

## Wates FM invests in next generation at Twycross Zoo

4 years ago



Leading facilities management provider, Wates FM, is investing in the future workforce with a year-long apprenticeship programme at its flagship residency contract at Twycross Zoo in Leicestershire.

The apprenticeship programme will see local 17-year-old Abi complete a Level 2 NVQ in facilities management, working full time on site with Wates FM while undertaking online study with training provider, HIT Training.

Becoming an integral part of the Wates FM team, Abi works on a range of tasks, including preventative maintenance, emergency light testing, carpentry, decorating and risk assessments.

Wates FM has been Twycross Zoo's FM partner for the past six years providing a range of hard FM services across the estate, including external landscaping, mechanical and electrical services, maintenance and refurbishment of the zoo's 64 buildings.

Abi commented: "When I left school I really wanted a career where I would be outside, something that would be active and had variety. I visited the government website to see what my options were and found the opportunity with Wates FM. I feel so lucky to have found an apprenticeship in FM; there are so many different parts to the job and it's amazing to work at Twycross Zoo. I'm particularly interested in the electrical side of things and I feel like I'm a really valued member of the team."

Abi was appointed as an apprentice on the Twycross Zoo contract through the Wates Group's Early Careers programme, which offers development opportunities to undergraduates, graduates, school and college leavers.

Wates FM currently has 25 apprentices working across its UK-wide contract portfolio. The business' investment in the future workforce also includes a range of activities through its community investment team, including engagement programmes with schools to promote the sector and help educate young people on the careers available in FM.

James Gregg, Managing Director, Wates FM, commented: "There is no better way to carve a career in facilities management than to have hands-on experience and as leaders in FM, we have a duty to create opportunities to up-skill the next generation. Our work to invest in the workforce of tomorrow extends way beyond our apprenticeship programmes and we actively seek out the best ways to engage young people at all levels of education to shine a light on careers in this diverse and exciting sector. Abi has become a valuable member of the team and is a true example of how mutually beneficial apprenticeships can be to our industry."

As part of its ten-year contract with Twycross Zoo, Wates FM works in partnership with the zoo to support its conservation of endangered species, Wates' contract highlights include the refurbishment of a habitat for the zoo's bonobos, the only group of these great apes in the UK. The Wates team installed new air handling units which provide comfort heating within the enclosure, specialist glass in the day areas and decorated two outside enclosures to support animal welfare.

As part of its growing partnership with Twycross Zoo, Wates has also created new on-site co-located offices from which the Wates and zoo teams are based. Constructed from repurposed modular containers, the lodge is wrapped in a zoo-inspired camouflage print, designed and installed by local social enterprise, Nuneaton Signs.

For more information on the Wates Group's Early Careers programmes, please visit <https://www.wates.co.uk/careers/early-careers/>