



Hampshire County Council



Hampshire Futures Skills & Participation



Paving The Way

Olumayowa is 40 and lives in Aldershot, with her partner, and has a 9-year-old daughter. After completing her training to become an electrical engineer in Nigeria, Olu went to Sheffield University to do a Master's degree in control systems engineering. She then got on to the graduate programme at Siemens UK and worked on steam turbines, transmission and distribution, and ended up at Frimley working on wind turbines. She was made redundant in 2019 and by July 2021, having not found a new job, decided to retrain as an electrician. Olu reasoned that having a trade would mean she would always be able to find work, and she started an electrical domestic installer NVQ level 3 course.

While she was training, Olu started claiming Universal Credit and it was at a meeting with her work coach at the Job Centre that she heard about the CSCS card course. She realised she would need it as a tradesperson, and it seemed like a good opportunity to get the card at this stage. So, she joined a CSCS card course in November 2021 at Aldershot College.



The course covered health and safety in construction, a lot of which Olu was familiar with already from her time working at Siemens. "Training in a small group made it very cosy – there were people with site experience who shared useful things as each topic came up. It helped me because it gave me insights into what I might experience onsite and helped me prepare myself for this job." Olu passed the level 1 qualification with flying colours and went on to pass the CSCS touchscreen test as well.

"The training helped me prepare myself for this job."



Olu helped tile this roof



Olu's job involves keeping the site tidy.



When a house is finished, Olu cleans it ready for sale.

Olu then decided it would be a good idea to get some site experience and accepted a role as site labourer on a Berkeley Homes site in Cranleigh, through the agency Konnect Recruit. Olu said: "I wanted to get back out to work and do something productive. I'm still studying to become an electrician and because of that, I'm meant to work Tuesday to Friday. I study on Mondays." However, because the site is busy, Olu often finds herself working on a Saturday as well. "I'm glad to be contributing something in my working life again."

Olu has noticed how hard it is for the site to find labourers, but the job suits her. "I like helping out. The first week was hard on my body but there's no need for a gym membership with this job! I can do 15,000 steps a day easily." Olu has enjoyed the variety involved in the role – her day-to-day tasks involve keeping the site tidy and she had a chance to experience lots of other activities, such as roof tiling, putting up fencing and even floor screeding. "I like to help where I'm needed," said Olu, "and I can turn my hand to many things."

"There's no need for a gym membership with this job – I can do 15,000 steps a day easily!"

Despite starting in the middle of winter, Olu hasn't let the wintry weather put her off. "Once you start moving about you forget about it. And there are lots of coffees on site!" Unusually Olu isn't the only woman on site -there is another woman working as a forklift driver. "She's older than me, and more experienced." Olu says the course she did has made a difference to her life: "Getting the CSCS card enabled me to get this job and because of that I've been exposed to a different world – I've learned a lot. I might well be working in another sector now if I hadn't got the CSCs card – and I don't think it would be as well paid!"

Olu's line manager, Andy Schofield, is delighted with her work. "Olu's a great asset to our team – she works hard, she's always on time, she asks good questions and she's fitted in really well. We hope we can keep her!"

"I like to help where I'm needed, and I can turn my hand to many things."

Olu is still applying for jobs in her field of engineering, but labouring is a good stopgap for her. She is building her experience all the time and is contracted to work at the site until April. She's also had about 10 other job offers whilst working for the agency. All in all, life is looking good for Olu and her family.