

From Apprentice to Works Manager: Max Harris's Journey with PTSG

3 hours ago



PTSG has just opened its new Centre of Excellence in Manchester and launched the biggest apprenticeship recruitment campaign in its history.

But what does an apprenticeship at PTSG actually look like a few years down the line?

To find out, we caught up with someone who's already lived it. Nine years ago, Max Harris joined Trinity Fire & Security Systems – a PTSG Company – as a 21-year-old apprentice. Today, he's Works Manager for the South Coast, leading a team of engineers and overseeing major healthcare sites, including the very hospital where he once worked as a porter.

A late start and a leap of faith

Max Harris was not your typical apprentice. When he joined Trinity in 2017, he was 21 years old, had a 12-month-old baby, and was walking away from a steady income as a porter at his local hospital to take on an apprenticeship paying £9,000 a year.

"I had rent to pay and a baby on the way. But sometimes you have to take a step back to move forward."

The opportunity came about through a conversation at the hospital. The operations manager Max worked under suggested he look into it and put his name forward.



Three years at college with something to prove

Max completed a Level 3 Fire and Security Emergency Systems Technician apprenticeship at Yeovil College, attending on block weeks over three years. He had to resit his maths and English, having not done well in those subjects at school.

Trinity's support during that period was practical as well as personal. When Max needed to complete portfolio units that weren't available in his own region, colleagues arranged for him to travel to Exeter to gain CCTV experience while fellow engineers gave up their time to help him develop.

From service engineer to the works team

After qualifying in 2020, Max became a service engineer, although he had already been carrying out service work during his apprenticeship, even volunteering for the out-of-hours call-out rota to support the team.

His main site was Salisbury Hospital, a large multi-panel Gent networked fire alarm system that he knew inside out, not just technically, but physically, having once worked there as a porter.

In 2022, Max joined the works team, focusing on installation, commissioning and remedial projects. Max completed advanced Gent training and continued working across Salisbury and other major sites.

A promotion he almost talked himself out of

Earlier this year, Max was promoted to Works Manager for the South Coast. He now manages a team of four engineers, overseeing scheduling, resources, documentation and project delivery.

He nearly didn't apply.

"I was nervous. I didn't think I'd get the opportunity," he admits.

It was a senior manager who has supported Max throughout his career, who encouraged him.

“He took me under his wing and he’s there whenever I need him.”

Moving from the tools into management took some adjustment, but it’s also transformed his family life. With two young children and two stepchildren, the move has given him more predictable hours and more time at home.

What keeps him at Trinity

Max has now spent nine years with Trinity, progressing from apprentice to engineer to manager.

“I don’t feel like a number,” he says. “No one looks down on you. Everyone I’ve worked with has supported me. I haven’t felt the need to look anywhere else.”

He is equally clear about what builds lasting client relationships.

“The engineer is the face of the company. If you’re getting on with the client and doing your work to a high standard, the customer stays with you. A long-standing relationship like Salisbury Hospital, that’s built by the engineers they see walking through the door.”

Advice for the 21-year-old Max

Looking back on his journey, he still finds it hard to believe how far he’s come.

“I was an apprentice, and now I’m a works manager. When you actually look back and look in the mirror... yeah, that is a massive achievement, to be honest. I probably don’t give myself enough credit for it.”

As for what’s next?

“I just want to keep climbing. Keep climbing that ladder.”

Max’s story is exactly why PTSG continues to invest in apprenticeships. The opening of the new Centre of Excellence and the launch of the Group’s largest-ever apprenticeship recruitment campaign aren’t simply about filling vacancies. They’re about creating careers.

Every experienced engineer, supervisor and manager started somewhere. For Max, that journey began with one person willing to give him a chance.

Nine years later, he’s leading the next generation.

To find out more about apprenticeship opportunities at PTSG visit <https://careers.ptsg.co.uk/>