



MEDIA RELEASE

2nd July 2010

**Wates “Changing Paths” scheme aims to reduce UK’s annual
£11 billion re-offending costs**

Changing Paths, a scheme designed to help ex-offenders back into the workplace, has become its own independent Community Interest Company (CIC) and registered charity. Originally established by the Wates Group, Changing Paths’ new status as an independent organisation will enable the scheme to grow and offer even more training and work opportunities for ex-offenders with a growing number of organisations, across a broad range of sectors. “Around 58% of ex-offenders reoffend within two years of leaving prison and this is often directly linked to an inability to gain employment.” said Chris Booton, Strategic Alliance Director from Wates, “We strongly believe there is bigger role for companies and communities to play in supporting ex-offenders back into employment. As a principle sponsor of the Changing Paths programme, our aim is not only to provide opportunities within Wates but to engage our clients in the scheme and help Changing Paths to grow as its own entity.”

Initially established by Wates as a charitable scheme, Changing Paths has been successful in providing practical and life skills training, as well as future jobs and career opportunities for a number of ex-offenders returning to the workplace.

“Currently three quarters of those leaving prison do not have a job to go to on release,” added Michael Maldon from Changing Paths. “Re-offending costs the UK over £11 billion per year. Our scheme helps not only reduce re-offending, but provides companies with highly skilled and motivated employees that in our experience have gone on to be significant assets to those organisations.”*

If you would like to be involved in the Changing Paths Schemes please contact Michael Maldon at Changing Paths Tel: 07825 061684 or Email: Michael.Maldon@wates.co.uk.

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For further information please contact Sarah Mylroie at the Madano Partnership on Tel: 020 7593 4000 or Email: Sarah.Mylroie@madano.co.uk

*All figures are quoted from the ‘High Hopes: Supporting ex-prisoners in their lives after prison’ report produced by the Department for Work and Pensions, July 2008

Notes to Editors

Wates

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 over 2000 people and had a turnover of £945 million in 2009.

The company works across a range of sectors, including education, prisons, affordable housing, retail fit out and refurbishment, office interiors, land development and commercial buildings.

Wates has three areas of Corporate Responsibility focus: to reduce the impact of CO2 emissions from our activities; Target Zero of eliminating all non-hazardous waste to landfill by 2010; and boosting skills and employability in areas of most need. Wates was awarded Gold status in the Business in the Community Responsible Business index in 2009.

Safety is a top priority within the Wates Group, and the excellent safety record has resulted in RoSPA Gold Awards for Occupational Safety and the British Safety Council Awards for the past seven years.

Wates was recognised externally in a variety of ways during the year including:

Major Contractor of the Year by Building Magazine
RoSPA gold medal for safety and health for the seventh year in succession
Housing Excellence and Sustainable Contractor of the Year awards
Two CIOB gold awards for Construction Manager of the Year

Changing Paths

Changing Paths is an Independent Community Interest Company (CIC) originally set up by the Wates group to help the resettlement of offenders into sustainable employment within the construction industry.

Only those ex-offenders who have already proven themselves within the prison system are eligible to apply for the scheme through prison advertisements. The skills and needs are then assessed to ensure a bespoke path can be developed for them.

Programmes include new training opportunities and work experience placements before full time employment is taken up by the employer. This allows all parties to understand what is involved in their roles and ensure the best people are matched with each company.

Wates remains a principal sponsor through its charitable programme, Wates Giving.