

APSE National Housing and Building Maintenance Awards – A showcase of previous winners.

To: All Chief Executives, Main Contacts and APSE Contacts in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland

Key Points

The training of apprentices requires commitment, giving them the resources and time needed to become a fully trained and capable team member making a contribution to the local authority. Some local authorities have been doing this every day for many years and the APSE Apprentice Awards have been recognising these Councils and Apprentices achievements for nearly two decades.

This briefing focuses on the APSE National Housing and Building Maintenance Awards which began 19 years ago with the aim of highlighting the training organisations and the individual apprentices who are leading the field within the UK.

1.0 Background

Many Local Authorities have had an Apprentice Programme in place for several years, and in the [APSE Local Authority Apprentice Programmes](#) survey conducted in May and June 2018, just under half of all respondents (45.58%) reported that their scheme had been in place for more than 10 years. There were 24.49% with a programme that had been in place for 5 to 10 years, 15.65% have had a scheme in place for 3 to 5 years, with 9.52 % having a formal scheme in place for 1 to 3 years and 1.36% had established their programme in the last year. From the other responses received, it was confirmed by one authority that they were in the process of setting up a programme and only one respondent advised that they did not have any formal arrangements in place.

The renewed political focus on the critical role that apprenticeship programmes can play in skills and infrastructure has resulted in a reinvigoration of the Apprenticeship Programmes in all sectors including local authorities.

The training of apprentices requires commitment, giving them the resources and time needed to become a fully trained and capable team member making a contribution to the local authority. Some local authorities have been doing this every day for many years and

the APSE Apprentice Awards have been recognising these Councils and Apprentices achievements for nearly two decades.

2.0 The APSE local authority apprentice and trainee of the year awards

The APSE local authority apprentice and trainee of the year awards are specific to front line service areas and support excellence in training standards within local authorities and their partner organisations throughout the UK.

There is a range of frontline services recognised in the local authority apprentice and trainee of the year awards. These include the following: -

- Highways and Street Lighting
- Building Skills
- Mechanical and Electrical
- Professional Services
- Horticulturist
- Transport
- Scotland Housing and Building – 1st to 4th year.
- Scotland Housing and Building – Non-Trade.

This briefing focuses on the APSE National Housing and Building Maintenance Awards which began 19 years ago with the aim of highlighting the training organisations and the individual apprentices who are leading the field within the UK.

The case studies in this briefing provide an overview of a selection of apprentices who have previously won the award, the journey they have undertaken since they received the accolade and details of the apprentice programmes at their local authorities.

The Case studies featured in this briefing including the following: -

- **Case Study Two** - Fife Council, Mechanical and Electrical Winner 2011, Lynne Fox
- **Case Study Three** - Berneslai Homes, Mechanical and Electrical Winner 2014, Kiefer Booth
- **Case Study Four** – East Lothian Council, Building Skills Winner 2015, Emily Whitecross
- **Case Study Five** - Newcastle City Council, Professional Services Winner 2015, Mitchell Galloway
- **Case Study Six** - East Dunbartonshire Council, Professional Services Winner 2016, Paul Don
- **Case Study Seven**- Bournemouth Council, Mechanical and Electrical Winner 2016, George Smith

In addition, to the Councils and previous winning apprentices, Case Study One provides a focus on Colin McInnes, APSE Associate who has actively supported the APSE National Housing and Building Maintenance Awards for several years as a judge for the awards.

3.0 Case Study One

Colin McInnes – APSE Associate and APSE National Housing and Building Maintenance, and Scotland Housing and Building Apprentice judge.

What made you consider an apprenticeship with the council?

In 1984, I commenced my apprenticeship as an electrician with the former Strathclyde Regional Council along with another 53 apprentices across a variety of trades. The council were very proactive with their apprenticeship scheme and had over 200 apprentices at any one time working within the service. The decision to follow an electrical apprentice wasn't a difficult one as I was always interested in physics and electronics and was fortunate to complete an 'O' Level in electronics from the University of London when still at school.

What was the most challenging part of the apprenticeship?

My apprenticeship was great and I was involved in a variety of tasks across all aspects of the electrical trade rather than being restricted to one area of the trade. The most challenging aspect of my apprenticeship was challenging myself to do the best I could in understanding the trade and using it on a daily basis to resolve problems and delivering a high level of service to the clients.

