

I just finished university, and I wasn't sure what I should do for a career.

I moved back to London, and quickly got some work as a temp to cover the cost of living. I was applying for jobs, but it was pretty half-hearted to be honest. I just needed some time to think about what I wanted to do.

After a lot of research, I stumbled across an ad for a Business Support Officer role at SIS. It sounded great, but I didn't think I'd be right for it. After all, I'm not a typical SIS officer - or at least, I thought I wasn't. I assumed you had to be white, middle-class and have an Oxbridge education. Instead, my parents weren't born in this country and I went to an Inner London secondary school. But I applied anyway. What did I have to lose?

I was pretty surprised when I was offered the job. I had to pass the Developed Vetting and, even though I was born in the UK, I was still a bit concerned that my African heritage and overseas family might be a barrier. But the whole thing was a lot less stressful than I imagined. Even though we talked about my background during the interview, the vetting officers were more interested in getting to know me as a person.

Since I joined, I've had lots of opportunities. I've supported the running of agents and acted as the team accountant. But I mostly manage projects, which includes working with colleagues in MI5, GCHQ and wider government. This means there's plenty of flexibility and variety, with a lot of interesting tasks and chances to travel abroad.

I've found out that quite a few colleagues with similar backgrounds to mine also nearly didn't apply. But ignoring our

misconceptions was definitely the best career decision we made. It makes sense when you think about it. We're constantly adapting to combat new threats to Britain's security, so diversity's more important than ever. We're a multicultural country and, when we work together, we have a wider range of resources and skills that can help keep our country safe.