



Mechanical apprentice, 1995



Head of Operations, 2024

“Finding a craft as a career”

Name: Mark Waddilove | Job title: Head of Operations | Length of service: 29 years

I started a **mechanical apprenticeship** with **South Staffordshire Water (SSW)** in **July '95** at **16 years of age**. The apprenticeship involved six months of initial training off-site, learning the fundamentals. Having completed this I was then back at work learning about the operation and maintenance of a SSW pumping plant. My off-site training continued with one day a week attendance at college, completing numerous City & Guilds Qualifications. I completed an NVQ Level 2 and Level 3 as part of the Advanced Modern Apprenticeship in engineering maintenance criteria.

The apprenticeship was completely new to me, and I enjoyed the learning 'on the job' aspect of the course. In the engineering workshop, I got to complete foundation training in different aspects of utilities such as machine tooling, lathes, boring, surface grinding, basic electrical and gas welding.

I have always been a practical person. Growing up, I enjoyed working with my dad on various projects in the garage and I wanted to find a craft that I could do as a career. The apprenticeship was a fundamental foundation to learning the skills of my craft and it has set me up for life in an industry that I love and enjoy. I would encourage anyone considering an apprenticeship to go for it as learning a trade completely sets you up with skills for life.