What was the most rewarding part of the apprenticeship and why?

One of the most rewarding things from my apprenticeship was receiving the overall Apprentice of the Year award in 1989 which recognised the commitment, sacrifice and high standards that I had put in over the 4 years of my apprenticeship. Another is knowing that you have completed either a small or large piece of work to a high standard that is going to be beneficial for someone.

Where has your career taken you since you completed your apprenticeship?

I believe that an apprenticeship lays the foundations for any future career path that you choose to follow. It gives you the discipline, confidence, independence, skills, problem-solving techniques and a team working ethos which can be used in any future roles.

Following my apprenticeship, and after a short period as a tradesperson, I achieved a position as a Construction Management Trainee which allowed me to develop my career further and provided me the opportunity to move into a management role. I have held various appointments at a senior management level in the public service and believe that the foundations laid in my apprenticeship has allowed me to operate as a successful manager and leader.

What advice would you give people just embarking on an apprenticeship?

I would highly recommend an apprenticeship to everyone as I believe that this can achieve the same desired output as someone following a further education path. University is not always for everyone and doesn't always guarantee success. Apprenticeships provide a different approach to learning which will better suit some people to achieve the same outcome. The advice I would give to anyone undertaking an apprenticeship would be to maximise what you can from it, don't waste the time! Absorb

everything, show commitment, listen, ask questions, try things, practice, practice, practice. Most importantly enjoy it!

Finally, what comments would you like to make regarding your time as a judge for the apprentice awards?

As a judge of the APSE Apprentice of the Year awards I have been very impressed every year with the high standards that continue to be shown by the apprentices being put forward by their authorities. It is extremely difficult, as a judge, to separate the apprentices to enable us to award the overall award as the standards are so high across the board. Sometimes it is so marginal that you are looking for that small thing that separates one individual from the others. This could be as simple as an apprentice using their own initiative to do something or contribute to something rather than just the norm. I enjoy interviewing the apprentices and try to make the interview process as relaxing and enjoyable as we possibly can in the circumstance. It is good to see how enthusiastic, committed and confident they are in their apprenticeships and know that if authorities can continue to produce high calibre tradespeople then councils can continue to provide a high level of service to its customers.

4.0 Case Study Two

Organisation: Fife council

Category: Mechanical and Electrical – Winner 2011

Apprentice: Lynne Fox

Building Services provides Fife Council with a 24-hour, 365 day a year repairs, maintenance and construction development service. They have a large and highly skilled workforce undertaking all mainstream trade activities and delivering quality works at competitive prices through a best value partnership with Property Services.

Building Services play a key role in supporting Fife Council to meet current challenges and community objectives. These challenges and objectives are:

- to be a top-performing Council
- to be the leading green Council
- to put customers at the heart of what we do
- to support the local economy

At the same time, however, Building Services have made significant working efficiencies, reduced management costs, maximised productivity and maintain customer satisfaction.

The challenge for the Service is to continue to evidence best value and competitiveness. They strive to be considered as the Service of choice and place a strong emphasis on quality of service, employee development and maintaining our current apprenticeship programme. The 3,670 employees are seen as a key resource in ensuring that customer-driven services are provided whilst improvements in technology are a key enabler to modernise the service offering and bringing about efficiencies whilst enhancing the quality of the Service.

Fife Council's objective is to deliver successful youth employment with a Modern Apprenticeship Programme.

Since the amalgamation in 1996 Asset, Transportation and Environment (AT&E) has trained over 500 apprentices, these young people have gained the knowledge and expertise to follow their chosen career paths and aspirations, this includes 60 redundant apprentices adopted from local businesses, rescuing careers and livelihoods.

The Council invest over £5m p.a. and have 120 trade apprentices, across their four-year apprenticeships. The success rate and retention have enabled them to have in place a successful and sustainable succession plan. In addition, through the apprentice program Building Services have successfully reduced the age profile of their workforce and as staff retire, they are replaced by trained, competent staff.

Fife Council Building Services goal is:

"To produce homegrown trained personnel that can deliver a quality product continuously at an exceptionally high standard consistently."

