

Case Study: Social Value

Increase work opportunities for NEET adults and local people Coventry Retail Quarter – Pre-employment Programme

- This was a partnership with WMCA, Infraskills, Coventry Job Shop & Eurovia which provided a number of ringfenced entry level job opportunities which were funded through WMCA Construction Gateway.
- The programme offered two-week classroom-based construction training complemented with work placements and a guaranteed job interview.
- At the end of the programme three NEET adults were recruited by Eurovia.

As part of their preparations to celebrate being the UK City of Culture 2021, Coventry City Council (CCC) wished to redevelop the Upper Precinct and Smithford Way in the centre of Coventry. CCC's vision was to transform the existing thoroughfare, the Upper Precinct and Smithford Way, into an event and community gathering space delivering a Flagship Public Realm Improvement scheme by 2021.



As a leading provider of construction services to Local Authorities, Eurovia understands the importance of bringing Social, Economic and Environmental value to the local communities where we live and work, creating a lasting legacy. As part of our approach for the Coventry Retail Quarter scheme, we implemented an ambitious pre-employment training programme aimed at assisting unemployed people in Coventry into the construction industry.

The pre-employment programme, a partnership between Eurovia Contracting, West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), Coventry City Council (CCC) and Infraskills, offered construction training and job opportunities for those who may be facing barriers to employment, or who may have found it hard to enter the industry without prior experience. Common barriers that affect those removed from the labour market include the financial implications of gaining access training (such as NVQs) and qualifications (such as CSCS), as well as digital exclusion and work experience. This pre-employment programme bridged the gap for those far removed from the labour market, enabling them to become work ready for the construction industry. A total of 150 local people were able to get new jobs at the hub over a 12-month period, working on this regeneration project.

The key social value priorities for this project were:

- Higher rates of local employment
- Improved access to training for priority groups
- Assisting long-term unemployed people to become work ready

A recruitment day, open exclusively to local unemployed people registered with Coventry's Job Shop was held in partnership with Eurovia and Infraskills. Successful applicants were invited to attend a two-week tailor-made pre-employment training programme delivered by Infraskills.

There were eight successful applicants from the open day, and they began their two-week course in January 2020. Of the eight participants that took part in the pre-employment course, five participants went on to take part in work experience days on-site with Eurovia on the Coventry Retail Quarter scheme. There were two successful asylum seekers, two over 50-year olds, and a young person. During this work experience they undertook a variety of roles and tasks including Banksman, Gateman and Compound upkeep, as well as Shadowing - Setting out engineers, Pedestrian marshals, Banksmen and the General Foreman.



Of the five participants that undertook work experience placements, three had interviews with Eurovia. The applicants had previously been given interview skills training by Eurovia and were able to perform well. At the end of this programme Eurovia employed three graduates from the programme, they all worked on the Coventry Retail Quarter scheme.

This programme has been a huge success, with Eurovia employing several new operatives from the programme. Those who did not gain employment have still significantly benefitted from this programme, becoming closer to the labour market through training and work experience. Eurovia Contracting is looking to offer jobs on the scheme to as many participants as possible by the end of the programme. An event was held in March 2020 to celebrate the success of the project.



Danny Pollock, Successful Graduate and Eurovia Operative said: "I was unemployed for two months and saw the opportunity for a fresh start in construction while walking past the Coventry Job Shop window. The course was brilliant and I'm learning so much every day. I love the job and working in the team – we're like a family. I hope to stay with the company until I retire."