-diving.

### What's your career background?

I studied Geography at University West of England (UWE). In the summer holidays I worked in factories, 2 months of putting lids on tubes of toothpaste and pies in foil trays! After University I went travelling for 3 months and landed an admin role at a council. 6 months later in August 2004, I landed a job as a Water Sampling Technician at Bristol Water and I've been here ever since!

### Any exciting facts about yourself?

I was once upon a time the Captain of the South West of England Roller Hockey Team and can do a back-flip on my skates!



# Natasha

## Environment Manager

### What do you do?

I provide environmental advice to the business. Every day is different as we look after many different aspects of the environment. One day this could be how habitats around the lake influence the quality of the water, the next looking at diseased trees and how to safely remove them.

### Tell us something exciting

I love working with local schools to raise awareness of the endangered European Eel. After providing young eels (elvers) to school children to raise, we then release them back into the lakes to live! The excitement from the children and teachers alike on watching this strange animal grow is so exciting. Did you know European Eels are more endangered than the red panda?

### What was your job interview like?

I answered questions from a panel of 3 senior staff members! But it wasn't scary at all – as the interview is really about me, my work and voluntary experience.

I think it's important to ask questions about what opportunities the job will provide you with. It's a two-way process!

### What's your career background?

I studied Environmental Sciences at the University of Brighton. I then worked in environmental regulation with Natural England. This sounds fancy but basically there's laws in place to protect our environment and wildlife which all companies must abide to. I then moved to Bristol Water – essentially joining one of the companies monitored by Natural England!

### What do you want to be when younger?

Work in the rivers. Without a doubt. Although I don't get to put on wellies and wade in the river in my current job I do manage projects to keep rivers happy and healthy.

### Best career memory?

Lots of local TV and radio appearances speaking to 100,000 people on some fantastic river restoration work!

### Tips for a job like yours?

Keep asking questions. Our environment provides us with so many life support services, and there is always something new to learn about how it all works.





# Ashley

## Network specialist

### What do you do day-to-day?

I ensure the water gets to your taps 24/7 – so next time you run it – think of me! Well, it's not just me, there's a large team of us and we work right from the reservoir, up to your house.

We're constantly monitoring for poor pressure or any kind of water issues. It's not an easy job given that if we laid the pipes in our service area flat, we'd end up in Madagascar! I also react to burst water mains, so in the unlikely event you're without water, day or night, it might just be me helping to get your water back in supply.

### Tell us something exciting?

I once found a hidden medieval tunnel while investigating a poor pressure query! The tunnel spans the whole length of a popular and busy street in Bristol (but I won't name it in case you go looking for it!) There's loads of them which smugglers used in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century.

### What was your job interview like for your current role?

It was a 2 hour interview which would have been testing if I hadn't done the preparatory work... That's my message for you – always prepare for your interviews! Oh, and don't worry – your inter-

views for first jobs shouldn't be anywhere near this long.

### What's your career background?

I started as an Aircraft Engineering Apprentice with Rolls Royce – apprenticeships can be an amazing option for hands on experience if you're unsure on University. I then worked in the building and construction industry before joining Bristol Water.

### Best career memory?

I appeared on BBC Radio Bristol in Emma Britton's 'Bristol Water Special' morning breakfast show!

### Any exciting facts about yourself?

I cultivate Bonsai trees (like Mr Miyagi!)

### Tips for getting into a role like yours?

Never be scared to ask questions if you're unsure on something, it's always best to just ask. Be willing to continuously learn—it doesn't stop after school or higher education. Take any opportunity to develop and learn—literally anything.



# Mike

## Data Analyst

### What do you do?

I figure out the easiest and fastest way to gather information from people, places and systems! Some of this involves writing code to automatically turn information into charts and tables to let us see how we're doing in different areas. If someone wants to see how we're doing in customer complaints and why we receive them, I'll write some code in a fancy program called Power BI and turn it into pie charts, tables, line graphs and whatnot. This then allows us to work out common causes of complaints so we can look to reduce them and keep customers happy!

