

Christmas Cheer for 8 homeless men as 'The Cyrenians' launch new construction skills company TCUK Property Services

£3.3 million worth contracts underway

Wednesday 23 December 2009 - The Cyrenians has continued its national acclaimed programme of employing homeless people with the most ambitious scheme to date. A team of eight trainees from Brighter Futures, The Cyrenians' construction skills training centre, has been selected from 18 hopeful applicants for a 12 month paid traineeship with The Cyrenians new company, TCUK Property Services.

TCUK Property Services has been set up to supply training and employment to disadvantaged people into the construction industry.



The blueprint for the new company is the highly successful self-build scheme in 2006 in which a group of previously homeless men built an extension to The Cyrenians' Head Office and a second £1.6 million project which transformed historic Virginia House into a residential academy. The award winning charity announced this third large scheme, a continuation of The Cyrenians self-build programme.

The first contract will be the refurbishment of The Cyrenians own emergency access building in the West End of Newcastle. The grade 2 listed building will be transformed by a £2 million refurbishment into a state of the art facility. The scheme has been funded by the Department of Health, through the National Treatment Agency and by the Department of Communities and Local Government's Places of Change programme.

The second contract is the development of a ground-breaking substance misuse accommodation service for women with children. This £1.3 million contract is also funded through the National Treatment Agency and includes both the refurbishment of an existing building in central Newcastle and construction of an extension. Five more properties will be developed to provide 'move-on' accommodation.

The eight successful trainees who have all experienced addiction problems or issues relating to homelessness, have successfully completed basic training in plastering, joinery and electrical work at the

Brighter Futures Construction Skills Training Centre and will start their traineeship in January 2010; New Year a new start. On being given the news, new trainee Sean Cleghorn said:

"This is the beginning of a new life for me – it's the first job I've ever had and I can't wait to start. It's epic! My family is so proud of me."

During the 12 month paid traineeship the trainees will gain practical experience and qualifications to develop their chosen trade.

Stephen Bell explained:

"TCUK Property Services (TCUK-PS) will be a springboard back into mainstream employment and independence for people who have been through our support and training and reached our recruitment standards."

"TCUK-PS will deliver construction services to both The Cyrenians and other organisations and in the process provide employment and training opportunities. This is a very significant development for The Cyrenians as an organisation focussed on really tackling the needs of vulnerable people."

In the last three years over £5 million capital investment has been carried out by The Cyrenians in the region on a number of projects. These include the Virginia House, a flagship stabilisation project, Brighter Futures which specialises in construction skills training and Oaktrees, an alcohol dependency rehabilitation centre.

The Charity is bucking the general economic trend. In 2009 The Cyrenians increased turnover by 300 % to over £7 m and now employs over 180 people and has a volunteer team extending to over 170. Over 800 individual people benefit weekly from The Cyrenians'

support.

The Cyrenians was awarded National Charity of the Year in 2008, and in 2009 received The Queens Awards for Volunteering and Star Status in the Sunday Times 'Best Companies to Work For'.

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