

Scarborough Training Centre

In the space of just six weeks and with the support of UCATT and the TUC education and skills arm, unionlearn, Willmott Dixon has transformed a dilapidated storage area into a fully equipped, flexible and tailored learning centre.

The new centre in Hopper Hill Road in Seamer, Scarborough was opened on 19 October 2010 by Group Chief Executive, Rick Willmott. He was joined by Acting UCATT Yorkshire Regional Secretary, Steve Murphy, the mayor of Scarborough, Hazel Lynskey, and the Chief Executive of Yorkshire Coast Homes, Steve Oldridge.

"It's really good to see UCATT and unionlearn working with Willmott Dixon at the Scarborough Training Centre to help promote skills and employability in the workplace and the wider community," he said.

"Willmott Dixon has been in existence for 158 years and has been through recessions and economic downturns before," added Head of Customer Service and Training, Huw Evans. *"To get through the bad times we believe that you need to invest in the people who work for you."*



Working and training at the heart of the community

The centre will offer training in life-long trade skills such as carpentry, plumbing, joinery and decorating. And this will be on offer not only to Willmott Dixon's local maintenance team but also to Yorkshire Coast Homes tenants and other residents in the local community looking to find out more about the construction sector – particularly those who are unemployed or have been affected by redundancies and business closures. It is fully equipped with classroom furniture, a whiteboard, projector and laptop computers, and its flexible arrangement means that it can also be used to deliver training in practical construction skills including tiling and plastering, painting and decorating and plumbing.

"Having an area within our offices means that our staff don't have to travel to other parts of the country to access training. That can be a really off-putting factor," said Huw. *"With a great support from UCATT, we have been able to provide a really good, local training facility."*

And Willmott Dixon General Manager at Scarborough, Derek Dyer, said: *"We identified a need for a local training facility in a comfortable and familiar environment for our tradespeople and the wider community. We also want to improve our employees' quality of life and work life balance and reducing travelling time is one way of doing that."*

The initiative is part of Willmott Dixon's ongoing *Opening Doors* work placement and apprenticeship programme, which offers tailored training and development opportunities for local people including those who are currently unemployed. The programme provides an introduction to the world of construction work and an opportunity to gain skills for school students. And it encourages local unemployed people to get back to work by giving them the opportunity to retrain or up-skill in order to improve their employability.

A progressive union working for its members and the community

"This initiative shows how a progressive union can work with companies for the benefit of its members and the local community," said Steve Murphy. *"The learning centre will allow people to further their skills, knowledge and gain decent qualifications and we look forward to working with Willmott Dixon on this and other projects in the future."*

Unionlearn is providing learning materials and has welcomed the initiative at a time of increasing need for skills training.

"We are glad to be supporting UCATT with the initiative to set up this Learning Centre and we are especially delighted with the centre's innovative plans to respond to the needs of the wider community," said Skills: Recession and Recovery Development Worker, Noella Mellad. *"By looking to provide learning opportunities for workers to improve and develop their skills, as well as training for people who may be facing redundancy or are*





out of work, UCATT and Willmott Dixon are helping people to face the future with greater confidence."

"It has been really, really advantageous to work with UCATT," said Willmott Dixon Training Manager Sharon Ayles. "The training centre would not have been possible without their input."

The training journey begins

Over the next few months the centre will provide:

- Construction skills training;
- The opportunity for young people to find out what it's like to work in the construction industry; and
- Training courses for the local maintenance team to obtain or upgrade their Construction Skills

Certification Scheme (CSCS) cards. These demonstrate that workers are competent in particular areas of construction work and have a good awareness of health and safety.

Sharon will be organising outreach work through local community centres and working with organisations like Connexions and Jobcentre Plus and the first training courses for people from the local community are scheduled to get underway in January 2011.

"For every course we run, we'll be inviting two people from the local community to come and gain new skills," said Sharon. "We'll be targeting unemployed people including those who have been made redundant or those affected by business closures in the area."

PASMA tower scaffold training, asbestos awareness training and tool box talks, in addition to NVQ training and qualifications for administrative staff are also in the pipeline. And while construction skills are the first priority, the company also hopes to run Skills for Life and English language courses for its migrant workforce, who are skilled but may not have a qualification in English. It will also work with local colleges in the area, including technical colleges at Scarborough, Bridlington and Whitby.

"It's the start of something exciting and will develop further. Our training journey has begun!" says Derek.



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