The Council report that the challenges relate to providing a 24-hour, 365 day a year repairs, maintenance and construction development service. With a large and highly skilled workforce undertaking all mainstream trade activities and delivering quality works in-house.

A high level of service is demanded by the people of Fife and that expectation will continue into the future. Fife Council consider the delivery of a successful modern apprentice scheme vital in the retention of key frontline services.

In the current climate, Building Services offer Fife Council complete security on construction works through agreed competitive fixed prices, quality workmanship, a rigorous health and safety management regime and a commitment to meet both the clients project goals and Fife Council's objectives with particular regard to sustainability and support of the local economy.

The Apprentice – Lynne Fox

What made you consider an apprenticeship with the council?

Previous to my electrical apprenticeship I worked as a clerical assistant within Building Services. I had never considered a trade as a career. However, part of my job was assisting apprentices with their portfolios and arranging training. After witnessing this first hand on how the apprentice program was run and the opportunities it presented, this made me want to apply.

What have you achieved since winning the award?

Since winning the award, I have completed my apprenticeship and passed my trades test. I have also recently completed the 18th edition course, which is an update of the electrical regulations. I have also recently completed a SVQ course in Emergent Technologies, which

is a detailed course in renewable energy. My next goal is to apply for my approved test, I missed out on the opportunity to apply before due to maternity leave.

What was the most challenging part of the apprenticeship?

The most challenging part of my apprenticeship was getting used to using hand and power tools, something which I had little experience in. Also learning about building fabrics and other trades and their requirements. These challenges seemed huge at the time but on reflection, the apprentice program helped me gain this information at a pace I was comfortable with.

What was the most rewarding part of the apprenticeship and why?

The most rewarding part of the apprenticeship was being offered a career with the Council. They offer so many different opportunities to learn, this includes a wide range of work, training and they actively encourage further personal development.

What advice would you give to people just embarking on an apprenticeship?

The advice I would give to anyone considering an apprenticeship would be to enjoy the experience and take full advantage of opportunities and training. Don't be frightened to ask questions if you are not sure but remember the answers so the next time you don't need to ask the question. Thinking about the whole job including other trades when completing electrical works and interact with other trades so you can learn about their needs and requirements.

5.0 Case Study Three

Organisation: Berneslai Homes

Category: Mechanical and Electrical – Winner 2014.

Apprentice: Kiefer Booth

The Councils Apprenticeship Programme

Berneslai Homes are signed up to the One Barnsley pledge, which means that they guarantee 2.5% of the workforce are apprentices. The service consistently outperforms this target and currently, apprentices make up 4.2% of the workforce which equates to 21 apprentices. Over the past 10 years, Berneslai Homes have trained approximately 60 apprentices with the majority being successful in obtaining full time positions across the company.

A range of apprenticeships in a variety of disciplines are offered, including: -

- Bricklaying
- Business Administration
- Electrical
- Gas
- Joinery
- Painting and Decorating
- Plumbing

- Procurement
- Quantity Surveying
- Stores

The duration of the apprenticeship's ranges from 2 to 4 years depending on the type of profession. Each apprentice is given the chance to gain experience alongside a fully qualified mentor or experienced staff member whilst receiving formal training at a college. The mentoring not only supports the apprentice in a work capacity but offers them guidance about the workplace, this is often challenging as the apprentices can disclose personal details about themselves that require additional support from outside agencies. Mentors are given the support of HR to deal with these issues and they are signposted to external agencies where required. In the past, we have used external agencies specialising in autism and domestic abuse.

Berneslai Homes aims for all of the apprentices to achieve a level 3 qualification at the end. Although apprentices are not guaranteed a permanent position at the end of the apprenticeship they are encouraged to apply for vacancies and the mentors assist with application form and interview techniques.

The benefit of the apprenticeship programme to the organisation is that they essentially 'grow our own' and see the flourishing of people starting their career and building in confidence.

The Apprentice – Kiefer Booth

What made you consider an apprenticeship with the council?

I knew it was a good apprenticeship that covered a multitude of installations and wiring types, so I would cover a larger area of work and have a good all-round knowledge of the electrical industry.

What have you achieved since winning the award?

