

National Apprenticeship Week 6 -12 February

Could a career change be on your horizon?

Imerys - the [multinational mineral-mining company](#) with a strong presence in the Southwest - is hiring 10 new apprentices this year, six will be for engineering, three in production and one for lab work.

Current engineering apprentices Josh, Lilia and Dan took time out ahead of [National Apprenticeship Week](#) to talk about what it is like to be in the role, and why they would recommend it to anyone starting out their career or looking for a new challenge.

Josh Giles, in his third year of a mechatronics (mechanical and electrical) apprenticeship with Imerys and Cornwall College, is 30 and so not the traditional apprentice age.

He explains: "I worked in retail for years - Homebase, Argos and Woolacotts - but I lost my job during Covid and it seemed a good time to reassess what I was doing and where my career was going.

"Taking things apart - and putting them back together again - has always been a bit of a hobby on the side, so engineering was always at the back of my mind. I spotted the apprenticeship at Imerys and my first thought was to scroll past, thinking I was a bit too old. But I've learnt you can do an apprenticeship at any age, for almost any profession.

"No two days are the same here. Sometimes we will be carrying out general maintenance and machine checks, sometimes we will be dismantling a broken piece of equipment and rebuilding it - which is always a good challenge.

"You need to have a good understanding of how everything works, which is huge as the clay mining process, from pit to port, involves various different stages and each stage is mechanised - so that's a lot of moving parts to keep running!"





Lilia, 26, is studying the same course as Josh and had a similar realisation during Covid furlough that she was in the wrong career. She explains:

"I was a catering manager - hospitality is tough, long hours and stressful - so I was thinking of other options and I had always been good at fixing things. I picked that up from my dad over the years, and he suggested Imerys.

"The job has been great, anyone thinking about it should just go for it. People wonder what it is like being a woman in a traditionally man's role, but honestly I don't really think about it.

Obviously this work is not for everyone, you get dirty and we're outdoors a lot, but I love the challenge, the variety and knowing I have a solid career path ahead of me."

Dan, 21, followed a more traditional route, coming to the apprenticeship straight from college. He always knew he was interested in engineering:

"I focus on electrical engineering, and I am the only apprentice to do this. Imerys has its own 'grid' as we have solar panels and wind turbines on our land to help generate our own electricity. As a result, we have substations everywhere which need attention, and so working on the 'subs gang' as I do, means I have been able to learn on the UK's largest private energy network - which is an incredible experience.



"I was amazed initially about how much freedom and responsibility I was given - there is always someone watching but generally I get on with the job like any other member of the team. For the first year of the course we were classroom based and that gave us the knowledge we needed to get stuck in, in year two.

"I definitely made the right choice coming here, I feel it would have taken me years to gain this amount of experience anywhere else. The incredible scale of Imerys means there are endless opportunities to learn and diversify. I would recommend it to anyone thinking about engineering."

Imerys has 10 apprenticeships available starting this year in the following areas:

- Six in engineering (three year course)
- Three in production (one / two year course)
- One for lab-based work (one / two year course)

Each course is a blend of college and work-based learning. The jobs will be live in the next few weeks, to ask any questions or for an initial chat, please call 01952 281 924 or email uk.jobs@imerys.com.

Find out more about careers with Imerys, which include everything from operations to geology, scientific lab work to office-based admin roles - visit the company's [website](#) which features live roles.

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