



NEWS RELEASE – 19 October 2017

Hills recruits quarry industry's first MPO apprentice

Hills Quarry Products has recruited the UK quarry industry's first mobile and static plant operator (MPO) apprentice.

Aidan Jeffreys, who is based at Hills' Shorncote Quarry near Cirencester, began the MPO apprenticeship in September and is due to complete his studies in December 2018 with Level 2 Diplomas in both Plant and Processing Operations.

The number of young people joining the quarrying industry has significantly declined over the years and statistics show that just 17 percent of the quarry workforce is aged between 18-34; and the average age of those in quarry-related roles is 55*.



Apprentice Aidan Jeffreys and operations manager Peter Steffens

Hills actively targeted school leavers and existing college students and attended a number of events at local colleges to showcase the career opportunities available within the industry including this new apprenticeship scheme. Interested candidates were then invited to spend a day at a working quarry to see for themselves the type of work they would be expected to undertake and the conditions in which they would be working. On site they also had the opportunity to meet up with potential future colleagues who shared their experiences of working in the quarry industry.

Reflecting upon his new role, Aidan said: "I am really enjoying my time at Hills. I have been given more responsibility than I have had before and everyone has been helpful, patient and friendly. It is a great environment to be in."

Aidan spends the majority of his working week undertaking practical based learning, which includes operating mobile and static plant, and the remainder of his time is spent with external trainers and mentors learning the more theoretical requirements for the role.

Peter Andrew, Group director Hills Quarry Products, said: "We are delighted to have Aidan on board; he has settled in extremely well and has shown a real flair for the tasks he has been set and is coping well with the pressures of learning whilst training."

Peter continued: "This is a real achievement for Hills and the quarrying industry. Hopefully this will set a benchmark and Aidan will be the first of many to join Hills as an apprentice."

Anyone interested in pursuing an apprenticeship can contact the Hills Group on telephone 01793 781196 or email info@hills-group.co.uk.

*source MPQC - <http://www.mpfutures.co.uk/news/inspiring-futures-coming-soon/>



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Notes to editors:

Hills Quarry Products specialises in the production and supply of quarry products and ready-mixed concrete to the construction and agricultural sectors. It is a dynamic regional business which, while centred on Wiltshire, has stretched its boundaries into neighbouring areas to become one of the region's largest suppliers. Hills Quarry Products is a wholly owned subsidiary of The Hills Group Limited, a privately owned family company established in 1900. www.hills-quarry.co.uk

The **Mineral Processing Mobile and Static Plant Operator – Aggregates Apprenticeship (Level 2)** was developed by MPQC using the criteria identified by Hills Quarry Products and other industry leaders.

The apprenticeship will provide Aidan with the skills required to be a successfully qualified Mobile Plant Operative. As part of his apprenticeship Aidan must complete the following assessments: competency in operations, health and safety, sustainability, effective communications, product knowledge, maintenance techniques, planning and organising Work, professional judgement, commitment to code of ethics, CPD, commitment to equality and diversity, and accepting responsibility.

External trainers will provide theoretical training including: IOSH, risk assessment and SSOW, wheeled loading shovel (novice), isolation and lock-out of machinery, pre-start/daily inspections, hazardous substances and dust, geotechnical awareness and manual handling.

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