



MEDIA RELEASE

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WATES LIVING SPACE HELPS LOCAL JOBSEEKERS BUILD A NEW FUTURE

Jobseekers in Newport have been given a chance to get back on the career ladder by taking part in an initiative which gives people an opportunity to undertake construction skills training to improve their job prospects.

The Building Futures course was organised by specialist affordable housing contractor Wates Living Space in partnership with Newport City Homes with assistance from the Newport Construction Initiative, Barry College, Construction Skills Training and Action 4 Employment.

During the two-week course ten people from the Newport area took part in the scheme, receiving basic training in carpentry, brickwork, tiling, plastering as well as health and safety.

The programme concluded with a local community project for homeless charity Solas. The participants - alongside Wates staff - painted and redecorated a new emergency accommodation centre in Newport.

Established by Wates in 2005, the Building Futures programme, accredited by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance, was developed to help long term unemployed, ex-offenders and parent returnees return to the workforce and learn about different trades within the construction industry.

Dominic Torjesen, 23, from St. Julian's, Newport was unemployed for 6 months following redundancy before taking part in the scheme. He commented: "The Building

Futures course has been fantastic. You get information and training in different types of work in the construction industry and advice on the courses available locally that will help you move into work in that area. It was also really good to put my new skills into practice on the Community Day.

“Following the course I’m now really fired up about securing employment that will enable me to complete my carpentry apprenticeship”.

The scheme has so far helped more than 300 long term unemployed people and gives participants the opportunity to obtain their Construction Skills Certification Scheme qualification and safety equipment – an essential requirement for working on a construction site – free of charge.

Louise Hyde, Building Futures Project Manager from Wates says: “The key to the Building Futures programme’s success hasn’t been about simply giving people new skills, but about inspiring them to learn new things, explore new possibilities and to have confidence in their ability to succeed.

“We are planning to increase the number of participants in Building Futures to 375 by the end of 2010 by holding 12 further courses nationally.”

ENDS

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 over 2000 people and had a turnover of £945 million in 2009.
- 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 Contractor of the Year at the Inside Housing Sustainable Housing Awards in 2009.

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