

Life under lockdown as an apprentice

Macauley shares his experience so far...

Keeping people connected

Times like the present, is when people rely on connectivity even more than normal. With the majority of people working remotely or from home, they need to stay connected and informed. My job is to ensure this is a seamless experience.

Being a key worker in lockdown

It's been, what feels like an eternity under "lockdown", however being a key worker has been keeping me occupied and busy. I knew that even though the government told people to "Stay Home", I could not as there is no working from home in my line of work. My field engineer colleagues and I, continue to keep the nation connected, no matter what!

The government classified our company, and in particular 'Field Engineers', as key workers. I am the boots on the ground. My role requires me to keep the nations TV, Radio and other networks operational. I travel around my region, the North East, and respond, reactively, to any faults that occur on our systems. This can range from a simple reboot to a full high voltage re-wire of a complex transmitter. There is no working from home for me!

No working from home in my line of work

When the "lockdown" measures were put in place, at first, I felt very anxious as to what they meant and how life would change. Speaking to my family and friends it became apparent that they felt the same. I knew that even though the government told people to "Stay Home", I could not as there is no working from home in my line of work.

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I wasn't really scared or phased by having to leave the house because I knew the work I was doing was vital and making life just that little bit easier for everyone who could stay at home, providing them with the entertainment and connectivity they needed.



Being prepared

Our company is one of the best prepared at being resilient. Every year we spend at least a week preparing and testing our disaster recovery systems. Normally this is a test, but this time, on March 16th, it was for real. Our plans and training kicked into action. Ranging from the obvious, working from home with laptops and phones made available, to full disaster recovery transmitters being tested and deployed, we are prepared for it all!

Unprecedented situation

As this unprecedented situation unfolds, our contingency planning and preparing continues. Our management board meet daily to react to government advice, and implement procedures and guidelines to assist us, but with emphasis on our own wellbeing as well as our family's health. When at work, I have been feeling very safe. I normally work alone, in my own vehicle, with my own tools and laptop phone etc. so it was very easy to implement social distancing!

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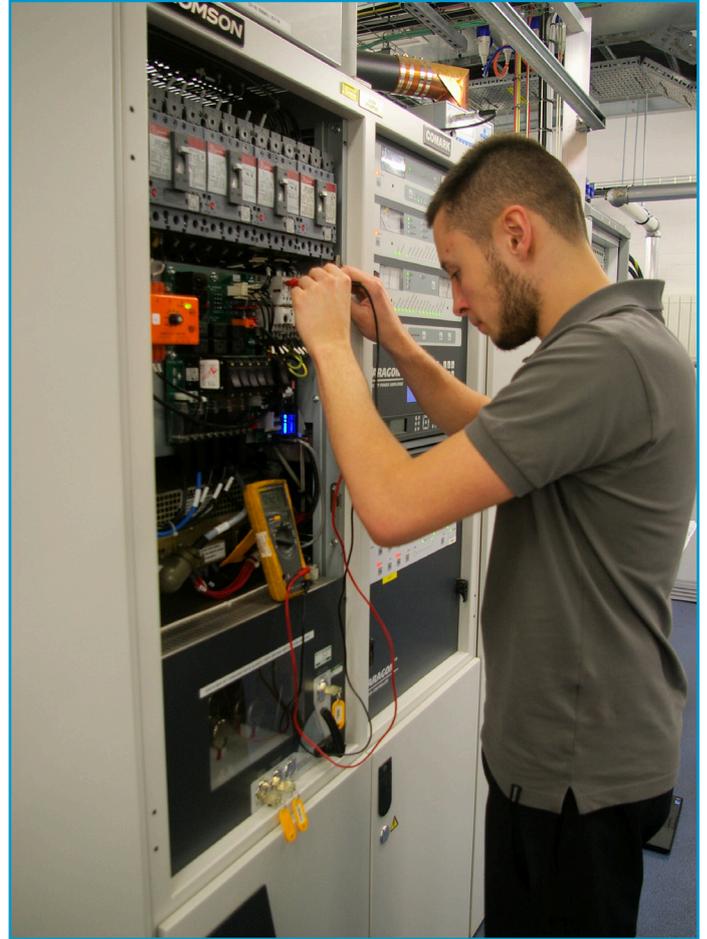
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This means I avoid all public transport which again limits my exposure to the virus. I was given face masks antibacterial hand gel and antiviral wipes so I was well stocked up on PPE.

What has changed?

What has changed a lot, is our prioritisation of our work. We have taken the decision to prioritise critical services to account for reduced staffing levels due to the virus. We have also devised new ways of working regarding how to attend two man jobs that require two people for safety reasons.

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Relaxing at home

With all that pressure of keeping the nation connected and entertained, and with the extra precautions and procedures we have had to implement, I have found it a nice relief to come home and relax. I have just bought my own house, so I have been keeping very busy by painting and decorating. I have found it very nice to just sometimes switch the news off, put the paint brush down and go chill in the sunshine in the garden! Till we do it all again tomorrow...

