

## Leigh Worsdale

AMRC Training Centre's Apprentice of the Year Winner 2017

### Success is all about the right attitude for multi-award-winning Apprentice of the Year Leigh Worsdale.

From media appearances to job offers from around the world and starting the journey to becoming a young apprentice ambassador, the last 12 months have been a whirlwind for the AMRC's first female Apprentice of the Year and heavy duty diesel engine builder, Leigh Worsdale.

Leigh, who is from Chesterfield, applied for an apprenticeship after her GCSEs because she wanted to gain experience while getting paid. She was inspired by the facilities at the AMRC Training Centre after attending one of the centre's open days with her school.

She was awarded an apprenticeship under the Close Brothers SME Apprentice Programme, which contributes to the cost of apprentices, to help SMEs recruit and train a new generation of advanced engineers.

When asked what the highlight of her year has been, she will tell you that what gives her the most satisfaction is knowing she is contributing to Chesterfield company Foxwood Diesel, her employers', success:

"Seeing my company grow and the changes I've been able to make to a small developing business has been my highlight, I feel like I've played a big part in building the business up.

"I started off improving health and safety standards, ensuring the working environment was clean, and went on to change manufacturing systems to make them more efficient and effective; cutting cost, reducing waste, improving stock control and time management. Employing these kinds of process improvements really affects not just the working life of the staff, but productivity as well."

It is this kind of forward-thinking and dedication to her workplace that landed Leigh the coveted title of "Apprentice of the Year" in the AMRC Training Centre's 2017 ceremony, held at the University of Sheffield.

The judges were "overwhelmingly" impressed by Leigh's confidence, and spoke about how she continuously seeks ways to improve her workplace and its processes.

Leigh's achievements also led to her being awarded "Chesterfield's Apprentice of the Year" in the North Midlands and South Yorkshire Apprentice Awards and "Highly Commended Advanced Apprentice of the Year for the East Midlands" in the National Apprenticeship Awards.

The crown jewel of her award-winning year was her trip to the USA hosted by Boeing, where Leigh enjoyed a tour of the aerospace giant's sites in Los Angeles, Portland and Seattle, learning more about the world-renowned manufacturer as her prize for winning Apprentice of the Year.

Leigh never expected her award to bring her so much attention: "The awards just kept on coming this year; it's been an amazing experience! It's great to have your achievements recognised in that way, especially by Boeing.

"I was also invited to demonstrate Industry 4.0 technologies to Members of Parliament at a High Value Manufacturing Catapult event at the House of Commons; it's a big honour to be seen as a representative for the AMRC Training Centre."

Leigh is now an experienced ambassador; she has appeared throughout print and broadcast media, becoming the face of successful apprenticeship training in the Sheffield city region.

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Leigh Worsdale

**"Do it! Anyone can be successful, my story isn't unusual, I just work hard and I am given the right focus. I still feel like there is still a stigma to undertaking an apprenticeship, but now things are changing and the benefits, not just for the young people but for their companies and UK industry, are finally being seen. Apprenticeships really do make a difference to the lives of young people, I am evidence of that!"**

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Leigh's apprenticeship has given her grand plans for the future and she is now furthering her higher education by completing her Level 4 HNC studies. She is also pursuing training opportunities to diversify her skills and knowledge of modern engine technologies:

"I would like to travel, so gaining more qualifications will be imperative to allow me to take advantage of opportunities abroad; having all those contacts from job offers will come in useful!

"I would simply not be able to have that experience with a purely academic degree; my apprenticeship training allows me to gain real valuable skills that are in demand from industry. When you learn something new, you can apply it to your job straightaway, therefore gaining more of an understanding for what you are doing."

For Leigh, doing an apprenticeship was all about getting the experience and the opportunities for career development she needed, whilst being able to earn a wage. She encourages anyone considering an apprenticeship to go for it:

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