

Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service Apprenticeships



We talk to Ashley Roberts, Apprenticeship Manager at Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service and Apprentice Fire Fighters Steven Watt, Dale Youngs and Liam Cooch about what apprenticeships bring to their organisation and the apprenticeship experience.

The Employer Perspective: Ashley Roberts, Apprenticeship Manager

Q. How has your organisation benefitted from recruiting apprentices?

Ashley: We have been delivering apprenticeships for five years, initially as a subcontractor of a FE college, more recently as an Employer Provider. We have integrated systems to support the learning and development of all employees, including apprentices.

Our staff have current occupational expertise supported by specialist training including Level 3 Operational Firefighter, Fire Service instructor courses, TAQA assessor awards and other forms of Continuous Professional Development.

Trainers are also equipped with coaching and mentoring skills to support individual learning.



Ashley Roberts

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

Ashley: Find out as much about the organisation as you can before applying for positions. Do your research, understand the vision and values of the organisation. Be careful when deciding the apprenticeship that you're thinking of doing and be convinced you are going to enjoy the job. An apprenticeship is the training within your career, if you don't like the career then it will make your job a whole lot more difficult.

You can learn a lot by watching and listening to what goes on. If you are struggling with something, know the people who you can go to in order to ask for advice or guidance.

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

Ashley: The world of apprenticeships has changed over recent years, Apprenticeships standards now allow you to develop and build your workforce with skills that reflect the work that is required. The use of Apprenticeships to develop the workforce is something to be celebrated and Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service are developing a strategy that considers apprenticeships for all elements of training the workforce.



The Apprentice Perspective:

Steven Watt, Dale Youngs and Liam Cooch
Apprentice Fire Fighters



Q. How did you find out about your apprenticeship?

Steven: I found out about the apprenticeships when the advertisement came out for the role. I thought I wouldn't be able to apply due to my age but that wasn't an issue. I have always wanted to be a firefighter and have applied on numerous occasions and believe having the ability to work and learn at the same time benefited me and my learning styles.

Dale: Upon completion of my initial recruit 12 week course I found out I was under an 18 month apprenticeship with on station training. This included a four phase module process, with each phase ending in an on programme assessment, all leading to an end point assessment.

Liam: For myself it wasn't a case of finding out about apprenticeships and choosing this route. This was the structured route that MFRS take with all newly recruited Fire Fighters after switching from an NVQ system recently.



Steven Watt

Q. What's being an Apprentice like?

Steven: As an apprentice, I have been able to learn and put things to practice at real incidents. As a University graduate, there were times where we were taught something, but weren't able to put it into practice. So, most of the time, that knowledge was lost.

Dale: The opportunities for self-development have been endless and I have enjoyed every minute. It has been the best thing I have ever done. Teamwork and the ethos and values the service prides itself on are instilled in every apprentice. This has helped our station thrive during the assessment phases.

Liam: The people working with you are always willing to help. I've really enjoyed it so far, the constant requirement for learning new skills and maintaining high standards keeps you at your best and on your toes.



Dale Youngs



Liam Cooch

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

Steven: Have it as an option when deciding your future career. Having done university, I would recommend the apprenticeship approach as the on-site experience is vital and you get to see first-hand the knowledge you are taught.

Dale: Never give up. If you don't get in first time around try again. Persistence pays off.

Liam: Preparation. Be organised and prepared to work hard. Stay committed.

