

MEDIA RELEASE

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## **Wates Living Space Wins TPAS Connecting People Award**

Leading affordable housing contractor, Wates Living Space, has scooped the award for Best Practice in the Community at the Midlands Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) Connecting People annual awards ceremony in Solihull.

The accolade was presented to Tom Langley, Business Director for the Building Futures programme, which gives jobseekers an opportunity to improve their employment prospects and is funded by the Wates Family Enterprise Trust.

The programme was developed to help the long term unemployed struggling to find work due to age, lack of qualifications or difficulties in returning to work. It aims to teach participants about different trades within the construction industry and undertake construction skills training to help them secure a job..

Phil Sperring, Midlands Business Unit Director for Wates Living Space said: "Building Futures is a fantastic scheme, not just because it gives people new skills, but because it inspires them to learn new things, explore new possibilities and to have confidence in their ability to succeed.

"We have found it particularly successful in the West Midlands, as we've been able to help those struggling to find work, and the wider community too."

The Wates Group aims to help 500 unemployed people through the Building Futures course by 2012, and for 50 per cent of those to find employment or progress into further education or training. Already more than 250 participants have completed the programme, with 67 per cent having moved into employment, education or training.

As part of the Building Futures programme, Wates Living Space arranges trade taster days, site visits, health and safety training, skills assessment and mentoring on personal development and interview skills. The programmes conclude with a community day where participants use their newly acquired skills to improve a community facility or assist with a community project in their area. The programme's

direct contribution to local communities equates to in excess of 2,500 hours volunteered to projects in deprived areas.

## **ENDS**

For further information about Wates Living Space and Wates Giving please contact Victoria Walker at Beattie Communications on 0844 8425270 or 07876 548498 or email [wates@beattiegrou.com](mailto:wates@beattiegrou.com)

## **Editors Notes**

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 2,000 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 20,000 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 Social Housing Contractor of the Year at Inside Housing Sustainable Housing awards in 2009

Wates Giving is a charitable programme set up by the Wates family owners of the Wates Group to support projects that benefit communities for the long-term. All projects are proposed and championed by Wates Group employees. Since Wates Giving was launched in 2008 over £1.9m has been committed to projects across the UK.

[www.wates.co.uk](http://www.wates.co.uk)