I have gained full time permanent employment as a substantive electrician and continued to improve and develop my knowledge. I have recently won an award as an Inspirational Employee at the Direct Works Forum and won the Chairs Choice award at the same event. During my apprenticeship I was nominated for the Duke of Gloucester Young Achievers Scheme, of which I was a finalist and also a finalist in the Barnsley and Rotherham E-commerce awards. I am currently undertaking a job shadowing role with the Operational management team with the support of both the Senior Managers. I am also currently studying a leadership and management course through ILM.

What was the most challenging part of the apprenticeship and why?

Due to the support of my mentors and managers, the whole apprenticeship ran very well. I was moved around different areas of work to give me a good overview of all the works that we cover. That being said the hardest part of the apprenticeship was probably the college side as I had to adjust to the college environment as I was an older student, so I have been in the workplace, albeit different industry, since I have left school so had to

become accustomed to having extra breaks and some of the students having just left school not having the same level of maturity.

What was the most rewarding part of the apprenticeship and why?

Knowing on completion I was going to have a great career with the potential to move on to bigger things within the industry

What advice would you give to people just embarking on an apprenticeship?

Don't be afraid to ask questions if you're unsure about anything. Always try and have go.

6.0 Case Study Four

Organisation: East Lothian Council

Category: Building Skills – Winner 2015

Apprentice: Emily Whitecross

The Property Maintenance Service at East Lothian Council is an essential core support function of the Council, providing the planning and delivery of repairs & maintenance services for Council housing and Council-owned properties.

The Property Maintenance service: -

- Provides a '24/7', 365 days per year emergency and non-emergency repairs service to Council housing and Council-owned buildings
- Delivers the planning, installation and customer liaison for a significant proportion of the Housing Capital Investment Plan to agreed standards.
- Ensures the electrical safety of Council housing
- Oversees the procurement of goods, services and sub-contractors for property repairs and improvements
- Delivers minor social work adaption for all housing tenures
- Plays a key facilitation role during local and national elections

The Apprenticeship programme at East Lothian Council has been running for many years, however in 2016 number of apprenticeship places were increased and they undertook the largest campaign to date (8 apprentices). There is the capacity and funding for a maximum of 12 property maintenances at any one time which consists of:-

- 2 x plastering apprentices commenced July 2019
- 2 x plumbing app's/2 x joiner app's/1 x painting app / 2 x electrical app's (Year 4)
- 1 x electrical app / 1 x blacksmith app / 1 x painting app – due to complete the apprenticeship in July this year.

The apprentices are appointed follow a robust recruitment campaign which has 3 stages, an aptitude test, a practical test and an interview.

The council report that one of the largest challenges for the apprentice programme is ensuring that the apprentices are supported every step of the way and are placed with the

correct tradesmen and ensuring apprentices have experience on the job in alignment with college learning.

There are many benefits reported from the apprentice programme which include:-

- Investment in young people. Developing skilled young, local, people contributes to the local economy.
- Investment in young people is encouraged through utilisation of community benefits clauses which provide work placements on large construction projects in local area.
- Retention of apprentices wherever possible within the council's structure
- Award winning apprentices – College Apprentice of the Year for 5 previous students and also APSE nominations / winners previously in Scottish Awards
- Promotes East Lothian Council as a good employer
- Funding and support via training providers

The Apprentice – Emily Whitecross

What made you consider an apprenticeship with the council?

When I was in 6th year of high school I decided to have work experience as a plumber with East Lothian Council. I had to think of a plan B in case I did not get the grades required to go to University. I decided I would do a further 11 weeks of unpaid work experience as it was such a wonderful environment to learn in. I subsequently successfully applied for an apprenticeship with East Lothian Council.

What have you achieved since winning the award?

Since the awards, I am now a Gas Monitoring Officer with East Lothian Council, using the knowledge gained from my apprentice. It is office based and I ensure our gas contractors are complying with regulations. I am also back at college, thanks to East Lothian Council, studying to be a Building Services Engineer, designing heating and ventilation systems for new buildings such as community centres and schools.

What was the most challenging part of the apprenticeship and why?

Studying for the Gas exam was the most stressful part, realising the responsibility you have with gas and ensuring you completely understand the processes put in place to keep everyone safe.

What was the most rewarding part of the apprenticeship and why?

