

March 5, 2018

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

Future plumbers are being urged to kick start their career with high-quality training courses and to steer clear of 'rogue trainers'.

With National Apprenticeship Week underway, the national plumbing register WaterSafe is advising anyone considering a career in plumbing to stay away from fast-track courses, which can be only a few weeks, and instead work towards a Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) Level 3.

It takes four years to complete the Modern Apprenticeship in Domestic Plumbing & Heating SVQ Level 3, which is an employer-led scheme and managed by SNIPEF (The Scottish & Northern Ireland Plumbing Employers' Federation.)

SNIPEF is a member of the UK WaterSafe plumbing register, which is backed by all the UK water companies, including Scottish Water, and lists approved plumbers who are qualified in the Water Fittings Regulations and Byelaws.

With the national focus on Apprenticeship Week, 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 fully qualified plumber with both practical on-site experience and classroom theory. People simply looking for a quick career fix will miss out on key skills and may end up unwittingly putting 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.

Candidates for the Scottish apprenticeship are expected to have a minimum of four National 4 qualifications at general level and are required to pass the industry approved BPEC Aptitude & Selection Test.



As part of Apprenticeship Week, which runs from March 5 to 9, apprentices are being urged to sign up to SNIPEF Training Services Ltd which benefits from government funding from Skills Development Scotland (SDS).

Trainee plumbers who want to start on the training programme need to be employed and their employer must agree to recruit them as an 'employee status plumbing apprentice' to qualify for the scheme.

Plumbing apprentices in Scotland are also given a dedicated regional advisor to monitor their progress and meet regularly with them, their employer, and college or training centre.

Anyone interested in a career in plumbing is advised to look at the WaterSafe website at watersafe.org.uk/becomeaplumber before signing up for a course. They can also find the list of qualifications which are required for WaterSafe approval.

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.