

# Trainee driver for c2c is following in her father's footsteps

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As part of its Street to Seat training programme, c2c took on one trainee who has followed in her father's footsteps to become a mainline train driver.

Kaya Coles joined the training programme in June, which is designed to enable drivers to sign up without any prior railway experience. Following a series of recruitment stages, Kayla made it to become one of six successful applicants out of 1,200 to join the Street to Seat course.

Both Kayla and her father, Tony, became train drivers from very different routes. Tony joined c2c in 2008, having sought out a new career after working in a casino. He became an East Ham shunt driver before progressing to a mainline driver in 2015.

Kayla, meanwhile, studied for a degree in psychology and a masters in crime science, with an interest in becoming a police detective. But, when the coronavirus pandemic hit, Kayla started to rethink her future career choice and, having gained first-hand knowledge from her father as to what a train driver's role entailed, decided to apply.

Kayla said: "Becoming a train driver was not the career I had planned when going to university, however things change and I am so grateful to be on this journey to become a mainline driver.

"Hearing about the job from my dad and seeing just how much he enjoyed his job inspired me to go for it. When I got the phone call to say I had got on the Street to Seat course I felt so proud of this achievement and I know my dad did too!

"I am thoroughly enjoying my training and I look forward to the day I pass out and get my licence. I hope that this is the start of a long and successful career in the railway and I encourage anyone thinking about becoming a train driver to go for it!"

c2c Operations training manager Andrea Barclay said: "Due to Covid-19, flexible changes had to be made to our plan including setting up 'bubbles' to allow our drivers to carry on with their training. Even though some of the training had to be delivered in theory, the trainees adapted really well from the start and we could not have asked more from them."

"Street to Seat is a brilliant opportunity for those looking for a change of career and the fact we've had such a wide range of people apply and be successful from a pilot, to a teacher and stay at home mum, is testament to just how popular train driving still is in 2021. We are hopeful we can recruit our next group of trainees to the programme late next year."