

News

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National Apprenticeship Week 2020 - Looking Beyond

By Sarah Muscas, Community Engagement Manager, Morgan Sindall Construction – Yorkshire and North East

One of the themes of this year's National Apprenticeship Week is to #LookBeyond the myth that the main responsibility for apprentices is doing menial jobs on site, such as making tea. Not to underplay the importance of a good cuppa on site – it's vital! – but this is an outdated stereotype that needs to be put to bed.

As an example, we can look to Morgan Sindall Construction's work on Leeds Skelton Lake Services, a £60m site under construction to the east of Leeds (Junction 45 of the M1), The scheme is located in a part of the city that is home to some of its most deprived wards and a key focus of Morgan Sindall Construction's social value strategy was employment skills training.

A project the size of Skelton Lakes can play a key role in boosting skills across the region, and we therefore place a huge responsibility on doing what we can to create training and employment opportunities, such as apprenticeships, that will bring economic benefits to the area while helping people learn a wealth of new skills.

One of the most rewarding aspects for our team has been collaborating with organisations across the region to develop programmes that help people on their journeys.

On this project, we were proud to welcome a site engineer apprentice via the EN:Able Futures shared apprentice scheme and an apprentice groundworker, who was recruited by Will Nixon Construction, our head groundworker on the project.

For those learning about the construction industry, there is no substitute for on-site experience. 41 five-day work experience placements in site management, site engineering and quantity surveying were delivered to Leeds College of Building Level 3 Construction in the Built Environment students and A-level students from Leeds, Wakefield and Huddersfield.

Supported into-work programmes were also created to support Armed Forces service leavers' transition into the civilian construction industry via Build Force and we also helped local unemployed adults find work in partnership with Leeds jobcentres and Construction Industry Training Board skills hubs.

Additionally, I worked with Leeds Beckett University, Leeds University and University of Huddersfield in order to promote student research opportunities and identify higher-level apprenticeship upskill opportunities for our supply chain partners.

Everyone who we welcomed on to the site on apprenticeships or other placements had some part to play in one of the biggest construction projects Leeds has seen in recent years – they should all be proud, and hopefully it will be a springboard for their future careers.

Away from Skelton Lakes, I was proud earlier this week to attend the Leeds Apprenticeship Recruitment Fair, the largest such event in the North. It was really inspiring to see so many people there finding out about the life-changing potential of apprenticeships, as well as so many employers who have made this model of employment and training a key part of their operations.

At the fair, I was promoting current apprenticeship vacancies within our Yorkshire business. We have a really exciting pipeline of work coming up, and I'm looking forward to getting involved in more initiatives that support the creation of the next generation of construction professionals and unlocking the potential of people across our region.

At Morgan Sindall Construction we are committed to looking beyond - whether that's outdated stereotypes about our industry, preconceived notions about what it takes to succeed in construction or mistakes or difficulties people may have had in their past. We're determined to do what we can to support them on their next steps to developing a successful and rewarding career in the construction industry. If you'd be interested in working with us on our next project, please get in touch today.