### Tell us something exciting

I was a fraud data analyst at TSB bank. I had to work 12-hour night shifts for weeks once writing code to stop hackers stealing money! I also had fancy software that let me zoom in and see exactly where the hacker was trying to steal from!

### What was your job interview like?

Um... I actually missed my interview! I lived in Gloucester and had to get 3 trains and was so focused on my notes to perform well in my interview I missed my stop! I took a video of myself explaining why I was perfect for the role, and

they gave me another chance the same day.

When I finally got to my interview, it was all about whether I knew how to work independently, as my manager would be very busy. My analyst experience was also examined, and I completed a few tasks on excel to see if I could use pivot tables, vlookups and other functions.

### What was your first job?

As a kid I used to put the skittle pins back up during a game when they get knocked down! But my first proper job was a lifeguard.

### Any exciting facts about yourself?

I once caught a piranha on a fishing line with one hand while I had a broken collar bone in the Amazon! And I broke my collar bone riding a bike down the world's most dangerous road.

### Tips for getting a job like yours?

If you're good at maths (particularly algebra) or physics, my job might be for you. I studied banking and finance, but I'd recommend a course that involves coding – but you don't need to go to uni. Here's some key software to be aware of - SQL, Excel, Google Analytics, Power BI, SAS and Tableau. Finally, don't waste your potential – you'll never forgive yourself when you're older.



## Kath

### Operations Room Manager

#### What do you do in your role?

I work in what's called a control room – a special room that oversees all our pumps, pipes, chemicals and systems in one neat little room. Here, we're the eyes and ears of the regions water supply. There's enough pipes to stretch to Madagascar so it's a pretty big job.

As soon as we sense a problem, we send out engineers to repair things as quickly as possible to keep the taps flowing day and night. I also monitor security – both at our sites and for people who are working on their own. This could include anything from trespassers to fires to medical emergencies – anything and everything!

#### Tell us something exciting

I love visiting the Water Treatment Works which is where your tap water is cleaned before it reaches your home. There're all kinds of crazy processes, did you know we use sand, carbon, Ozone, and chemicals to treat the water! Every site has its own methods.

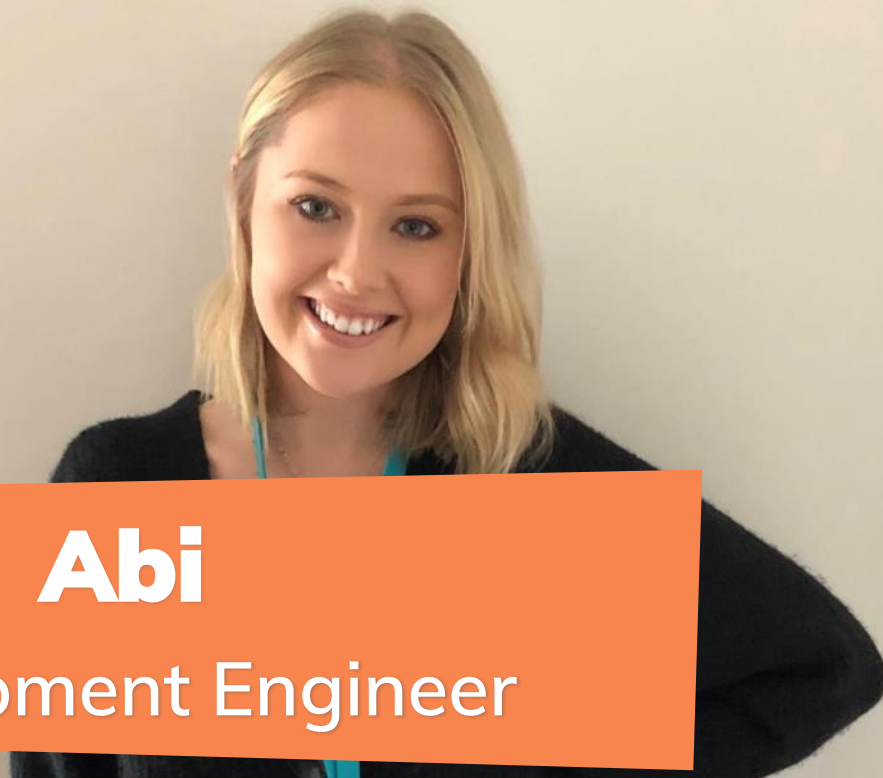
#### Tell us about your job interview for this role

