

# Oliver, Technical Trainee

## Level 6 - Science Industry Process and Plant Engineer Degree



Based out of our Sewage Treatment Works in Island Road, Reading, Oliver is currently studying towards his degree in Chemical Engineering at the University of Greenwich, where he spends one day per week. The other four days are in the workplace and across Thames Water sites working as part of a small team of Research Scientists.

### Why did you choose to apply for a Thames Water apprenticeship?

My criteria for an apprenticeship in order of importance was as follows: The university course, the size and flexibility of the company and their focus on learning and development. Filtering the available apprenticeships by these aspects respectively left a select few opportunities. Knowing that it is impossible to understand a company from the outside, I wanted to learn as much as possible in the interviews. This is where I was won over.

Speaking to the HR teams and future colleagues I was charmed by their genuine interest in me, and their enthusiasm for learning and development. I barely knew the name of 'Thames Water' before applying, but researching them during and after the application phases, I was able to get a good image of the company as a whole, but not department specific information. This would only be discovered when I started my role.

While there are tasks that must be completed, I soon learnt that a person's role at Thames is made naturally, meaning: you will naturally fall into responsibilities and projects depending on where your strengths and interests are. I feel so lucky that I am able to work somewhere that operates in this way.

### Can you tell me about your life and career journey?

From the bright age of 13, I began my time as a working citizen. A humble paper round

evolved into numerous different roles through my teenage years. In this time, I lived in a small rural town with very little industry. This frustrated me, as I had such high ambitions for science and engineering. I knew that I had to find a way to broaden my career scope.

Growing up as a science-liking learner, all signs pointed to full time university. Good A levels, a decent work ethic and huge passion for learning. However, overwhelmed by the abundance of options, I chose to take a year of travelling in Japan post college. Here, I had the privilege of having a great deal of experiences in working, exploring and independence. This step out of the norm physically made me look outside the box, to Degree apprenticeships.

I began to view apprenticeship as not just an alternative to university, but the FUTURE of university. The opportunity to get a degree (and beyond!) while having industry experts to mentor you through it and gaining 'oh so valuable' experience at the same time, is too good to turn down! My experience thus far is that apprenticeships are what you make them. If you want to focus on your learning, there will be support. If you want to just get on with work, you have the tools to do it. If you want something, it is up to you to get it.



# Lydia, Technical Trainee

## Year 2 - Mechanical/Electrical apprentice



Lydia is currently completing her UET Level 3 apprenticeship standard and is in her second year of studies.

Lydia is based at our Ashford Common water treatment works site and is currently working with her mentor to complete her NVQ level 3 in mechanical and electrical engineering.

In year 1 & 2 of Lydia's apprenticeship she studied her PEO (performing engineering operation) units and BTEC in engineering at Guildford college, full time in year one and day release in year two.

### Can you tell me about your background?

When I was younger, I was fortunate enough to do lots of travelling and experience many different cultures and ways of life. I like to think this has made me quite open-minded. I'm always excited to meet new people and try new things.

My education was a bit unconventional. My mum home-schooled me from the age of about six and I went on to complete my secondary education with an online school. Having this background showed me the value of learning in a way that was tailored to me, not necessarily sticking to the norm.

### Why did you choose to apply for a Thames Water apprenticeship?

I found Thames Water when I was searching for engineering apprenticeships all over the UK. I was really excited to have the opportunity to work on such an important service as water. I also loved the opportunities for progression within Thames and the fact that I could train in both mechanical and electrical.

