

Bob Bryce – National Apprenticeship Week



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At 76 years old, most people would have retirement well in their sights, but Bob Bryce is not only still working, but learning new skills too. He's sharing his story for #NationalApprenticeshipWeek.

"I joined the railway on 7th November 1999 and my biggest regret is that I didn't do it sooner! It's the best job I've ever had, which is why I want to keep working as long as possible.

"I'm a Thameslink passenger host and team leader based at Luton station and I'm currently doing a Level 3 Supervisor apprenticeship so that I can improve my skills even further. I was hesitant to do the apprenticeship at first because of my age – I left school over 60 years ago without any qualifications! It's been hard to get back into the routine of learning again.

"In order to do the apprenticeship, I needed to have the equivalent of GCSEs in maths and English, which I didn't have because they didn't exist when I was at school! I got the qualifications in 2019 and straight after that, started my apprenticeship. When I complete my course, I'll have a Level 3 apprenticeship, which is the same as an A Level.

"I was really enjoying the physical lessons where you learn as part of the group but because of the pandemic everything had to switch to becoming virtual, which was another challenge I had to overcome. Although Covid-19 has delayed things, I'm on the home straight now with just one exam left to go. I think I must be the oldest apprentice in the UK!

"If I'd had my time again, I would've got a job on the railway as soon as I could. It wasn't until I was 55 that I found my dream career, this was after trying a variety of roles from the county council and local printing company to office admin. I've also experienced dips of unemployment throughout my career but it just goes to show you should never give up.

"In my opinion, rail is a job for life and I'm grateful for the opportunity to learn new things at my age. I don't want to retire anytime soon! I would encourage anyone in later life to consider an apprenticeship because you're never too old to learn something new."