



WANSBECK HOMES

Our Vision:

Making the Difference

Our Mission:

To deliver outstanding customer service and create a brilliant place to work.

Our Values:

- Customer Services
- Teamwork
- Integrity
- Quality
- Leadership

Client best at meeting residents needs

Wansbeck Homes began operations on 25 February 2008 following the Large Scale Voluntary Transfer of the housing stock formerly owned by Wansbeck District Council. Together with Cheviot Homes, Wansbeck Homes became part of the Bernicia Group.

Wansbeck Homes is constituted as an Industrial and Provident Society with charitable rules. The governing body is the Board of Management, which is made up entirely of volunteer members and comprises of individuals from a wide range of backgrounds and professions including tenants of Wansbeck Homes. The Board is made up of 15 Members, 5 are representatives nominated by the Council, 5 are independent people and 5 are tenants.

Our Board and staff are committed to making a difference to the housing conditions for individuals, neighbourhoods and the communities we serve.

Background

Earn yourself an Apprenticeship

Worklessness is a persistent problem in Northumberland, particularly in the southeast of the county. Northumberland's District Councils and the County Council have offered a range of activities to train and recruit young people and workless people, through Youth Traineeships, work experience, work placements etc. With the issues highlighted above Wansbeck Council set up a successful programme to offer training and work placement opportunities to 'hard to reach' adults and young people from the District's most disadvantaged wards. The new Northumberland Public Sector Work Programme supersedes the previous Wansbeck programme and is based on the successful pilot programmes.



In October 2006 local teenagers in the Wansbeck area were asked to put themselves forward for a once in a lifetime opportunity to prove they were suitable candidates for full time apprenticeships and become the tradespersons of the future by working through a pre-apprentice programme developed by Wansbeck Public Sector Work Programme. With assistance from Connexions 12 youngsters were selected to undertake the scheme. The project was funded through the Wansbeck Initiative by the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund

Wansbeck Homes, part of the then Wansbeck District Council was one of the leading players in the development and training of the selected youngsters, once selected they all became part of the' pre-apprenticeship programme. At the end of which they would have hopefully gained valuable skills and work experience, in a variety of trades in the construction industry.

The chosen youngsters had all expressed an interest in working in the construction industry, but had been struggling to find themselves an apprenticeship opening before being offered the chance of a place on the programme. Over the subsequent 12 months, all of them will have the opportunity to become multi-skilled and gain a City & Guilds qualification. The

youngsters would also be given the understanding around work ethics, punctuality and reliability which they will need in their future careers.”

During that time they worked alongside Joiners, Plumbers, Electricians, Bricklayers, Plasterers, Roofers and Painters, as well as attending college two days a week. Of the trainees, six were taken on as apprentices by Wansbeck Homes with five of the six achieving their first choice of trade. Three of five not taken on gained employment in alternate occupations, and the twelfth is now working as a Plumber in the private sector.

In 2006 – 2007, and 2008 – 2009 Wansbeck Homes continued developing the scheme and appointed seven pre apprentices in 2008 – 2009, for 2009 -2010, we have just appointed another seven trainees who will start working on the 7th December. Form the 2006 – 2007 we appointed five Apprentices and for the 2008 -2009 we appointed an additional two Apprentices

What is innovative about the service provided?

The WDC programme was developed in recognition that public sector employers are the greatest source of employment in the then Wansbeck district and should take a lead in supporting workless residents to raise their employability and connect with the labour market.

The programme has piloted an approach to offering training and work placements across Council departments to workless residents. Over three years Wansbeck Homes has successfully trained and recruited 19 local workless people achieving high retention and a job outcome of around 50% job outcome rate. The aim of the project was to raise the employability of local people who are disconnected from the labour market and to support them throughout their placements and eventually into sustainable employment in the public or other sectors.



What are the benefits to the client, the contractor and the residents?

A) The Client: - To provide work and training opportunities where full apprenticeships are not generally available to the local community of Wansbeck. Also offering a broader range of opportunities to local workless residents turning the priority into a reality. This helping the overall strategic approach of the local Housing Group in helping to achieve social inclusion within the area.

B) The Contractor: - It allows the contractor the opportunity to assess the capabilities of the appointed trainees, this helps to highlight those of real capability for appointment into a full apprenticeship. The opportunity also allows for an additional year of training that helps to see increased productivity of year one apprentices.

C) The Residents: - Providing real help for young people and adults who are currently facing significant disadvantages in the labour market and provides residents of deprived areas tailored support to connect them with employment in the public sector predominately but enabling them to compete in the wider labour market.

D) The Neighbourhood: - The county of Wansbeck has a substantial problem with the proportion of young people who are NEET (not in education, employment or training). This scheme allows for the opportunity to assist in the NEET problem by allowing some local people the opportunity to hopefully escape from the social, problems associated with, crime; drug abuse; anti-social behaviour; homelessness; poor health; benefit dependency and teenage pregnancy.

What were the financial costs and cashable benefits?

Value for money –For an individual on the pre apprentice programme, costs were £9,653 including project management of the programme this demonstrates good value for money. Whilst the cost is greater than the state benefits required for the same period, the average salary of skilled construction workers would yield £5.5K in tax and NI, as well as contributing through council tax and VAT on purchasing goods. It is likely that the investment in an individual would be repaid within the first year of employment.



How relevant is this as an example that might be followed by other organisations?

There is no reason to suppose that the programme could not be replicated elsewhere, provided there is strong commitment at political, strategic and operational levels. The benefit to the local communities and more important, the opportunity to help disadvantaged youngsters is a fantastic opportunity not to be missed. Overall, the project performed very well. The programme has fulfilled the original aims of the project.

The programme demonstrates an excellent fit with a number of national, regional and sub-regional projects. Most trainees have achieved a positive

outcome: a job, an apprenticeship, or further training. All trainees are more employable as a result of the programme.

Although the scheme has been financially funded in the past as mentioned earlier Wansbeck homes has committed to an additional seven placements this year. The programme is now supported by the DGLG Working Neighbourhoods Fund (WNF)

We feel the opportunity is fantastic and will if funding removed in the future look to carry on with the scheme.



Below are some of the comments from a small number of of the stake holders associated with the project:

"I have enjoyed the programme and am thankful for all the help I have received to get to where I am today. To have the chance to develop new skills as I found it hard to achieve this before this opportunity"

"As an apprentice you get more respect and can go into more depth"

"If it wasn't for this, I'd be stacking supermarket shelves"

"Everyone put themselves out to help us. People took time out of their jobs to help us and made space for us"

"I was worried no-one would really want us there and there wouldn't be anything much to do, but it was all really friendly and we were made to feel welcome"

"I was surprised how much organisation it took to get myself out in the morning, but I'm really pleased I managed it. It made me see it was possible to work even with a baby. It made me organized and get a routine at home which was good for all of us"