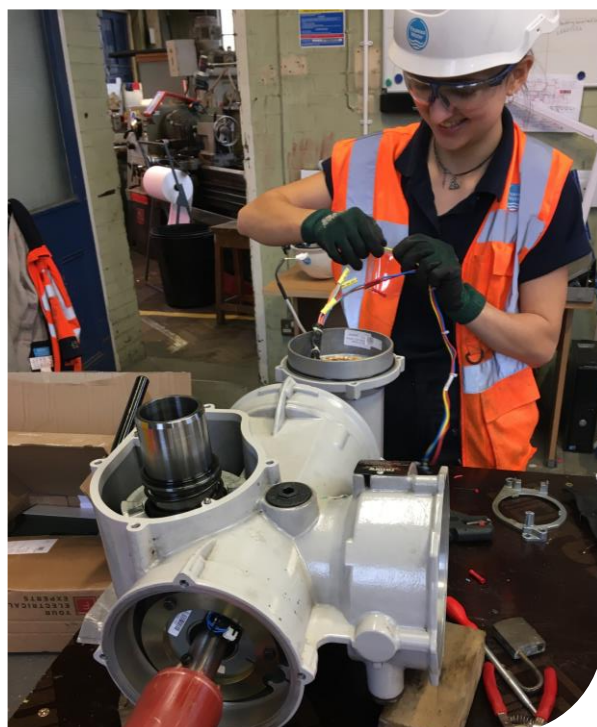
I come from Wales and grew up overseas, so I didn't know much about Thames Water

before I found the apprenticeship. I've been really happy with my experience, though, and love being able to study and work at the same time.

### Can you tell me about your life and career journey?

I was born in Wales, but I spent most of my childhood as a British expat in Saudi Arabia. When I got a bit older, I came back to Wales on my own and started work as a waitress. I liked waitressing, but it was never what I wanted to do in the long-term.

I was really interested in engineering, but I wasn't sure I was quite ready to take up full-time studying again or end up with a massive student loan. An apprenticeship seemed a great way to learn while also earning a good wage and supporting myself. Although I was offered apprenticeships closer to where I lived, the Thames Water apprenticeship offered great training, a generous salary, and some really exciting prospects for the future. It was an opportunity worth travelling for.



# Ashley, Technical Trainee

## Year 2 – Electrical /ICA apprentice



Ashley is currently completing her UET Level 3 apprenticeship standard and is in her second year of studies.

Ashley is based at our Esher sewage treatment works site and is currently working with her mentor to complete her NVQ level 3 in mechanical and electrical engineering.

In year 1 & 2 of Ashley's apprenticeship she studied her PEO (performing engineering operation) units and BTEC in engineering at Guildford college, full time in year one and day release in year two.

### Can you tell me about your background?

I always enjoyed school growing up as I genuinely enjoy learning. College was good fun as well! My parents taught me to work hard; they told me that almost anything is achievable when you work for it, so I've tried to apply this in all aspects of my life. In school I was really bad at physics, I never understood the principles and found it so complicated.

When I got to college however, everything sort of clicked and I knew for sure that I would work in the engineering field. Before secondary school however, I actually wanted to work as a dentist.

### Why did you choose to apply for a Thames Water apprenticeship?

I initially never considered Thames Water, but one of the Lecturers from my college recommended that I apply here. For this reason, I never knew much about the company, only that they provide clean water and have reservoirs. I knew that sewage went into sewers and about the clean water treatment because we went on a trip to a Thames site when I was in primary school, but

that was just about all the knowledge I had. My previous knowledge was a reality, just not in the field I was working in.

I work in the Waste networks and so my job involves working with sewage. I was not prepared for the smell, but as time has gone by, I've gotten used to it and it's really not as bad as you would think. I've been fortunate enough to work on the pumping team as well as at the Sewage Treatment Works so I have now seen and completely understand the Sewage treatment process. No two days are the same which is really cool, because I'm always learning here.

### Can you tell me about your life and career journey?

From secondary school, I knew that I wanted to work in the engineering sector. My first job was actually as a receptionist in a beauty clinic, whilst I was studying engineering in college. I then did part-time work with a super car mechanic for three months. I've enjoyed all the jobs that I have had. I learnt a lot from them and have been able to use some of the skills I learnt with Thames.

I am hopeful that I will stay with Thames as I work with a great team. Everyone's really encouraging, friendly and helpful and they don't spoon feed us, which has helped me to learn some things very quickly. Once I finish the apprenticeship, I would eventually like to get a degree in electrical engineering.

