

**CASE STUDY:**

## Construction Gateway: Providing the blueprint for building skills and employability

Construction has always been a sector that Governments have relied upon to support recovery from an economic shock, and the COVID-19 pandemic has been no different.

The current Government's 'levelling up' agenda is predicated on increased central spending on regional infrastructure, while the strapline for the Prime Minister's New Deal for Britain 'Build, Build, Build' needs no clarification.

So, with the construction sector of increasing importance to the national economy, interest in initiatives like WMCA's Construction Gateway, with its focus on employer-led training provision, short and snappy courses and employment outcomes, has increased significantly.

Just weeks before the first national lockdown, Winning Moves completed a timely evaluation of the Construction Gateway project.

Through a combination of visits to key development sites where training was taking place, interviews with some of the 13 training providers and Tier 1 developers (potential employers) offering interviews at the end of the course, and a survey of learners, we were tasked with evidencing the regional impact of the project and considering the effectiveness and viability of a new approach to delivering training. This 'bootcamp' approach, which was described by several stakeholders as a '*significant departure from the traditional delivery models that Government funding and college provision is geared towards*', focused attention on skills development and job outcomes, rather than course attainment and qualifications.



**West Midlands  
Combined Authority**

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## What we learnt

Almost two thirds of survey respondents (60%) cited positive employment outcomes, while 483 students are now employed in the construction sector as a direct result of the project.

### Engagement

- 1,400 students engaged with the Construction Gateway, with a focus on harder-to-reach groups, including the long-term unemployed, ethnic minorities, ex-offenders and people with physical disabilities
- Orientation sessions were a successful mechanism for recruiting motivated and interested students, with between 40 and 60 combined authority residents attending each session
- 4 private providers were responsible for 46% of all student outcomes

### Delivery

- A recognised success of the Construction Gateway has been the flexibility it has offered to colleges and private training providers to respond rapidly to employers' specific skills requirements.
- Students have benefited from practical, onsite experience, which exposed them to the realities of working on a construction development, helping them to determine if the sector is for them

- The project financially supported students by paying for their CSCS cards, a requirement to allow individuals to work onsite. CPCS Plant including Telescopic Handling, Bricklaying and labouring were the most popular cards

### Impacts

- 7 of 13 training providers successfully placed 50% of their learners into employment, with 5 achieving WMCAs stretch target of 70%
- Employers perceptions of people from 'harder to reach' communities changed significantly as a result of seeing learners working onsite, with many stating their interest in recruiting them following their training
- The Construction Gateway has helped support employment opportunities in the region are filled, addressed the aging workforce in the sector, and encouraged people from different socio-economic backgrounds, particularly women, to consider construction as a career.



**483** students are  
now employed

**1400**  
students engaged with project



*7 of 13 training providers successfully placed 50% of their learners into employment, with 5 achieving WMCAs stretch target of 70%*

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## What happens next?

It would appear that interest in bootcamp delivery, as an alternative to traditional training provision, shows no signs of abating. The approach is emerging as an option to address both immediate and longer-term issues with upskilling, employment and supporting career changes, while the Government has identified bootcamps as a central delivery mechanism of their 'Lifetime Skills Guarantee'. This guarantee, funded through the National Skills fund, will offer a fully funded college course to adults without an A-Level or equivalent qualification. More locally, WMCA are hoping that Sector Work Academy Programmes (SWAP)'s, that are delivered using a bootcamp approach, will play a prominent role in supporting growth in the West Midlands' key sectors.

**For further information on this project or on the work that Winning Moves is completing in the Education and Skills arena, please contact Michelle Hollier, Director of Research and Evaluation on [michelleh@winningmoves.com](mailto:michelleh@winningmoves.com) or Paul Woodcraft, Consultant in Education and Skills on [paulw@winningmoves.com](mailto:paulw@winningmoves.com)**



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