

My name is Chelsea Lawrence, I am currently a Mechanical Junior Technician at WSP/Parsons Brinckerhoff. I started my apprenticeship in 2013 and now have nearly 3 years' experience within the building services industry. I am currently undertaking my HNC which will be successfully completed in February 2017, following on from which, I will then progress onto my HND.

I have been a CIBSE member for the majority of my career, I first joined as a student member and then upgraded to a Licentiate member earlier this year.



WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO BECOME A BUILDING SERVICES ENGINEER AND WHAT PATH DID YOU TAKE TO ACHIEVE THIS?

If I'm going to be completely honest I fell into the job after leaving college, I was 17 years old and looking for a job, but I believe it is the best thing that I have ever done. It has enabled me to progress and gain a much higher responsibility over my own work. I started in the summer as an apprentice where I completed my ONC from which I then carried onto my HNC, which I am close to finishing.

WHAT IS THE MOST ENJOYABLE ASPECT OF YOUR JOB?

One of the most enjoyable aspects of my job is being able to work on great international projects and being given the responsibilities that not many people at my level have. Working alongside people who are always willing to help is also an enjoyable aspect, as I know if there is any point where I believe I am struggling, people are always there to guide me.

WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST PROFESSIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENT TO DATE?

As someone who has only been in the industry 3 years, I haven't had a lot of experience to have a professional accomplishment as such. I am proud of the progress I have made. I have come a long way compared to when I first started. Currently my biggest achievement is being successful with the LCIBSE professional registration. I am grateful for all the projects I have been involved in as not many people have the opportunity to work on major development schemes like I have. I am constantly learning new things each day at work and I am becoming a much stronger minded person. The apprenticeship route has helped me personally by gaining a much higher degree of education than I would have obtained if I followed my own career path. It has also opened doors to further my education with a HND, once completing my HNC. My colleagues have played a major role in getting me to where I am today as they provided guidance and believed in me.

WHAT ONE PIECE OF ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO SOMEONE THINKING ABOUT BECOMING A BUILDING SERVICES ENGINEER?

I would strongly recommend the apprenticeship route is one of the best paths to become a building service engineer. Although you come into the business not knowing much, your colleagues help you out a lot and you learn from the ground up as they say. It may take a longer amount of time to get where you want to be, but you will gain more work experience and understanding of how the



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industry works. Anyone new to the industry is bound to be shy but if you are ever stuck don't hold back, ask all the questions you want because there is always someone around to put the time and effort in to help you understand exactly what to do.

what jobs you have participated in. I thought it was going to take longer and that I wouldn't reach the word count but when I had finally finished I ended up writing more than expected- it was definitely worth it.

WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER TO BE THE BENEFITS OF CIBSE MEMBERSHIP? AND WHY?

There are many benefits of being part of CIBSE- it allows you to access all the guides which as a young engineer is a great help, as it is there for guidance and it also allows you to attend CPDs. Now that I have letters after my name it means that when the company bids for jobs, my CV shows that I am a capable engineer.

BUILDING SERVICES IS GREAT BECAUSE..?

I believe that building services engineers do not get as much recognition for their work as they should. People only ever see the outer shell and never see the operation behind the building as it is hidden. Not many individuals understand how hard the job can be and how much time and effort has to be put in to complete a job successfully. We design systems for the public's everyday use and have to take their health and best interest into our design. A lot of pressure is on the designers because if one little mistake is made within the design process, it could have serious consequences. I believe that this job is a secret art and there are always new jobs to tackle - you are constantly learning within the industry. ■

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WHY DID YOU BECOME LCIBSE ENGTECH?

I applied for the LCIBSE EngTech to get myself onto the ladder of progression, I feel like I have really achieved something since completing my apprenticeship.

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HOW DID YOU FIND THE APPLICATION PROCESS TO BECOME LCIBSE AND WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO OTHERS CONSIDERING THIS GRADE?

At first I thought that applying for the LCIBSE was going to be harder than it was, it consisted of completing a report detailing what roles and responsibilities you have undertaken in your work place and