

Suresafe Electric's Apprenticeships



We talk to Julie Dourley, Office Manager at Suresafe Electric's (Widnes) Limited and Mike McKenna, Electrical Apprentice about what apprenticeships bring to their business and the apprenticeship experience.

The Employer Perspective: Julie Dourley, Office Manager

Q. How has your organisation benefitted from recruiting apprentices?

Julie: Our business has benefitted enormously from recruiting apprentices. There is a national shortage of electricians and by recruiting apprentices we can train and mould our future apprentices to the standard that we require. After they come out of their apprenticeships, we have fully home-grown electricians qualified and trained to our requirements. We have also found that the qualified electricians take great pride and pleasure in sharing their knowledge and helping the young people to develop. Also, with our office admin apprentices, we have been able to provide positions in our office for individuals straight from school or college. The only requirements at this level is for general knowledge of ICT which all pupils do at school these days. We have managed to offer all our office admin apprentices either full time positions within our company or place them with our main client Evolve Facility Services. So, everyone has gone on to gain full time employment as a direct result of the apprenticeship programme.

For ages 16 to 19 there is also the benefit of the age related grant which is £1,000 per apprentice. This is beneficial for companies who are just starting out and do not have high turnover or profit.



Julie Dourley

Q. What advice would you give to potential apprentices wanting to join your business?

Julie: The main advice I would give to a potential electrical apprentice is to look at the long term goal. It must be very hard for a young person to leave school or college and think that they will not be earning decent money for potentially a further 4 years if they sign up to complete an apprenticeship, but the rewards are massive. To become a fully qualified electrician will mean that you will never be out of work and the earning potential is huge. The same with the office admin apprentices. If you take an apprenticeship, you are receiving on the job training together with the back up of college resources and support. It really is the best of both worlds. A lot of companies hold a lot of store in people who have work experience on their CVs. So, even if you complete an apprenticeship and gain the NVQ with no job at the end, you can then put that on your CV to prove to future potential employers that you have gained that experience and knowledge in a proper work environment.

Q. What advice would you give to other businesses who are thinking about recruiting apprentices?

Julie: The apprenticeship scheme has worked extremely well for our business. When I started in June 2015, we had 3 electricians and 1 other office staff member. We now have 16 fully qualified electricians and 4 electrical apprentices together with 5 office staff and 1 office admin apprentice. We developed a slow steady process to recruit the correct apprentices and support and nurture them. We have a very low staff turnover and feel we have very happy and settled workforce as a result. There are obvious financial benefits to businesses, but the rewards of taking a young person through the apprenticeship scheme is fantastic. You can mould them from a blank page to the employee you want them to be. The support from our local college has been amazing both for the apprentice and our business. They have helped our apprentices grow into mature and capable employees.



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The Apprentice Perspective:

Mike McKenna, Apprentice Electrician



Q. How did you find out about your apprenticeship?

“ My mother started an electrical apprenticeship at the age of 36 with 3 children and I was inspired.

So, when I was offered one, I jumped at the chance. ”



Mike McKenna

Q. What's being an Apprentice like?

“ I like the hard work of it. This may sound ridiculous, but I love getting my hands dirty. I also enjoy learning new things and the college aspect of it, because I was never the smartest in school. But, being the age I am, I focus more. ”

Q. What advice would you give to someone who is thinking about becoming an apprentice?

“ Start early and pay attention. People are trying to give you advice, so show them respect and take it on board. Some people don't like being told what to do, but the people who are qualified are just trying to help. ”



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