

## **Job Spotlight prepared for Contract Journal**

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### **Tom Iles graduate trainee contract supervisor, White Horse Contractors**

1. What's it like working as a graduate trainee contract supervisor at White Horse Contractors?

I work under a contract manager, Lloyd Jones, a senior contract manager who has been with White Horse Contractors for over 30 years. On a day-to-day basis I provide support to the contract manager, while learning how to run a contract. This means I get to go out and meet clients and handle some contracts myself.

2. What's the best thing about working as a Contract Supervisor?

Developing my experience and learning new skills, because this will help me to move up the ranks. Amongst these, the best skills learnt are those involved in solving problems and overcoming challenges. Of course, there's the people-element to the business too, and I enjoy meeting clients and working with our own staff.

3. And the worst?

Perhaps one of the most frustrating elements of this graduate trainee role is being the most inexperienced person in the office. This means I have to turn to others for solutions and can't always have answers at my fingertips. Something only time, and a lot of questions, will help to overcome. However, with a strong team ethos in place, there's always someone to turn to for help and guidance.

4. What sort of person is best suited to this job?

I think you need to be able to get along with a variety of different people. For example from a private landowner or professional sports club to a major contractor, so interpersonal skills are very important. Equally I've found a practical knowledge does help. I come from a farming background so I have an understanding of machinery and how weather conditions can affect work and I've certainly been able to apply this to my role.

5. What qualifications do you need?

I started with a National Diploma in Sports Turf, while I was working at a golf course. I wanted to take this further so I decided to do an honours degree in Agriculture and

Conservation. It was while on work experience with White Horse Contractors, as part of my degree, that I secured the job here. Now I am taking a contract supervisor's NVQ as part of my ongoing professional development.

6. Do many women work in the sector?

There are a number of women at White Horse Contractors, mainly working in administration, accounts and the CAD studio. However, the roles that require you to spend time on site do tend to be more male-dominated, which is a historical thing.

7. Describe a typical day on site...

I met a client on site this morning. This involved discussing and assessing the conditions, ensuring all the right materials had been ordered and that the team had the right plans in place to carry out the work. I needed to check they had all the facilities they needed, and ensure that everyone was inducted. Typically I would spend about two hours on any one site, and at busy times I can find myself out on site for around six or seven jobs a week.

8. What was your last/favourite job?

I joined White Horse Contractors directly from university. In my first year with White Horse I had the opportunity to work alongside a contract manager as sub-contractor to Murphy Pipelines on the Brecon-Tirley Transco gas link.

9. What's the typical starting salary for graduates?

Around £19 - £20,000.

10. What can you expect after 10 years?

I would hope to earn around £35 - £40,000 in ten years' time.

11. What's a typical career path?

From a graduate trainee position the usual career path is to move on to become a contract supervisor, then contract manager, and then on to more senior roles which command higher rewards and greater responsibilities.

For more information on working at White Horse Contractors call 01865 736272.

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