Paula Abbott

BSc (Hons) 1st Class, Logistics Management

Paula served as an officer of the Royal Air Force, leaving in September 2012 after 22 years' service. Commissioned into the Logistics Branch, she deployed in support of operations in the Middle East and on various Joint, Multi-National and NATO training exercises in North America and Norway. She completed a tour of Cyprus where she was responsible for aircraft, airport and passenger operations. During her military career Paula has been responsible for the management, personal development and discipline of up to 200 personnel at any one time, notably during her tenure as lead Training Officer at a training school.

After attending the Intermediate Command and Staff Course Paula undertook a Command role and had responsibility for one of the largest squadrons at her Unit. This included military and civilian personnel in equal numbers. This experience has given Paula a breadth of skills involved in supporting and managing personnel at varying stages of their career from junior personnel to senior managers. Paula found herself dealing regularly with Union representatives and officials to ensure appropriate safeguards were in place to maintain effective management and good relations. She routinely conducted formal interviews, annual appraisal reporting and de-briefing across the various ranks and logistics disciplines.

Following her military career, Paula undertook the role of Airside Duty Manager at Heathrow Airport where she was responsible for the safety and compliance of the airfield. During her 8 years at Heathrow Paula also took on the role of Aircraft Operations Manager where she expanded and honed her skills in stakeholder management, communication and planning. She liaised closely with her counterparts from the main airlines.

Paula recently added to her military experience when she undertook a Full Time Reserve role with the Royal Air Force as an Innovation Project Manager. On promotion to Wing Commander, over a two-year period she was responsible for leading the investigation, development and management of diverse projects designed to support programmatic transformation strategies. In so doing, she worked with, and led, a committee of internal and external stakeholders spanning the military domains of Army, Navy and Air Force as well as Defence Industry specialists.

Paula has supported and volunteered for PACT (Parents and Children Together) Charity over a number of years, specifically as part of the peer-to-peer online chat service, offering support and guidance to families who have adopted, or are in the process of adopting children.