

# Learn by heart

## Mark Moorcroft, Field Service Engineer, Tunstall Healthcare

*Tunstall's apprenticeship scheme offers opportunities across the business, from IT to HR and finance. Mark Moorcroft tells us about his journey from apprentice to fully qualified Field Service Engineer and his passion for the job.*

Before I began my apprenticeship at Tunstall I was working as a technician in a factory helping the engineers there, and that led to me deciding to develop my knowledge and become an engineer myself. The apprenticeship at Tunstall was perfect as it combined a day at college with four days working in the field, so it blended different methods of learning.

### **Upskilling**

I was given a mentor for two years. I shadowed at first and then gradually started to complete jobs under his supervision. At the same time, we also have to complete an extensive range of specialist training courses, not just technical, but also things like health and safety and how we interact with customers and service users. As I gained experience, I started to move from telecare equipment like Lifelines in people's homes, to then working on scheme equipment like Communicall. The apprenticeship was three years in total, so in my final year I started to work with different engineers each week to broaden my knowledge; each one taught me something new. The apprenticeship is great because it goes at your own pace; it's only when you're qualified and your mentor and area manager are confident that you have the skills to complete jobs to Tunstall's very high standards that you can work unsupervised.

### **Moving up**

Once my apprenticeship was complete and I'd passed the relevant exams, I applied for a position as a Field Service Engineer and was thankfully successful and began in September 2022. The role is really varied; we maintain everything from community alarms to warden call systems, plus testing for linked equipment such as access control, fire panels and emergency lighting. Our Customer Satisfaction Centre sends us our jobs through each morning and we can then plan our day, taking into account the Service Level Agreements we need to meet for that customer and the most effective route between locations. The stock we carry is profiled to the area we cover, and we have a system that automatically replenishes anything we use and gives us rapid delivery on any parts we don't carry as standard.

With Tunstall's scheme equipment in particular, it's not that unusual to see systems that are up to 30 years old, although less so these days as customers are investing to make the most of the digital transition. We also maintain and fix third party equipment, so the breadth and depth of specialist knowledge we have to have is vast. Plus, Tunstall is continually innovating and bringing out new products and services that we need to look after. That also means I'm learning all the time, which I love.

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**Teamwork**

You get to know the customers and other engineers in your area. Even though the job is field based, we all support each other and work as a team, sharing advice and information and helping each other. We also have regular area meetings every couple of months where we get updates about the business and catch up, and there's an online platform where the whole engineering team can ask questions or feedback.

**People person**

My favourite part of the job is interacting with customers and service users. Because we operate in the same area, except in on call hours when the region is wider, you get to know people and build a really good working relationship with them. Everyone's different and we're trained to take account of various situations and be consistently courteous and professional. Plus our recruitment process means colleagues are chosen for softer skills and personality as well as experience and knowledge. I'm always conscious that I'm working in people's homes on equipment that is so vital to them, and we never leave a service user unprotected. The 'Service' part of my job title is just as important as the word 'Engineer'; I represent Tunstall and its values, and helping people to feel safe and supported is what our company is all about.

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