



## **Why we are putting young people at the heart of what we do**

The Young Person's Guarantee offers the opportunity of a job, placement, training or volunteering for every 16-24 year old in Scotland.

As well as giving young people access to greater opportunities, it lets employers build a workforce with the right skills and experience.

The first company to sign up in the North-east of Scotland was AquaTerra Group.

A leading industry specialist for difficult access operations and potentially hazardous environments, the company is based in Kintore and has 30 employees.

AquaTerra provides a comprehensive range of construction services to the energy sector. It also offers a global provision of practical health and safety training, providing over 60 different courses in more than 25 different countries.

We spoke to business support director **Charlie Cameron** and asked him to tell us a bit about how they are aiming to put young people at the heart of what they do.

"If you're a local employer looking for a great business goal to set yourself, you should be signing up for the Young Person's Guarantee.

As a business, AquaTerra knows that developing young, local talent is great for the company and it allows us to grow organically.

Over the last few years, we have had apprentice opportunities in business administration as well as mechanical engineering.

We have also hosted many work experience and training sessions specifically for young people.

These have ranged from offering individuals the

chance to participate in a certificated training course free of charge, to hosting a whole class group and designing team building, problem-solving and STEM-related activities in our custom-built training centre.

We have also hosted host open days for clients and when it's been appropriate, we've invited local schools to attend.

## Community

The support from Developing the Young Workforce North-east (DYW NE) is really excellent and you never feel alone or left to get on with it.

AquaTerra appreciates that we have located our business in Kintore by choice and we have to be genuinely considerate about community involvement and the development of young people.

My own experience goes back to when I started my own business aged 26, so from a young age I have been involved with apprentices.

From there, I then worked in further education for 15 years. In that role, I worked with S3 & S4 pupils and young adults up to 25 years old both in the construction trade areas and in art and design.

I've been at Aquaterra for 10 years now and have worn a few hats during that time. I currently look after quality, health, safety & environment, as well as human resources.

I like to think I've used my experience and positive outlook to promote the benefits of working with young people.

## Advice

Ideally, I always like to see job applicants presenting themselves honestly and telling me as much as they can about themselves, regardless of how unimportant they might think it is.

A young person might be painfully aware their CV doesn't have an extensive roster of roles and experience, but they can still recognise their own achievements.

Maybe it's been through volunteering or part time jobs, or maybe activities within their community and participation in clubs or teams but it will all help to put across what they've done and what they have to offer.

Personally, I appreciate it when a young person is bold enough to call and introduce themselves.

Our current apprentice mechanical engineer is studying for his HNC. He got the job by delivering CVs door to door which is how I met him. We had a chat

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**Charlie Cameron  
AquaTerra**

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and I invited him in for an interview which is how he got his opportunity with us.

## Entry level

More generally, if you're looking to join the energy sector, my advice would be to try and consider a career path you would like to achieve as a starting point.

The industry has a vast range of roles from administration-based jobs onshore to offshore jobs hanging from a rope all day carrying out physical and technical tasks.

Do your research because it will pay off. Contact colleges, universities, DYW NE, training companies and employers to make sure you understand the requirements you will have to achieve over the course of your career development.

I would also direct the young person to ask for advice from parents, friends, guardians, carers or even online.

## Innovate and grow

And when it comes to AquaTerra, we are always looking for fresh new talent, regardless of experience or age.

We are only 17 years old ourselves and we have plenty of years left in us.

AquaTerra is continually seeking to innovate and develop our people. We like to investigate new opportunities and support new ideas.

And we fully support the development of our young employees and often push them to study or work beyond their own expectations and achieve their potential.

That's why it was an easy decision for us to sign up to the Young Person's Guarantee and show our commitment to young people in the region.”