

## CASE STUDY: Balfour Beatty



### MEET OUR APPRENTICES Freddie Palmer

Job title	Junior Engineer
Location	London
Apprenticeship type	M&E
Qualification/education level	NVQ Level 3 as an Electrical apprentice. Now an undergraduate at John Moore University.
Date joined	September 2009



**Please provide a brief summary of your role, the project you are supporting and the type of work you undertake on a daily basis:**

During my apprenticeship, I worked on a whole variety of projects. Some of the big name projects in London I worked on are Moorfields Eye Hospital, Blackfriars Station, Sea Containers House, Maurice Wohl – Kings College and Heathrow T2B. Each project was completely different and I enjoyed the variety of experiences I had in the different locations, with different targets and clients. After completing my 4 year apprenticeship early, I worked as an electrician for a short period at Heathrow Terminal 2B on a nightshift; I was then offered the chance to become a Building Services Engineer with the Balfour Beatty Student Programme Course at Liverpool John Moores University. Despite my electrical background from my apprenticeship I am currently working alongside a Mechanical Engineer at a project in London Victoria called Kings Gate and The Zig Zag Building. We are working as a subcontractor to Lend Lease and Land Securities, but it is more of a partnership as we liaise together on the decisions made on site that will affect our M&E works.

One of my roles at the moment is to go out to tender on a big plant movements package to ensure we get all items of plant that require specialist movements moved safely and efficiently around the project, plant involved in this tender will be our Generators, Air handling units and water tanks along with many other items. We have 13 floors of apartments in our east building with modules located in the main corridor of each floor, I have just finished completing the tender process from start to finish which involves inviting people to tender with a scope of works to now having a pre start meeting with our chosen contractor. Also we have a UKPN substation located in-between our two 13 story buildings but below ground with 3 basements, we have a deadline for this Friday to get an 11Kv switch room complete, I am currently looking after this area to get it complete on time which we are currently on course to do.

The work I do on a daily basis is always different as with a project this size different changes or issues pop up daily so we are always trying to design out any risk and handle any issues that do arise quickly and efficiently in order to keep on or ahead of programme and keep everybody on site safe. As we have only started works on site in January we are still in the early phases of the project hence some packages still being under tender, within a month or two when all packages have been procured my role will then change again. This is one of the reasons I chose to apply for the course as every day and every week is always different.

#### **What attracted you to Balfour Beatty?**

I joined the company in 2009 when quite like the company has done recently it had a lot of changes. Balfour Kilpatrick was becoming Balfour Beatty Engineering Services and growing even bigger, when I applied for my apprenticeship I researched the company so I knew what sort of company I would be applying for. Whilst doing this I realised I was applying for a huge company not just in the UK but all over the world, this really appealed to me as working in different countries has always been of great interest. Not only the size of the company impressed me, but of the amount of people that knew about the company, speaking to friends and relatives who are not involved in construction all new the name and had seen Balfour Beatty hoarding all over London.

#### **What development opportunities have you been given whilst in your role?**

I have had great development opportunities whilst I have been working for Balfours. From being a first year apprentice a couple of weeks out of school to then becoming a fully qualified Electrician, to now at University training to become an Electrical or Mechanical Engineer. I recently attended an Emerging Talent day at

the London Museum where all of the young people within the first year of their courses at Balfours met some of the higher management across CSUK and people who have completed their courses talked about their own opportunities, it was made very clear to us that if you work hard and succeed there will be opportunities to work your way up within the company and as I am a person with high aspirations it is another exciting challenge!

#### **How has Balfour Beatty played a role in your long term career goals?**

As I mentioned previously my long term goals are to work my way up as high as I can within Balfour Beatty, and if I did get the right opportunity go and work in a different country. With a company like Balfour Beatty all these things are achievable, what I have found is if you work hard it is noticed and you will be given further chances to move on to different options and get more opportunities. During my apprenticeship there was opportunity's to go on health and safety courses to learn more about the industry, being 16 and having hardly any experience I found these courses were invaluable.

#### **What has been your highlight so far at Balfour Beatty?**

The highlight of my time at Balfour Beatty so far was getting my results for my AM2 exam which is the last exam you have to pass in order to become a qualified electrician. It's the biggest highlight of my time so far as all my work had paid off and I had reached my target to become qualified ahead of schedule!

#### **What one thing surprised you most about working for Balfour Beatty?**

The biggest surprise for me was the people that actually work for Balfour Beatty. No matter what project I was working on be that as an apprentice or as a junior engineer, everybody understands where you're coming from as everybody has been there and done it before. It doesn't matter what the task is you are given, if you are not sure or have a question about it just ask, I have never asked a question and been pushed away even if I should of known the answer. The good thing about our industry is people would rather you ask and get it right rather than hold your question back and get it wrong.

#### **What are the top three tips/pieces of advice you would give to anyone thinking of applying to Balfour Beatty?**

1. Discover what role you would like to fulfil whether that be higher up the company or an apprentice, find the best route to get there even if you start as apprentice does not mean you will not be a project manager one day!

2. As I said above, do not be afraid to ask. Asking questions is how you gain the important extra bits of knowledge that will help you in the long run.
3. Apply! Coming from somebody that works for the company this can look like a generic statement and I am normally one to question these things. But honestly I could not recommend trying to get an apprenticeship or on the undergraduate scheme with Balfour Beatty enough!