



National Apprenticeship Week

Name: Ethan Wicks (left)

Location/Site: Saltend Chemicals Park, Hull

Apprenticeship position: Instrumentation & Controls

Apprentice

Apprenticeship start date: September 2020

Name: Jack Taylor (right)

Location/Site: Saltend Chemicals Park, Hull

Apprenticeship position: Electrical Apprentice

Apprenticeship start date: September 2020



ETHAN WICKS
JACK TAYLOR

Ethan and Jack from friends to colleagues

To celebrate National Apprenticeship week, we speak to px Group's apprentices at Saltend, Ethan Wicks and Jack Taylor, to learn about their experience in px Group's apprenticeship scheme. In September 2020, Ethan and Jack joined px Group's newest apprenticeship cohort and incidentally, the pair were friends long before they became colleagues.

Having both studied Level 3 Electrical NVQ at college, both Ethan and Jack independently applied to join the Apprenticeship scheme at Saltend. The pair's applications were both successful, with Ethan joining us as an Instrumentation & Controls Apprentice, and Jack joining as an Electrical Apprentice in September last year. Both Ethan and Jack balance the apprenticeship with their studies by spending four days working at the H2H Saltend site under supervision and one day studying in college.

While joining the apprenticeship scheme marked a new, and therefore potentially daunting endeavour at the start of their respective careers, both Ethan and Jack quickly realised that they have more than just each other to rely on for support. The pair recount that one of the standout highlights of the apprenticeship scheme so far is the close knit culture at Saltend and the dedication of px Group to ensure that their mentors on site are available to provide guidance at all times. As a result, Ethan and Jack share that they already feel like an embedded 'part of the px team' just six months after starting out as Apprentices at Saltend.

Ethan and Jack both admit that the Apprenticeship is challenging, with a fast introduction to the "real world" of on-site, safety-critical work. They both say, however, that there has been one key factor that has enabled them to quickly get up to speed and integrate into the Saltend workforce: the willingness of the wider O&M team to take the pair under its wing and treat them as one of its own.

While on site, Ethan and Jack shadow their colleagues, who thoroughly explain and show them how to complete each responsibility. Once they understand what is required, Ethan and Jack have the opportunity to gain practical experience and conduct the tasks themselves, all while being supervised. Ethan and Jack also benefit from having regular catch-ups with Lee Hind, their programme manager, where they discuss their progress and are provided with competency assessments. The expert guidance and mentorship enables Ethan and Jack to ask as many questions as required, so that they can have confidence in knowing they have completed everything correctly.

Not only have Ethan and Jack benefited from gaining hands on experience under the guidance of skilled professionals, but px Group's Apprenticeship scheme has also provided them with the invaluable experience of being part of a professional team. As a result, Ethan and Jack both list a number of work and life skills that they have learned in just six months, including how to communicate and work effectively with colleagues of all different professional backgrounds, ages, and walks of life. They share that they have found opportunities to learn, socialise, and network with experienced senior engineers, enabling them to get a better understanding of the business, the site, and their roles within it.

Looking ahead, Ethan and Jack are both looking at taking on more responsibility as they continue their studies and achieve their qualifications. They both speak effusively about the connected, team-focused culture at px that is driven by strong support from leadership, and the ability to gain practical experience that helps Ethan and Jack to develop their knowledge, so that they can confidently progress with their future studies and careers.

Lee Hind, Maintenance supervisor at px Group says:

"Ethan and Jack have been a fantastic addition to the Saltend site and px Group's apprenticeship scheme marks an invaluable experience for all those involved."

"We know how daunting it is to come out of college and go straight on to site, so we committed to ensuring their learning was a priority for us throughout the Coronavirus disruption. We developed bespoke training and learning programmes for them, and adapted our rotas on site so that they could stay connected to their mentors."

"Not only have the pair been able to gain incredible mentorship and hands-on experience, but the rest of the Saltend team has gone above and beyond to welcome and guide them. I'm extremely proud of them both, as well as being proud to be able to contribute to px Group's longstanding tradition of supporting apprentices."