

Title: **Case Study**
Retail
in Gloucestershire

Sam Crouch is a 23-year-old assistant buyer/merchandiser for Gloucestershire clothing company Pakeman, Catto and Carter.

And she loves her job. "I buy clothes for a living, which you could probably say is every woman's dream," she says.

Sam left school at 16 with 12 GCSEs, and started out as a trainee hairdresser – she had always been interested in fashion, hair and beauty. Despite nearly finishing her training, Sam realised hairdressing wasn't for her and left before completing her Apprenticeship.

She started working for Pakeman's as a sales assistant in their Cirencester shop, not realising it would be the start of a new career.

By the age of 18 she was assistant manager and started a Level 3 NVQ (National Vocational Qualification) in Retail. She was able to go straight in at Level 3 because her job had a supervisory side to it, which matched the units of the NVQ.

Sam completed her NVQ in just over a year and went on to take Level 2 in Business Administration.

She was promoted to acting manager and when the position of assistant buyer/

merchandiser became available, Sam got the job. By now she knew that she wanted to be a buyer for a fashion house or large store.

As the name suggests, the buyer chooses the products to buy for the company according to customer demand, trends, store policy and budget. Merchandisers are responsible for deciding which goods to stock in which shops and how they should be displayed.

Sam works closely with both the buyer and merchandiser, helping to choose the garments for the company's clothing catalogue, stores and stalls at country fairs and events. She also assesses the stock to make sure they always have what's needed available to send to their outlets.

She places and processes orders, checks the quality of garments received, chases up orders, looks at stock levels, goes to local shops to check on layout of stock and to discuss new season's clothing ranges. She even 'dresses' the shop window for the annual Cheltenham Races display.

Sam is now working hard towards achieving her ambition to become a buyer for a big fashion company: "I would love to travel with my job – another passion of mine, along with fashion."