

NATIONAL TRAINING AWARD FOR BUILD UP BLACKPOOL

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PRESS RELEASE

An innovative project set up to train unemployed adults in Blackpool in construction skills has won a coveted National Training Award.

Blackpool Build Up, a partnership between Blackpool and The Fylde College and Blackpool Council, was formed in January 2008 after a successful LEGL bid for £1.4 million. Since then the training centre has exceeded expectations, delivering training to 842, almost twice as many as the target of 437, and successfully helping a total of 313 off benefits and into full-time employment over 22 months.

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.

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.

The National Training Awards (NTA) are the most prestigious awards for training in the UK. The NTA identify and celebrate organisations and individuals that have achieved outstanding business and personal success through investment in training.

Commenting on the award, Blackpool and The Fylde College Principal, Pauline Waterhouse, said: "This is a huge honour for the College, but what we are really celebrating is the dramatic impact the project has had on people's lives. For that, the tremendous team at Build Up should feel a real sense of pride.

"We've seen people come through training at the Centre from all walks of life, who never believed they could turn their lives around like they have, learning useful, applicable skills and maintaining full-time employment.

"The success of the project highlights the importance of investing in education and training, particularly in the current economic climate. The College is a central part of Blackpool's regeneration and is proactively involved in addressing the skills agenda needed to run alongside the physical regeneration agenda."

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Notes to Editors:

The National Training Awards are run by UK Skills on behalf of the Department for Business Innovation and Skills (DBIS) in England and in partnership with the Department for Employment and Learning Northern Ireland, the Welsh Assembly Government, Skills Development Scotland and the Scottish Government.

In today's highly competitive and ever-changing economic climate, training is more important than ever. The creation of a highly skilled workforce increases performance and productivity, brings success to individuals and businesses, and contributes to the UK as a whole, enhancing our credibility and reputation as a force to be reckoned with in the global economy - put simply, training reaps rewards!

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