Changing opinions in regards to females having a trade, within the council with tradesmen and out with whether it tenants or contractors. Also building wonderful working relationships with those around me.

What advice would you give to people just embarking on an apprenticeship?

Don't stand with your hands in your pockets! And thoroughly enjoy it, if I could rewind time and do the apprenticeship again I would in an instant.

Any other comments

I am extremely grateful to East Lothian Council for giving me so many opportunities to learn.

7.0 Case Study Five

Organisation: Newcastle City Council

Category: Professional Services – Winner 2015

Apprentice: Mitchell Galloway

The Councils Apprenticeship Programme

Building Services at Newcastle City Council (NCC) delivers a comprehensive range of repairs and services which include over 100,000 repairs in tenanted properties, refurbishing 2,000 Void properties and servicing 22,000 gas boilers each year. Building Services is also responsible for the provision of disabled adaptations to council tenants, this service is managed by Your Homes Newcastle (YHN) on behalf of Newcastle City Council.

Building Services comprises of the following business areas:-

- Architectural & Construction Services,
- Mechanical & Electrical Services
- Repairs & Maintenance Services
- Disabled adaptations

At Newcastle City Council, they are committed to providing opportunities for young people and offer a diverse range of apprenticeships across the council. The apprenticeships provide a great grounding for future careers, with most apprentices moving into further employment or higher education.

NCC's contribution to Education and Skills is to improve educational attainment and support all learners to fulfil their aspirations and potential, encourage everyone to learn, develop skills, build self-esteem and ensuring future employment in the skills appropriate to the section's needs.

NCC has over 100 apprentices and trainee's on programme through various apprenticeship frameworks, new Standards, and Higher Education programmes, aiming to create more and better jobs. Currently, the success rate in this area is normally 90% of those completing apprentice programmes are achieving full time employment within NCC.

Work-based learning programmes ensure that training is put in to practice in the field not just a "textbook" approach. NCC has worked through and still encourage the development of a "Basic Skills Strategy" in reading, writing, maths, and ICT maximizing social inclusion in family life and the modern environment.

One of the very tangible ways in which the Council supports Social Mobility amongst the most vulnerable is through the growing number of pre-apprenticeships/traineeships

which are arranged for care leavers, those with learning difficulties, disabilities and long term 'NEETs'. The programmes were developed for individuals who may aspire to be apprentices but due to their lack of skills or attributes are not immediately able to progress into apprenticeships. The pre-apprenticeships were designed in building services and are now being rolled out across the organisation.

The pre-apprentices begin with the young people being offered work experience placements, during which time they confirm their occupational pathway and prove their commitment. This is followed by a period of fixed-term employment. The end of the employment normally dovetails into periods of Council apprenticeship recruitment and there is evidence to demonstrate that these young people are progressing into apprenticeships across the Council.

Despite the budget cuts in the organisation they are still maintaining the apprentice numbers and are continuously trying to increase the number of learners in the City Council. However, it is difficult to meet the government target of 2.3% yearly average of new start apprentices within the organisation.

The Council believes that apprenticeship training helps employees to improve their skills, which will benefit the organisation in the long term. An apprenticeship will also ensure that the skills developed are matched to the future needs of the service including filling any skills gaps and allowing the business to source future managers and leaders from within.

Employees who have been trained in-house tend to be highly motivated, committed to the company and supportive of its business objectives.

An apprenticeship encourages employees to think of their job as a career and to stay with the organisation for longer, which reduces recruitment costs. Apprenticeships are also offered to existing members of staff which assists in demonstrating that they are an integral part of the workforce and are also part of the Council's investment in their future.

The Apprentice – Mitchell Galloway

What made you consider an apprenticeship with the council?

The council could provide a wide range of opportunities within their Architectural Construction Services department that supported new developments across the city as well as improving the council's portfolio of properties. I saw the learning potential if I could get involved in numerous schemes to be extremely rewarding and provide an excellent grounding for my future in the built environment sector.

What have you achieved since winning the award?

I went on to gain full employment at the city council in 2016 as a senior architectural technician. After six months at this position, I was appointed assistant project manager within the council's Major Projects team working on some of the city's biggest capital investment projects. I gained promotion after a year as assistant to a full project manager. My main duties daily are the delivery of Newcastle Helix, a leading site for research and innovation in the heart of Newcastle. I manage the daily co-ordination between

contractors, design teams and clients to ensure the £350 million scheme is a success and achieves its objective to become a 24-acre testbed and collaborative ecosystem for public and private bodies that are unlike anything else in the UK.