It was pretty daunting as I hadn't had an interview in over 18 years, but once you're in the interview it's absolutely fine. A lot of the questions were competency based which helps you ex-

press yourself and lets the interviewer understand your career aspirations.

#### What's your career background?

I actually started in a legal department! I joined Bristol Water 19 years ago working in the customer services department and took the related step into the Operations Room which is where I am now.



# Abi

## Development Engineer

### What do you do in your role?

I design water mains for new housing developments! I use fancy software to create a plan of where the water mains need to go in order to supply houses, I then quote for the cost of the work. I go onsite a lot and meet housing developers and construction teams. This means I get to meet lots of new faces, something I really love about my role.

### Tell us something exciting

In my previous position at Bristol Water, I had to get up at 5am to go check the quality at Oldford Boreholes (an underground water resource) While it was a long day, we put up a gazebo and had a nice BBQ!

### What's your background?

I studied Geography at undergraduate level and then Climate Change Science & Policy as a post-graduate degree at Bristol University. I got a part time role at University as a bank cashier. After finishing my course, I was offered a job at Atkins as a Water Modelling Engineer, working with Thames Water. About 2 months into the role, I was seconded into Bristol Water part time. In this role I helped to build ways to see leaks on our network using live telemetry (automatic ways to collect data). I really loved it at Bristol

Water so took on a role in Asset Management and then as a Development Engineer.

### What did you want to be when younger?

A Hairdresser or a lawyer! I never thought I'd have the opportunity to go to University, I didn't find school easy. But I surprised myself with my GCSE and A Level grades!

### Best career memory to date?

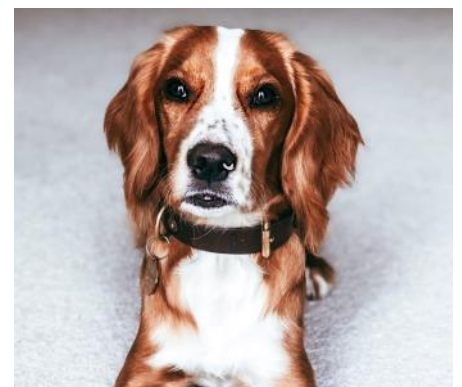
Getting to help out when we have burst water mains which impact water supply. It's nice to help and chat to people about Bristol Water!

### Tips for someone looking for a job like yours?

Don't be put off applying just because you don't have the necessary qualifications! I've had interviews where I've struggled to answer questions but being honest and admitting you don't know is better than faking an answer. Take an interest in others jobs—I've learnt a lot from others in the company.

### Any exciting facts about yourself?

I have an adorable cocker spaniel puppy who has his own Instagram page @teddy\_cocker1





# Beth

## IT Project Manager

### What do you do?

I deliver IT projects which fall outside the usual running of the business. These projects are to improve processes or systems.

We form a dedicated project team who have the right skills to achieve the end goal. It's my job to keep this team organised and on track to deliver. I also manage any issues or threats that might affect delivery.

### What was your job interview like?

I had to give a 5 minute presentation! I was very nervous but did a lot of research and preparation. The interview was around the Bristol Water values – make sure to look the company values before you interview with anyone! It was both formal but friendly and gave me an insight into the people and culture here.

