

Title: **Case Study  
Engineering & Manufacturing  
in Gloucestershire**

**Chris Blinman** works as a design engineer with a local company. His job is to design components on computer, which are then manufactured and fitted together.

“I have been interested in engineering from a very early age,” he says. “I was always messing about with Meccano and Lego. Then as I got older it was cars and motorbikes, tinkering about and helping my dad.”

Chris, aged 22, went to Sir Thomas Rich’s school in Gloucester. After taking GCSEs he went on to do AS levels. He considered going to university to study engineering, but decided to take an apprenticeship instead.

“I decided to take the apprenticeship route because it can still lead to a degree,” he says.

When a vacancy came up for an Advanced Apprenticeship at an engineering company, SPP Pumps in Coleford, Forest of Dean, he applied and was taken on.

Chris spent his first year at Gloucestershire College, where he did an NVQ in Performing Engineering Operations.

He also started a BTEC National Certificate in Basic Engineering Training Parts 1 & 2 and took Level 2 Key Skills. He spent four days a week in the workshop learning hands-on skills and then a day of theory.

Then from his second year he was full time in the job. He finished his National Certificate and then completed a Higher National Certificate (HNC) in Mechanical Engineering.

“My company is really good on training,” he says. “I have gained experience in every department, from design engineering to working on the shop floor as a fitter and machinist, through the final product inspection to dispatch and shipping.”

He can now either take a Higher National Diploma – or start a part-time degree at the University of the West of England. “From there hopefully I’ll become a Chartered Mechanical Engineer,” he says.