



Press Release

Under embargo until 18 March 2013

Deputy Minister Launches Shared Apprenticeship Scheme to Meet Employer Demand for Flexible Training in Wales

A Welsh housing association and Council have teamed up to form a Shared Apprenticeship Scheme, which increases the flexibility of training in Wales - in a bid to address the skills shortfall within the construction industry.

Jeff Cuthbert, Deputy Minister for Skills, today joined representatives from Pontypool-based Melin Homes and Monmouthshire Council's CMC² to launch South East Wales' Shared Apprenticeship Scheme, Y Prentis. The launch, which took place at the Senedd in Cardiff, was an opportunity for the Deputy Minister to meet the apprentices and employers involved in the innovative scheme.

Y Prentis is backed by CITB-Construction Skills Wales and the Welsh Government and has been established to meet the growing demand for a more flexible approach to apprenticeship delivery in South East Wales.

Reflecting the skills needs of industry, the scheme guarantees young people a two-year apprenticeship programme with the flexibility to move between employers in order to complete a full apprenticeship. Further, by allowing employers to offer a proportion of an apprenticeship without having to commit to the full term, the new scheme is suited to the increasing number of short term construction projects and contracts, which currently are unable to offer the appropriate training and work experience that are central to an apprenticeship.

The scheme is supported by the Welsh Government and CITB-ConstructionSkills Wales, the Sector Skills Council and Industry Training Board for construction and managed by Melin Homes and CMC². It will offer 105 craft apprenticeships including brickwork, joinery, plastering and infrastructure and civil engineering, with training and work placements being provided by local colleges and a number of local employers including Melin Homes, Cowlin, Leadbitter and Interserve.

Speaking at the launch Jeff Cuthbert, Deputy Minister for Skills, said: "Shared Apprenticeship programmes are an important means of supporting apprentices during these economically challenged times. Shared Apprenticeships provide flexibility in planning the learning of apprentices; apprentices are able to rotate between a number of different employers as they progress through their learning. Importantly, the partners involved in this initiative are committed to ensure that the apprentices attain the relevant construction framework and secure sustainable employment."

Wyn Prichard, Wales Director of CITB-ConstructionSkills, added: "We are delighted to be involved with the Y Prentis Shared Apprenticeship Scheme in South East Wales. It is just one of the many ways that we are listening and responding to industry concerns regarding skills shortages and the employment of apprentices during tough economic times. The scheme demonstrates that





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industry, Government and education are prepared to look at innovative approaches to training to overcome these issues. It will also help us to attract new talent to the industry by ensuring training opportunities are available."

Adrian Huckin, Y Prentis Director, said: "The Y Prentis Shared Apprenticeship Scheme offers companies and apprentices many benefits and advantages and will be an invaluable addition to the development of the construction industry. Employing apprentices often becomes a great financial and time burden for small companies, however shared apprenticeships can alleviate these issues as well as addressing South East Wales' construction skills needs, making the industry in this area a more stable one."

Under the scheme, apprentices will undertake short term work placements with an employer before moving on to the next employer. They will continue this for two to three years until they have completed their apprenticeship.

For more information on how to become involved in the Shared Apprenticeship Scheme, either as an apprentice or employer, please call Mark Whitby on 07767 244871.

Ends

Issued on behalf of CITB-ConstructionSkills Wales by Grayling.

For further information contact Helen McCulloch on 0117 929 2311 or helen.mcculloch@grayling.com.

Notes to editors:

About CITB

CITB is the Industrial Training Board (ITB) for the construction industry in Great Britain (Scotland, England and Wales). We are working to ensure that construction employers have the right skills, in right place, at the right time by investing funds and providing a wide range of industry-led skills and training solutions.

We are also a partner in ConstructionSkills, the Sector Skills Council (SSC) for the UK construction industry, and we are raising employer engagement in training, providing labour market insights on future skills needs and developing standards and qualifications for the sector. As an ITB and SSC are providing vital support to a sector which is central to the UK economy.

For more details on our work please visit www.citb.co.uk