### What's your career background?

I did not go to University - I wasn't sure what I wanted to do and I applied and got a Sales Administrator role.

I found myself becoming more and more involved

in projects and a few months later, I was offered the role of Project Coordinator in the same company. The company put me on a PRINCE 2 qualification in project management. My manager was to go on maternity leave and suggested I took on her role Project Manager which then lead to being offered the role fulltime! I

spent a few years there before applying to Bristol Water.

### What did you want to be when younger?

A librarian!!

### Tips for anyone wanting a role like yours?

Be organised. You'll also need to be able to keep your delivery team motivated and good work ethic is everything! And don't put too much pressure on yourself if you're unsure if Uni is right for you. There's other courses and ways that can get you to the end goal.



# David

## Commercial Manager

### What do you do day-to-day?

I'm responsible for the financial and legal aspects of construction and civil engineering projects - things like laying new water mains.

I'll often visit the sites to see the work and check it's all running to time and budget – two very important things in the business world. It's nice being both in and out the office.

### Tell us something exciting

I'll give you an example of what I do! We often use contractors (these are external people we pay to do the work), and we had one try to locate an old water pipeline in a farmer's field without much success (it happens!) The contractor thought he was in for an unrealistically large pay-out but using my knowledge of payment mechanisms and rules, claim costs were reduced by 75% - keeping the project on budget.

### What was your job interview like?

I actually interviewed over Facetime in March 2020 due to the coronavirus lockdown!

It was very surreal – I dressed in my best shirt tie and suit – but I still wore my slippers!

### What's your career background?

I trained as a Quantity Surveyor and did this for 11 years. I then took a position as a Senior Lecturer in Quantity Surveying at the University of South Wales.

### What did you want to do when younger?

I wanted to be an auctioneer selling animals in a livestock market!

### What was your first job?

Feeding the neighbours cats and tending to the garden during the summer!

### Any exciting facts about yourself?

I represented Wales in the world indoor tug of wars championships in Carlow, Ireland and in 2007 the Irish Open Under 90 Kilogrammes Master Judo Championship! I'm also a Lay Reader in my local group of churches – Christianity is very important to me.

### Any tips for getting into a job like yours?

Work hard at school especially in STEM subjects. Try to get some experience with a builder, utilities, or civil engineering company.



# Ben

## Engineering Technician

### What do you do day-to-day?

It's pretty varied! Think changing big pumps and motors, repairing chemical gas leaks and even climbing up water towers to calibrate equipment. You can pretty much choose what you want to specialise in.

### Tell us something exciting

About 3 years ago it was very cold and snowy! Most had days off work—but not as an engineer! Water still needs to run. We were given land rovers and had to work in pairs. It was very busy but exciting, making sure everything was operating right.

### What was your job interview like?

I was nervous but felt very comfortable once in the interview and enjoyed answered the questions asked.

### What's your career background?

I did a 4-year apprenticeship in Multi Skilled Maintenance and Mechatronics with a company called Terra Nitrogen. I went worked in a quarry, the Ministry of Defence, and now Bristol Water.

### What did you want to do when younger?

Honestly? I had no idea. My dad told me I'd win the lottery when I grew up.

### What was your first job?

Behind a fish counter at the big Asda at Cribbs Causeway! I enjoyed it. I remember thinking a 4 hour shift went on forever...

### Best career memory to date?

I found a large crab at Purton Water Treatment Works. I thought what a weird looking thing. I took a photo with it and set it free in the Sharpness canal. Little did I know it was a Chinese Mitten Crab and was in the top 100 invasive species list! The Environment Agency then came to try find it, it was the first to be sighted in the South West! The photo even made it into their magazine!

### Any tips for getting into a job like yours?

Honestly get an apprenticeship if this is the field you're interested in. I think it's 100% the best thing you can do.

### Any interesting facts about yourself?

I've had the hottest burger in Bristol.