

Sovini Apprenticeships



We talk to Christina Forshaw, Assistant Learning & Development Business Partner at The Sovini Group and Dilan McDonald, Apprentice Joiner, about what apprenticeships bring to their business and the apprenticeship experience.

The Employer Perspective: Christina Forshaw, Assistant Learning & Development Business Partner

Q. How has your organisation benefitted from recruiting apprentices?

Christina: Our apprenticeship programme is integral to our aim to make a positive impact in the communities in which we operate. We believe that apprentices have an impact on the whole business as they can add a whole new dimension to the workplace, bringing with them a fresh perspective and new ideas. Apprentices can be trained to meet the needs of the business and tackle skill shortages. Throughout the recruitment process we ensure apprentices are the right fit with our company values and that they have a clear understanding of our vision and mission from the beginning of their career. Many of our directors began life as apprentices and they are great advocates of the apprenticeship programme, acting as a source of inspiration to new recruits. Every apprentice receives on-going support from their dedicated mentor. In addition, we also employ an apprentice champion who acts as a link between the training provider and the business. They offer a further support resource.



Christina Forshaw

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

Christina: Our apprenticeship programme provides the opportunity to grow professionally and personally, building the foundations for a successful career. We actively promote females into trades with a view to addressing the gender imbalance in the construction industry. We want apprentices to understand our values as an organisation and help them to become well rounded individuals. On completion of the apprenticeship programme, we offer participants an improver year at an increased rate of pay. This enables apprentices to fully utilise their skills and provides an opportunity for them to secure a full-time contract within the company. During this improver year, apprentices continue to receive mentoring and training to fully prepare them for the world of full-time employment. To date, 100% of apprentices who completed the improver year have secured full time contracts with us. The Sovini Group apprenticeship application process has evolved over the years. We removed the minimum GCSE requirements for some of our roles to open up opportunities for candidates with the right qualities. Rather than a standard interview, our innovative recruitment day includes a variety of assessments, offering candidates a chance to show their full potential. As a company we are completely committed to growing and developing the apprenticeship programme as a key strategic aim. We provide benefits and opportunities above and beyond the basic apprenticeship offer.

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

Christina: Recruiting apprentices reflects that you are preparing for your business in the future. Once you have identified skill gaps within your company you can hire and train apprentices to match the workforce that you desire. A benefit of apprenticeships is that they offer both the candidate and the employer the opportunity to learn and grow. Apprenticeships give people a chance, new skills and the beginnings of a potentially great and rewarding career. They provide employers with talented, enthusiastic and ambitious staff able to grow into and fulfil future resourcing needs. Make full use of the Levy, through this, you can reduce your training budgets, the 5% co-investment contribution is fantastic. Employees are given a sense of achievement and responsibility if they are contributing to the mentoring and guidance of the apprentice. We have developed a close collaborative working relationship with our training providers to help continually improve the programme. In the last few years we have held our apprenticeship recruitment days at the college which has enabled us to prepare suitable activities to assess candidates i.e. building a wall or a small piece of furniture or plastering. This allows us to see how they perform on a practical task and test their functional skills.



The Apprentice Perspective:

Dilan McDonald, Apprentice Joiner



Q. How did you find out about your apprenticeship?

“ I found out about Sovini Property Services because I was currently employed by Carillion who went into liquidation. Sovini then got in touch with a few apprentices and took them on. I chose this route because I thought it would be a good one to take and it definitely is. There are things I never used to be able to carry out, but now I can do most things. ”



Dilan McDonald

Q. What's being an Apprentice like?

“ Being an apprentice is a very good thing to do because you learn new things everyday and also grow a lot in confidence you learn new skills everyday and also doing different tasks every day. ”

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

“ 110% go for it. I am really happy with how much I have grown in confidence and how much my skills have come up from the start of being an apprentice. You will gain a lot of knowledge on and off the job. Also college is a big help. ”

