



## Press release

Thursday 28 January 2010

### **WATES BUILDS BETTER FUTURES IN MEXBOROUGH**

Doncaster's long-term unemployed were given a career kick start in construction last week as a national training scheme was introduced in Mexborough and culminated in the refurbishment of a drugs rehabilitation centre.

Ten of Mexborough's over 25s who have been struggling to get back into work completed the national Building Futures scheme which was run by Wates Living Space in partnership with St. Leger Homes of Doncaster – the organisation that manages around 21,000 homes for Doncaster Council. The week-long programme saw them learn a variety of practical construction skills including joinery, brickwork, electrical work and they have also visited a building site to see for themselves the inner workings of construction.

These skills were then put to the test as the participants improved and enhanced The Depot in Mexborough - an invaluable drugs rehabilitation centre and important community asset. They were rewarded with official Building Futures certification which will enable them to go on to achieve industry-recognised qualifications. The course ultimately aims to provide jobseekers and ex-offenders with the skills and motivation to return to work.

Richard Young who completed the Building Futures course said: "When I was offered the opportunity to learn new skills on a course that would ultimately lead to a new career I was over the moon. This is the kick start I needed. I've learnt a lot this week and it obviously stuck because I was able to show off my new skills when we refurbished The Depot. I'm going to use them to get my CSCS qualification which Wates and St Leger have booked me onto – when I have that I can officially work for a contractor and on a building site."

Dave Wilkinson from St Leger Homes commented: "The lads should be really proud of themselves. They have worked really hard and transformed this centre. I believe they thoroughly enjoyed doing this and good luck to them in their future careers."

Joanne Jamieson, Wates Living Space Business Unit Director said: "As a significant employer in Doncaster and throughout Yorkshire, we are constantly looking for ways to go beyond building and invest in the communities in which we work. Our Building Futures programme does exactly that and I am so pleased we have been able to work with St Leger Homes on delivering this innovative training course and make a real difference to the lives of these Mexborough residents. They've obviously done a great job on The Depot so I am sure glittering construction careers await them!"

Wates Living Space is working with St Leger Homes on a £300m programme investing in Doncaster's council homes. Homes can receive new kitchens, bathrooms, rewiring, central heating and much more.

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**For further information please contact Lisa Margis on 0161 236 0008 or 07748 301 005**

**Notes to Editors**

Wates is one of the UK's largest family-owned construction services and development companies. Established in 1897, it remains privately owned by the Wates Family. Wates employs more than 2,200 people and had a turnover of £1,009 million in 2008.

Part of the family owned Wates Group, Wates Living Space is one of the UK's leading affordable housing contractors, working with RSLs and ALMOs we build or refurbish in the region of 26,000 homes for residents each year through the New Build and decent homes programme.

Wates Living Space was awarded Contractor of the Year at the Housing Excellence Awards and Sustainable Contractor of the Year at the Inside Housing Sustainable Housing Awards in 2009.