

Apprentice builders lay foundations for career in construction

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Young apprentices are laying the foundations of careers in the construction industry – by building the college where they study.

Six trainees from Winchmore Brickwork have finished building a new motor workshop at Hertford Regional College in Broxbourne as part of a three year Apprenticeship scheme.

Campbell Weir, head of the construction, engineering and technology department at the college, said: “These lads are quite literally learning on the job. They spend one morning each week learning construction theory before putting it all into practice by building some fantastic new facilities for the college.”

Enfield-based Winchmore Brickwork began training apprentices with Hertford Regional College over five years ago when managing director Tony Yianni realised that there was not enough skilled labour available locally to meet the demand for construction work. The company has now successfully supported 10 young builders through their bricklaying Apprenticeships with a further 10 still currently studying.

Mr Yianni said: “It became clear to me a while ago that there was so much work coming up linked to housing growth in the region and the Olympics but that we just wouldn’t be able to get enough labour to service the contracts. Now we’re reaping the rewards of our investment in training as we’ve got a 120-strong skilled workforce who are prepared to stick around because they can see we are committed to helping them get on in their careers.”

There are over 3,100 apprentices currently learning vocational skills ranging from construction to beauty therapy in Hertfordshire, including 430 at Hertford Regional College which is the largest work-based learning provider in the county. The Learning and Skills Council works with the college, sixth forms and other colleges to help plan and fund courses to ensure students gain education and skills relevant to the needs of employers in the area.

Jeff Wren, partnership director for the Learning and Skills Council Hertfordshire said: "We need to get more apprentices onto schemes in this county to meet a growing need from employers in all sorts of industries, not just construction.

"Hertfordshire is a booming county and there are some great opportunities for businesses to grow and prosper but employers need access to a skilled workforce. Apprenticeships enable employers to ensure the training their employees receive is relevant and will make a real contribution to the company."

The apprentices will continue their work and learning this year at the College and on building projects at other schools and housing developments in Hertfordshire.

For more information about the Apprenticeships log on to www.apprenticeships.co.uk

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Notes to editors

**For further information please contact Donna Barker or Lucy Clegg
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Digital images attached:

Digger portrait, from left to right:
Back row: Chris Willmot, Carl Mendola
Front row: Tony Yianni, Billy Russell

Wall landscape, from left to right:
Chris Willmot, Tony Yianni, Carl Mendola, Billy Russell

The Learning and Skills Council

The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) aims to improve the skills of young people and adults to ensure that England has a workforce of world class standard by 2020.

The LSC was established in 2001 as a non-departmental public body (i.e. carries out its work at arms length from ministers) and is responsible for planning and funding high quality education and training for everyone over the age of 16 in England, other than those in universities.

Hertford Regional College

Hertford Regional College is the largest college in the area and offers the widest range of courses available. Around 12,000 full or Part-time students studied at the College last year and although many students come from the immediate area the reputation of the College also draws students from further afield.

The main College centres are in Ware and Broxbourne and there are also the smaller NextStep centres in Waltham Cross and Bishop's Stortford. Part-time courses are offered at these centres plus numerous other venues, such as schools and community centres, throughout Broxbourne and East Herts.

Winchmore Brickwork

Winchmore Brickwork is based in Enfield Town, Middlesex and offers a professional service incorporating the supply of labour, plant and materials for all types of brick and Blockwork packages.

Recent and current clients include hbg Construction, Kier London, Jarvis Construction Limited, Bluestone Plc, Mansell Construction Services Limited, Willmott Dixon Housing, Higgins Homes Limited Leadbitter Construction, Galliard Construction and Costain Limited.