

Delivering a sustainable and positive impact on communities

## Community matters most with East Midlands training centre



Client	Daventry and District Housing Partnership
Services	Home modernisation and refurbishment, including kitchen and bathroom replacement, re-roofing, central heating replacement and re-wiring
Contract start date	November 2007
Duration	4.5 years
Value	Over £5.2m a year

Every region of the UK gains advantages from having a skilled, adaptable workforce. As well as managing the modernisation of 3,100 homes in the East Midlands area, we are training and reskilling in the local community – setting up the area’s first training centre in partnership with Daventry and District Housing Partnership.

When we started our partnership with Daventry and District Housing Partnership (DDHP), it soon became clear that the relationship would develop with people firmly at its heart – both tenants and the local community.

With such a strong focus on community matters, we received enormous support and encouragement to invest in both local community facilities and in the people who would benefit from them.

Our main service has been to provide warm, safe and secure homes for all tenants by improving and modernising homes. And we’re always striving to develop and share best practice in customer service so we can provide the best possible customer experience.

### Bringing new skills to people in the local community

In addition to our core services, from the outset we’ve been aiming to increase the skillset of local people. Over the lifespan of our partnership with DDHP, we’ve employed six locally-based apprentices. And we plan to employ a further three local apprentices during 2010.

As part of our joint commitment with DDHP to train and upskill apprentices and the workforce, together we’ve established the first training centre in the East Midlands. It was set up specifically to address the needs of our partnership and has recently been given Centre of Excellence status by the National Skills Academy for Construction.

Through the centre’s training and development programme, we are continually expanding the skills base of the existing workforce.

**42** people in the existing workforce have taken part in equality and diversity training and

**35** people in the existing workforce have completed asbestos awareness training

### Committed to specialist training

As part of our commitment to training and development in Daventry, we've established a specialist work experience programme for local school pupils. It's designed to provide students with opportunities to learn directly about working life and the working environment within the construction industry and social housing sector. We piloted the programme through our partnership with DDHP and it is already delivering results.

Our team of four work experience ambassadors works closely with local schools in the Daventry area to support pupils through the programme. So far, we've worked with 15 learners to complete more than 1,200 hours of work experience. During 2009, we took the programme one step further to offer work experience within DDHP, enabling learners to see first-hand what a housing partnership scheme involves.

### Exploring the world of work

We've developed relationships with four schools in the Daventry area so far, working closely with the pupils to help them explore the world of work. Staff from both our team and DDHP run workshops on interview techniques and application forms, inter-school challenges and careers days.

Jonathan Hern, Major Improvement Programme Manager at DDHP, said: "The schools events are a great opportunity for local young people to sample careers in a range of trades. As well as learning practical skills, the events also help the students to develop their teamwork and communication skills. Our major improvement programme has already had a positive impact on local employment, with the appointment of apprentices. We are delighted to extend the benefits to local young people in the community."

### 'One in a Million' pledge pays back in Daventry

Our commitment to the community reaches further than training – we've developed the 'One in a Million pledge'. For every one million pounds that DDHP spends with us, it will give back one per

cent of the value to benefit the district.

Through the scheme we've carried out the following work, which has an estimated value of more than £32,000:

- Refurbished Daventry Town Community Centre with a new kitchen, new flooring and redecoration
- Fitted new showers in the changing rooms at Brodie Lodge playing field
- Created a new outdoor seating area and plants for residents to enjoy at Greenhill Court

Anthony Kent, Connaught Project Manager, said: "We are committed to leaving a lasting legacy in the neighbourhoods in which we work. That includes offering career advice and guidance to young people, upgrading community facilities and the ongoing home improvement works. We are delighted to be benefiting people in the local and wider community."



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### Having a measurable impact

Based on New Economics Foundation (nef) modelling, our partnership with Daventry and District Housing has created more than £1.7 million of social and economic investment to the local area. The nef model demonstrates the social and economic value of activities – its figures are based on:

- reduced impact on public services
- wealth generated and retained locally from the use of local businesses and the employment and training of local people
- activities and projects that engage the community

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