

## **National Apprentice Week**

### **How apprenticeships change lives**

Apprenticeships have the power to deliver life-changing career opportunities – as evidenced by several of Persimmon’s own success stories.

Jo Chiles, from Ogmore-by-Sea in South Wales, is just one example of how an apprenticeship with Persimmon has produced quite stunning results.

Between the ages 14 and 16, Jo found himself as the primary carer for his three siblings aged two, four and five.

With little income coming into the home, there were many times when the cupboards were empty of food and there was no electricity.

Today, after going on to spend four years living in a hostel, 20-year-old Jo is studying an NVQ Level 2 in bricklaying with Bridgend College in association with Persimmon, spending two days in the classroom and the rest on site.

He now has his own flat and is hoping to obtain a full-time job with Persimmon when he completes his apprenticeship next year.

Jo said: “Being a young carer to my siblings was extremely difficult. We struggled for food and electricity before my siblings were eventually taken into foster care.

“Bridgend College encouraged me to progress with the apprenticeship and it has completely turned my life around. I have a say on what’s going on in my life.

“I now have my own flat and I feel a more settled, stable and mentally clean. I don’t know where I would’ve been had it not been for the encouragement and support I received.

“Rob Clover at Bridgend College told me there are things you can change, things you can ask for help with and things you can’t change. That has really stuck with me.”

Jo said he enjoys the challenges bricklaying brings.

“There is always something new to learn,” he said. “I’m guided by people who have been doing the job for decades and the apprentice master keeps us on our toes.”

Former Persimmon trade apprentice of the year Keane Squires joined the Anglia business in 2019, quickly impressing his mentors with his natural talent and work ethic.

The 21-year-old left school with no GCSEs but has now completed his NVQ level 3 in bricklaying and is a respected member of the team at the Woods Meadow development in Oulton Broad.

Keane said: “I would recommend an apprenticeship to anyone leaving school who enjoys a hands-on job. As well as learning a trade and gaining qualifications, if you are willing to work hard, then careers in construction are well paid and I was able to purchase my first home at just 20-years-old.

“I like being able to take a plan and see the construction of a house through from start to finish. When the house is finished you get a real sense of pride and satisfaction in your work.”

Persimmon Homes Teesside apprentice bricklayer Justin Barlow said his life had significantly improved since starting an apprenticeship with Persimmon.

He said: “It has given me a clear career path and a bright future. I now have a full time job and I am receiving a high level of instruction and learning all about construction, while at the same time earning a living.

“I have now passed my driving test and been able to buy my own car, something which a while ago would not have seemed possible. This has all made me a much more confident person and in turn has vastly improved my communication and overall life skills.

“I would strongly recommend to any young person who is unsure about what their next step should be to consider an apprenticeship, see what is out there and just go for it.”

To find out more about an apprenticeship at Persimmon Homes, visit

<https://www.persimmonhomes.com/jobs/apprenticeships/>

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