

On Site Experience - Meet the Candidate

LANCASHIRE

A new multi-million pound fund was announced in 2019 to continue the work in helping to tackle the construction skills shortage. The CITB commission was to follow on from the success of the Construction Skills Fund (part of the government's national retraining scheme) in the creation of opportunities for new-entrants to the construction industry (including those with barriers) to receive the relevant and necessary training and much needed on-site experience required to establish a strong local labour pipeline for employers within the sector.

Fully funded by CITB, the On-Site Experience Commission aims to increase the number of people trained in construction supported by the opportunity to gain actual

experience (and subsequently – employment) as a way of continuing to tackle the skill shortage across the UK spanning the next 3 years.

Procure Plus has been awarded the commission in Lancashire, Cheshire and North Wales.

Working with employers, local employability group partners and training providers across the regions, we are already well on our way to achieving our targeted 1680 gaining experience on site with 840 moving into employment by 2023.

In a series of profile pieces we will be introducing some of these successful candidates to hear how this fund has changed the course of their working lives.

Today meet Steven Culshaw

Steven is currently working on the Preston Western Distributor and East-West Link Road with Costain as a Vehicle Banksman.

Prior to this opportunity, Steven hadn't worked for coming up to 12 years having had to leave work to become a full time Dad, following his partner suddenly and unexpectedly becoming very poorly following the birth of their son. Following a marital breakdown, Steven's circumstance deteriorated during which he found himself living in a homeless shelter for 2 months prior to securing himself a flat in late 2020 – which was a key turning point in Steven getting his life back on track.

In January, Steven visited his local community support for a food parcel and it was during this meet that Progress Futures asked Steven what other support they could provide for him. It was that conversation that signposted Steven to Procure Plus and we immediately signed him up to do his Health & Safety L1 and CSCS touchscreen test.

Progress Futures also continued to support Steven during this process, assisting with his CV, employability skills and confidence.

Meanwhile, Procure Plus at this stage were fully engaged with Costain who were keen to recruit from the local communities as part of their social value commitment. Steven was identified as an ideal candidate for one of their Vehicle Banksman roles and as such received additional training to secure his NPORS certificate. Following 2 weeks of paid on site experience, Steven was offered a full-time role on what is planned to be a 3 year project.



Q+A with Steven

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**Dan Grant -
Foreman, PSI Global:**

“Steven genuinely works hard, is always on time, is enthusiastic and forward thinking - which is perfect for me. His level of effort is 100%. He sets a great example to people around him - and he's got a cracking good sense of humour which is an added bonus!”

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**Martyn Hodge –
Site Manager, Costain:**

“Through our engagement with Procure Plus, we have one point of contact now who links us to various local employability groups who engage with the candidates we're aiming to reach with our job opportunities. To work with one partner who can coordinate candidate referrals, put the necessary training in place and orchestrate them coming onto site through our chosen partner agencies has worked fantastically. Social value targets have been met, candidates have secured great jobs, we've saved time and money and have strengthened our links to local communities in the process.”

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How did you hear about the opportunity to retrain and what interested you about it?

It was on dropping in to collect a food parcel that Phil from Progress Futures asked how else they could support me. Having been lucky enough to secure my flat, I needed to find work now to financially support myself. This is when we talked about the possibility of construction and that was it, I was signed up there and then to the CSCS course.

Any challenges/barriers you faced (either training or employment)?

Due to Covid, there wasn't any classroom training and so I had to complete the Health & Safety course online which proved a challenge at first but I soon got the hang of it. Aside of that, the only other challenge really was my confidence. I hadn't worked for so long, I didn't really know what to expect. Procure Plus and Progress Futures supported me throughout the process which really helped to boost my confidence and belief that this would actually lead me to a job and the minute a role with Costain was mentioned I just ploughed all of my energy into doing everything I needed to do to make it happen.

What role have you gone into and what types of things are you doing on site?

I was really lucky to be given the opportunity to further qualify as a Vehicle Banksman. On site, I'm controlling barriers, the flow of public across the site entrance, recording vehicles coming on/off site, installing crash barrier systems, signs and fencing whilst also assisting with any general labouring as and when required. I'm hoping to further qualify in the future and really fancy getting my Slinger certificate.

What difference has this opportunity made to you?

It's made a massive difference and has opened a whole new door of opportunities for me. Me and my son are already able to do more things as a family together. I have the means to take us places, to do things and to enjoy life a bit more. It means I can now plan for the future more than I ever could. One of the things I'll be doing for sure is finally learning how to drive with the hope of hopefully owning my own car – which will open up more opportunities again. It's given me much needed financial security, a sense of purpose which has been a huge boost for my overall wellbeing.



creating value for our communities

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