

A day in the life of an Aldermans apprentice

Lydia Charlton

At school, what did you most enjoy or excel at?

Whilst at school, I particularly enjoyed the analytical aspects of geography and combined science. I also thrived in creative subjects like English and Art.

What was it about engineering as a career that appealed to you?

The hands-on nature and problem-solving aspects of engineering were particularly appealing to me. I wanted a challenging job where no two days are the same and I wanted something that required logical thinking to come up with creative solutions.



Why did you decide to pursue an apprenticeship?

After leaving school and gaining an experience of the working world, I realised how important acquiring a trade was to me and decided to pursue my interest in engineering. Opting for an apprenticeship provided the ideal opportunity to work towards my career goals and gain qualifications while earning a salary.

How did you find your apprenticeship placement?

I knew I was interested in welding and while researching part-time welding courses, I stumbled upon apprenticeship opportunities. Though I hadn't initially considered them, the gov.uk website helped me recognise the benefits that apprenticeships offered.

Why did you choose Aldermans?

I knew Aldermans had a great reputation as everyone I spoke to said good things about the company. Their staff retention is excellent; it's loyal, friendly and like joining a family. Aldermans' website showcases their green ethos and company goals, which are really positive and inspirational. The informative interview I had with Karen and tour of the factory, reinforced what I had heard and read and convinced me that this was the company I wanted to work for.

When did your apprenticeship start, and when will it end?

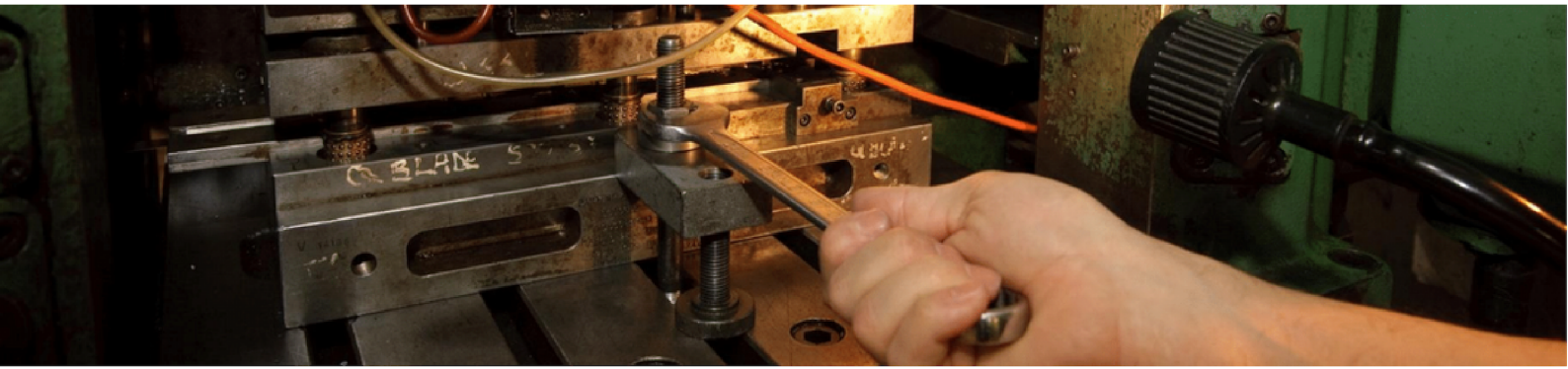
I started my Level 3 apprenticeship in advanced manufacturing engineering in September 2023 and am due to finish March 2027.

How has Aldermans helped you develop your skills?

For the first three months, I was in college full time, now I'm able to be back in the factory. I am benefitting from the opportunity to work alongside experienced colleagues who provide me with practical insight and mentorship. I am working in various departments developing my skills and knowledge of the entire fabrication process - all offering me a solid foundation for my career as a fabricator.

What's the most important thing you've learned about yourself during your apprenticeship?

I'm really excited about learning new skills. It's one thing to be told how to do something but when you're able to do it for yourself and see yourself developing it's massively rewarding.



During your apprenticeship, what have you achieved that are you most proud of?

I've only been working in the factory for a few weeks, but every new thing I learn and accomplish becomes my favourite. I'm excited for whatever comes next.

What have you learned about being an employee?

Being with Aldermans has highlighted that learning from experienced colleagues and being open to growth and learning opportunities is essential. It's also about building positive relationships with colleagues and adapting to workplace culture.

Are there any down-sides to being an apprentice?

I have tried to come up with some downsides, but I don't believe I've experienced any so far. If the choices for my career development are an apprenticeship or university, I know I've made the right choice for me: I'm not running up debt. I'm being paid to learn skills that my employers really want.

What do you do on a typical day at work?

I'm training to become a multi skilled fabricator. So, my typical day is ever changing. One day I may be welding the next I'll be helping set up our CNC punch-laser combination machine. Every day is a different opportunity and challenge.



How has your apprenticeship helped you plan the next steps in your career?

I'm at the beginning of my apprenticeship journey. It's a three-year course and I want to use all that time to learn to be the best fabricator I can to prepare myself for the rest of my career at Aldermans.

What would you say to others who might consider an engineering apprenticeship?

Definitely go for it. Being able to develop a skill and learn a trade is invaluable. I didn't take a direct route after leaving school but having made the change to an engineering apprenticeship, I would recommend it to anyone. Be willing to learn and take on new challenges.

About Aldermans

A family firm, established in Plymouth for over 50 years, we're one of the region's best known and respected metal fabricators.

Combining traditional skills with the latest technologies, we offer our clients an integrated metalwork service, from design and prototyping to small or large scale production runs.

Our technologies include press tooling, pressbrake folding, CNC machining (lasering, punching, milling, turning), cutting, welding, assembly and kitting, and powder coating.

We are proud to hold the EN ISO 9001:2015 quality management certification, plus ISO 14001:2015 for environmental management, and OHSAS 18001:2007 health and safety management.

As well as investing regularly in the latest technologies, we also invest in our staff through training in manufacturing management techniques, such as lean manufacturing and Six Sigma.

We are an active member of PMG, the Plymouth Manufacturers' Group.