I was also involved in the delivery of Stephenson's Rocket to The Discovery Museum in Newcastle for The Great Exhibition of The North (GEOTN). The first time the locomotive returned to Newcastle in 156 years. The exhibit was one of the most well attended attractions for the GEOTN.

What was the most challenging part of the apprenticeship and why?

I always knew that the apprenticeship programme was there to support me if I did come into any challenges or complications however this was never necessary. The team around me was always there to ensure I felt comfortable in the environment I was working within and provided adequate opportunities for me to develop my skills in a variety of ways.

What was the most rewarding part of the apprenticeship and why?

Without a doubt, the most rewarding element of the apprenticeship was the diversity of the projects I was able to be involved with. From the renovation of the city's black gate and castle keep to the refurbishment of existing schools as well as adapting sports facilities to create world-class practice space for international athletes. Every project had its challenges. However, this was exciting and an opportunity to be involved in some great developments.

What advice would you give to people just embarking on an apprenticeship?

An apprenticeship is about constantly learning and trying to get the most out of every experience, so I would always say ask as many questions as you can, keep a record of what you do and the challenges you face and learn from them. With time, practice and hard work you will always achieve what you want to as long as you've got the right mindset and the willingness to be the best you can.

Any other comments

Having an apprentice manager who was there to support my journey through my learning both academically and at work was an essential element of getting to where I am today. I think that without someone looking after the apprentice's best interests sometimes you can get lost in the organisations objectives as they don't always align.

8.0 Case Study Six

Organisation: East Dunbartonshire Council

Category: Professional Services – Winner 2016

Apprentice: Paul Don

The Councils Apprenticeship Programme

The Construction Management Apprentices at East Dunbartonshire Council are based within the Major Assets Team. The Major Assets team is responsible for managing the delivery of council build projects over the value of £1 million. They manage the design,

construction, and aftercare for council projects and ensure that each project is delivered on time and within budget. Paul's role was to assist the Project Officers with the delivery of these projects, undertaking a range of tasks and responsibilities.

East Dunbartonshire Council's Apprenticeship Programme forms a large part of the centrally coordinated Early Career Programme, which also includes a Graduate programme and an approach to providing Work Experience for Senior Phase pupils. The MA Programme has been delivered this way since 2013 and MAs from a range of service areas and frameworks are recruited every August. These areas include: -

- Early Years
- Health and Social Care
- Youthwork, Customer Service, ICT,
- Accountancy
- Digital Marketing
- Business Admin
- Procurement
- Craft
- Streetscene
- Roads

Since 2013 and including this year's intake, 74 Young People will have secured Apprenticeships with us. With often restricted budgets, reduced capacity within teams and uncertainty around the future delivery of services, there are challenges to overcome when committing to an Early Career Programme. However, the commitment of Senior Management, Team Leads, mentors and colleagues have always been positive, even in challenging times.

When evaluating and gaining feedback on the programme, managers, colleagues and mentors are always extremely positive about the overall effect on team dynamics when welcoming a young person to the team. The benefits stated include, a fresh approach, enthusiasm and energy, raising morale, new ideas and mentoring has been incorporated into individual development plans, with now, sometimes previous apprentices becoming mentors themselves.

The Apprentice – Paul Don

What made you consider an apprenticeship with the council?

Being able to give back to the communities I have been a part of for all my life was something that I thought was an exciting challenge and also to have a better understanding of what the council does. When you are a young person living in an area, you do not realise how much the council does for you and everyone else, so I thought this was a great chance to develop my education and experience by working in such a multi-function organisation.

What have you achieved since winning the award?

Since winning the Professional Services award I was runner up in the Scottish APSE Apprentice Awards and I have progressed in my career by earning myself a full time (permanent) job as a Project Manager for East Dunbartonshire Council.

What was the most challenging part of the apprenticeship and why?

