

CHRIS ROLLING STOCK (MAINTENANCE) TECHNICIAN APPRENTICE

South Western Railway

Why did you choose to do an apprenticeship?

I've wanted to do an apprenticeship from an early age, but thought that going to college to get my A-Levels would be a good idea so went down that route initially.

One of my teachers at school had said how good apprenticeships were. I loved the idea of doing something practical and getting paid to do something I enjoyed really appealed.

College was mostly theory, but I really wanted to get hands-on for my job, so I feel that an apprenticeship will give me the skills I need to achieve this.

Physically making and taking things apart is so much better and I think is a great way to learn. But you do need the theory so that you understand why you're doing what you're doing, both sides are needed to get the whole experience.

I'll gain invaluable work experience doing an apprenticeship, not just the theory side of things which I feel going to Uni would be. Employers look for real-life work experience.

Would you recommend an apprenticeship?

I would absolutely recommend an apprenticeship. I have already recommended it to my friends who are currently taking a gap year.

If you can do an apprenticeship in something that you do as a hobby, then it won't feel like you are doing a job, it'll feel less of a chore!

What does an average day look like for you?

I am currently completing a foundation year of 40 weeks 'off-the-job' training at SETA.

During an average day the first half of it will be doing theory, understanding how the systems work before we head off out into the workshop for practical hands-on part, so it's a good mix of both elements.

I have completed Mechanical Maintenance, Electronics and Fluid Power so far.

I will be based at the Salisbury Depot, but that just has Diesel engines, so will have the opportunity to go across the Network. Out on site will be approx. 80% practical working with the trains, writing up logbooks and gathering together a portfolio of evidence towards my apprenticeship.



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How did you first become interested in engineering?

One of my GCSE's was in Engineering Computer Science, and then at Barton Peveril College I did BTECs in Engineering, as well as Product Design. I really enjoyed these subjects. That combined with taking my Mums car to the garage when it broke down when I was 15. I was amazed at how the mechanic could solve the problem and knew what everything was. Since then, and watching many YouTube videos later on the subject, I wanted to do something 'mechanically' practical.

A brilliant engineering *YouTuber* called Mark Rober has been quite inspirational in terms of the activities and creations that he comes up. I'd love to be able to do recreate some of the items, and I'm hoping that with the skills and knowledge I'm gaining as part of my apprenticeship that I'll be able to!

What has been your personal highlight so far?

I've really enjoyed the Mechanical Maintenance and can see how this will be used when I get out on site.

Everything that I have learnt is definitely going to underpin my 'on-the-job' training when I get out on site.

What personal qualities do you think are important to do your job?

Working with rolling train stock I'm definitely going to need problem solving skills, determination, perseverance and consistency. I'll need to be able to work under pressure, keep calm under pressure, be able to communicate, and be a team player!

Why did you choose to be an Apprentice Council Rep?

To represent my peers and the problems they may have. Especially if they are not confident enough to bring it up to a member of staff, then it may go unnoticed.

I want to develop my communication skills, being able to convey ideas from one person to another in a way that they can understand.

We look at leadership skills during the sessions, and being a leader and setting an example appeals to me, so peers can approach me with a problem, and I can provide knowledge and expertise to help them.

Seeing other people thrive is very appealing to me, as I would to be a Team Leader/Supervisor at some point in my career.

