



## **ONE THOUSAND REASONS TO CELEBRATE FOR BUILD UP BLACKPOOL**

September 2010

### **Press Release**

A groundbreaking project set up to train unemployed adults in Blackpool in construction skills has successfully placed its one thousandth learner into sustainable employment, despite launching less than three years ago.

Blackpool Build Up, a partnership between Blackpool and The Fylde College and Blackpool Council, was formed in January 2008 after a successful Local Enterprise Growth Initiative (LEGI) bid for £1.4 million. Since then the training centre has far exceeded expectations, delivering training to a total of 1634 learners, more than double the target of 810 and already quadrupling the four year target of finding employment for 257 learners.

Jeyson Barnes, 47, from Blackpool became the one thousandth learner to find work after being taken on by Steven Ford Recruitment, a contractor working on the regeneration of Blackpool Promenade. Jeyson worked in security and self employed on building sites before becoming unemployed. Despite applying for numerous construction jobs, he was unable to find work without his CSCS card and remained unemployed for 13 months. He enrolled with Build Up Blackpool after seeing an advert at Job Centre Plus and began his training in July.

After 10 weeks training at the Princess Street venue, Jeyson had gained his CSCS card and also certificates in Manual Lifting and Handling and Abrasive Wheel Operation. He is now helping to build the new tram terminals along the famous promenade.

Jeyson said: "It's amazing that I'm the one thousandth person the Build Up have helped into employment, particularly at a time when unemployment is so high. The staff at Build Up are really supportive and work to raise your confidence as well as teaching you new skills. Without them, I wouldn't have a job today."

With the amount of regeneration underway in Blackpool, Build Up addresses the skills agenda and supports local contractors in creating a skilled workforce, assisting them with meeting social responsibility clauses in tenders.

Steven Ford, Director of Steven Ford recruitment, who have employed more than 30 trainees before Jeyson, added: "I have had nothing but great service and rapport from the Blackpool Build Up staff. The learners are good lads, all wanting to work with the skills that the contractor requires."

The programme is open to residents aged over 21 with no previous experience of the construction industry required. Many of the trainees have low educational participation and poor achievement rates, are long term unemployed or prolific offenders and all volunteer to join.

Steve Clough, Head of School of Construction at Blackpool and The Fylde College said: “We’re so happy that we’ve passed the 1,000 mark. Its not just about a number though – we’re helping people to turn their lives around and instilling self belief as well as contributing to the regeneration of the town.”

Councillor Maxine Callow, Cabinet Member for Tourism and Regeneration at Blackpool Council, said: “With the economic climate the way it is helping people in to work is vitally important to ensure their well being. I am very pleased this initiative has been so successful and I hope it continues to flourish and help yet more people.”

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