

We all believe Lauren is deserving of the Apprentice of the Year award, she is an asset to our team and exhibits commitment to quality in carrying out day-to-day tasks. Lauren has a lot of additional responsibility and strives towards improving our services. Lauren is productive and willing to take initiative, she is able to identify efficiencies and cost savings that work towards Aster's vision of ensuring everyone has a home.

Lauren is consistently committed and dependable; she has excelled in her role supporting not only the Contact Centre but also the repairs and maintenance department as a whole.

As the months have passed, Lauren has been leaps and bounds ahead of her NVQ programme, working towards her Customer Services qualification, she is currently working 5 months ahead at 90% complete and utilises her time well. Lauren passed her Maths and English Key Skills with flying colours and is being encouraged to progress onto Level 2 already.

It is her use of time management that has enabled her to get this done, and excel within the call centre, being the person to turn to if you need help in getting a job done on time. Her dedication to taking calls and delivering great customer service has given her such confidence, as she is more willing to learn and take on new roles. Overall, Lauren has progressed brilliantly throughout her NVQ and she has settled in to the team. Although nervous at first, Lauren's confidence has grown and she handles calls extremely well.

Besides her NVQ, Lauren has been doing a variety of training throughout the Contact Centre and Aster Group. Following her completing our customer services training plan, she has developed new skills and now holds a vast knowledge and expertise in our sector. The Apprentice position is unique in the way that Lauren is the only person that is multi-skilled across all roles within the Contact Centre – such as Repairs and Maintenance, Administration and Planning.

In order to Multi-skill herself, Lauren took the initiative in arranging various training activities such as;

Surveyor job shadowing – Lauren completed inspections with our Wiltshire surveyor. From this, Lauren has learnt more about the condensation and mould process, including how to identify this and what questions she could use to successfully diagnose over the phone – she uses this information to educate our customers in changing their routine daily activity to reduce condensation.

Housing Officer shadowing – Together Lauren joined the Neighbourhood Team and completed estate inspections and visited customers with issues and queries. This has helped Lauren in her role as she now has a better understanding of neighbourhoods and estates and is able to assist with calls that are more complex, supporting other members of the Team with these enquiries.

Heating Team shadowing – Lauren has completed office based training with the heating services team to learn about regulatory and legal compliance that Aster as a landlord have to meet and comply with, and how what we do affects their work load. Lauren was able to see how to plan and accommodate emergencies, and was able to see the full process of a job logged through to being completed. Lauren also spent some time out of the office with one of the engineers, so that she could see how the repairs and servicing contracts are delivered in person.

In addition to her Contact Centre training plan and her NVQ, Lauren has attended a number of training courses, through our Academy, which have helped her develop further.

Lauren attended a Minutes and Meetings course – She now holds the skills required to effectively take minutes for meetings, which she regularly puts into practise and understands the importance of accuracy with this task. Lauren has received a recognised certificate for this course.

Lauren attended the asbestos awareness course. This covered the legal compliance and health and safety practices associated with working with asbestos. It also covered how to identify and

handle these types of repairs over the phones, this information is so valuable towards the safety of our tradesman and contractors.

On a daily basis, Lauren has a variety of tasks to uphold and gets these done with a positive attitude towards the work and the responsibilities surrounding them. Her colleagues and customers recognise the quality of the service she delivers as she receives compliments and has recently been awarded employee of the month. Lauren serves as a role model for others.

Lauren completes a daily SOR sweep - this includes checking all of the codes used to raise jobs from the previous day, whilst also checking the correct budgets codes have been selected. This assists the team leaders towards improving compliance of cost and time accuracy of repairs.

Besides this, Lauren does a weekly housekeeping task to chase out of target jobs over 30 days old, to ensure these are booked in or completed down; this helps the operations team in achieving their KPI figures and ensures accuracy with reporting. This also helps to ensure customers have jobs booked within target and follow-ons are completed within a reasonable time too. This reduces traffic into the contact centre where customers would have been chasing repairs.

Lauren is our dedicated customer champion. This means she receives all negative commentary monthly from the back of our satisfaction surveys. She collates all the feedback and takes appropriate action on each one, either resolving the issue or escalating it. Lauren returns this to the management and complaints teams after investigation to discuss trends and suggesting ways we can learn and adapt to improve the way we work.

Lauren exhibits exemplary service and quality in her daily work. She always delivers positive contribution to discussions, 1-1's and Meetings.

We have encouraged Lauren to make the most of her remaining time as a call centre apprentice, and get as much training and experience as she can to secure a permanent customer service role.

Lauren's confidence has really built up; she was extremely nervous and timid when she joined our team and was not confident in decision making on calls. Lauren is now able to use her own judgement and experience to deal with difficult customers and complex situations in this role.

When listening in on her calls, she is polite and professional on the phone and asks good questions to diagnose repairs. Lauren always achieves 90% + on her calls audit scores.

The company has strict checks for data protection and customer verification when disclosing personal information, Lauren's attention to detail ensures that all of her calls comply.

Overall, Lauren is a keen learner and never afraid to ask questions to better herself. She has pushed herself to develop her skills, knowledge and confidence even when this has taken her out of her comfort zone.

So far, in her apprenticeship role, Lauren has learned a great deal, she provides cover on the phone lines regularly and takes on additional responsibilities. Both of these work towards improving our services and play a vital role. We have no doubt Lauren will be a permanent member of our team, and will go far. Lauren has a great understanding of the company's aims and ambitions and she understands the role she plays in working towards achieving them as a team.

With very little work experience and no knowledge of the housing or repairs sector Lauren has exceeded all expectations and achieved so much since joining us. She has developed professionally and personally and is a real asset to our team and our company as a whole.

It is clear that Lauren has a bright future within our company and this award would be the recognition that she well deserves.