The most challenging part of my apprenticeship was trying to win over the respect of contractors/consultants/engineers etc as I was going into meets as their 'Client' and the person they had to report too - as I started this journey as a 20-year-old. Going into high profile meetings on behalf of the council making sure that the design team/contract were all working to my decision making and my instruction. This was challenging because you can feel people judging your ability due to your age. However, even though this may have been the most challenging aspect of my apprenticeship, I also thrived on it.

What was the most rewarding part of the apprenticeship and why?

The most rewarding part of my apprenticeship was seeing the impact on the community that my projects had. For example, I was involved in 3 new primary schools, 3 nursery's, sports facility and community centre and to see the faces of the users enjoying their new facility and knowing that they will be able to grow/learn and achieve so much in the buildings that I was part of is something that makes all the challenges/problems worthwhile.

What advice would you give to people just embarking on an apprenticeship?

Don't think twice about it, throw yourself into the deep end and embrace every moment, even the tough times as it will set you in good stead for future events that will come your way. Do not settle for just being 'an apprentice' - everyone started their professional journey somewhere and this is the start of yours'.

9.0 Case Study Seven

Organisation: Bournemouth Council

Category: Mechanical and Electrical - Winner 2016

Apprentice: George Smith

The Councils Apprenticeship Programme

Bournemouth's (now Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole BCP Council) 'In-House' trades team undertake construction, maintenance and planned building work throughout the BCP area. Although the council refer to themselves as an 'In-House Team', work and labour is spread across the new council, BBML (Bournemouth Building and Maintenance Limited) and Seascope South. The latter two are wholly council-owned companies.

The scope of the work undertaken by the service includes:

- Responsive maintenance for 5,629 Bournemouth area housing stock (including leasehold)
- Planned works for Bournemouth's housing stock (kitchens, bathrooms, disabled adaptations)

- Gas and electrical periodic inspections and remedial works for Bournemouth housing and BCP's corporate properties
- Refurbishment of houses purchased for strategic housing to assist with discharging homeless duties Responsive maintenance for corporate and strategic housing properties across BCP
- Large construction, refurbishment, and new build projects for both internal council clients and external clients in the local area
- Disabled facilities grant-funded works for external clients
- Maintenance of the Victorian cliff lifts
- Emergency out of hours response 24/7/365

The service delivers council projects and priorities, such as seafront regeneration, tourism, property development as well as time-sensitive construction projects.

The team provides an internal resource for the council to call on in a volatile construction market, for both maintenance and construction and have stepped in when commercial contracts and companies have failed, and a project or service needs to be delivered.

The apprentice programme is well regarded and one of the largest in the local area. Currently, there are 32 trade and construction apprentices working within the team across all trades. In addition, short- and longer-term work experience placements are offered to people who want to develop a career in the trades. The placements can be for school children as well as older adults looking for a change of career or an opportunity.

The council's apprenticeship program does not provide challenges as such, it is part of what BCP council do and could not see operating the organisation any other way. However, it is a continuing challenge to attract more women to the trades, despite working with local schools and promoting the programme widely, which includes focusing on real case studies of previous apprentices who went to local schools so young people can see and relate to them.

The council report that there are huge benefits to having an apprenticeship programme in construction and building maintenance. These benefits include: -

- Having apprentices allows the workforce to constantly develop and stops it becoming stagnant. Some of the more experienced tradespeople get a real kick from passing their skills on to a new generation and equally, they can learn new techniques and skills in other areas from their apprentices. A recent example was when one of the retired painters sadly died and all his old apprentices turned up to his funeral to pay their respects, wherever they were working now.
- Having a thriving apprenticeship program helps to combat the skills shortage as the majority of apprentices stay on once qualified. It can also ensure that the future workforce is trained to a high standard and understands the way the service operates. Testament to this is that the workforce is made up of around 50% ex-apprentices that we have been trained over the past 30 years ago.
- The program assists the Council to meet other targets around regeneration, community and social cohesion. Offering work experience placements and

interviews to any of the looked after children in the area and focusing on higher risk groups has seen excellent results, working with local youth workers to signpost people who need an opportunity and are ready for change. The council pride themselves on offering support and opportunities to young people who live in the councils housing stock. For every person who finds a career they can excel in there is a ripple effect to friends, family and future generations.

