

March 5, 2018

Future plumbers in Northern Ireland urged to choose high-quality training, not 'rogue trainers' during National Apprenticeship Week

Would-be plumbers in Northern Ireland are being urged to kick start their career with high-quality training courses and to steer clear of 'rogue trainers'.

With National Apprenticeship Week 2018 underway, the national plumbing register WaterSafe is advising anyone considering a career in plumbing to choose industry-approved qualifications – to ensure they get the right training and keep customers' drinking water safe.

WaterSafe is a national, free online service which lists plumbers who are trained in the Water Fittings Regulations and Byelaws and is backed by all UK water companies, including Northern Ireland Water.

The organisation is keen to stress that people hoping to become plumbers should not waste their money with rogue trainers offering fast-track courses which are not recognised by the industry.

WaterSafe says it takes years to become a properly qualified plumber with both practical on-site experience and classroom theory. In Northern Ireland, trainee plumbers need to serve a four-year apprenticeship to gain a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 3 in plumbing. Funding is provided from the Department for the Economy.

People simply looking for a quick career fix will miss out on key skills and may unwittingly put their customers at risk if they cannot guarantee a safe water supply.

Chris Sneath, Chairman of WaterSafe, said: "Becoming a plumber and a craftsman is a fantastic career choice and doing the job well requires those in our trade to be highly skilled.

"It does take some years to learn both the practical and technical skills and I would urge prospective trainees to take proper advice before they choose a course.

"Fundamentally, if you receive the right training you will provide your customers with a good, safe and reliable service and have a rewarding career in the industry. If you have satisfied customers they will provide you with on-going work throughout your career."

Poor training can be doubly costly – it can mean breaching consumer legislation and potential investigations by trading standards, and also pose a risk to the safety of customers.

Trainee plumbers are advised to look at the list of approved qualifications to qualify as a WaterSafe-approved plumber online at watersafe.org.uk/becomeaplumber.

Anyone interested in a career in plumbing in Northern Ireland can also look at the SNIPEF (The Scottish & Northern Ireland Plumbing Employers' Federation) website at becomeaplumber.com.



National Apprenticeship week celebrates the success of apprenticeships for individuals, businesses, communities and the wider economy, while encouraging others to choose the training programmes as a pathway to a great career.

National Apprenticeship Week 2018 runs from March 5 to 9.