

Warming up: Begin a career in heating with Honeywell

Honeywell

You've probably heard the name "Honeywell": it's the UK's leading supplier of domestic temperature, gas and water controls, and on the cutting edge of smart-home innovation. The firm has roughly 130,000 employees around the world and, with the "smart heating" revolution now in full swing, there has never been a better time to join them.

PROCAT offers paid apprenticeships with the temperature-control giant, providing school-leavers with the foundations for a long career that could take them to far-flung places such as Singapore and Dubai.

Connor Beham and Ollie Fitzpatrick are both in the fourth year of an operations and maintenance engineering scheme with Honeywell at PROCAT. They decided against going down the traditional university route. "Uni wasn't really for me, I was better at learning through hands-on," said Connor. "My cousin was in the year above me and he told me all about it. It's nice to earn money and not be in a lot of debt from going to uni."

"You come out of the apprenticeship prepared if you've been connecting, networking," added Ollie. "Whereas with uni, a lot of people find themselves quite lost."



Image: PROCAT Student removing Air-Conditioning unit from its wall fixings.

So how much do the apprentices actually make in the learn-while-you-earn programme? More than you might think: "We haven't been given our fourth-year salary yet, but as third years it was £18,000," said Ollie.

Alongside the salary, Honeywell provides other benefits to its apprentices, including the chance to purchase shares in the company and a company car if they need to travel.

Despite being on the same course, the two fourth-year apprentices are currently getting very different real-world experience. Ollie is working at the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, looking after the security cameras, access control points and sensors outside West Ham's newly converted London Stadium. Connor, on the other hand, is installing the heating, ventilation and air conditioning in a new law and business building at the University of Kent.

These hands-on skills mean they're both resolved about the future – and how the scheme will help them achieve their aims. "Each year they have a meeting with old Honeywell apprentices, and discuss how they've climbed the ladder – there's the guy running the Nordic sites who was an apprentice," said Connor. "We've got an apprentice that finished last year, he's now our project manager."

Ollie is also impressed with how committed Honeywell is to its apprentices: "It's not 'come and get an apprenticeship, and we'll see if we'll employ you'. It's 'if you're doing a good job, okay, we'll line you up to be here.'"

So what does the immediate future hold for Ollie and Connor? "We're both already getting offered positions at Honeywell after our apprenticeship."