- Some apprentices choose to set up on their own after a few years with the council. This is also seen in a positive light too. These small thriving businesses bring wealth into the local economy and can also be a great source of great quality subcontractors when workload requires it.

The council has outlined how incredibly proud they are of George and our other apprentices. The apprentices work across all areas from small jobs to large construction projects. The apprentices are seen as industry-leading and are often knowledgeable and highly trained. They form a key part of the workforce and play an important part in everything the council does and, very often are the future supervisors and managers.

The Apprentice – George Smith

What made you consider an apprenticeship with the council?

I considered doing an apprenticeship with the council after completing 2 weeks of work experience with the council's electrical department whilst I was in year 10 at secondary school. During this 2-week placement, I found all members of the electrical team to be super friendly and they made a real conscious effort to include me as a member of the team.

What have you achieved since winning the award?

Since winning the award in 2016, I am now a fully qualified electrician having successfully completed the three-year apprenticeship scheme followed by a 12-month improver period. I have also gone on to complete additional courses such as the new 18th edition wiring regulations and undertook an Inspection and testing course, which I have found hugely beneficial. In addition to the qualifications I have achieved, I have also been lucky enough to have been given the opportunity to lead on electrical installation on several new build houses and refurbishments in the Dorset area. This is something I have thoroughly enjoyed and look forward to doing more of.

What was the most challenging part of the apprenticeship?

I found trying to gain experience in the correct fields of work in which your NVQ, National Vocational Qualifications, requires you to complete, as one of the most challenging aspects of the apprenticeship. This involved having to photograph work you came across on a job and use it as evidence when writing on the topic in aid of building your work experience portfolio, a formally assessed piece of work by the college. Therefore, I often would subconsciously think about which parts of my NVQ I still needed to complete when attending daily jobs and if they could potentially be used as an example in my portfolio.

What was the most rewarding part of the apprenticeship and why?

The most rewarding part of the apprenticeship for me was being apart of carrying out a job involving a disabled adaption. On one occasion, we installed a new kitchen which was catered for a tenant who had recently inhibited mobility issues. This was a very rewarding job, due to seeing how ecstatic the tenant was when seeing the new kitchen for the first time and the great feedback she gave the council.

What advice would you give to people just embarking on an apprenticeship?

My advice to someone embarking on an apprenticeship would be to not hesitate on asking questions if you're unsure on something or confused as everyone at some point has been in this situation. I would also say don't be afraid of making mistakes, as this is all part of learning a new skill and progressing throughout an apprenticeship.

APSE Comment

There is a range of reasons cited for running programmes but it is clear from the case studies and the responses to the APSE Apprenticeship survey that they are in place as part of a wider corporate strategy with the majority of respondents reporting that they ensure young people continue to enter the workforce and assist in developing skills and knowledge in the local area.

The skills and knowledge shortage across a range of sectors is widely publicised and it is evident that apprenticeship programmes are assisting in bridging the skills gap across a whole range of services from construction to horticulture.

The majority of authorities are reporting over 80% of their apprentices completing the programme and being offered permanent roles within the council. The role of local authority officers has evolved rapidly and higher-level apprenticeships are being used as a mechanism to upskill the existing workforce especially in areas such as leadership and management as well as project management.

APSE believe that the Apprentice Levy has assisted in raising the profile of apprenticeships and focuses financial resource on building the skills and knowledge of the workforce. However, APSE would like to see Government develop a national labour strategy, as part of the industrial strategy, to support respective industries such as construction, recognising that the availability of skilled workers will impact on delivery.

On a final point, some local authorities invest significantly in this area and we want to highlight the training organisations and the individual apprentices who are leading the field within the UK.

The APSE Local Authority Apprentice and Trainee of the Year Awards are specific to front line service areas and support excellence in training standards within local authorities and their partner organisations throughout the UK, including members and non-members of APSE. The awards scheme is open to candidates from all stages of training and are open to every authority and their partner organisations in the UK.

For further information please visit our website - [APSE Apprentice Awards](#)

The APSE National Housing and Building Maintenance Awards will be celebrated at the **APSE Building Maintenance and Repairs Seminar** on the **3 October 2019** at the Best Western Plus, Stoke on Trent Moat House. Full details of the Seminar can be accessed via the following link - [APSE Building Maintenance and Repairs Seminar](#)

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