

Health and Safety Compliance Officer

Cheila Viegas is a Health and Safety Compliance Officer at Chris Allsop Metal Recycling Ltd

How long have you have been doing the role?

I have been in this role for nearly five years.

How did you get into the role? Did you come from a different sector?

My previous HSEQ/HSE role was within the drinks sector. I applied for my current role as I was looking to gain experience within the waste and recycling sector, and I knew I had transferable skills that would place me in a good starting position.

What qualifications or experience and /or specific training did you require for the role?

The initial requirements were to have experience in Risk Assessment, writing Safe Working Procedures, providing safety focused training, managing contractors, managing machinery inspections and services and carrying out site audits and inspections. It was also a requirement to have the NEBOSH National General Certificate with an expectation that I would, in time, complete a WAMITAB qualification to better fulfil the Environmental responsibilities within the role and to become TCM for both of the company sites.

What skills do you need for the role?

Being able to communicate well at all levels is essential, able to adapt the approach to the audience, being



flexible and receptive to ideas and suggestions whilst still applying Health and Safety law to ensure compliance. I believe it is also important to have good risk perception, organisational and problem-solving skills.

Who would this role suit?

This role would suit someone that is self-motivated and likes a challenge. They should be able to think on their feet due to the ever-changing work environment and be willing to be involved in the various activities to gain a good understanding of the hazards. Also be prepared to get their hands dirty on occasion. It is not a glamorous role!

What advice do you have for anyone looking to start a Green Career?

I would say go for it. This industry poses many challenges when it comes to Health, Safety and Environment Compliance, however, it is in my personal experience one of the most rewarding roles I have had to date. Do not try to tackle everything at once, prioritise your high-risk areas and work your way down. Keep your knowledge up to date, challenge yourself and refresh and build on existing knowledge. Do not become comfortable doing the same things day in day out. Seeking out different training and qualifications keeps the mind focused on prioritising people and their safety.

What is your educational background?

I grew up and studied in Portugal, but I left school before completing any GCSEs. When I moved to the UK, I worked mainly in factories and warehouses for a few years and gradually became more interested and involved with H&S within those roles which eventually led me



to do the IOSH Managing Safety course in 2015. I took the plunge and applied for an admin role with a Brewery with some H&S responsibilities, that role quickly became a full time H&S role and while there I completed the NEBOSH General Certificate. I have since also completed first aid training, fire warden training, I am a qualified manual handling trainer, I have received training to Face FIT Test and I am currently in the process of completing the NEBOSH Diploma.

Metals recycling is a £7 billion sector and comprises an estimated 2,000 businesses and employs over 15,000 people.

It is an established globally competitive industry that provides essential raw material from recycling for metals manufacture, which in turn enables a significant reduction in use of energy and virgin resources.